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*A Brief Review of the History and
Social Organisation of the Peoples
of the Northern Territories of the
Gold Coast.*

BY

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During my service in the Northern Territories the demand for salt and the colossal prices paid for this highly prized commodity, led me to the conclusion that in all probability in early times strangers arriving among the primitive peoples bringing with them salt would be accepted as friends, and so be able to pave the way to the interior of remote tribes. It appears that from earliest times primitive man craved for salt, salt being one of the mineral constituents of the body. The extensive trade which existed in salt across the desert also leaves little doubt that this was the means by which merchants from the North and East first penetrated into the heart of the negro tribes. It is for this reason I conclude salt was the open sesame of the trade routes and gold the magnet.

Gold and
Ivory.

There can be little doubt that the trading posts within the forest belt were established to obtain gold and ivory, for accounts of the coast trade at a later date show that the natives were well aware of the value of gold and ivory, these being the two articles of barter they produced in exchange for the merchandise brought by the trading vessels. (Various writers have described this early Coast trade—known as the "Silent trade.") It was only in later years that the European traders accepted "black ivory"—i.e. slaves, in exchange for their merchandise.

History.

The history of the peoples of the Northern Territories cannot be dissociated from that of the peoples of the Upper Niger and indeed of the whole of the Eastern and Western Soudan. For centuries there have been migrations and movements of peoples following along the trade routes and westwards and southwards from the country round the fringe of the desert, so producing the ethnic complex of peoples now to be found throughout the Guinea Coast. It is mainly in the direction of the desert therefore that we must look for the origins of the peoples who formed the kingdoms of the Northern Territories as also the States of the Gold Coast Colony for the influence of the superior cultures coming from the North appear to have penetrated as far as the coast, the Krobos, Shais, Guans, Ewe speaking people, Awunas, etc., all having traditions that their ancestors came from the Niger.]

Early Origins.

From the various data and information supplied by explorers and scholars who have made a close study of the country and peoples round the foot of the desert, one can trace a succession of foreign influxes which at varying times built up a chain of Kingdoms and Empires extending round the fringe of the desert from the East towards Abyssinia and the Nile Valley through Kordofan, Darfur, Wadai, Bornu to the extreme West, as well as colonies of Berber and mixed foreign origin in the once fertile oases of the desert. There are various ways and routes by which Mediterranean cultures could have penetrated to this part of Africa. Writers trace the foundation of the Empires round the foot of the desert as far back as biblical times, and associate the arrival of "white rulers"

A BRIEF REVIEW OF THE HISTORY AND SOCIAL ORGANISATION OF THE PEOPLES OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORIES OF THE GOLD COAST.

The Northern Territories of the Gold Coast comprise an area of approximately 37,000 square miles, with a population according to the 1931 Census Report of 717,275. It is bounded on the north by the French Colony of Haute Volta, this boundary running approximately along the 11th parallel, on the south by Ashanti, on the west by the French Colonies of Haute Volta and the Ivory Coast, and on the east by the late German Colony of Togoland. In addition to this area, this Memorandum deals with that part of Togoland under British Mandate in which part of the Mamprussi, Dagomba and Gonja Kingdoms lie. The whole area consists of the three comparatively large kingdoms of Mamprussi, Dagomba and Gonja, together with a collection of minor kingdoms and "Tengani" areas, the last being the most primitive form of community.

Geographical Position.

In order to arrive at an understanding of the peoples with whom we have here to deal, it is necessary to take into account the various foreign influences which have filtered through and along the fringe of the desert and moulded the lives of the peoples in this part of Africa, as well as bringing in an admixture of foreign blood during the centuries before the arrival of European trading vessels on the Coast. Their history would seem to show that this is not the first time they have been subjected to "white rulers."

External Influences.

A perusal of early writers on Africa shows that along the old trade routes through the Sahara from the East there came merchants and later settlers bringing in their train religions and cultures, which they imposed in part on the negro inhabitants of this part of Africa. There is evidence to show that the Niger countries were known to merchants from the East and from the North of Africa centuries before the Christian era. Gold appears to have been the magnet which attracted merchants across the desert to this remote part of Africa. Again it appears that the human commodity, slaves, and ivory drew merchants from far and near to the heart of negroland. It is recorded that at one time the Soudan was a vast hunting ground for slaves, and writers have stated that the caravan routes through the Sahara were marked by the bones of dead slaves, who were marched across the desert to the Mediterranean coast.

Old Trade Routes through the Desert.

It would seem difficult to understand how early merchants were able to establish these peaceful trade routes through the heart of unknown tribes. There can be little doubt that salt was the open sesame of the trade routes and the medium of exchange or barter which the merchants from the East brought to the primitive peoples.

Taming Influence of Salt.

Nonsense

In this part of Africa with the migration southwards and westwards of Caucasian peoples. The early history of Egypt records the migration of Semitic Colonists through Arabia to the Nile, who, when Egypt was invaded on the North, were driven into the interior of Africa, settling, it is believed, in the Eastern Soudan, round Kordofan, from which direction in later centuries there were migrations westwards to the Niger countries. It is interesting to find that Tamakloe, a native of the Gold Coast, who has written a brief history of the Dagomba people, relates a tradition still existing among the Dagombas that they were descended from the tribe of Ad, the son of Uz, the son of Aram, the son of Shem, son of Noah. [There is a tradition among the Guan people in the Eastern Province of the Gold Coast Colony that their ancestors originally came from the Niger and earlier still from the direction of the Nile.]

Nonsense this is not true

Again, in the once fertile oases of the Sahara dwelt the Tuareg peoples, a Berber tribe (also claiming mixed Semitic descent) who swept across the desert from the North and captured the oases and the salt mines. It would seem that these tribes, attracted by the fertile country round the fringe of the desert, made incursions into the Soudan. These invasions and intermarriage with the negro tribes who later migrated into the Niger countries, contribute to the mixture of races now to be found throughout the Niger countries and the Guinea Coast. It may be that these fusions with the Berber tribes of the desert in later centuries formed the chief connecting link with Mediterranean cultures.

Berber Tribes of the desert connecting link with Mediterranean cultures.

The earliest known Empire in the ^{some} Western Soudan of which traces remain is that of Ghana or Ghatana, which is said to have extended from the Niger bend to the Atlantic. Over this vast Empire, it is recorded, ruled a line of white kings, who may have been of Caucasian origin. Professor Seligman points out that where there is early Caucasian influence in Black Africa the evidence is that this is Hamitic. There are writers who support the view that this powerful kingdom was founded by scattered colonists of Semitic origin who, on being driven out of Egypt, followed along the trade routes of the early Jewish merchants, whose highways of commerce are said to have extended from China to Peru, from India to Africa, centuries before the Christian era. There is no sufficient evidence to establish the existence of routes of commerce on so extensive a scale, but some such interchange though perhaps in a modified degree might account for various anomalies and customs found in West Africa which appear to be of Christian origin, but are more possibly Semitic. On the other hand some apparently Christian beliefs might be traceable to the later influence or intermixture of Berber Tuaregs of the desert, who at one time are said to have been partially Christianised. Other writers aver that this kingdom was founded by peoples again of mixed Semitic origin who had settled in Carthage or other of the Phœnician Colonies along the northern coast of Africa. As there may have been trade routes across the desert in the West from Morocco as well as

Ghana.

Nonsense

A pack of lies composed into a bk

in the East, it would be difficult to establish with certainty by which route these peoples arrived. At any rate there are traces of a vast and powerful Empire—loosely held together no doubt—which has left traces of its religion and culture in the various taboos and observances to which the primitive people adhere in this part of Africa.] The later influences which have been superimposed on the early cults make research complex and difficult. Of the cities of Ghana, Dr. Williams in his book *Hebrewisms in West Africa* quotes from De la Ronciere's book *La Decouverte de l'Afrique au moyen Age* :—

“ There are at the end of the Sahara dead towns whose past was glorious. Through excavations the foundations of one of them have been traced. May we not look for a solution of the mystery of these ruins in stone which are most likely the remains of Ghana, that beautiful town where they had, according to the Geographer Idrisi, sculptures and paintings? Was that town built by the Jews—the masons of the desert—as would seem to be indicated by the likeness of its ruins with those of Tindirna, near the Niger attributed to-day also to the Children of Israel? Was this their capital? There reigned there a certain number of ' white emperors ' before the occupation of the Sahara by Islam.”

The Ghana Kingdom appears to have flourished during the early centuries of the Christian era. According to Barth it was founded about 300 A.D. About the 8th century it was invaded on the eastern side by peoples from the Songhois Empire, another powerful kingdom away to the East towards Bornu. Ghana appears to have been finally broken up by the Mandingo Kings of Melle or Malli, a powerful kingdom to the west of Ghana founded, it is thought, by peoples of Caucasian or Arab origin. These invaders were said to have been mounted on horses—probably introduced from Arabia, the horse not being indigenous to this part of Africa. The later spread of Mohammedanism in the Soudan, which, like the other foreign invasions, would seem to have arrived along the old trade routes through the Sahara, might have been largely responsible for the decline of this great pagan Empire of Ghana, as it was for the break up of the powerful Songhois Empire in the region of Bornu.

There are varying theories regarding the founders of the Songhois Empire. According to Tarik-es-Soudan, a 17th century Arabic manuscript found in Timbuktu, the first King of the Songhois was said to be named Diallyaman—from the Arabic *Dia min al Jemen*, signifying he is come from Jemen or Yemen, which was at one time a Semitic Colony in Arabia. The route by which they would have reached the Soudan opens up a wide field for speculation. It is possible that, driven out of Yemen, they reached the Nile and there formed a Colony, coming under Egyptian influence, and thence were driven out of Egypt at the time of the Persian conquest into the interior of Africa, where they no doubt intermarried with the negro tribes. Owing, however, to the inroads

of the Berber tribes of the desert and consequent fusion and inter-marriage, it would be difficult to distinguish the racial identity of the Songhois peoples. It is to the Songhois Empire that tradition seems to point as the origin of the invaders who formed the Mamprussi and Dagomba Kingdoms in the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast. The Songhois, whatever their origin seem to have been settled to the west of Bornu. Bornu was a vast trading centre for caravans from across the desert, for we read slaves from the markets round Bornu were marched across the desert to Muszek in Fezzan, the great channel for trade through the Sahara, and from thence distributed to the Northern and Eastern Mediterranean Coast to Egypt, Turkey, Arabia and Persia. Bornu flourished as a trading centre till the Songhois (whose kingdom, lying to the west of Bornu, no doubt supplied its markets) probably through pressure from the desert, migrated westwards along the fringe of the Sahara, and founded the important trading centre, Jenné, in what was the Ghana Kingdom, according to Monsieur F. Dubois about the 8th century. It would be difficult to define at any given period the confines of these loosely constituted Empires, "gliding the one into the other like lights on troubled waters". Ghana had not entirely faded out, but the Songhois centre, Jenné, grew in importance till at a later date, about the 11th or 12th century, it is said its merchandise was to be found at every port along the Guinea Coast, as well as in the interior. Some writers maintain that Jenné, variously spelt Genne, Ghinea, gave its name to the Guinea Coast, while others are of the opinion that the name Guinea was derived from Ghana. According to early writers, Jenné appears to have been at the height of its powers during the 12th to the 16th centuries, for about the 12th century Timbuktu, in the neighbourhood of Jenné, and originally a Tuareg settlement, gradually rose to fame as the "port of the Sahara in the Soudan," the great meeting place of the caravan trade and the market where the merchandise from the East was bartered for gold dust, ivory and slaves. The trade from all the countries below the Niger began to converge on Timbuktu. The centre of gravity of trade in the Western Soudan appears to have shifted westwards from Bornu to Jenné and thence to Timbuktu. Owing to its position on the edge of the desert, Timbuktu, "the meeting place of the camel and the canoe," grew in commercial importance. Caravans arriving across the desert would deposit their wares, finding there a ready market for the merchants of Jenné trading on the rivers of West Africa in gold, ivory and slaves. By the 15th century Timbuktu* became a centre of culture as well as trade, a seat of learning as well as a centre of rich merchants from various parts of the then civilised world. It was during the 11th century that Mohammedanism appears to have become

Jenné.

Timbuktu.

*NOTE:—Strategically so important in this part of Africa, Timbuktu had naturally been coveted by neighbouring rulers, and in the 12th or 13th century the city fell under the power of the Mandingo Kings of Melle. Other conquerors followed, and in the 15th century it was recaptured by the Tuareg tribes of the desert, and later in the same century it fell into the hands of the Songhois Kings, when it rose to great splendour and became a centre of Mohammedan culture, the Songhois people having been converted to Islam about the 11th century.

a power in the Western Soudan, having penetrated through the channel of the desert, carried along the trade routes, first largely probably by travelling Arab merchants, and followed by scholars who penetrated the Courts of the pagan Kings.

It is recorded that in 1086 A.D. the King of Bornu embraced Mohammedanism. From the Courts and high places this spectacular religion would gradually filter down into the market places, the rules of the Koran being expounded among the people. Schools were founded, mosques built, and a Mohammedan quarter was established in the towns of the Soudan whose Sheik began to rival in power the pagan Kings. In the 16th century, Timbuktu fell into the hands of the Moors, who no doubt increased the power of Mohammedanism in the Soudan. It would seem that the spread of Mohammedanism accounted for the gradual disintegration of the pagan kingdoms of the Soudan from the 11th century onwards, and the breaking away of those of the pagan rulers who refused to adopt Mohammedanism. Winwood Reade in the *Martyrdom of Man*, unscientific, though his work may be regarded from the modern standpoint, gives an interesting sidelight in the following description:—

“The machinery of the old pagan court might still go on; the negro Chief might receive the magnificent title of Sultan; he might be surrounded by albinos and dwarfs, and big-headed men and buffoons; he might sit in a cage or behind a curtain in a palace with seven gates, and receive the ceremonial visits of his noblemen, who stripped off a garment at each gate, and came into the presence naked, and cowered on the ground, and clapped their hands, and sprinkled their heads with dust, and then turned round and sat with their backs presented in reverence towards him, as if they were unable to bear the sight of his countenance. . . . But the Arab or Moorish Sheik would be in reality the King, deciding all questions of foreign policy, of peace and war, of laws and taxes, and commercial regulations. . . . And when the Mohammedans had become numerous, and a fitting season had arrived, the Sheik would point out a well-known Koran text, and would proclaim war against the surrounding pagan kings, and so the movement which had commenced by the school would continue by the sword.”

