68

M'wambia and the N'jenge

ONCE UPON A TIME there was a man who married a woman, and she bore him a male child. Then he married a second wife, and she also bore him a male child. After a while the first wife died.

Now the name of the eldest son was M'wambia, and the name of the second was also M'wambia, and he was known as M'wambia the Younger, to distinguish him from his brother.

When the two boys were about twelve and ten years old, it happened that the animal known as the N'jenge came from the wilds and ate the food in the fields. Thereupon the two brothers went into the woods, and M'wambia the Elder made a snare to catch the N'jenge, and M'wambia the Younger also made a snare at a little distance away. Now a N'jenge came into the snare of M'wambia the Younger, and he released it and killed it and ate it. And a N'jenge also came into the snare of M'wambia the Elder, but he released it and did not kill it. He let it go free into the woods, and the two boys returned to the village and said nothing to their father.

One day the mother of M'wambia the Younger went into the fields and gathered sugar-cane, put it into her basket on her back, and brought it to the house. The father took a large piece and gave it to his elder son, but to the younger he gave a small piece. Then the younger brother said, "Why have you given me a small piece and my brother a big piece?"

And he said, "Because you have a mother while the mother of your brother is dead."

Then M'wambia the Younger said to his father, "Come into the woods."

Then he showed him the two snares, and told him how he had killed the N'jenge which he had caught, and how M'wambia the Elder had let him go. And the father was very angry and upbraided his elder son, because the N'jenge was very fat. He chose a tree, tall, with a straight stem, and made him climb up into it. Then he took spikes and stuck them into the ground around the tree with the points leaning inward toward the tree; and he made the points sharp, so that if the boy descended or fell down the points would run into him and he would die. He went away and left M'wambia the Elder in the tree.

Now M'wambia stayed in the tree for twenty days, and at the end of that time, a N'jenge came and said, "*Mangi Kihuti!*"

And M'wambia said, "I am not Mangi, I am M'wambia."

And the N'jenge took one spike and carried it away, and ten N'jenge came and each took one spike and carried it away. Then the N'jenge whom M'wambia had set free came, and he said, "*Mangi.*"

And the boy said, "I am M'wambia," and he told him how he had set him free. The N'jenge, when he heard this, carried away all the remaining spikes and M'wambia gradually unloosed the grip of his arms around the stem of tree and slid to the bottom.

Next the N'jenge made a hole open in his side, and out came a big sheep. M'wambia took some fat to eat. At first he could not eat it, for he was so weak and was very sick; but afterward he ate a little, and then a little of the leg. Then the next day, he ate another piece of the leg. Thus the sheep provided him with food for four days. At the end of that time, the N'jenge opened his side again and there came out a goat, and that gave him food for four days, and then there came out two goats, and these lasted three days, for M'wambia had grown stronger and bigger. There then came an ox, and the N'jenge ate too, and M'wambia grew still bigger and stronger.

Finally, the N'jenge said, "Go among the long grass and jump." And M'wambia went among the long grass and jumped twice, and N'jenge said, "You are not yet strong enough." So they ate another ox, and then the N'jenge said, "Go and jump again." So M'wambia went and jumped four times. Finally, he said to the boy, "What would you like to possess?"

And he said, "A goat."

And the N'jenge opened his side and gave him one hundred female goats which had not borne, one hundred female goats which had borne, one hundred young goats who knew their mother, one hundred male goats, one hundred fat male goats, one hundred sheep which had not borne, one hundren sheep which had borne, one hundred young sheep who knew their mother, one hundred male sheep, one hundred fat male sheep, one hundred cows which had not borne, one hundred cows which had borne, one hundred calves, one hundred oxen, one hundred fat oxen.

And the N'jenge said to M'wambia again, "What do you want?"

And M'wambia replied, "Women."

And the N'jenge gave him two hundred goats and two hundred oxen to buy women. So M'wambia bought one hundred women. And the N'jenge said again, "What do you want?"

And he said, "I want nothing more."

Then he went to the Gura River, and he built a big village for his wives and his oxen and his goats. But no children were yet born, so M'wambia went and tended the goats, and he sat on a hillside where he could see them all, for they were many.

Now the mother of M'wambia the Younger said to her young daughter, "Take a bag and go and get vegetables." So the child went to get the vegetables but could see none; and she walked and walked, and at last she saw

M'wambia sitting on the hillside herding goats, and she called out, "That is our M'wambia who was lost." But he said nothing. And then she called out again, "That is our M'wambia who was lost."

So he spoke to her and he asked, "How are they all at home, my father and my father's brother?"

She said, "They are well."

She saw his village and his wives and his cattle. Then he took a goat and killed it and cut it up and put it into her bag. She walked twelve hours and came to her home. As she came to the homestead she called out to her mother, "Bring me a cooking-pot in which to cook the vegetables." And her mother brought a little one, and she said, "Bring me a big one." And she brought a bigger, and the girl said, "That is not big enough."

And the mother said, "Do you want the one in which we cook meat?" And she said, "Yes."

And her mother asked, "What kind of vegetables have you that you want so large a pot?" The mother opened the bag and saw the meat, and she said, "You have stolen a goat."

And the girl said, "I have not stolen it; it is from M'wambia."

And her mother said, "Do not tell a lie. M'wambia is lost."

And the girl said, "I have seen him, and the day after tomorrow you shall come and see him too." And she told how she had seen him and his many possessions.

So the next day they cooked the meat and ate it, and on the day after they all went together to see M'wambia. All went—his father and his father's brother, and the mother and the father's other wife, and M'wambia the Younger, and the girl, and all the family. And when they came to where M'wambia the Elder was, they saw him sitting on the hill herding goats. And there was a river between them, and M'wambia the Elder took a string and he tied a goat to the end of the string and threw it across the river. And the father took hold of it to go to him. As he was being pulled across the river he was drowned because he had been cruel to his son. But the others got across safely, and when they came to the village of M'wambia the Elder and saw his many goods, they stayed there and made their home with him.

And, after a while, M'wambia said, "I have many men and women to do work in my homestead." And he gave his relations work to do—one had to mind the full-grown goats, one had to mind the young goats, and one had to work in the fields. And he said, "I will go away for a while and see if they do their work well." And he went to another village and slept there for five days.

And when he came back to his homestead he saw some fat, and he said, "What is this fat on the ground?" And he looked and saw on the wall the head of N'jenge, and he knew that his friend the N'jenge had come to the village while he was away and that his relatives had killed him. And he

said no word to them, but he said to himself, "My luck is gone, because the N'jenge is dead with whom I am of one heart."

And he took a stone and a knife and made his knife very sharp, and he killed all the women and all the men, and all the goats and all the cattle. Then he took the knife and plunged it into his own breast, for the N'jenge, his luck, was dead.

[AKIKUYU]

69

The Child and the Eagle

A WOMAN HAD A CHILD. One day she went to work in the fields. While she was going to her work the child cried. When it stopped crying she suckled it, and after she had finished suckling it she laid it down in the shade. Then she went on hoeing.

Once again the child cried, and a bird came—an eagle—and sat upon it. It soothed the child with its wings. Then the child which was crying became silent. When she saw this the woman was greatly alarmed and said, "Dear me! How terrible! The eagle is eating my child!" As she went toward it the eagle flew away. Then she suckled her child, and after she had done suckling it she put it upon her back. When she had finished hoeing, she left off work and returned to the village.

On her arrival there, she did not tell her husband of the marvel which she had seen but kept it to herself. The next morning, the woman again went to work in the field with her child. The same thing happened—once again she laid the child to sleep in the shade. After a time the child cried. Then she beheld the eagle alight on the child and quiet it. The woman was amazed and said, "What is that eagle doing? It is sitting upon my child, but it neither bites nor scratches it—no, and then the child is quiet. Truly an astounding thing!" Once again the woman went to her child. When the eagle saw her coming, it flew off and went to sit on a tree. The woman took her child and was greatly alarmed.

She returned to the village and, on her arrival, told her husband about it, saying, "A great marvel!"

Her husband asked, "What about?"

The woman said, "Today is the second day I have seen the most amazing thing there where I hoe. I put my child to sleep in the shade, and as soon as it cried an eagle came, and when it alighted it stooped over the child and soothed it with its wings. Today is the second day that I have seen that bird act thus. Its name is 'eagle.' "

Thereupon the husband refused to believe her, saying, "No, you are lying; there never was such a thing." The wife said no more.

Late in the afternoon the woman took her hoe and went to work in the field. On her arrival she laid her child in the shade. The child cried. There-

upon the woman thought, "Now I will go and call my husband, who disputed my word and said that I lied." So the woman ran. When she arrived where her husband was, she cried, "Come on! It is you who disputed, saying there never was such a thing. Let us go now and see."

The man took his bow and three arrows. On his arrival at the field, the woman said to him:

"Sit down here. I will put the child to sleep in the shade yonder, and then, when you see the bird coming, hide yourself." The woman left the child and went some distance away, and the man hid himself there. Then the child cried very loudly. As the man watched, he saw the eagle come and sit upon the child. Then the man was greatly alarmed and charged his bow with two arrows, that he might pierce the eagle sitting on his child. Then he shot, but at that moment the eagle dodged, and both arrows pierced his child.

Now that is the explanation of the origin of murder. The eagle was a kind person; nevertheless the father of the child wished to kill it. Then the eagle cursed him, and said, "Now is kindness among men at an end, because you killed your child. Beginning with you, and going on to all people, you shall kill each other."

To this day people kill each other.

[BAILA]

70

The Fat Woman Who Melted Away

THERE WAS ONCE a very fat woman who was made of oil. She was very beautiful and many young men applied to her parents for permission to marry her and offered a dowry; but the mother always refused. She said it was impossible for her daughter to work on a farm as she would melt in the sun. At last a stranger from a far-distant country fell in love with the fat woman, and he promised, if her mother would give her to him, that he would keep her in the shade. At last the mother agreed, and he took his wife away.

When he arrived at his house, his other wife immediately became very jealous because when there was work to be done, firewood to be collected, or water to be carried, the fat woman stayed at home and never helped, as she was frightened of the heat.

One day when the husband was absent, the jealous wife abused the fat woman so much that she finally agreed to go and work on the farm, although her little sister, whom she had brought from home with her, implored her not to go, reminding her that their mother had always told them, ever since they were born, that she would melt away if she went into the sun.

All the way to the farm the fat woman managed to keep in the shade. When they arrived at the farm the sun was very hot, so the fat woman remained in the shade of a big tree. As soon as the jealous wife saw this, she again began to abuse her and asked her why she did not do her share of the work. At last she could stand the nagging no longer and, although her little sister tried very hard to prevent her, the fat woman went out into the sun to work and immediately she began to melt away. Very soon there was nothing left of her but one big toe which had been covered by a leaf. This her little sister observed and, with tears in her eyes, she picked up the toe which was all that remained of the fat woman, and, having covered it carefully with leaves, she placed it in the bottom of her basket. As soon as she arrived at the house, the little sister placed the toe in an earthen pot, filled it with water, and covered the top up with clay.

When the husband returned, he said, "Where is my fat wife?" and the little sister, crying bitterly, told him that the jealous woman had made her go out into the sun and that she had melted away. She then showed him the

pot with the remains of her sister and told him that her sister would come to life again in three months' time quite complete in body, but that he must send away the jealous wife, so that there should be no more trouble. If he refused to do this, the little girl said she would take the pot back to their mother, and when her sister became complete again, they would remain at home.