It does not seem improbable that the breaking away of tribes under such a displaced pagan ruler may have some bearing on the migration westwards of warrior bands from the region of Bornu. The Mamprussi, Dagomba (and Moshi peoples in the French Haute Volta Colony) claim to have come originally from Zamfara in the Soudan, in the heart of the early Songhois Kingdom on the west of Bornu. This tradition would seem to be founded on fact. It is possible that the leader of the invaders was the descendant of a ruler or member of the ruling family in the country from which he came, and was thus held in awe by his followers, adopting the ceremonies of his former court as soon as he decided to settle and found a new kingdom.

Mohammedanism causes disintegration of pagan Kingdoms.

It is obvious that the various upheavals and movements of peoples in the kingdoms round the fringe of the desert must have profoundly affected the country south of the Niger bend, on which the desert trade largely depended. The inroads of the men of the desert, slave raiding, internecine warfare and even climatic changes resulting in the disappearance of the water supply in and around the desert, would account for a steady pressure from the north and east, and the steady migration of peoples westwards and southwards, while the known break up of kingdoms round the fringe of the desert which I have described would coincide with the more complete invasions of bands of peoples such as are recorded at the formation of the Mamprussi, Dagomba and Moshi Kingdoms. The arrival of warrior bands who formed the Mamprussi, Dagomba and Moshi Kingdoms appears to have been about the end of the 12th and early part of the 13th centuries.

Formation of
Mamprussi and
Dagomba
Kingdoms.

French writers have been endeavouring to establish the origin of the founders of the Moshi Kingdom (who are admittedly of the same parent stock as the ruling classes in the Mamprussi and Dagomba Kingdoms) since their arrival at Wagadugu at the end of the 19th century. Monsieur Tauxier has published four books on the peoples of the Haute Volta Colony, in three of which he deals with the Moshi. In his work *Nouvelles Notes sur les Mossi et le Gourounsi*, published in 1924, he analyses the works of the following authors on the subject: Monsieur Binger, Dr. Ruelle, Monsieur de la Fosse, Lieut. Marc, Monsieur Moulin, Monsieur Labouret and Houdas' translation of Tarikh-el-Fettach and Tarikh-es-Soudan, as well as Mr. Cardinall's *Natives of the Northern Territories* and throws much light on the movements of these peoples, without, however, being able to establish with certainty their place of origin before their arrival at Gambaga or Nalerigu in what is now the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast. From Tamakloe's short history of the Dagombas, we gather that there is a tradition still surviving among the inhabitants of the arrival of peoples from the East prior to the advent of those who formed the existing Dagomba Kingdom. Although too much reliance cannot be placed on the Hausa manuscripts, written as they were in recent years, concerning events in the early history of the tribes in and around the Niger bend, Withers Gill's translation of a Hausa MS., "A Short History of the Dagomba Tribe," bears Tamakloe, for it relates, "The Dagombas are of Zamfara origin. They came originally, as they will tell you to-day, from Gambaga. The Konkombas, who are also of Zamfara origin, settled before them." It is probable that the arrival of these earlier strangers might be associated with the known westward migration of peoples from the Sudan, away to the east of the Niger bend, west of Bornu, the early centre of the Songhois Empire.

I interested myself at one time in collecting bits of broken pots of different moulds in certain parts of the Northern Territories to identify the previous inhabitants. At Karni I was informed by old

Indications
Migrations
from the
Soudan. of

men that pots of a particular mould, fragments of which I had collected in their village (from old middens), and identified in neighbouring villages over a wide area, were left by the Janni people, who, I found, lived in what is now the Lawra District in the 17th century, and that they were driven out of Lawra by invaders from Daboy to the south-east. Is it not possible that these were Jenné or Janni people from the important Songhois town, Jenné? These people now live near Djibigu in the French Haute Volta Colony, and are referred to by Migeod and De la Fosse in their "Table of vocabularies" as Dyan (Djan or Jan) people, just as Jenné appears on some maps as Dienne.

Iron
Smelting

The existence to-day of ancient slag heaps to be found in the north-west of the Northern Territories, particularly in that area previously occupied by the Janni and Senussi people, showing that the inhabitants in former centuries practised iron smelting, as also varied methods of constructing houses with iron slag and mud bricks as well as ordinary puddled swish, iron implements of husbandry side by side with the survival of more rudimentary stone implements, the manufacture of black soap, etc., would seem to be indications of the impress of superior cultures. The Berbers practised these arts.

Wood
Carvings.

I also made a collection of wood carvings, among which were some interesting carvings of heads from the town of Gao or Gaoua in the Lobi country, about fifty miles from Lawra, in the French Haute Volta Colony, which show unmistakable signs of Egyptian art. This art and style of carving is confined to particular families and has been handed down through generations. It is significant also that the men in the Lobi country around Gao have an Egyptian style of head-dress. There is on old maps a town of Gao on the Niger, east of Jenné in the Songhois country, which is said to have been at one time the capital of the Songhois Empire. It is interesting to find that Dubois and other writers trace the founders of this Gao on the Niger to the Upper Nile, and relate that on the route from the Nile to the Niger there appear to have been two or more towns of Gao, variously spelt Koukaoua, Kouka, founded by the emigrants from the Nile, which would seem to mark successive steps at which the migrants settled on their way from Nile to Niger. Near the city of Gao on the Niger there is a local tradition of the arrival of an Egyptian Pharaoh in these parts, which Dubois considers refers to the arrival of Dialliaman, the leader of the Songhois emigration. The existence of traces of Egyptian art which I have mentioned in the Lobi town of Gao would seem to support the theory of a further migration from Gao on the Niger to the present habitat in the Lobi country near Lawra.

At a village called Boiele in the Lawra-Tumu District in the north-west of the Northern Territories, I came across people who call themselves Ghana people, and it may be that their ancestors came originally from the town of Ghana in the Ghana Empire. Close to Boiele is a village called Yagha, and I find there was a State of the same name in the Songhois Empire. In the Sawbella division

of the Lawra-Tumu District the people call themselves Debi people, and one of their villages is called Boti. On Barth's map we find a State of Debi in the Soudan near Zamfara, with Boti as one of its principal towns. These instances would seem to point to something more than coincidence, for what is more likely than that in the migration of a people they call themselves or their villages by their former place of origin?

Moreover, we find in the Lawra-Tumu District Kasena people side by side with the Debi people. Kasena was at one time an important State within the Songhois Empire lying to the west of Bornu. In Dr. Rennell's map of the interior of Africa contained in the Appendix to *Park's Travels*, we find Kasena on the west of Zamfara, and to the west of that again the town of Jenné. I made at one time a collection of native baskets. Those made by the Kasena people are pyramid-shaped, and on them are worked an elaborate pyramid design in coloured grasses. This might also lend support to the contention that the Kasenas came from the Songhois Empire, and earlier still came under Egyptian influence. Again we find in the Lawra-Tumu District people who call themselves Issala. Dr. Barth's map gives Insala or Issala as a well or Tuareg settlement in the desert north of Kasena on the trade route to Bornu. Owing to the intensive slave raiding which preceded the arrival of the European in the North, most of the males of these peoples have been exterminated and their traditions lost. It is, however, of interest that some of the Issala people designate themselves Larba or Lakharba Issalas. In *Barth's Travels* we find a reference to Larba or Laraba peoples within what was the Songhois Empire, whom he came across on the south-west of the Niger, near Say (which is north-west of Yagha), and who, Barth writes, were strong opponents of Mohammedanism. Might it not be possible, therefore, to trace in the wandering of this people from Issala in the desert, south to Larba in the Songhois Kingdom, and, centuries later perhaps, westwards, the trend of the migration of the invaders of the N.T.s from the Songhois Kingdom. If their name is to be accepted as an indication of their origin, the Issalas would originally be of Berber or Tuareg origin. It is interesting to note that tribes of the Tuareg or Berber people of the desert were known as Imoshagh, and it may be that Moshi is a corruption of this name. The Romans referred to the Berbers or Imoshagh people as Mauri, and the Moshi to-day call their language Mole.

Dr. Barth in his "Chronological Table of the History of Songhay" states that in 1329 "the town of Timbuktu ransacked and destroyed by fire and sword by the king of Mosi, the garrison of Melle making their escape, and [?] up the town. The power of Mosi, which up to this time has always been the successful champion of paganism, is very remarkable at such an early period." The Tuareg or Imoshagh peoples were also upholders of paganism and opponents of Mohammedanism. Monsieur Tauxier, who has spent many years in the Haute Volta Colony, after much research, has fixed the commencement

Kasena

Sissala

Start
 of the reign of the first King or Paramount Chief of the Moshi in the Haute Volta—Nedegu of Dagomba—at 1233. This being the case, we may take it that the Mamprussi, Dagomba and Moshi Kingdoms were in process of formation about the end of the 12th and early part of the 13th century. || This would coincide with the Mohammedan invasion which swept through the Soudan, causing the disruption of many of the pagan States, and driving those who resisted Mohammedanism westwards and southwards out of Zamfara, Laraba, Kasena and Debi country, where the Mohammedans later established their Hausa kingdoms. The spread of Mohammedanism might thus have been a prime cause of the migration of the peoples we now find in the Guinea Coast. It would seem that the peoples below the Niger bend have formed a bulwark against the formation of Mohammedan States, south of the Niger bend in what is now the Haute Volta Colony, the Gold Coast and Togoland (as well as the Ivory Coast), the main sphere of Mohammedanism being confined to the country round Bornu, and extending along the Western Soudan. The Kasena and Laraba Issala peoples, according to the tradition in those parts, are among the oldest settlers in the north of the Northern Territories. This fact would support the contention that they were driven out of the pagan States of the Soudan by the early Mohammedan invasion.

Owing to the absence of written records, and the various upheavals causing movements of peoples, so that the people who now inhabit the Northern Territories are for the most part only the remnants of the descendants in some cases of refugees, in others of the fusion between the males of conquering tribes and the females of the conquered (the males of the original tribes having been exterminated or disposed of as slaves by their conquerors), one can make no definite statement as to how these peoples arrived in the Northern Territories, but history and tradition together with such evidences as still survive seem to support the theory that they came from the direction I have indicated.

Drum History
 The interesting drum history of the Dagombas contains the tradition that they came from the East. I am well aware that the exploits of individual warriors or leaders as given by the drummer are in many cases probably the repetition of some well worn saga such as that of the "red hunter," the legendary "Ulysses" of these people. It may be, however, that the original saga of the Red Hunter which the drummer is repeating, adding to it events in recent history, contains a modicum of historical fact. I therefore put forward the theory that the idea of the Red Hunter may have originated from the invasion of the Empires round the fringe of the desert by migrants or Berber men of the desert who, as we know were light or "red" in colour, and that the peoples from these Empires who invaded the Northern Territories brought with them as part of the history of their race the story of the conquering Red Hunter—red because these invaders of the Soudanese Kingdoms were light or red in colour, and hunter because the leader and his followers would have of necessity to live by hunting in the uninhabited country through which they

passed. It is possible therefore that the Red Hunter story originated from earlier episodes far back in the history of the peoples who set out from Zamfara, probably centuries before they reached and invaded the Northern Territories. Furthermore, among the negro peoples round the desert the name "Red Hunter" would have become almost synonymous with conqueror.

The various authorities seem to be in agreement that the ruling classes in the Mamprussi, Dagomba and Moshi Kingdoms came of a parent stock. Gambaga, or Nalerigu in the neighbourhood of Gambaga, appears to have been the central point at which the leader of the invaders came to rest, and from which the invaders radiated in their expedition to subdue the people and establish themselves as their rulers. Around Gambaga was formed the Mamprussi Kingdom, with the leader of the invaders as its Paramount Chief, while one branch went south and formed the Dagomba Kingdom and another north to form the Moshi Kingdom. Strength is lent to this assumption by the fact that the Moshi and Dagomba Paramount Chiefs appear to have continued some sort of allegiance to the Paramount Chief of Mamprussi, and to have looked upon Gambaga or Nalerigu, the residence of the Paramount Chief, as their spiritual home. It is related that it was customary (at any rate until the advent of the European) on the death of a Paramount Chief of the Moshi and the installation of a new Paramount Chief, to send a messenger to the Na of Mamprussi, a present from the new Na of Moshi accompanying the messenger. In addition, it is recorded that the Na of Moshi sent annually a white horse to the Na of Mamprussi. It is probable that a similar custom existed in the case of the Dagomba.

There is a big gap in the recorded history of the Northern Territories, and one has to rely largely on surmise in deducing from the fragmentary data in existence the events of importance that took place between the founding of the Mamprussi and Dagomba Kingdoms and the founding of the Gonja Kingdom at a much later date, about the 17th century. It is not to be supposed, however, that the inhabitants led a peaceful and uninterrupted existence during all that period of time. My researches lead me to believe that there have been constant movements of people as a result of slave raiding, internecine warfare, etc., whole sections of a tribe or family breaking away and migrating to new territory. According to the present Yabumwura, Paramount Chief of the Gonja Kingdom, prior to the arrival of his ancestor Jakpa and his followers who formed the Gonja Kingdom, the Dagombas waged a mighty war on the Vagellas, who inhabited the country to the south-west of the Northern Territories. Following on this war (towards the end of the 17th century) Jakpa and his people, who came from the west, possibly Kong,* in the old Melle or Malli Empire—Jakpa being a Mandingo—completely overran the southern belt of the Northern Territories, driving the Dagombas from many of their strongholds and forming the Gonja Kingdom.