The husband then took the jealous wife back to her parents who sold her as a slave and paid the dowry back to the husband, so that he could get another wife. When he received the money, the husband took it home and kept it until the three months had elapsed. Then the little sister opened the pot and the fat woman emerged, quite as fat and beautiful as she had been before. The husband was so delighted that he gave a feast to all his friends and neighbours and told them the whole story of the bad behaviour of his jealous wife.

Ever since that time, whenever a wife behaves very badly, the husband returns her to her parents, who sell the woman as a slave. Out of the proceeds of the sale they give the husband the amount of dowry which he paid when he married the girl.

[EFIK-IBIBIO]

71

The Cherry-Pickers

ONCE UPON A TIME some girls went to pick cherries, and one of them said to one of her comrades, "Let us pick cherries with our eyes shut." Now the rest of her comrades picked without shutting their eyes, and they picked red cherries, but she picked hers unripe. And she said, "Girls, let us open our eyes," and she saw that the cherries of her comrades were red. So she said, "My comrades, wait: let me go and pick some good cherries." And her comrades said, "Go." However they deceived her and went their ways and defecated. Then she asked, "Are you there?" And the dung replied, "We are." But it was the dung which replied. So she tried to follow her comrades and sang:

"*I went with those girls: they left me*
at the cherries.
They made me stay on the dung and on
the rock,
The dung cried ah-loo-rookok,
Ah-loo-rookok *was cried on the rock.*"

After a while she came to a marsh, and the marsh caused her to trip and fall and upset her cherries. But the marsh gave her a fish in exchange for her cherries. So the girl sang:

"*Behold, this marsh upsets my cherries:*
My cherries I got on the rock, where
the girls left me:
I went with those girls: they left me
at the cherries.
They made me stay on the dung and on the rock,
The dung cried ah-loo-rookok,
Ah-loo-rookok *was cried on the rock.*"

The marsh then gave her another fish, but a kite snatched the fish away. So the girl sang:

"*Behold, this kite snatches my fish:*
My fish I got from that marsh which upset
my cherries:

My cherries I got on the rock, where
the girls left me:
I went with those girls: they left me
at the cherries.
They made me stay on the dung and on the rock.
The dung cried ah-loo-rookok,
Ah-loo-rookok *was cried on the rock.*"

Then the kite gave her a feather. And the girl went along and found a boy who was dancing with a spray of grass. The boy saw that the feather was pretty and tried to grab the feather, and it was badly broken. So the girl sang:

"*Behold, this boy breaks my feather:*
My feather I got from that kite that snatched
my fish:
My fish I got from that marsh which upset
my cherries:
My cherries I got on the rock, where
the girls left me:
I went with those girls: they left me
at the cherries.
They made me stay on the dung and on the rock.
The dung cried ah-loo-rookok,
Ah-loo-rookok *was cried on the rock.*"

So the boy thereupon gave her a withe. The girl went on and came upon a place where a man hit his cow with his penis. The girl laughed at him. "Why do you hit your cow with your penis? Have you no stick?" So the man seized her withe and hit his cow with it and the withe broke. Then the girl sang:

"*Behold, this man breaks my withe:*
My withe I got from the boy who broke my feather:
My feather I got from that kite that snatched
my fish:
My fish I got from that marsh which upset
my cherries:
My cherries I got on the rock, where
the girls left me:
I went with those girls: they left me
at the cherries.
They made me stay on the dung and on the rock,
The dung cried ah-loo-rookok,
Ah-loo-rookok *was cried on the rock.*"

The man gave her milk and she went on. Next the girl found a place where the children drank cattle-dung. There the children tried to take her milk, and upset it all. So the girl sang:

"Behold, these children upset my milk:
My milk I got from the man who broke my withe:
My withe I got from that boy who broke my feather:
My feather I got from that kite that snatched
my fish:
My fish I got from that marsh which upset
my cherries:
My cherries I got on the rock, where
the girls left me:
I went with those girls: they left me
at the cherries.
They made me stay on the dung and on the rock,
The dung cried ah-loo-rookok,
Ah-loo-rookok *was cried on the rock."*

The children gave her a razor. And next the girl found a place where they shave their heads with a potsherd, and she laughed. "Why do you shave with a potsherd?" Thereupon the man seized her razor and the razor broke. So the girl sang:

"Behold, this man breaks my razor:
My razor I got from those children who upset
my milk:
My milk I got from that man who broke my withe:
My withe I got from that boy who broke my feather:
My feather I got from that kite that snatched
my fish:
My fish I got from that marsh which upset
my cherries:
My cherries I got on the rock where
the girls left me:
I went with those girls: they left me
at the cherries.
They made me stay on the dung and on the rock,
The dung cried ah-loo-rookok,
Ah-loo-rookok *was cried on the rock."*

These people gave her a cow. Thereupon the girl went on and found a place where they eat bones with the dogs, and she said, "Take this cow and eat it." Then they killed her cow and ate it, they and their children. So the girl sang:

"Behold, these men kill my cow:
My cow I got from that man who broke my razor:
My razor I got from those children who upset
my milk:
My milk I got from that man who broke my withe:
My withe I got from that boy who broke my feather:
My feather I got from that kite that snatched
my fish:
My fish I got from that marsh that upset
my cherries:
My cherries I got on the rock, where
the girls left me:
I went with those girls: they left me
at the cherries.
They made me stay on the dung and on the rock,
The dung cried ah-loo-rookok,
Ah-loo-rookok *was cried on the rock."*

They gave her a dog in exchange for her cow. But the dog killed a man, and they arrested her as the owner of the dog. And the girl said, "Take me to the pasturage that I may defecate." And they told her, "Go aside here." But she said, "My dung smells offensive: let me go aside at a distance." So she escaped from there, fearing vengeance for the man whom the dog had killed.

[LANGO]

72

Ngomba's Basket

FOUR LITTLE GIRLS one day started to go out fishing. One of them was suffering sadly from sores which covered her from head to foot. Her name was Ngomba. The other three, after a little consultation, agreed that Ngomba should not accompany them, and they told her to go back.

"Nay," said Ngomba, "I will do no such thing. I mean to catch fish for mother as well as you."

Then the three girls beat Ngomba until she ran away. But she determined to catch fish also, so she walked and walked, she hardly knew whither, until at last she came to a large lake. Here she commenced fishing and singing:

"*If my mother*
[She catches a fish and puts it in her basket]
Had taken care of me
[She catches another fish and puts it in her basket]
I should have been with them
[She catches another fish and puts it in her basket]
And not here alone."
[She catches another fish and puts it in her basket]

But a murderer, a *mpunia*, had for some time been watching her, and now he came up to her and accosted her:

"What are you doing here?"

"Fishing. Please, don't kill me! See, I am full of sores, but I can catch plenty of fish."

The *mpunia* watched her as she fished and sang:

"*Oh, I shall surely die!*
[She catches a fish and puts it in her basket]
Mother, you will never see me!
[She catches another fish and puts it in her basket]
But I don't care
[She catches another fish and puts it in her basket]
For no one cares for me."
[She catches another fish and puts it in her basket]

"Come with me," said the *mpunia.*
"Nay, this fish is for mother, and I must take it to her."
"If you do not come with me, I will kill you."

"Oh! Am I to die
[She catches a fish and puts it in her basket]
On the top of my fish?
[She catches another fish and puts it in her basket]
If mother had loved me
[She catches another fish and puts it in her basket]
To live I should wish."
[She catches another fish and puts it in her basket]

"Take me and cure me, dear *mpunia,* and I will serve you."

The *mpunia* took her to his home in the woods and cured her. Then he placed her in the paint-house and married her.

Now the *mpunia* was very fond of dancing, and Ngomba danced beautifully, so that he loved her very much and made her mistress over all his prisoners and goods.

"When I go out for a walk," he said to her, "I will tie this string round my waist; and that you may know when I am still going away from you, or returning, the string will be stretched tight as I depart, and will hang loose as I return."

Now Ngomba pined for her mother and, therefore, entered into a conspiracy with her people to escape. She sent them every day to cut the leaves of the *mateva* palm and ordered them to put the leaves in the sun to dry. Then she set them to work to make a huge *ntenda.* When the *mpunia* returned, he remarked to her that the air was heavy with the smell of *mateva.*

Now Ngomba had made all her people put on clean clothes, and when they knew that the *mpunia* was returning, she ordered them to come to him and flatter him. So now they approached him, some calling him "father" and others "uncle"; others told him how he was a father and a mother to them. And he was very pleased and danced with them.

The next day when the *mpunia* returned, he again said he smelt *mateva.*

Then Ngomba cried, and told him that he was both father and mother to her and that, if he accused her of smelling of *mateva,* she would kill herself.

He could not endure this sadness, so he kissed her and danced with her until all was forgotten.

The next day Ngomba determined to try her *ntenda,* and to see if it would float in the air. Four women lifted it high and gave it a start upwards, and it floated beautifully. Now the *mpunia* happened to be up in a tree, and he espied this great *ntenda* floating in the air; and he danced and sang for joy, and wished to call Ngomba, that she might dance with him.

That night he smelt *mateva* again, and his suspicions were fully aroused. When he thought how easily his wife might escape him, he determined to

kill her. Accordingly, he gave her some palm wine to drink which he had drugged. She drank it, and she slept as he put his *sommo* into the fire. He meant to kill her by pushing this red-hot wire up her nose.

But when he was almost ready, Ngomba's little sister, who had changed herself into a cricket and hidden herself under the bed, began to sing. The *mpunia* heard her and felt forced to join in and dance, and thus he forgot to kill his wife. But, after a time, the cricket ceased singing, and then he began to heat the wire again. The cricket then sang again, and again the *mpunia* danced and danced, and in his excitement he tried to wake Ngomba to dance also. But she refused to awaken, telling him that the medicine he had given her made her feel sleepy. Then the *mpunia* went out to get some palm wine, and as he went Ngomba drowsily asked him if he had made the string fast. He called all his people, dressed himself, and made them all dance.

The cock crew. The iron wire was still in the fire. Then the *mpunia* made his wife get up and fetch more palm wine.

Then the cock crew again, and it was daylight.

When the *mpunia* had left her in the morning, Ngomba determined to escape that very day. She called her people and made them try the *ntenda* again. When she was certain that it would float, she put all her people and the *mpunia*'s ornaments into it. Then she got in and the *ntenda* began to float away over the tree-tops in the direction of her mother's town.

When the *mpunia,* who was up a tree, saw it coming toward him, he danced and sang for joy, and only wished that his wife had been there to see this huge *ntenda* flying through the air. It passed just over his head and then he saw plainly that the people in it were his people. So he ran after it in the tops of the trees until he saw it drop in Ngomba's town. And he determined to go there also and claim his wife.

The *ntenda* floated round the house of Ngomba's mother, and astonished all the people there, and finally settled down in front of it. Ngomba cried to the people to come and let them out. But they were afraid and did not dare, so that she came out herself and presented herself to her mother.

Her relations at first did not recognize her, but after a little while they fell upon her and welcomed her as their long-lost Ngomba.

Then the *mpunia* entered the town and claimed Ngomba as his wife.

"Yes," her relations said, "she is your wife, and you must be thanked for curing her of her sickness."

While some of her relations were entertaining the *mpunia,* others were preparing a place for him and his wife to be seated. They made a large fire, and boiled a great quantity of water, and dug a deep hole in the ground. This hole they covered over with sticks and a mat. When all was ready they led the *mpunia* and his wife to it and requested them to be seated. Ngomba sat near her husband, who, as he sat down, fell into the hole. The relations then brought boiling water and fire, and threw this over him until he died.