*NOTE:—The name Gonja may be a corruption of Gonjawa or Konjawa meaning men of Kong, just as Dagombawa is used to designate men of Dagomba and Manfursawa—men of Mamprussi. The name Gonja was used as far back as the 18th century, for in the Appendix to Park's Travels published in 1791 this Kingdom is referred to as the Gonja Kingdom.

The Dane Gun.

It seems probable that the Gonja invasion marks the arrival of the Dane gun as a means of terrorising and subduing the people, and that it was by this means that the Gonjas were able to drive the Dagombas before them. The Gonjas, coming from the Melle Kingdom on the west, would possibly have obtained the Dane gun from the trading posts in the Gambia. On the other hand, the Mandingos were a warlike people, and it is difficult to establish with certainty their means of conquest. At any rate, whether or not it was introduced by the Gonjas, the arrival of the Dane gun from the coast about this time (the latter part of the 17th century) seems to coincide with the rise to power of the Ashanti, whose levies by means of this weapon were able to terrorise the inhabitants of the Northern Territories and carry off numbers of slaves. The Dane guns supplied by the Ashantis caused a tremendous upheaval in the Northern Territories. Daboya, an important centre on account of the salt-flats, became the centre from which the Ashanti levies radiated in search of slaves. About this time a tremendous invasion of the north-west of the Northern Territories took place. Bands of marauders armed with Dane guns, consisting of Dagombas (as the result of a dispute over the Na-ship, a band of disaffected Dagombas had moved from the Dagomba Kingdom, under their leader Dozio, and arrived in Daboya), Tampoulimas, and possibly Gonjas, set out from Daboya and overran the whole of the north-west of the Northern Territories, driving the Lobis and Dagatis from around Wa and the Janni people from what is now the Lawra District. This invasion affected the whole of the country as far to the north-west as Djibigu and Boromo in what is now the French Haute Volta Colony, and resulted in the formation of the Wa Kingdom by the Yelia family, which appears to be a Tampoulima family, and other minor kingdoms in the Lawra District. It is for this reason that we find people of Gonja, Dagomba and Tampoulima origin in the Lawra and neighbouring districts. A description given me by an old man at Hiel, and confirmed by the Chief of the Zini Kingdom (both descendants of Dagombas who took part in this raid) of the manner in which most of the wars and raids for slaves were executed, affords evidence of how Dane guns were employed. These could only have been supplied from the Coast, probably by the Ashantis, for it would be about the 16th and 17th centuries that the slave trade with the Coast began to flourish. The process of forming a kingdom seems to have been for the marauding bands, on arriving in a village, to loose off Dane guns which terrorised the inhabitants, drive off their cattle, seize the women, massacring many of the males or disposing of them as slaves. Having collected everything they wanted, the leader then allocated different sections of the conquered territory to his sons or principal "captains" to rule. It was in this way that the minor Kingdoms of Wa, Wallebele, Kong, Du, Dolbizan, Sawbella, Kwapun, Lambussie, Zini and Mankurri, to mention a few, were formed.

Invasion of the north-west of the Northern Territories.

While stationed in the Lawra-Tumu District, I discussed the history of the Moshi with neighbouring French Commissioners, who asserted that at some time or other the Moshis invaded the north-west of the Northern Territories. Monsieur Tauxier supports this view.

It may be on account of the upheavals that took place in the 17th century, together with the disruptive effects of the intensive slave raiding that has taken place since then that I was unable to come across any tangible proof of this invasion other than to find that the Mmorla family at Kaleo in the Wa District, who now call themselves Dagatis, allege that their ancestors came from Wagadugu, the capital of the Moshi Kingdom, and that the ruling class in the villages of Kwalo and Kwala in the Tumu District have a tradition that their ancestors were Moshis. Although I was not able to establish their origin as Moshi, I am inclined to the opinion that the ancestors of the Dagati peoples who call themselves Na-Iri (meaning House of the Father) in all probability formed part of the band of Moshis who, according to tradition surviving in the Haute Volta Colony, invaded the north-west of the Northern Territories. Further research may establish that the people who call themselves variously Dagati, Dagawa, Dagaba, Dagari, may be the offspring of the Moshi invaders and the local inhabitants, for theirs is a patrilineal organisation.

It is possible that this Moshi invasion was the cause of the Moshis moving themselves from their habitat near the 11th parallel in the north-west of the Northern Territories to the country on the borders of Ashanti and the Northern Territories in the south-west. Strength is lent to this surmise by the fact that at one time the ancestors of the Moshis who now live at Kwala lived at Pra (which site is to-day called Bangwon) within the Jafien Tengani in the north-west corner of the Northern Territories. I have established that the Moshis at one time lived within this Tengani.

To discuss the various events, migrations, internicine warfare, and slave raiding which have formed the history of the Northern Territories in the last few centuries would necessitate going into wearisome details, names and even histories of individual families, and the exploits of leaders of marauding bands. To this day the name of Abosso Prempeh, which would appear to be an Akan name, is mentioned in awe by the descendants of those he terrorised. Again there are tales of the exploits of one, Serikin Savulugu, in the Dagomba Kingdom, who found his way as far as the north-west of the Lawra District in search of slaves, and was eventually killed at Batiasan. There was the invasion by Zaberimas, with whom were allied certain Dagombas from Saraga, who had laid waste a vast territory round Sati in the Haute Volta Colony, and levied a large tribute in slaves from the peoples in the neighbouring country, including the north-west and centre of the Northern Territories. The exploits of the Mandingo raider, Samory and his followers were only put an end to by the arrival of the European at the end of the 19th century, which probably arrested the formation of a kingdom under his rule, as well as the formation of a kingdom by the Zaberimas.

Moshi Invasion
of the north-
west of the
Northern
Territories.

In studying the distribution of peoples in the Northern Territories, one comes across many instances to show how tribes and even families have been divided, one section being found in one part of the Northern Territories and another in another, e.g. one finds Dagombas who formerly lived at Yendi and are now in the north-west of the Northern Territories, and people who claim to be Dagombas from Wungu in the Mamprussi Kingdom, a town near Gambaga, who are now the ruling class at Nabolo in the Tumu District. One finds in this way branches of the same family speaking different languages. Only by collecting the histories of individual families in the villages throughout the Northern Territories would it be possible to trace the different relationships that are in existence. Again one finds one branch of a family following matrilineal and another patrilineal descent.

A Conglomeration of Races.

After the various invasions and movements of peoples, it will be evident that the countries below the Niger were a conglomerate of races, religions and cultures, the later superimposed on the earlier chief of them being Berber, Semitic, Arab, Egyptian, so that we are not dealing with a homogeneous race of negroes in any part of the Gold Coast. Traders had penetrated down the rivers into remote parts of the country, and the breakup of Empires round the fringe of the desert led to various migrations of peoples into the interior of the Gold Coast. As I have mentioned, the peoples in the Northern Territories to-day are for the greater part the result of fusion between the males of conquering or refugee tribes and the females of the indigenous peoples. As there have been several waves of migration and of slave raiders, it would be difficult to establish the racial identity of the bulk of the present inhabitants, the mixture of dialects and type in a single village in the Northern Territories being evidence of the fusion that has taken place. This admixture of races is not confined to the Northern Territories. As I have already mentioned, the Guan, Krobos, Addahs, Awunas, Shais and other peoples in the Gold Coast Colony and Togoland have a tradition of their ancestors having come from the Niger. The same pressure which drove people from the Soudanese Kingdoms into the Northern Territories would undoubtedly account for the migration of Guan peoples from the east of the Northern Territories into the Colony, and of the Akan stock from the country on the south-west of the Northern Territories into the forest region. The Akans claim to have come from Tekyiman, and it is possible that they came originally from the Mandingo Kingdom of Melli. There seems to be a differentiation between the Akan peoples and the peoples who formed the ruling classes of the Northern Territories, and it may be that the Ashantis trace their prowess in war to the warlike Mandingos of Melli, the founders of which are said to have been of Caucasian or Arab origin. If we take it that the Mamprussis and Dagombas had a greater admixture of Berber, this would in part account for the differentiation between them and the Akan peoples, the Berber being an agricultural people while the Arabs were nomadic, living by raids

in the peaceful neighbouring people when their resources failed. The history of the Akans in the last few hundred years shows their propensities to be more warlike than agricultural, whereas the Mamprussis and Dagombas in the Northern Territories are definitely an agricultural people.

The presence of gold in Ashanti might account for the superior development and culture of the forest region in the 17th century. The intensive slave raiding carried on by the powerful Ashantis to supply the trade with the Coast is a factor that helps to account for the continuous depopulation of the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast, which show unmistakable signs of having at one time been densely populated.

Such in review are the recorded events and influences which have left their imprint on the peoples, such are the fragments of peoples and races, like the fragments of a kaleidoscope, that go to form the mosaic of peoples with which we are faced. Through the channel of the desert came cultures as well as merchandise, religions and cults which have left their impress on the primitive peoples and survive in the various "taboos" and observances with which their lives are surrounded (like the religious observances and ceremonial of the ancient Hebrews). Gold and ivory were the products in which the merchants from the East were in search, and it has been shown that a vast trade in slaves must have passed through the channel of the desert centuries before European trading vessels reached the Coast from the Atlantic. There does not appear to be any certainty as to the extent of the sea trade carried on by the Carthaginian or Phœnician sailors who are recorded to have sailed round the West Coast.

Religion and Social Organisation.

The effect of the various occupations is everywhere obvious, in the facial characteristics of the people, many of them showing little or no trace of negro features, as well as in their customs. The wave of Mohammedanism which swept along the Soudan did not change the beliefs of the inhabitants of the Northern Territories, for we find a common religion of the soil emerging. Whatever institutions or innovations came from the outside, certain it is that they were built upon the foundation of the agrarian life of the peoples, who would probably readily adopt observances and ceremonies for approaching the Deity who controlled the forces of Nature of which they stood in awe, and on which their livelihood depended. Thus we find throughout the Northern Territories, and for that matter the greater part of the French Haute Volta Colony, one common religion emerging after the many vicissitudes, namely the belief in the "Earth God," the giver of all gifts, and the ancestral spirits, which beliefs I shall describe in more detail in a later paragraph. The peoples believe in a Supreme Being, called in Dagati "Weni," who is very far removed from and beyond their daily concerns. The Earth God is the nearest

The Supreme
Being.

Mwini

approach in their minds to the Great Creator. Side by side with these beliefs we find a widespread fetish worship or animism, which is allied to the Nature Worship of primitive peoples. Just as they believe that a tree is inhabited by a living spirit, it is not difficult for them to believe that a piece of wood or inanimate object can become the abode of a spirit, and that such an object has the power to avert evil. Fear of the unknown and the consequent need for a specific against all ills has enabled the belief in the amulet and fetish to gain a hold over them. The kindred groups or clans also have their totem animals.

Handwritten: Magic.

Apart from the everyday religion of the people—the common medium through which they sought supernatural aid in their everyday concerns—there is a widespread belief in magic or the occult. This “magic” which we find terrifying the peoples of the Northern Territories, may have been in the first instance simply a means adopted by strangers of gaining power over the credulous and less developed peoples. Whether or not we admit the power of “black magic” or of evil intent being potent to work harm to those who fear and believe in its power, there exists everywhere in the Northern Territories this gigantic bugbear of fear of unseen occult forces, a fear which is as real a force among the primitive peoples as was the dread of the slave raiders who for centuries disturbed the peace of these parts. Just as a child through fear of the unknown is assailed by all the bogeys of darkness—a movement of the wind becomes an approaching monster, the tapping of a twig on the window-pane, the knocking of an unseen hand—as it emerges from the nursery gradually gains confidence and sheds its fears till the darkness no longer holds any terrors, so, no doubt, with the advancement of knowledge, the power of magic will gradually lose its hold. At present it is an impelling but intangible force among the peoples. The religion of the soil, however, which had everything to do with the daily life and needs of the people, was universally adopted by the bands of warriors who imposed themselves on the country. They accepted the god of the people—the Earth God, as their own. It may be that it was the religion also of the original inhabitants of the Soudanese kingdoms from which they migrated.

Handwritten: Religious sanctions of the Community.