[BAKONGO]

73

The Beautiful Girl Who Had No Teeth

THERE WAS ONCE a man who had three sons, none of whom had a wife. One day the father went out to see if he could find a suitable girl for his eldest son, and he found a beautiful girl at a village nearby. That night, when he returned home, he called his eldest son and said, "I have found a beautiful girl for you, and tomorrow I want you to take the cattle to her father."

Early next morning the son went out with five of the best cattle and presented them to the girl's father. On his arrival the girl took his sticks and the young boys took the cattle to the kraal. The girl's father then said, "Have you come to take my daughter?" To this the man replied that he had. The girl's father then called his daughter and said, "Here is your husband, you must go with him to his home today."

The girl replied that she was ready, and she and the man departed together for his home. On the road home the girl began to sing:

"I am a beautiful girl but I have no teeth."

Her husband became alarmed and said, "Open your mouth that I may see if what you say is true." To his surprise he found that what she said was true and that she had only a black ridge where her teeth should have been.

The husband then said, "I was not told of this, and I must return you to your father." They returned to the girl's home and there the husband demanded the return of his cattle as his wife had no teeth. The cattle were returned and the disappointed man went home. On his arrival his father asked, "Where is the girl, my son?"

The son replied, "I could not bring her home because she had no teeth."

The second son, on hearing this, asked his father, "May I not go myself to see if the girl has no teeth, because I too want a wife?" The father agreed, and the next day the second son set off with the five head of cattle. Presenting them to the girl's father, he said, "I have come for your daughter. I have come early so that I need not sleep here tonight but may return home with your daughter this evening."

The man informed his daughter of the wishes of the young suitor and the girl replied, "Very well, but I must first give my husband some food." After

the meal the girl suggested that they depart at once, and they proceeded along the road. When she and the second son reached the same place on the road as before the girl began to sing:

"I am a beautiful girl but I have no teeth."

On hearing this the young man asked her to open her mouth that he might see for himself. To his surprise he found that what she said was true and he immediately returned her to her father. "Here is your daughter," he said, "she has no teeth and I want my cattle returned." The girl's father sadly agreed, and the second son returned to his home.

On his return his father said, "Where is the girl?"

The son replied, "I thought my brother was lying, but it is true. She has no teeth and I returned her to her father."

The youngest son now rose and asked his father if he might go and see for himself, and the father agreed.

The eldest brother asked in disgust, "Do you think that we are mad and stupid because we left the girl?"

"No, no," answered the youngest brother, "but I should like to see a girl who has no teeth."

The next day the youngest brother took the cattle and went to the girl's kraal, where he presented the cattle and asked for the girl. The old man, seeing such a young man, said, "You are very young to want a wife and, besides, both your brothers tried but returned my daughter. However, you may take her if you so wish." Calling his daughter, he told her she must return with this new man to his home. The girl agreed and, after first giving her new husband some food, they proceeded down the road.

At the same place as before the girl again sang:

"I am beautiful but I have no teeth."

"Open your mouth," said the young man anxiously. On seeing the black ridge within her mouth he showed some surprise, but only said, "Never mind, let us go on our way." Arriving at a river the girl began to sing the same song, but the young man said nothing. When in the middle of the stream, he called to the girl to come near to him and, clasping her tightly by the neck with one hand, he told her to open her mouth; with the other hand he scrubbed the girl's mouth with sand.

To his joy he found that beneath the coating of black shone forth a set of beautiful teeth, and, filled with happiness, he brought his wife to his father's kraal. The other two brothers on seeing the girl, rushed to their father saying, "Come father, come and see your mad son, he has brought this girl home, although she is even now singing her song about her teeth."

The father came, but said nothing, and the youngest brother called one of his sisters and told her to take his newly acquired wife to his mother's hut. The girls of the village who had heard about this strange girl gathered about

her and began to make jokes, so that when the newcomer laughed they might see if the story about her teeth were true. To their surprise they found that the girl had very good teeth.

Meanwhile the youngest son told his father that he had brought the girl home as his wife. The father was disappointed. "Yes, my son," he said, "that's all very well, but you have lost all my cattle. What can we do with this girl? I hear she has no teeth and therefore cannot eat." The son did not reply, for at that moment his sister came in and told her father that the newcomer had teeth, for she had seen them. The father said, "Are you sure?" Being convinced that it was so, he went to his son and said, "Very well, my son, we shall see your wife tomorrow."

The next day the father entered the hut where the girl was and said, "I want you to open your mouth. I will give you a sheep for this favour." The girl did as she was bid and the man saw for himself that she had teeth. The woman in whose hut the girl rested then trilled with her lips, and all three went out to the main yard, where the father called the elder sons and said, "What stupid boys you are! Look, this girl has fine teeth, and it has fallen to your youngest brother to find this out and to take her to wife."

The two eldest brothers became very ashamed and would not look at the girl. A few days later large pots of beer were made and all the friends and neighbours came to pay their respects to the new arrival. All spoke of her beauty and her excellent teeth, but the two brothers never saw for themselves, their shame being too great.

The story is finished.

[BAVENDA]

74

The Girl Who Was Sacrificed by Her Kin and Whom Her Lover Brought Back from Below

THE SUN WAS VERY HOT and there was no rain, so the crops died and hunger was great. This happened one year; and it happened again a second, and even a third year, that the rain failed. The people all gathered together on the great open space on the hilltop, where they were wont to dance, and they said to each other, "Why does the rain delay in coming?" And they went to the Medicine-Man and they said to him, "Tell us why there is no rain, for our crops have died, and we shall die of hunger."

And he took his gourd and poured out its contents. This he did many times; and at last he said, "There is a maiden here who must be bought if rain is to fall, and the maiden is named Wanjiru. The day after tomorrow let all of you return to this place, and every one of you from the eldest to the youngest bring with him a goat for the purchase of the maiden."