The peoples we are dealing with live in small communities, and their whole life was encircled with religious sanctions and taboos, the breaking of some of which, it was considered, imperilled the fortunes of the community at large. Offences were in connection with the breaking of laws concerning man in his relation to woman, woman in relation to childbirth and the upbringing of children, farming, fishing, hunting, picking of fruit, planting or use of certain trees, burning of grass and the non-observance of superstitious or religious rites. The laws which governed, and for that matter still govern the lives of the people, were compiled from what they believed to be the dictates of the ancestral spirits. These laws or customs accorded in some cases with the laws of Nature and the conditions of the locality in which

they lived. We must remember that the success of their crops was a matter of vital importance. If the crop failed, there were no other resources, and famine would result, so that they lived in constant dependence on the beneficent Earth God and in the fear of some offended spirit intervening to bring disaster to their crops. Therefore, they had to be careful to propitiate the ancestral spirits. We can understand that planting a crop at the wrong season would bring no harvest. To us this would simply be the consequence of neglect of a scientific law of Nature. To them it was the offending of some spirit or the breaking of a time-honoured custom of the community dictated by the spirits. If you sow at the wrong time, the spirits will punish you, was their idea. Again, they lived in constant fear of raiders and invaders. For centuries the hand that sowed had no certainty of reaping, so that they felt the need to call upon the ancestral spirits to help them at every step. Before planting the spirits were consulted to ascertain when the time was propitious, and a member of the community would have committed an offence if he planted a certain crop before the wishes of the spirits were promulgated. In the minds of the community this offence was looked upon as a ground for the spirits to become annoyed, and in order to stave off any possible vengeance such an affront to the spirits might bring in its train, it was in some cases necessary for a sacrifice to be made to the ancestral spirits. Fear of the unknown consequences precluded the inhabitants of a community from in any way departing from custom or changing their mode of life and the rites to be performed, the method of preparing food, the manner of planting crops, etc. The reply "We cannot do so and so, our ancestors never taught us" is invariably met with when an innovation is suggested. Undoubtedly, as a result of outside influences, changes in their mode of life have taken place. This is probably due to strangers coming to reside in a community who have learnt the art from their ancestors of better methods of cultivation, housing, or preparation of food, etc., and after long residence the people among whom they settled, finding no evil consequences occurred, decided that the novel procedure did not annoy their own ancestral spirits.

Just as in the rural districts of England, Scotland and Ireland, the land in the Northern Territories is mapped out into a network of well-defined, specified areas. Each area has its own particular name, and is the abode or domain of the God of the Earth or Earth God.* In the Dagani language the name given to the Earth God is "Tengani." It would seem that the boundaries of these areas have not changed for many centuries, many of them having names which bear no relation to the present inhabitants; further, what is now uninhabited "bush" country is still divided into areas, the names of which are well known to the present inhabitants of the neighbouring districts. It is probable that there is little, if any, of the habitable land in the Northern Territories

Division of
land into
Tengani areas.

*I shall endeavour to explain in a later paragraph how these areas were formed.

that has not been cultivated at some time or other. It is as a result of the incessant slave raiding and internecine warfare that we now find sparsely populated areas and expanses of uninhabited bush country.

Earth God
and Ancestral
Spirits.

In addition to the Earth God or "Mother Earth," the giver of the sustenance of life, each area is believed to be inhabited by the ancestral spirits, not only of the present inhabitants but also those of the autochthonous peoples who lived within each respective area. The priest or principal mediator between the people and the Earth God, Tengani, is called the Tengansobe. (Tiertina, Tigatu, Tengadana, Tendana, Kasawulewura and Dugutigi are names given to the Tengansobe in other languages.) The Tengansobe, who lived the life of a recluse in communion with the Earth God and ancestral spirits, is believed to be possessed of supernatural powers and acts as the mediator between the people and the Earth God and ancestral spirits of his particular area. For this reason the Tengansobe was regarded as having spiritual control over the lives of the people residing within a Tengani area. It is the universal belief of the inhabitants of the Northern Territories that unless the dictates of the Earth God conveyed through the ancestral spirits are obeyed, the fruits of their toil will not be bountiful. Shortage of rain, failure of crops, pestilence and such like disasters are all looked upon as the result of the failure of some member or members of the community to observe the proper customary rites dictated by the Earth God through the ancestral spirits. The Tengansobe is believed to be able to propitiate the Earth God and avert the wrath of the ancestral spirits on such occasions.

self
function
✓

Probable
origin of the
Tengansobe.

The office of Tengansobe points to the need among primitive people of someone to mediate between them and the power controlling the forces of nature upon which their daily life depended. The character of the Tengansobe precludes one from concluding that he held his power on account of the fear in which he was held by the people. Were this the case, the Tengansobe would have used his powers to intimidate the people and so become a petty tyrant. Originally, probably the Tengansobe was nothing more than the elder of the original family or kinship group who settled in a locality, and who, because of his wisdom and experience was best equipped to ascertain the will of the local deity. Only when a family increased so as to become a small community would he become the adviser of all the elders and wise men, and so come to occupy the office of priest or Tengansobe. This office was hereditary, and the spirits of his predecessors in office were his advisers. My enquiries have conclusively proved to my satisfaction that the Tengansobe took nothing from his people, nor did he expect them to give him anything. His requirements other than the sustenance of life were nil. His was a purely spiritual office. He was not a ruler but a priest, a mediator between the people and their god. When any calamity came upon the people in the shape of pestilence, lack of rain, locusts and such like, he, by virtue of his superior knowledge and that of his predecessors, was regarded as being able to mediate between the people and their

god and to make the necessary sacrifices to propitiate the Deity. Any offence or happening that required the Tengansobe's intervention necessitated a meeting of all the Elders with the Tengansobe at the Tengani (Earth God) shrine to ascertain what sacrifice should be made to appease the offended spirit or spirits, cleanse the polluted earth and avert disaster to the community. The meat of the sacrifice required was distributed among the Elders, a small portion, usually the head, going to the Tengansobe. Where cowries were included in the sacrifice, these were buried in the earth, and were only taken from the earth again in the presence of the Elders when some calamity happened and a public sacrifice had to be made, to obtain the necessary cow, sheep or goat which the spirits had called for to be sacrificed.

The whole social and religious life of the people is built up on the structure of the family. The family or kinship group is a miniature community. The peoples live in "compounds" of varying sizes containing varying numbers. In some parts of the Northern Territories a family compound will contain as many as 200 or more people. Originally, a family would form the nucleus; as the children grow up and marry, additional huts are built in the compound to accommodate them and their children, and so a compound grows in size and complexity. When it becomes too large, in some cases the branches form new compounds. The methods of housing, and the construction of compounds vary considerably in different parts of the Northern Territories. In some parts the branches of the kinship group live in small compounds of their own, each with its own head, while in others the kinship group is housed, as explained above, in one vast compound, but in every case the authority of the head of a family or branch of a kinship group is recognised. When the head of a family dies he is buried in a place of honour, frequently inside the family compound, while the less important members are buried outside. A mound of swish or beaten clay is placed over the grave of the head of a family, and his successors are also buried in or beside this grave. The ancestral spirits to whom sacrifices are made, are the important elders of a family, who thus continue to rule the lives of their descendants in the area in which they lived. The Tengansobe or head of the kinship group, as he reached old age, would probably before his death instruct his successor in how to perform the necessary rites to approach the Earth God, and so the knowledge would be handed down. If after his death some new circumstance, e.g. drought or famine, arose about which the successor had not been instructed, he would then go and consult the spirits of his predecessors as to what the community had done wrong or failed to do, and obtain the necessary guidance. ~~These~~ people have various methods of approaching the spirits of the dead. On his death he too would pass to the world of spirits. In this way the ancestral spirits, which play so important a part in the lives of the people, would accumulate, as also the knowledge they possessed, and so they became the advisers of the community.

Family
Compounds.

Ancestral
Spirits.

Throughout the Northern Territories the peoples believe in an after life to which the spirit passes on leaving the tenement of the body. Their conception of death is totally different to ours—a man is killed while hunting not as the result of his own or someone else's carelessness, but as the result of some spirit intervening. Illness is attributed to an annoyed spirit "catching" a man. If he is unable to appease the wrath of the spirit which is inflicting the illness, he does not survive. Sudden death (such as death from heart failure) necessitates a meeting of the elders to decide whether the happening is due to the will of a spirit or the magical spell of a witch. No one dies in their minds from what we term "natural causes." (It is probably on account of their conception of illness and death that their belief in witchcraft is so deep-seated.) A man does not "die"—he merely passes into another existence from one or other of the causes mentioned. In their minds the hereafter is not far removed from the life here, and the ancestral spirits are closely in touch with all that is happening in the community where they lived. Thus the family life extends even into the next world. When the head of a family wishes to consult one of the ancestral spirits, he will in some cases take an offering of food or water to the grave of the ancestor. In the other world the ancestors are believed still to require food, but it is the immaterial essence not the material substance of the food which the spirit is supposed to come and partake of. Sometimes a calamity to the family is traced to the neglect of some ancestral spirit who is thus reminding the living of his presence, and a sacrifice of a fowl or animal is duly made. It will be seen therefore that a family will cling to its place of origin, the locality inhabited by the ancestral spirits. This belief in the spirit world accounts for the fact that it is always the desire of the people in the Northern Territories that a corpse is buried among the deceased's own people. If at all possible, a sick man will struggle home. Should he die away from his home, his relations will carry the corpse to his ancestral home. When he has to be buried away from his home, his relations will when possible bring earth from his grave to his home.

In addition to the grave of the ancestors, each household or branch of a family has its family shrine, which contains the tutelary genius of the household, and is believed to be able to avert evil and protect the family from incurring the wrath of the ancestral spirits. This shrine consists of a branch of a tree stuck in the ground having three prongs—a tripod—which support a pot containing earth and water, and is something in the nature of the household god or hearth deities of the old Roman household, which might indicate that both had a common origin. The shrine in the Northern Territories is in some cases inside the house, and in some cases at the entrance. The Roman family shrine was transferred from the atrium or entrance hall to the hearth. Among the Romans this was originally the shrine of the cultivated fields, worshipped at the boundary of the farm or family allotment. In the Northern Territories when the head of a branch of a family makes his farm, he goes round the fields and smears some water and

earth taken from the shrine on to stones at the corners or boundary of the farm. This is intended to ward off evil spirits and protect the crops.

Should a member of the family take some corn from the farm before the day appointed for gathering, then trouble is to be feared. Should none of the members of the household confess to the offence, then the procedure is for the elder, at dead of night when all the household is quiet, to go and consult the spirit of the shrine, whereupon the culprit, knowing what is taking place, in fear and trembling for the consequences and probable wrath of the ancestral spirits, confesses his guilt. He is then taken to the family shrine, where the elder performs the necessary rite and sacrifice to free or "shrieve" the culprit from his guilt, and thus prevent any harm befalling the family. Again too, in the case of a wife having had a liaison with a man other than her husband, it would be at this shrine she would be "shrieved." Among some tribes a woman will confess at this shrine before childbirth any liaisons she may have had with other men. This was also done with a view to averting the impending wrath of the ancestral spirits that might be cast upon the family. In the same way, when sickness befell a member of the household, the sick member would be taken to the family shrine and a similar rite would be performed by the head of the household. If, however, some further evil befell the household or a member of it, it would be considered that the matter was too serious and the spirit of the shrine would not avert the wrath of the ancestral spirits. The head of the household would then go to the head of his branch of the family and relate what had happened. Whereupon the head of the branch would go to the grave of the ancestors to consult them and offer the necessary sacrifices. If ill-fortune continued, the head of the branch would consult the head of the family, who, if necessary would in his turn consult the Tengansobe, who advises what spirit has been offended and the necessary sacrifice is made accordingly. Thus, in some cases, to an apparently trifling offence some ill-fortune will be attributed, causing such reverberations and disturbance among the ancestral spirits as are calculated to deter individuals from in any way departing from the rules of the community. Such were the superstitions and fears which ruled the lives of the peoples, and held them in an iron grip from birth to death. Thus the head of the family in the wide sense was the ruler, priest and father confessor of the family and custodian of the ancestral spirits. The family shrine is the symbol which binds a family together. It represents the god of the hearth or home. Should a family grow in size so that it became necessary to split up, the head of the group that moved would obtain from the elder of the compound from which he was moving some of the earth and water from the family shrine, and with this institute a shrine at the new abode. In the same way, should a family be driven from their home or habitat, they take with them some of the earth from the family shrine to their new abode. Thus no conquerors were able to break up the attachments of the family.

Shrieving
the Culprit

Demarcation
of Tengani
areas.

When a family or group increased in numbers, the land required for cultivation would be extended. Probably, they would extend and expand till they reached the boundaries of some other group or tribe, who had their own conception of how to propitiate the Earth God so that there came to be what might appear to be an Earth God in each inhabited area. The conception of the Earth God was common to all, but each group had its own method of propitiating the Earth God and their own ancestral spirits. In this way, it may be, areas came to be demarcated into that of the Earth God and ancestral spirits of the particular group who first lived within the area.

Formation
of
villages or
Sections.

The Tengani areas are in most cases subdivided into what we call in some instances sections and others villages, according to the density of the population. The following seems to be the way in which these subdivisions were formed. In the process of time families would grow to such an extent that the land they farmed near their habitation was insufficient for their wants. This necessitated the farming of land at some distance, with the ultimate result that a family or families would split up and form a habitation on their distant farms; or again, a hunter or refugee would be given succour, and in course of time be joined by his family in the broad sense of the word. To them the Tengansobe would assign land on which to farm. The Tengansobe would in due course delegate his power of propitiating the Earth God and ancestral spirits to one of the members (usually the elder of the family who first farmed in the new area). This new habitation and the lands attached to it are called in the Dagati language Tengan-le, Le meaning little, hence section or village, which are component parts of a Tengani. The Tengansobe of the Tengani remained the Chief Priest or spiritual mediator of the whole area, and the people within a Tengan-le would have to approach the Earth God through the Chief Priest should they require to farm land outside the area of their Tengan-le. (It is to be noted that the Tengansobe of one Tengani area could not propitiate the Earth God and ancestral spirits of another area.) The organisation of the people and the division of land in the Northern Territories might be compared to the ecclesiastical division of land in Britain into diocese and parishes, the parish being a subdivision of the diocese, and where in Scotland, at any rate down to the time of the Reformation, the Bishops exercised the power of creating new parishes within their respective diocese. The parish as a unit corresponds to the Tengan-le, with its local priest who was subject to the Chief Priest or spiritual ruler of the Tengani area, corresponding to the Bishop of the diocese.

✓ In those parts where families live in scattered compounds, each family has a piece of land or farm round the family habitation or compound (in village communities the farms are round the village), which is manured from the compounds, and cattle kraals—where there are cattle, and therefore grows an annual crop without lying fallow. In addition to this the family also has a piece of land or farm in the bush, which has to be shifted at varying periods, according to their

knowledge of the rotation of crops. This bush farm lies within the Tengan-le to which the original farm belonged. When more land is required outside the confines of the Tengan-le, the Tengansobe of the Tengan-le has to go the Tengansobe of the Tengani to which the Tengan-le belongs, in order to get more land "blessed," and so the Tengan-le expands until it reaches the confines of another Tengan-le or parish. It will be seen therefore that the formation of these areas was the result of a natural cell-like growth, the original kinship groups having formed the nucleus of the Tengani. As the peoples live entirely by agriculture, and owing to the necessity for shifting cultivation to obtain the best results, these bush farms, that is to say farms at a distance from the actual habitation, are the general rule.

¶ A family or branch of a kinship group to whom land had been allotted by the Earth God through the Tengansobe had the prior right to cultivate that land *in perpetuo*. They could, however, lend or depute any part of it to a friend or stranger for the purpose of cultivation. In such a case the would-be cultivator first approached the family to whom the land had been allotted, to obtain the consent of the ancestors who were the "trustees" of this land. Having obtained their consent, they then went to the Tengansobe to make a sacrifice to obtain the bounty of the Earth God. The conception of land as property in the sense we understand it was unknown. The family rights to land were spiritual rather than material, that is to say it was a spiritual inheritance rather than a material possession, as the land was still looked upon as the property of the God, so that one might say with truth it was the "Goodwill" (literally "God-willing") of the god of the earth and the ancestral spirits that they "owned." It was the ancestral spirits rather than the living who possessed the knowledge and rights of the land, as they alone held and were able to hand on the knowledge of how to cultivate the area on which they had lived. When a family deputed part of its land to another to cultivate, they did not sell that right but, we might say, merely passed on the goodwill of the Earth God and ancestral spirits. (The newcomer would be given the knowledge of the various sanctions, taboos, etc.). This might be compared to the modern idea of selling the "Goodwill" of a business, but without the monetary transaction. The goodwill of the Earth God and ancestral spirits was as real to them as the goodwill of the customers of a business to the business man of to-day. The goodwill was everything to them, the land itself belonged to the great earth or Earth God. }
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Land Tenure

"Goodwill"

So strong is the belief in the necessity for obtaining the goodwill of the Earth God and ancestral spirits, and the knowledge of how to propitiate them, in order that the earth may be bountiful, that a person desirous of cultivating land in what is now uninhabited bush, should he know the whereabouts of a member of the family who once cultivated that land, will go to great trouble to get into communication with him so as to receive the handing on of the necessary "goodwill" in the absence of a Tengansobe. Such an individual, whether he is

Feb

Bagatina.

able to find a member of the original family or not, if his crops are successful, is believed to have received the necessary "grace" from the Earth God, and others who follow him would look to this man to propitiate the Earth God for them. He becomes what is known in the Samoa Issala language as the Bagatina,* a substitute for the Tengansobe (in Issala Tiertina). Should, however, a member of the family who once lived on that land return, he would be regarded as having greater influence with the ancestral spirits to obtain the knowledge of the sanctions and taboos of the area, and would automatically be looked upon as the Tengansobe. The village of Namoro in the Lawra District affords an instance of this.

It is on account of these religious beliefs and the belief that their life on this earth is governed by their deceased ancestors, who are not far removed in their minds from the everyday events of their life, that families cling to the Tengani area of their ancestors.

What appears to us to be uninhabited bush country, to the natives of the Northern Territories (and of the Haute Volta Colony) is inhabited—inhabited by the spirits of the people who once resided there. It is an interesting fact that natives who migrate from their ancestral home from one cause or another invariably settle in a Tengani area in which other natives are already residing, although there is better land for cultivation in a near-by unpopulated area. This is due to their fear that on account of their not understanding the "whims" of the spirits who inhabit the unpopulated area, they may not receive their "goodwill" and consequently the fruits of their toil will not be bountiful: whereas if they settle within a Tengani area which is populated, they feel that they can learn the wishes of the new spirits that have to be contended with from those who already reside within the area.

I have explained how the lives of the people were governed almost entirely by religious sanctions, in which the earth and the spirits it contains were the dominating factors. Before proceeding to cultivate a piece of land, a sacrifice is made actually on the land itself to the Earth God. After the harvest sacrifices are made in thanksgiving to the Deity for his bounty at the Tengani shrine, of which the Tengansobe is the guardian. The Tengansobe presides over these ceremonies. A common custom in this connection is for the elder of a family to bring a chicken, a pot of cooked food made from new corn, and a pot of peto brewed also from the new corn, which he places at the foot of the shrine (which usually consists of a cluster of trees, a heap of stones or mound of swish—beaten clay). In this case the fowl is picked up and its throat cut, and the entrails are thrown on the shrine; the pot of food and peto are in turn picked up and some of the contents of each are thrown on the ground. The Elder then partakes of the contents of the pots—the first fruits of the harvest. In other

Sacrifices to
the Earth
God.

*NOTE.—For the reason that the necessity for the finding of a substitute for the Tengansobe does not appear to have arisen in the Dagati country, I have been unable to find a word in the Dagati language equivalent to Bagatina.

words, the elder of the family offers a tithe (in its original significance) to the Deity in acknowledgment of the fruits of the land. It is to be noted that this tithe is offered to the Deity and not to the Tengansobe. The Tengansobe takes nothing, nor did he expect anything from his people. (It is quite possible that there are now to be found Tengan-sobes who do not refuse "gifts" from their people.)

Tithe.

Communal land in the Northern Territories exists only to the extent that the inhabitants residing within a Tengani area have the sole right to the hunting and fishing throughout the area, and the fruits derived from unallotted and fallow land, subject to certain sanctions and taboos.

Communal Land.

It is an interesting fact that property (implements, stray cattle, baskets of grain or such like) the owner of which was not known, was taken by the finder to the Tengani shrine and handed to the Tengansobe (as being the property of the Earth God, the giver of all gifts) who took care of them until the owner was found. Members of the community would not appropriate property to which they were not entitled for fear of the punishment to which they might be subjected by the ancestral spirits.

Lost Property.

As I have explained, the invaders who formed the Mamprussi, Dagomba and Gonja Kingdoms, as well as the minor kingdoms, did not interfere with the religion and land organisation of the people. They imposed themselves on only so much of the country as their numbers permitted them to administer. The leader of these bands appointed his sons or principal "captains" as sub-chiefs to administer the inhabitants in the already existing Tengani areas. It is to be noted that the invading warriors carefully observed the existing division of the land into Tengani areas, themselves standing in awe of the Earth God and ancestral spirits of the respective areas, which was probably also the religion and land organisation of the country from which they came. In the Dagomba Kingdom in some instances the Tengansobes and their families (the office is hereditary) were exterminated by the invaders probably in the initial onslaught, and in such cases the selection of a priest* to propitiate the Earth God and ancestral spirits was attended with elaborate religious rites and consultations with the soothsayers. The warrior bands, though introducing a new conception of chiefs among the inhabitants upon whom they imposed themselves, adopted the religious sanctions of the particular areas in which they settled. The leader himself became the Paramount Chief, and was invested with certain spiritual powers. The rites performed at the installation or death of one of these Paramount Chiefs, and the taboos with which he is surrounded, are evidence of this. The people seeing that no harm was visited on the invaders by their own local gods would naturally credit such people with superior powers and thus the

Introduction of Chiefs.

*NOTE.—This priest was not a Tengansobe, as he did not belong to the original family of the Tengansobe of that area, and his office did not become hereditary. Till the present day the installation of successors to such a priest is attended with religious rites and ceremonies. There are instances of Chiefs themselves being appointed to this office.

magico-spiritual power of such an imposed Paramount Chief would gain credence and hold over the people—such a belief being as it were added to or superimposed on their own religion.

Mamprussi,
Dagomba and
Gonja King-
doms a
collection of
Federal
States.

The Tengani areas now became subject states under the leadership of the sub-chiefs imposed on them, who owed allegiance to the Paramount Chief, the original social code of the people being modified only to the extent that the people recognised the authority of chiefs. The large kingdoms of Mamprussi, Dagomba and Gonja are therefore a collection of Federal States, each state having its own government (dictated by the Earth God and ancestral spirits). It will therefore be seen that the Paramount Chief had little or no executive authority in the government of the semi-independent states, and owing to slave raiding and consequent internecine warfare, received little or nothing other than perhaps slaves from his distant sub-chiefs in the way of tribute. The principal binding force which held together these loosely constituted kingdoms was, and still is, the belief in the supernatural power with which the Paramount Chief was invested, in much the same way as among the Akan speaking peoples the common possession of and respect for a particular oath is a tie which unites into one state what would otherwise be a collection of village communities.

The minor kingdoms to which I have referred were formed in a similar way by bands of people, some of whom were of Mamprussi and Dagomba origin. In the north-west of the Northern Territories there were on our arrival a number of autonomous Tengani areas owing allegiance to no secular Chief, their constitution consisting of a council of elders and the Tengansobe. The upheavals and resultant migrations of branches of clans and families which took place during recent centuries caused much redistribution of peoples. It was, however, the common religion and Tengani land organisation of the people that held together these mixed communities. Had this land organisation not existed one can realize, with so many fragments of clans and fusions of peoples, the chaos that would exist had their organisation remained mainly or purely tribal.

Chiefs not
land-owners.

Prior to the advent of the European, it was the universal belief of the inhabitants of the Northern Territories that the land belonged to the Earth God, and was in the care of the ancestral spirits of the respective Tengani areas, and it is important to note that at no time did the Chiefs lay claim to the ownership of the land, which they in common with their people, regarded as belonging to the Earth God. It was the numbers of his people that connoted the power of a Chief, and not his territorial possessions. That is to say, the impregnability or security of a state or community lay in the number of the inhabitants rather than in the extent of its territory. It is probably for this reason that the inhabitants of the Northern Territories welcome strangers who wish to settle among them, and willingly allot them land to farm, and instruct them in the manner of approaching the Deity, and how to avoid offending the local ancestral spirits. The conception that land had in itself an economic value other than to provide the wants of the people was foreign to their minds,

Since the arrival of the European the consciousness of the economic value of land is evolving in the sense that the people now farm more land than is required for the necessities of life, the surplus being taken to the markets for sale or barter in order to procure the much coveted articles of European manufacture. The arrival of the European, and the oft repeated question "Who owns the land?" and the knowledge that has penetrated through that land has an economic value other than to provide the sustenance of life, has led some Chiefs in the Northern Territories to lay claim to the ownership of the land or point to the Tengansobe as the owner of the land, with the result that in some instances a misconception of the ownership of land has crept in. It is to be borne in mind, however, that to the Northern Territory native land and religion are practically synonymous terms (to the present day earth is a necessary adjunct to every rite that is performed), and in their minds land is still looked upon as belonging in the first place to the Earth God. Although as the result of misunderstanding, Chiefs and in some instances Tengansobes themselves, have misled political officers (myself included) into regarding them as the owners of the land, I am confident that none of them would dispute the accuracy of the system of land tenure in existence on the arrival of the European which I have described, particularly were they asked to make their declaration at the Tengani shrine. It was while investigating the social organisation of the peoples in those parts of the N.T.s where there were no secular Chiefs on our arrival, that I discovered the Tengani organisation of the land, which I am convinced is the true and ancient basis of the organisation of the people, and will be found to apply not only to the Northern Territories but to the Haute Volta Colonie and probably also other parts of Africa.

From an early age children were, and still are, educated in the knowledge of the boundaries of what was, as I have described, looked upon as their spiritual inheritance, and now, as the result of the introduction of economic values, is coming to be regarded as a material possession, i.e., property in the land. It will be seen, therefore, that the evolution that is taking place in the system of land tenure would tend towards individual ownership or "small-holdings" as now in France, where each peasant has his little bit of land, and not to the Feudal system which has led to so much discontent in Europe.

Just as in the case of land tenure the "goodwill" of the land is handed down to a particular family, so in arts and crafts the "goodwill" or "patent" to a particular trade or craft is handed down through generations. When serving in the Northern Territories, being struck by the high degree of skill and workmanship in some of the wood carvings, and with a view to increasing the production of these works of art, I endeavoured to get wood carvers in the Lawra District to copy them. In every instance I was met with the reply "I have not got the medicine to make them." In the same way with metalwork, on taking a particular kind of bracelet to a metal-worker to be copied, he invariably gave the same reply, "I have not got the medicine." At one time I employed a skilled blacksmith who

Evolution
towards
individual
Ownership.

Patents in
Arts and
Crafts.

had been trained at the Government Trade School at Yendi, and was also the son of generations of blacksmiths. This man had no objection to copying anything of European manufacture, but always on being asked to copy something of local manufacture, he gave me the reply that he had not got the necessary medicine. Thus a particular family inherited the "medicine" or "goodwill" of the spirits to make a particular type of carving or ornament, and it was believed that the ancestral spirits would punish anyone not belonging to that family who attempted to copy the design. In this way belief in the ancestral spirits protected the patent owned by a particular family from being copied, just as registration and the payment of a certain sum protects a patent in Europe to-day. Judging by the perfection of design in some of these carvings, it is possible that in the first place a skilled wood-carver arrived among the invaders from a more highly developed state, and handed down to his descendants the art of carving a particular design, so that it came to be looked upon as the possession or spiritual inheritance of that particular family, and was protected by the spirits from infringement. This applies also to patterns in weaving, hoe-making, etc.

The Family system.