On the day after the morrow, old men and young men all gathered together, and each brought in his hand a goat. Now they all stood in a circle, and the relations of Wanjiru stood together, and she herself stood in the middle. As they stood there, the feet of Wanjiru began to sink into the ground, and she sank in to her knees and cried aloud, "I am lost!"

Her father and mother also cried and exclaimed, "We are lost!"

Those who looked on pressed close and placed goats in the keeping of Wanjiru's father and mother. Wanjiru sank lower to her waist, and again she cried aloud, "I am lost, but much rain will come!"

She sank to her breast; but the rain did not come. Then she said again, "Much rain will come."

Now she sank in to her neck, and then the rain came in great drops. Her people would have rushed forward to save her, but those who stood around pressed upon them more goats, and they desisted.

Then Wanjiru said, "My people have undone me," and she sank down to her eyes. As one after another of her family stepped forward to save her, someone in the crowd would give to him or her a goat, and he would fall back. And Wanjiru cried aloud for the last time, "I am undone, and my own people have done this thing." Then she vanished from sight; the earth closed

over her, and the rain poured down, not in showers, as it sometimes does, but in a great deluge, and all the people hastened to their own homes.

Now there was a young warrior who loved Wanjiru, and he lamented continually, saying, "Wanjiru is lost, and her own people have done this thing." And he said, "Where has Wanjiru gone? I will go to the same place." So he took his shield and spear. And he wandered over the country day and night until, at last, as the dusk fell, he came to the spot where Wanjiru had vanished. Then he stood where she had stood and, as he stood, his feet began to sink as hers had sunk; and he sank lower and lower until the ground closed over him, and he went by a long road under the earth as Wanjiru had gone and, at length, he saw the maiden. But, indeed, he pitied her sorely, for her state was miserable, and her raiment had perished. He said to her, "You were sacrificed to bring the rain; now the rain has come, and I shall take you back." So he took Wanjiru on his back as if she had been a child and brought her to the road he had traversed, and they rose together to the open air, and their feet stood once more on the ground.

Then the warrior said, "You shall not return to the house of your people, for they have treated you shamefully." And he bade her wait until nightfall. When it was dark he took her to the house of his mother and he asked his mother to leave, saying that he had business, and he allowed no one to enter.

But his mother said, "Why do you hide this thing from me, seeing I am your mother who bore you?" So he suffered his mother to know, but he said, "Tell no one that Wanjiru has returned."

So she abode in the house of his mother. He and his mother slew goats, and Wanjiru ate the fat and grew strong. Then of the skins they made garments for her, so that she was attired most beautifully.

It came to pass that the next day there was a great dance, and her lover went with the throng. But his mother and the girl waited until everyone had assembled at the dance, and all the road was empty. Then they came out of the house and mingled with the crowd. When the relations saw Wanjiru, they said, "Surely, that is Wanjiru whom we had lost."

And they pressed to greet her, but her lover beat them off, for he said, "You sold Wanjiru shamefully."

Then she returned to his mother's house. But on the fourth day her family again came and the warrior repented, for he said, "Surely they are her father and her mother and her brothers."

So he paid them the purchase price, and he wedded Wanjiru who had been lost.

[AKIKUYU]

75

The Wicked Girl and Her Punishment

THERE WAS ONCE a certain girl who loved a youth, but her parents said that they would not give her to him in marriage. He was always coming and begging them to let him marry her, but they would say, "We shall not give her to you."

Now one day the girl came to him and said, "I have come to you to ask you to give me your knife so that I may go and kill my mother. Then we can run away to some other town and be married."

But he said, "No, no, we must not do that."

Again she came and said, "Give me your knife, that I may go and kill my mother."

But again he replied, "No, no, you must not kill your mother because of me." And he continued: "Go home and stay there. Those who can give your parents presents can give you some also."

Five days passed and then the girl asked, "Will you give me your knife to cut pumpkins?"

Now the boy had forgotten, and he pulled out his knife and gave it to her, and immediately upon receiving it, she went and cut her mother's throat. Then she ran to the youth and said, "Now, you see I have done it. If we do not flee, you and I will be killed. Look at the blood on your knife; I have cut my mother's throat with it."

So they started off. The youth took a bow and arrows and sent the girl in front of him, and they escaped from the city.

They pressed on and on toward the forest. They slept there that night and the next morning they pushed on again. When they reached the centre of the forest, the girl was seized with an internal pain, and she fell down and died. Then the youth drew out one of his arrows and fitted it to the bow and stood and guarded her body.

Soon the beasts of the forest all assembled to eat her, but he would not allow them to do so, but said that nothing should touch her unless he should first be killed.

The eagle came and alighted in front of the youth and said, "Let us feast." But he said, "No, no, did I not promise that I would not leave her? Shall I allow you to eat her body?"

The eagle replied, "Do not put your trust in women, they are not truthful."

But the youth said, "I do not agree, I trust this one."

Then the eagle said, "Have you a flask?"

And the youth said, "I have."

The eagle said, "Give me it," and he took it and flew off.

Soon he returned with water in the flask and said, "Have you a knife?" And the youth said, "Yes."

Then the eagle said, "Separate her teeth." And he plucked out two feathers from his wings and stirred them around in the water. So the girl's mouth was opened, the water was poured in, and immediately the girl rose up.

Then the eagle said to the youth, "See these feathers—keep them, some day when you have gone to another city and have obtained something to eat, you will repay us for our feast which we have lost today."

So the youth and the girl went off again and reached a city. They came to the house of an old woman which they entered, and they remained there until the afternoon. They even slept there.

The next morning they heard weeping, and they were told that the king's mother had died. Then the youth arose and said, "Let me go and see what can be done." So he started off and came to where the death had taken place, and when he had come, he went up to a man and said, "Can you obtain for me an interview with the king?"