I have endeavoured to show that the lives of the peoples in the Northern Territories prior to the advent of the European were governed entirely by religious sanctions, the head of the family or branch of the kinship group, the paterfamilias, controlling the lives of the members. The family was the unit and basis of the social organisation. The paterfamilias in the eyes of the members held the position of chief or head of the family group. On account of his superior knowledge of the spirits, he exercised a spiritual control over the family in that he was looked upon as being able to appease the wrath of the spirits who were causing distress to any of its members. I have shown how probably the head of the original family or kinship group became the Tengansobe or priest, who was consulted by the elders of the branches of the group on important occasions. An individual member of a family could not perform the rites at the household shrine, nor could he approach the head of his branch of the kinship group, nor the Tengansobe. The procedure was for the head of a household to approach the head of his branch of the family, who in his turn approached the head of the kinship group, who, if necessary, consulted the Tengansobe. The head of a kinship group held a position similar to that of the ancient Patriarchs. To him was handed down the wisdom and the knowledge of the various taboos, which were not meaningless restrictions, but in many cases accorded with the laws of Nature and of human society. The breaking of these brought disaster not only to the offender, but the whole community was involved. The fact that he had superior knowledge and could approach the ancestral spirits of the kinship group invested him with supreme authority over his family. The paterfamilias was able to enforce his authority by virtue of his superior knowledge of the unseen forces which governed the lives of the people. Fear of the unknown and of the unseen forces

about them, and of the wrath of the ever present ancestral spirits instilled obedience. To incur the displeasure of the head of the family by committing some breach of the customs, was to bring the wrath of the ancestral spirits. It will be seen, therefore, that the elder exerted a strong moral and disciplinary action over the individual members of the family, preventing actions believed to be inimical to the common good.

I have explained how the peoples who formed the Mamprussi, Dagomba and Moshi kingdoms arrived as a band of invaders under a powerful leader, who became the Paramount Chief of the central kingdom of Mamprussi. These invading bands, coming as they obviously had from a more highly developed state, and bringing with them superior knowledge, were able to become the ruling classes among the conquered peoples. There being no economic organisation by which they could administer the subject peoples, they had to rely on magico-religious force to show their superior powers and impose their will on the people. By virtue of the superior magic or "medicine," which they were believed to possess, they were able to maintain their authority over the subject peoples and form them into kingdoms. The Paramount Chief himself, that is to say the leader of the invaders, came to be regarded by the conquered people, as he was by his sons and followers, as being a man with superior magical or spiritual powers to all others. His sons or principal captains whom he appointed as chiefs to control the divisions of his kingdom all owed allegiance to him. I have explained in an earlier paragraph that for centuries the Na of Mamprussi was looked upon as being the spiritual head of the vast country that comprises the Mamprussi, Dagomba and Moshi kingdoms, and in the minds of some he still holds that position. In his Report on the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast, dated 1899, Lt.-Col. H. P. Northcott, C.B., the then Chief Commissioner of the Northern Territories, stated: "The respect due to the parent dynasty of Mamprussi was, until the arrival of the French at Wagadugu, kept alive by a yearly present of horses, slaves and clothing, and by the necessity of having a new king confirmed by the King of Mamprussi. Similar tokens of respect were also paid to the Court of Nalerigu by that of Yendi, but in neither case was the gift intended as tribute, the independence of both Moshi and Dagomba being fully recognised." It would appear that the Paramount Chiefs of the Dagomba and Moshi kingdoms were originally members of the family of the Paramount Chief of the central kingdom of Mamprussi, the leader of the invaders, who may have been a chief or ruler or member of the ruling family in the country from which he came, and thus had a prior claim to leadership.

Chiefs and
their Powers.

Again, as I have already stated, it would seem that the invaders either adopted or held in common with the people on whom they imposed themselves, the belief in the Earth God and ancestral spirits, for they did not interfere with the religion of the people, but left to the Tengersobe his office of priest and of propitiating the god of the soil and ancestral spirits of the area. History of other parts of the

world also shows that conquerors held in awe and respect the gods of the land they invaded. In addition to this they carefully observed as far as possible the existing division of the land into Tenganis, a Divisional Chief being placed over one or more Tenganis (with a sub-Chief in each Tenganis area as numbers would permit). The Divisional Chiefs continued to owe allegiance to the Paramount Chief, who obviously enhanced his reputation among the conquered peoples of having superior magical or supernatural powers by surrounding himself with innumerable taboos and ceremonies, no doubt similar to those of the court of the rulers in the Northern Kingdom from which they or their ideas had originally migrated. C. K. Meek, in his book *A Soudanese Kingdom* describes the King of the Jukun peoples as a being apart, believed to be a descendant of the gods, upon whose face no subject could look without being dazzled by its radiance. His personage was sacred—the magnetism or dynamic power of his person being sufficient to kill anyone who unwittingly trod even in his footsteps. His food was taken ceremoniously, and no one might drink from the bowl from which he had drunk. He ate in solitude and privacy, as on account of his celestial origin, he was not supposed to be seen eating like an ordinary mortal. Sometimes a drum was sounded and the whole village kept silence while the king ate. He had attendants who performed the various duties connected with his daily ceremonial. Ceremonies of a similar nature surrounded the Paramount Chiefs of the Mamprussi, Dagomba, Moshi and later the Gonja kingdoms.


The Paramount
Chief.

The Paramount Chief, therefore, evolved into something in the nature of a priestly ruler who lived a life apart, surrounded by innumerable taboos, which confined him within the precincts of a limited area. His wishes were commands. If he expressed a wish, it had to be immediately fulfilled. His wants, however, were few, for his power lay not in material things but in the supernatural. He would not be likely to ask for the impossible, as the impossibility of having a wish fulfilled might reflect on the potency of his magical powers, and reveal that he did not possess supernatural power over the elements. His personal regalia and "grandeur," as well as that of the Chiefs, were derived partly from articles of local workmanship but principally from traders passing through the Northern Territories to whom protection was granted through the kingdoms and States and from others seeking his favour. It would seem that this practice would lend itself to abuse, and that the Chief might want too much and mulct the trader, but this would become known and traders would circumvent a district in which the Chief was known to exact too heavy a toll.

In my opinion the force which held together a kingdom consisting of Federal States governed by Chiefs was entirely this religious or magico-religious power vested in the person of the King or Paramount Chief, living as he did a life apart in sacred isolation, and controlling his people by the supernatural power or sanctity rather than the material power of his kingship. There was little or no economic power attached to the kingship as there was no wealth in the country.

The Paramount Chief lived in state and comparative grandeur because his person was sacrosanct. He did not control his kingdom by an army of warriors, or by wealth of which there was none. He was invested with spiritual rather than temporal power. It was this intangible power alone that held together the far-flung Mamprussi, Dagomba, Moshi and Gonja kingdoms. The Paramount Chief was a King or Spiritual Ruler rather than an administrator dealing with the ordinary affairs of life throughout his kingdom, and in any case he had not the material means or machinery for administering his far-flung states consisting of innumerable small communities, each with its own code of "laws" or sanctions—the dictates of the ancestral spirits of the Tengani areas.

The authority of the Paramount Chief, therefore, lay entirely in the belief of the people in his supernatural or magical powers. He possessed magic superior to all others. It would seem difficult to understand how the people living in small and distant communities would even know of the existence of a king who so little affected their daily life, but one of the secrets of Africa lies in the extraordinary rapidity with which news travels over a large area, and the Northern Territories are no exception to this. The fear and awe inspired by the name of the "big Chief" would seem to grow rather than diminish as it travelled to distant parts of the kingdom. Also it is generally recognised among primitive peoples that a conqueror is invested with superior magical powers.

The Chief of a federal state or division of the kingdom was more closely in touch with the peoples over whom he ruled than was the Paramount Chief, to whom he and his people owed allegiance. The sanctions governing his life as Chief, as also in the case of the Paramount Chief, were dictated by the ancestral spirits of his predecessors in-office. His power had been handed on from the ancestor who had been placed over the people by the original Paramount Chief or leader of the invaders (just as a title is handed on in Europe to-day, only the succession in the case of a chief, although patrilineal, was seldom from father to son).

Divisional
Chiefs.

In the absence of any economic or material force or power, it is reasonable to assume that a chief did not introduce measures that had not the approval of his subjects. Also his belief in the spirit world precluded him from doing anything that was contrary to the wishes of the spirits of his ancestors and those of the ancestors of the people over whom he ruled. I am convinced, therefore that the Divisional Chiefs in the kingdoms of the Northern Territories held their power on account of their belief and that of their subjects in the magico-religious power that was handed down to them by their ancestors, and that it is for this reason that only members of a Chief's family are eligible to succeed to a vacant chief-ship, for the "spirits" of dead ancestors would not agree to hand on their power to a member of some other family. In fact a departure from custom in the appointment of a Chief to a vacant chief-ship was out of the question, for such a procedure would only cause the ancestral spirits

to bring ill-fortune. It is undoubtedly due, in my opinion, to the general belief in the spirit world that the "destoolment" of a chief is unknown. Except where the appointment to a vacant chieftainship is by "promotion," any such thing as an heir to a chieftainship is unknown in the kingdoms found in the Northern Territories. On the death of a chief, the successor is determined by consultations of the elders of the chief's family with the ancestral spirits, and it is only in the nature of things that the candidate, providing of course that he is eligible by virtue of his family, who is most generous to those whose duty it is to promulgate the wishes of the ancestral spirits, is generally successful. The selection of a Chief has not infrequently been the cause of disputes in the past, resulting in some cases in the unsuccessful candidate and his followers having to move to new territory.

To all intents and purposes the Chiefs lived as simple a life as did their subjects. They would receive a portion of meat killed by one of their subjects and a portion of the catch of fish. Except for his head wife and his particular favourite of the moment, the wives of Chiefs would appear to have been treated in no way different to the other women in the community. They in common with the other women in the village collected the firewood, water, shea-butter nuts and other sylvan produce, worked on the farms, repaired the huts, in addition to other domestic services in the house. It is certainly probable that no subject of a Chief would be permitted to have anything that the Chief had not. This, however, is a debatable point, for it is difficult to establish to what extent property was considered individual. Certain it is, however, that a Chief's subjects would see that his dignity was maintained, and were he not, for example, in possession of a horse, there would be no question of his being provided with one by one of his subjects, which he would continue to use on all occasions, while the owner would proceed on foot.

Tribute.

Customary services or tribute due to Chiefs prior to the advent of the European could only have been of a very negligible nature, for one has to remember that there was no economic organisation. Their wants from their people would be, of necessity, few, though undoubtedly their subjects would bring them presents annually and help to make their farms in the same way as they helped each other. Sources of revenue were tolls from traders and funeral customs. Such in my opinion was the position of the Chief prior to the arrival of the European. I do not overlook the fact that there may have been despotic chiefs who tyrannised over their people, and caused a reign of terror, but what I have described was the general character and position of the Chief in regard to his people. There was little scope for material aggrandisement, as the resources of the community were limited, and the Chief had all that he wanted. The Chief was in effect accepted as the leader of the people and the central authority in a divisional state. The introduction of Chiefs by invaders simply meant the organisation of what was formerly one or more Tengi areas under a secular leader. We find, therefore, what we might call

Koolish
whiteman

the ancient ecclesiastical division of the land and the secular division. We cannot call the secular leader a Territorial Chief, as he in common with his subjects looked upon the Earth God as the owner of the land, and observed the ecclesiastical division of the land, only probably there was not a sufficient number of Chiefs of the ruling class to place one in each Tenganani area. He was a Chief over the people, not over the land, as property in land was unknown. He was the leader of the people while the Tengansobe was the priest. When matters of moment affecting the whole community occurred, the Chief would meet in council with the elders of the families and the Tengansobe, so that the whole organisation was one vast extension of the family system, like the Akan Oman Council in the Gold Coast Colony. Owing to the lack of communication and the fear of slave raiders, and also because each community had its own sanctions and laws, the existence of the Paramount Chief did not affect the everyday affairs of a divisional state. In the more distant communities he was a remote spiritual entity.

In cases where a Divisional Chief rules over more than one Tenganani area, sub-Chiefs were appointed in each Tenganani, and a headman was appointed over a Tengan-le or village.

Sub-Chiefs and
Headmen.

As in the Soudanese kingdoms, it became the fashion in later times for a Mohammedan Liman to be attached to the Court or entourage of the Paramount Chiefs, and some of the Chiefs in the Northern Territories. His function appears to have been to make prayers to Allah and give counsel to the Chiefs. It may be that the Mohammedan influence modified the procedure of the Paramount Chief's and Chiefs' Courts, in that what were originally deemed sacrifices to the offended spirits became in some cases in effect penalties, which contributed to the perquisites of the Paramount Chief or Chiefs. In the same way, when an incorrigible offender had been handed over to be sold as a slave, he could be redeemed by the payment by his family of his purchase value. This redemption fee also went to the Chief.

As regards the military titles that are accorded to some of the "nobility" who now form part of the entourage of the Paramount Chiefs of the Mamprussi and Dagomba kingdoms, I am convinced that these personages or rather their status are of comparatively recent origin, the idea more than likely having emanated from the Ashantis after they dominated the Dagombas. They undoubtedly exercised some authority, which was probably in the nature of the authority exercised by schoolboys who attended the Government Trade School at Yendi, and who, because they were clothed in "Government uniform" were able to demand post-to-post carriers from the Chiefs of the different villages through which they passed to carry their tiny loads on their proceeding to or from Yendi to their distant homes.

In considering the question of "Courts," we must first consider what was the nature of the laws of the community, and what constituted an offence. As I have explained, the code of laws that governed the

Courts,
Tribunals or
Councils.

lives of the people in the Northern Territories consisted in religious sanctions which they believed to be the dictates of the ancestral spirits, and the breaking of which it was believed would bring the wrath of the spirits and disaster to the community. These sanctions, by long usage, had come to be the custom and practice of the community. Many of them were based on the ordinary simple laws of nature such as, for example, the proper season for planting, and the period of germination and fruition, the observation of which experience had taught the Elders brought the best results. Breaking of the laws meant merely the violation of one or other of the religious sanctions or taboos of the community. If an individual committed an offence, it was believed that the breach would bring ill-fortune not only to the individual but to his whole family or kin, and in some cases the whole community. Thus the individual is hemmed in on every side by the customs of his people. An offence committed by an individual, involving, as it did, the whole family, was therefore a family matter. Thus in the eyes of this primitive form of law the family, not the individual, was the unit.

The code of behaviour, sanctions and taboos of the community had been handed down from the rules which governed the lives of the forefathers of the present and autochthonous inhabitants. These unwritten laws were, therefore, the result of accumulated experience, kept up to date by frequent consultation with the ancestral spirits when any matter of moment occurred. The courts, visible and invisible, therefore consisted in the deliberations and pronouncements of the Elders and representatives of the peoples with due regard to precedent and custom. What we term "Native Custom" in a community was, therefore, more than a tradition. It is what they regard as the will of the still surviving spirits of the ancestors, not only of the present inhabitants but also those of the autochthonous peoples who had lived and were buried within the area. I have shown that these Ancestral Spirits who continue to govern the community were in their life-time the elders or heads of the families living within a community, so that the Elders living and deceased were the law-givers of the community. An offence committed by a member of a family was dealt with in the first place by the Elder of the family concerned in the manner I have already described. In a case which concerned more than one family, the matter would be brought before the Village Council of Elders, which in some cases included also the head of the young men and the head of the women, presided over by the headman of the village or Tengan-le, who, as I have explained, had been appointed by the Divisional Chief. In those communities where a secular ruler was unknown, the Tengansobe of the Tengan-le or village would preside. In a sub-Chief's domain the sub-Chief presided, and in a Tengan area where there was no secular leader the Tengansobe of the Tengan area presided. In the capital town of a divisional state the Chief himself presided over the Council, attended by the more important members of his entourage, which included in some cases the Liman. In a matter which concerned a

whole state, e.g. pestilence, which would only have occurred on rare occasions, the Chief and his entourage would meet in council with the Tengansobes, the headmen of all the villages, accompanied by the more important elders of the villages. The question to be decided was who or what had offended the spirits to cause them to visit a disaster, such as for example smallpox, on the community, and what steps should be taken to pacify the spirits and bring an end to the calamity.

As wealth was unknown, and property in land in the sense we understand it was unknown, disputes over land were infrequent. Offences were, therefore, in connection with the infringement of taboos and customs. Theft was of very rare occurrence. As I have explained, a lost hoe, stray cattle or such like were taken to the Tengansobe till the owner was found. When theft did occur the elders would meet in council to decide what evil spirit had entered the offender to cause him to do such a thing, and what sacrifice was required to avert evil consequences from the community. It has often been related to me that sometimes in the case of an inveterate thief, it was decided that one or both of his hands should be cut off to prevent him stealing, but I have never come across anyone who had been so maimed for this reason. It is reasonable to suppose that formerly, with the intensive slave raiding which went on, anyone who became a menace to the community would be disposed of as a slave. It is to be observed that the idea of cutting off the hand was not so much to punish the offender as to prevent him continuing to annoy the spirits of the ancestors by theft and so bring evil upon the community. Selling into slavery was probably done for the same reason.

Thus in effect the courts, if such they could be called, in the communities of the Northern Territories were merely the deliberations of the heads of families. Their function was not to decide whether a man were guilty or not, as in small communities his guilt was well known and not disputed, and as I have shown, fear of the spirits caused him to confess his guilt. (Should a man be wrongfully accused, it was sufficient for him to swear on the Tengani shrine to establish his innocence). The actual function of the courts was to decide what spirit had been offended and what sacrifice should be made to the offended spirit to avert evil from the community, or in other words to prevent the offended spirit venting his wrath on the community. It is probably for this reason that the individual, before taking any action, on every possible occasion consults a Boka-man or soothsayer to find out whether the step he proposes to take is likely to meet with the disapproval of the spirits, in which case misfortune would befall him. The Boka-man has various signs and portents which he interprets to decide whether the auspices are favourable. It is clear, therefore, that breaking of the "law" meant merely the violation of one or other of the religious sanctions or taboos of the community. Law was indissolubly bound up with religion. Just as

"Boka-man"
or Soothsayer.

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in England up till the 13th century, law courts were entirely ecclesiastical in nature, so among the peoples of the Northern Territories, law, morality and religion were one. To plant a crop at the wrong season was a breach of the sacred taboos, and was therefore a moral offence. Courts had not become secular nor was a fine in the sense we understand it the payment for an offence. The penalty was looked upon rather as a sacrifice to the offended spirit, and not a contribution to the Chief for having disregarded the law of the community. As I have explained, it is probable that Mohammedan influence in some places may have introduced the idea of penalties in certain instances becoming the perquisites of the Chief, so that the Chief presiding over such a case was not an entirely disinterested judge or father of the assembly.

Law and
Religion
Synonymous.

Apart from this the whole institution of the law in the Northern Territories was therefore one vast family system, law and religion being synonymous terms. The Chief was in effect the head of all the families. The government of the states was thoroughly democratic in nature. The laws depended for their validity on general acceptance and recognition. There was no authority universally recognised as having power to enact fresh laws over the heads of the community or against its consent.

Sentence of
Death.

It is often stated that the inherent jurisdiction with which the Chiefs in the Northern Territories were invested gave them power of life and death over their subjects. I do not consider that this statement can be taken at its face value. I have stated that the Chief was the head of the people, who were his subjects, and that as such every matter of import occurring within his domain was referred to him, and that in effect his rule was an extension of the family system. He came to be looked upon as the supreme head over the elders of the families, while the Tengansobe continued to occupy the position of priest or spiritual adviser, able to interpret the wishes of the spirits, approach the Earth God and deal with matters affecting the allotment of land. The Chief's power of life and death over his subjects was nominal rather than actual. He merely put his sanction to the will or "public opinion" of the community in much the same way as our King to-day has the nominal power to confirm a sentence or reprieve one of his subjects who has been tried in the Courts and sentenced to death. The information I have collected on this subject has led me to the conclusion that it was not the custom for a Chief to order that a man's life should be taken except on account of some personal affront such as having intercourse with one of the Chief's favourite wives, in which case in many communities death was recognised as the penalty by the State. Again, a person found to be a witch would in some instances be sentenced to death. This, however, in my opinion was not by order of the Chief, but rather as the result of the Chief acquiescing in the consensus of opinion of the community. Thus probably it has been argued that as the Chief had to be approached before the community could dispose

of the witch's life, he had the power to sentence the person to death. I, however, incline to the opinion that this was in the nature of a recognised formality.

One can imagine, however, that anyone who in any way offered an affront to the sacrosanct person of the Paramount Chief, or violated the taboos with which he was surrounded, would be put to death. This would not, however, be the result of an order given by the Paramount Chief, but rather on account of the community's fear of the evil which might befall them as the result of such an action on the part of an individual. So great was their belief in the magico-religious power that surrounded the person of their Paramount Chief that they could well foresee dreadful happenings, if the culprit were allowed to roam at large. In giving his sanction for the culprit being put to death, the Paramount Chief would merely be giving effect to the will of the people and the recognised or customary punishment for such an offence.

Such would appear to have been the fundamental basis of the social organisation of the peoples with whom we are dealing prior to the advent of the European. In spite of the inevitable changes that have taken place as the result of contact with western ideas and institutions, and the transition stage through which the peoples are passing, the fundamental basis of the social organisation and religion, namely the family system and the land organisation, though modified, remain. || note

The European arrived in this part of Africa at a time when the country had been rent asunder by slave raiding for years. The arrival of outside powers, while it gave protection to the decimated peoples, was bound to cause, in the initial stages, some disintegration of the existing organisation of the peoples. Approximately, the 11th parallel became the international frontier between Britain and France. This placed natives who had formerly lived together as a political unit some under the protection of Britain and some under that of France. On the east the frontier between Britain and Germany cut in two the Dagomba Kingdom, and placed a portion of the Mamprussi Kingdom under German protection. The necessity for dividing the Northern Territories into different administrative districts was a further cause for the disintegration of the existing organisation of the people. The Gonja Kingdom became divided in the southern part of the Northern Territories. In the north the establishment of stations along the frontier, which had no relation to the existing organisation of the people, on the eastern side diverted the inhabitants from their natural ruler, the Na of Mamprussi, to the now dominating force, the District Commissioner; with the result that Chiefs living at district headquarters, on account of their being in close touch with the European, came to assume an importance to which they were in no way entitled. In the north west, where for the most part secular Chiefs as opposed to Tengansobes had not yet evolved, in many cases the inhabitants retaining their original organisation into autonomous Tenganian areas, many of the men who were appointed by the European to be Chiefs,

The advent
of the
European.

ignorant of the political boundaries of the people or ambitious to have a large number of people subject to them, came in some instances to be placed over parts of different Tengan areas, each of which, as I have explained, had a different code of laws or sanctions. It is obvious that this must lead to complications. It is quite conceivable that the inhabitants of some of the states in the kingdoms of Mamprussi, Dagomba and Gonja, although not forgetting the intangible spiritual force that linked them to their Paramount Chief, when asked whom they served, could only think of their immediate Chief with whom their misfortunes had been shared for years. As regards those parts of the Northern Territories where the inhabitants were organised into either minor kingdoms or Tengan areas, the people, though at first in some instances resenting the arrival of an unknown outside power, were only too glad to have European protection to interfere with his dictates. As Tamakloe mentions in his Preface to his History of the Dagomba "confusion is caused by our common answer to a white man 'Yes, Sir' without having established in the first place a basis of understanding between questioner and questioned." Again, on account of the fear and suspicion in which the European was at first held, it was difficult to find out the true organisation of the peoples. In those places where there was no Chief the real head of the elders and priestly ruler, the Tengersobe, did not come forward to meet the European owing to the fact that he lived the life of a recluse in communion with the Earth God and ancestral spirits, and for the reason that it was not, nor is it to-day, customary for the Tengersobe to leave the precincts of the sacred shrine of the Tengan and come forward to meet strangers. Further the peoples are inarticulate and cannot easily explain their organisation and religion, nor could the elders of the village, without consultations with the Tengersobe and the approval of the ancestral spirits, come forward and divulge their religious organisation. It was for this reason that when the European arrived and asked for the Chief in places where there was no Chief, they could not explain that no secular Chief existed. More often than not someone without any official status in the community was put forward to meet the European and act as intermediary and ascertain his wishes, with the result that a misunderstanding arose, and this often quite unimportant individual came to be regarded by the European as a Chief or headman. It was necessary to find some sort of authority. Thus it was that, being unaware of their existing Tengan organisation, an autocracy was substituted irrespective of the land and religious organisation vested in the Tengersobe and Council of Elders.

✓ The most revolutionary force, however, which followed in the train of the European was that of economics, material values such as we understand them having scarcely evolved in these primitive States where wealth was non-existent, and such trade as there was in salt, kola, guns and such like was a limited and rudimentary system of barter, in which the cowrie had come to be used as a medium. With the penetration of the knowledge of economic values, the character of the Chief is taking on a different aspect. Material wealth and

possessions are becoming the criterion of power, so that in some cases we find a Chief using his "magical" power over the people to aggrandise himself. He may even become a petty tyrant. So strong is the belief in the magic possessed by such a Chief, and so deep-rooted the fear in its power as to effectively suppress the voice of the people, who are for the most part inarticulate. They are afraid to complain of injustices they suffer for fear of the evil powers of the magic a Chief possesses striking them. To illustrate the hold which a Chief's supposed magical powers have over the people, I recount here an incident that came under my observation. Towards the latter part of 1921, the Acting Commissioner of the Northern Province and myself were met at Tumu by the largest concourse of people that had ever been known to collect in Tumu—we estimated there were anything between 3,000 and 5,000 people who met us. When we had dismounted from our horses the Chiefs were lined up in front of us with the masses behind them. While I was in the middle of the process of introducing the Chiefs to the Acting Provincial Commissioner, of a sudden, without any reason that was apparent to us, except for the Chiefs and some of the boys who were holding their horses, the whole of the assembled people bolted. Though I continually endeavoured to ascertain the cause of this panic, it was only after some years, as the result of a chance observation to my interpreter concerning the "magical" powers of the Chief of Tumu, that I discovered the explanation, which was as follows: Mahama, the Chief of Bellu (who had held a command under the Zaberima raider Barbetu, and who after he was captured by the French had escaped by the power of his "magic"), had collected a certain following of Chiefs, and among the masses it was known or believed that this Mahama had come to the meeting armed with superior powers to Kantom, the Chief of Tumu. The cause of the panic was due to the fact that Mahama of Bellu's hat fell to the ground, which apparently demonstrated to the crowd that Kantom's power was superior to that of Mahama, and the magic contained in Mahama's hat was a menace to them. Some days later, on the return of the Acting Provincial Commissioner from Wa, the meeting was held and every Chief was loud in his praises of Kantom, whom they have regarded as their Paramount Chief ever since, and I would add that his "magic" or supernatural power still awed all and sundry up to the time I left the district in 1929.

In the case of other European-made Chiefs (I have cited the case of Kantom), we find them adopting similar methods to gain power over the people, and this magical power enables these Chiefs to make exactions on their subjects for their own personal aggrandisement. It has come under my notice that some of these men, when they have been elected Chief, not only copy the custom of other Chiefs by attaching a Malam to their entourage, but they also obtain "medicine" from men who are believed to have occult powers, sending in some cases long distances to the purveyors of magical powers to obtain the necessary "medicine" to help them successfully to intimidate their subjects and exercise authority over them. On every hand one is

European
made Chiefs.

able to observe the steady growth of affluence in all that appertains to such a Chief and his immediate followers. The fact that a Chief was authorised by the European to exact fines from his people provides a source of revenue. Judging by the growth of the building he occupies and his increased herds of livestock, one may be permitted to assume that these Chiefs are exacting a not inconsiderable amount of tribute, call it what one may, from their subjects. The commutation of all tribute to a definite value will place limits on the powers of Chiefs in this direction.