"The king's heart is broken," the man replied. "Is anyone going to bother him now?"

But another one said, "Here, do you know what his business is? Go and ask the king indeed."

And the king, when he heard, said, "Tell the youth to come."

So he was summoned, and he came and said, "If I bring your mother back to life, what will you give me?"

Then one of the attendants said, "Have you ever seen anyone who has died come back to life?"

But the king said, "Leave him alone, perhaps he has some magic," and he continued, addressing the youth, "I will give you ten slaves." He said, "See, this house also will I give you, and these horses."

So the youth said, "Very well, bring me water in a flask." And water was obtained and brought to him.

Then he walked around to the back of the house and stirred the eagle's feathers in the water and brought it back, and said, "Now open the king's mother's mouth." Immediately after the water had been poured down her throat, she rose up and remained alive, so the youth's presents were brought and given to him. Then he returned to his house and remained in the town and, whenever anyone died, someone would come and summon him to give the dead person the charm so as to bring him back to life again.

Now after a time, one of the king's slaves made the girl fall in love with

him, and he said, "Look here, girl, since we know each other so well, will you not give me your husband's charm?"

And she said, "Very well." So when she went to bed and her husband talked, she remained silent; when he asked her anything, she did not reply.

Then her husband said, "What is the matter with you?"

And she replied, "Well, we have been together for some time now, but you have got something which you are keeping secret from me; you are always hiding it." Then he said, "Is it only that which has made you so quiet? Well, here it is; keep it for me." And he gave the girl the eagle's feathers. No sooner had she received them than she took a waterpot and said that she was going to the river for water. But instead of doing so, she went and gave the feathers to the king's slave who took them to his house.

Soon afterward, another death took place in the king's family and the youth was summoned as usual. He came and said to his wife, "Where is the thing which I gave you to keep for me?"

And she replied, "It is here somewhere, I put it just here."

They looked but did not find it; they looked again but did not find it.

Now the king's slave went and said to the king, "If I make him rise up again, how much will you give me?"

The king replied, "Everything that you want I will give you."

So the slave said, "Very well," and he made the dead man rise up.

When he had done this, the king's slave asked that the youth should be seized and given to him for a slave. The king said, "Very well, go and seize him."

So he went and caught the youth and took his wife for himself. The king's slave bound the youth and put handcuffs on him and took him to the forest and made him clear the ground.

Some time later the eagle came to where he was and said: "Where is that which you promised me? I told you that the woman was not faithful, but you said she was. Now let me do you another good turn. Tonight, hold your leg irons up to your thighs and go into the city and find me a cat." So the youth went and found a cat, and he returned and hid the cat until daybreak.

Then the eagle came again and said, "The reason we sought you, O Cat, is that we want you to get us a mouse."

The cat said, "Very well," and immediately she ran in where the youth had been cutting wood and caught a mouse.

Then the eagle said, "O Cat, and you, O Mouse, you know the smell of my feathers. Take the road, go into the city, and enter the house of the king's slave, and if the mouse sees any feathers, you, O Cat, take them and bring them here."

The cat and the mouse went to the city and entered the house of the king's slave. The mouse looked everywhere, in the pots, in the quiver, but did not

see the feathers, and he went outside to the cat, and said, "I cannot see them."

Then the cat said, "Return, go and look again." And the cat entered and cried out "*Miyau.*"

Then the sleepers said, "Thank goodness! She will catch that mouse which has prevented our sleeping." So they went to sleep, both the king's slave and his wife.

Then the mouse came and sniffed at the slave's mouth and saw where the feathers were, and he said to the cat, "Here they are! I see them!"

"Where do you see them?" asked the cat.

The mouse replied, "In his mouth."

Then the cat said, "Very well, go and bite him."

The mouse went and bit the slave, and he went *poof*. The feathers fell out of his mouth and the cat caught them and took them to the youth in the forest.

The next morning the eagle came again and said, "Where are they?"

The youth replied, "See them."

Then the eagle said, "Good! but let us have another understanding. Some day you must pay me back for my feast which I gave up."

Now it happened that on the next day one of the king's sons became ill and died, and the king's slave was sent for and told to work his magic. But he said that he had lost his charm.

Then the king said, "Summon the other one to come. Here is a horse, go quickly and bring the one who is in the forest." The youth was sent for quickly and was brought and when he had come, the king said, "See, we have summoned you. May God cause your power to return to you."

"How can one who lives out in the forest obtain magic?" asked the youth.

But the king said, "For God's sake, help us."

Then the youth said, "Very well, but what will you give me?"

The king replied, "Everything that is in the slave's house I will give you."

Then the youth prepared his charm and raised up the dead man, and the king said, "Go and seize the slave."

The youth went and caught the slave and his wife; he undid his own handcuffs and put them on the slave; he took another pair and put them on the wife; and then he took them to the place where he had been cutting wood and said that they were to stack it all in one place. Then he called to the eagle, telling him to come; and when he had arrived, the youth said, "Go, assemble all your relatives; tomorrow we shall meet at the clearing."

The next morning the eagles came together, all the birds assembled, and all the beasts of the forest also came. When all had arrived, the youth said, "Now set fire to the pile." So they set fire to it. The fire consumed all the wood and left a great mass of embers. Then he said to the slave and his wife, "Get up and fall into the fire." But they refused. Then he told his attendants

to get up and drag them in; and they threw them into the fire. Every time that they got out, they were thrown in again, and at last they were cooked. The youth told the attendants to pull the bodies out of the fire to put them out in the open.

Then he said, "Eagle!"

And the bird replied "*Um!*"

"Now, see, here is your feast," the youth said, and then he mounted his horse and returned to the city.

It is certainly true that women are not to be trusted.