Land assuming
an economic
value.

As I have explained, land is now assuming an economic value. I have known of a Chief for this reason taking the best land for himself and so depriving a family of its land and means of subsistence. This happened in the case of a European-made Chief. It was with the greatest difficulty I was able to discover this state of affairs in order to make redress and restore land so taken, and only then from observation confirmed by enquiry and not from complaints made, the people being too afraid of their Chief to complain. I do not wish to imply that every Chief adopts such unjust methods; nevertheless this can happen. The reason for this I found to be the following. As I have explained, a European-made Chief in some instances came to be placed over parts of different Tenganian areas, each of which had its own code of sanctions or laws which controlled the lives of the people living within them (and to which the Chiefs in those parts where secular Chiefs had previously existed, in common with their people, were subject). Thus it came about that a European-made Chief who lived in one Tenganian area or Tenganian-le and had been given jurisdiction over the people in another area was not subject or bound by the religious sanctions or laws of the area outside the boundary of that in which he lived, so that he could exploit as he liked the people outside his own area, in some cases as I have said, depriving the people of their land. The presence of the European and the fact that the inarticulate peoples are now realising that they can obtain justice and redress wherever the flag flies, has mitigated to some extent the power of the Chiefs to exploit their people, but it seems to me that to obviate any possibility of injustice, the political authority should as far as possible be made co-terminous with the ancient land organisation, so that the people may be assured of retaining their family land and a measure of contentment. It seems to me that the question of their land is all-important to these peoples who live entirely by the produce of the soil. The fact that the land organisation in some instances bears no relation to the political authority we have imposed might in the future, when the people have become more articulate and material considerations have to a greater extent taken the place of religious sanctions, lead to endless disputes over the ownership of land. The Tenganian constituted the land authority. Thus were the land organisation vested in the Tenganian area system broken down and the Tenganian ignored, who is to establish a family's title to its land? By limiting the powers of Chiefs to the boundaries of the Tenganian

area or Tengan-le in which they reside, or allowing the chieftainships to lapse as the present holders die (in most cases they are not hereditary), either leaving one in each Tengan area, or better still substituting a man selected by the Tengersobe in consultation with the elders for each area, it would be possible to insure a measure of justice to the people. It seems to me that their ancient system of land tenure should be preserved and allowed to evolve into individual ownership or family inheritance in the land, for it is easier to break down such a system than to build up one which will meet the requirements of all and make for contentment and prosperity. In those parts of the N.T.s where secular Chiefs existed prior to our arrival it has sometimes been stated that the Chiefs own the land. It is my opinion, however, that investigation will show that this was not the case on the arrival of the European in this part of Africa. It seems to me that the all-important question is to preserve for the people throughout the N.T.s the land which they held as their inheritance on our arrival. When a limit has been placed on the obligations of the people to their Chief in the shape of a direct annual contribution, to be paid into a Central State Treasury with a percentage to go to the Chief, a check could effectively be placed on the undesirable methods employed by Chiefs and their followings to obtain revenue. The Chief would in this way have a regular source of income and a definite sum would be placed at the Central State Treasury to expend on necessary improvements and the building up of a progressive State. The Native Authority would also have some means of controlling the demands of a Chief from his people and checking injustice.

It may be argued that the Chiefs will continue to rule the people by fear and obtain more than the amount due by the subject and so defeat the objects of a fixed tax. But there is no doubt that the existence of a fixed tax would educate a village in its responsibility to a Chief and eventually check injustice. The prime causes of discontent and strife may be traced more often than not to the unjust exactions of a Chief. It may be found, however, that the belief in the magical powers of a Chief dies hard, and that not until economic forces have supplanted this-magic will Chiefs be able to adapt themselves to deal with the administrative problems of a self-governing State. With the advancement of Western ideas and institutions, and modern principles of justice and equity, the power of magic is bound to lose its hold. We should not be justified in interfering with the lives of these peoples were it not our aim to enable them to live their lives free from fear. I have endeavoured to explain what were the powers of Chiefs in the past, and the above appears to me to describe the metamorphosis of their powers in the present, and I hope that my interpretation of the situation in the light of past history may be helpful in enabling Government to define and demarcate what are to be their powers in the future.

Let us now consider the effects of European influence on the family system. Previous invaders did not interfere with the family system. We, on the other hand, have introduced an economic force

Effects of
European
influence on
the family
system.

which in the transition stage is gnawing at the foundations of the structure upon which the lives of the people are based. When it is realised that the labour for the making of railways, the building of roads and towns in the Colony and Ashanti, and other public works in the last decade or so was supplied mostly from the Northern Territories and the Haute Volta Colony, it will be appreciated that there is growing up a vast body of natives who are no longer bound by the religious sanctions of their family or tribe, and who are evolving from the superstitions and beliefs which governed their lives in the past. They are now in the transition stage. Every day, no matter how little we interfere in native affairs, a cog in the machinery by which the life of the individual was governed, is being broken. It is now some thirty years since the natives of the Northern Territories and French Haute Volta Colony have been free from slave raiders and have had European protection to go where they like at will. In recent years, there has been an ever-increasing number of young men passing backwards and forwards to the towns in Ashanti and the Colony. In every village through which these youths pass seeds of discontent with the restrictions of family life are sown. It is not necessary for them to discourse on the wonders of the towns in the south. The loads of "riches" with which they return alone sow the seeds. Then too, in more recent years the increasing lorry passenger traffic to and from the north brings reports daily of the free (?) life of the towns. It amounts to this that we have introduced a force which, without the substitution in this critical transition stage, of a direct means of maintaining the moral and economic responsibility of the individual to the family, and thus indirectly to the State, is bound to weaken the whole social organisation of the people. We are faced in Europe with the decline of the family system as the outcome of economic forces and industrialism, but this has taken place gradually over a period of centuries and the individual has evolved a personal ethical code of behaviour based on the teachings of Christianity as well as an obligation to the State. In the case of the Northern Territory native the family system is also their religion. Any rapid break up of the family at the present stage of social development among the peoples of the Northern Territories before they have learnt the principles of self-government on social and economic lines would be a serious matter. The need for directing native administration so as to hold together the better features of the family system is two-fold. The importance of the family as an economic unit in the Northern Territories cannot be over-estimated. Out of the co-operative system of the family was forged a powerful economic link in the community. The members of the family were inter-dependent, and contributed to the general upkeep and welfare of the community. Apart from the utilitarian aspect, the decay of the family system would mean the passing of one of the most admirable institutions in African life. Under the family system the development of the individual was, of course, subordinated to the interests of the community, so that there was little scope for individual effort or enterprise,

reason why
owners should
"fee free"
transition.

During the transition stage, however, and considering the very primitive state in which the people of the Northern Territories still exist, and on account of the lack of money for development, are likely to continue for sometime to exist, there is great need for holding together the better features of the family system, which has survived through the centuries, to counteract the rapid disruptive influences at work, and form the basis for a co-operative State. This could be fostered by making the individual members of the family responsible to the head of the family for their contributions towards the upkeep of the State. The heads of the families would in their turn be responsible to the headman of the village, who in his turn is responsible to the Chief. Again it will, I think, be admitted that too much power in the hands of single individuals in a primitive State is bound to lead to trouble sooner or later in spite of Ordinances and laws to check injustice. It has to be remembered too that the Chiefs and rulers in these kingdoms are in most cases not generations removed from their slave raiding ancestors, who did not hesitate to dispose of the autochthonous peoples as slaves, so that allowances must be made for their delinquencies. By spreading out power and delegating to the heads of families direct economic responsibility to the State I think that a more satisfactory and lasting administration would be built up. By degrees the individual could be made directly responsible to the State as individualism and individual property evolved. Formerly, as I have explained, the authority of the paterfamilias was vested in religion, or superstition as some might term it. When the people, through our influence, have emerged from their fear of the "spirits," only if laws based on an understanding of the social organisation of the people have taken the place of this restraining force can we have a well-ordered State run for the greatest good of the greatest number.

European influence is helping every day to remove the paralysing fear of the unknown and of the magic which previous invaders used to intimidate the peoples. The Native Authority Ordinance and the Native Jurisdiction Ordinance recently enacted make it possible for these restraining forces to be replaced by laws based partly on native custom or the old religion and organisation of the land, and partly on Western ethical standards, which are evolved, we might say, out of the idea of obedience to a merciful and beneficent God, which is so very near to their own conception of the Deity who inspires the Earth God or Mother Earth, the bountiful giver of the sustenance of life. Just as they consider that if they committed an offence against the Earth God or ancestral spirits they would be visited with disaster, the fruits of their toil would not be bountiful (it was, of course, when the calamity happened that they examined themselves to find out their sins of omission or commission), so in the same way could they understand that an anti-social act would finally react to their detriment or the detriment of the community. Laws or orders based on tribal sanctions and taboos would further inculcate this principle when the sanctions had ceased to bind "de-tribalised" members of the community.

With the advancement of economic development and the emergence of the people from the superstitious beliefs of the past, the wane of the magico-religious power of the Paramount Chiefs is inevitable. The formation of Central Treasuries as an economic link to take the place of the former intangible link would prevent the disintegration of the larger kingdoms and bind together the minor kingdoms and Tenganí areas. By the recent enactment of the Land and Native Rights Ordinance any benefits accruing from a division as the result of European development could be paid into a Central Treasury for the benefit of the kingdom to help forward its evolution as a whole instead of contributing to the enrichment of a particular Chief or division. The formation of a Central Treasury in each of the three large kingdoms of Mamprussi, Dagomba and Gonja and a fourth at Wa in the north-west to comprise the minor kingdoms and Tenganí areas would be a valuable means of centralising and consolidating the divisions of the Northern Territories. I have endeavoured to show that there is no great fundamental difference in the social organisation of the peoples and their methods of government. Taking the long view, there would seem to be little or nothing to prevent us from uniting in due course the whole of the N.T.s under one central Native Authority with representatives of the four large divisions, Mamprussi, Dagomba, Gonja and Wa (as the centre of the minor kingdoms and Tenganis).

An economic medium.

The circulation of money or rather currency in place of compulsory labour on roads, etc., would be the means of solving many of the problems with which we have been faced. As money is scarce in the N.T.s and is likely to be more so owing to the disbursements of Government being curtailed on labour in the Colony and Ashanti, which in previous years returned to a large extent to the Northern Territories, as the earnings of N.T. labourers, it might be necessary for the Central Government to institute a currency for the N.T.s for the purpose of circulation as a medium of barter or exchange for labour. A proportion of the money or currency thus circulated would return to the State in the form of direct taxes, etc., and would be a valuable means of building up economic rule. The substitution of an economic medium would undoubtedly encourage industry and promote the development of the Northern Territories.

Machinery for administration by Chiefs.

When we are able to establish a definite basis of tribute to Chiefs, so that Courts will not come to be looked upon as machinery for providing revenue, it would be possible for a Chief again to become the father or leader of his people. The building up of a machinery for administration by Chiefs which hitherto has not existed (they having relied on their animistic powers) will make it possible for them to evolve into administrators who, with the help of the elders of the families as their councillors, will enable a lasting form of self-government to be built up in the N.T.s. The people of the N.T.s have become accustomed to Chiefs, and a good Chief would, without doubt, gain in influence in a well-ordered State. There is at present no source of wealth in the N.T.s so that the lives of the people must

of necessity remain simple. The cost of transport to the coast would forbid the development of any extensive export trade. There are, however, possibilities, remote perhaps, of future development. With the advancement of air communications, and the possibility even of air transport, it is not out of the question that the trade routes through the desert may again be opened up, and provide a short-cut to Europe and the East. Or again it is possible that gold through the development of air transport might become an economic proposition in the N.T.s, or some other marketable commodity may be discovered which would bring comparative wealth to the N.T.s. Only if a satisfactory economic form of administration existed would they be able to bear prosperity without breaking up. Apart from other economic possibilities, the political and strategic importance of the N.T.s as an important foothold for trade in the Soudan cannot be overlooked. The future of some nearly a million people in our care in the N.T.s will be made or marred according to the form of administration to which they are subjected. In considering the future of the Northern Territories it seems to me the main question to be decided is whether they are to be subjected to the feudal methods which we have discarded in Europe or are we to assist them in establishing on an economic basis the democratic form of government and land organisation which were in existence on our advent. From what I have written it will be observed that the Chiefs themselves were not land-owners but leaders of the people, and that the land organisation remained vested in the ancient religion of the people. The Chief became the head of the community which was one vast family organisation, the units being represented by the heads of families. Thus the Chief became the head of all the families and, it would appear, found it necessary to adopt the democratic organisation of the people. By the regulation of tribute and of the economic forces we have introduced, and the preservation of the land for the people, the Chiefs would tend to evolve into administrators rather than land-owners or territorial overlords, and represent their people and States in the Central Government. Their power would thus as heretofore lie in the fact that they represented their people rather than in their personal possessions and wealth. By the institution of Central Treasuries their personal requirements and dignity would be provided for.

Possibilities of
future
economic
development.

There is in the N.T.s the material for the establishment of a model State, economic forces properly directed serving to unite together the sections of the kingdoms, making the whole into one vast Co-operative State having in course of time a representative or representatives of its divisions on the Legislative Council of the Colony.

A Model
State.

ST. J. EYRE-SMITH.

14TH MARCH, 1932.