[HAUSA]

76

The Old Woman Who Stole Milk

THERE WAS IN TIMES of long ago a certain old woman; she was living with her daughter; she was the mother-in law. Her son-in-law offered her *amasi,* telling her to eat; for there was not much food, it was a famine. She refused the *amasi.* He offered her a cow, telling her to eat the milk: she refused, saying she could not eat the milk of her son-in-law.

In the digging season she was very hungry; she was in the habit of returning home at noon, and she would open her son-in-law's house, and pour out the *amasi* and eat it. But when the sun had set, her son-in-law said, speaking to his wife, "Go home and boil some maize, that we may mix it with the *amasi,* for the calabash is now full." On their arrival she boiled maize, and made a soft mass; the husband went and took the calabash; he found it empty; there was now nothing but whey in it. They and their children cried, being hungry; and the mother-in-law said, "My children's children will die, for a thief is eating their milk, through this great famine." The old woman did thus at all times. But the husband and wife did not know that the milk was taken by their mother.

One day the husband lay in wait, and caught their mother; but their mother cried, saying, "I did it for the first time this very day." Her son-in-law said, "Go and fetch for me water at a place where no frog cries; and I will not expose you to the people."

He gave her a water-vessel. She went on and on for a long time, passing many rivers; she came to rivers which she did not know; she asked, "Is there any frog here?" A frog answered, "*Khhwe,* I am here." She passed on, and came to another place; she saw a pool; she went to it and dipped water; a frog said, "*Khhwe,* I am here." She poured it out. She travelled acting thus, and the frogs answering in like manner, for there were frogs in every pool. She came to another pool and said, "Is there a frog here?" No frog answered. She sat down and dipped water. But when the vessel was nearly full (for it was a very large one), a frog said, "*Khhwe,* I am here." She poured out the water again, now crying and saying, "Woe is me, *mamo!* I merely took of my own accord the *amasi* of my son-in-law for food." She went on and came to a very great pool. There were many paths which went to the pool. She was afraid. There were many shady trees on the banks of the pool. She went

to the pool and sat down; she said, "Is there any frog here?" There was no answer. She repeated her question. There was no answer. She dipped water into the vessel; the vessel was very full. When it was full, she drank very much, until the vessel was empty. She dipped again till it was full; she drank; she was no longer able to drink the whole, she had a pain in the stomach, for she was unable to leave off drinking, it was so nice.

But when she wished to arise and depart, she was unable to arise; she dragged the water-vessel, and went into the shade, and sat down there, for she was unable to walk. At length it was noon; there came a rock-rabbit, and said, "Who is this sitting in the shade of the king?" She said, "It is I, father. I was about to depart; but my limbs failed me." The rock-rabbit said, "You will soon see Ugungqu-kubantwana." She went and drank at the pool, and returned to the shade. A duiker came and said, "Who is this sitting in the shade of the king?" She said, "It is I, father. I was about to depart, but my limbs failed me." The duiker said, "You will soon see Ugungqu-kubantwana." A leopard came and said, "Who is this sitting in the shade of the king?" She said, "It is I, father. I was about to depart, but my limbs failed me." The leopard said, "You will soon see Ugungqu-kubantwana." All animals came saying the same. And when at length it was about sunset, there came very many and great animals; all the animals said the same.

When the sun was setting, she heard a great noise—*gungqu, gungqu*. She was afraid and trembled. At length there appeared something greater than all the animals she had seen. When it appeared they all said with one accord, "This is Ugungqu-kubantwana." When it came in sight, while still at some distance, she said, "Who, who are you sitting in the shade of Ugungqu-kubantwana?" Then the old woman had no more any power to speak; it was now as though death had already come to her. Ugungqu-kubantwana asked a second time. The old woman replied, "It is I, my lord. I was thinking of departing, but my limbs failed me." She said, "You will soon see Ugungqu-kubantwana."

The creature went to the river; when she reached it, she knelt on her knees, and drank the pool; although it was very great, she drank until the mud at the bottom of the pool appeared. She then sat down. And there were oribis there, who were the officers of Ugungqu-kubantwana; there were also hyenas. Ugungqu-kubantwana said, "Let her be eaten." The hyenas agreed. But the oribis said, "She shall be eaten when she is fat, O chief." Again she said, "Let her be eaten." The oribis said, "It is now dark; she shall be eaten in the morning, O chief."

It was dark; they slept, and all the animals slept. But some animals put off sleeping because they wished that she should be eaten. At length it was midnight and all were asleep. But four oribis had not gone to sleep; they arose and took the old woman, and raised her and placed her on the back of three of them; the fourth oribi took the water-vessel. They ran during the night, and went and placed her on the border of her village. Then they re-

turned with speed, saying, then they should get back before morning. And truly they soon arrived at the pool again.

One said to the other, "What shall we do? Let us devise a plan, that it may not appear that it is we who have enabled her to flee." The others said, "Since the animals which like to eat men are the leopard, the lion, other wild beasts, and hyenas—" Then one said, "Let us smear mud on the hyenas, for it is they who like to eat men; and the chief will agree and say, 'They have taken the game of the chief, and gone and eaten it at a distance.' For if we smear the leopard it will feel (for it is a very wrathful creature) and awake, and all the people will awake, and the chief say, it is we who have taken away the game, and gone to eat it." So all the other oribis agreed. They went and smeared the mud on the legs of the hyenas; and when they had cleansed themselves they went and lay down where they had lain.

In the morning all the animals arose and said, "Where is the game of the chief? She will kill the oribis, it was they who objected to its being eaten." The oribis at once awoke, saying, "The chief will look at the feet of all the people. If they have not gone anywhere, they will be clean. But if they have gone, there will be seen mud on their feet and on their legs." The chief agreed, and said to the oribis, "Make haste at once, and look for the muddy legs, and let them be seized and brought to me." All the animals stood forth, and looked at each other; there was found mud on the hyenas. The oribis said, "It is the hyenas who have taken and eaten her, for they are animals which like to eat men." The hyenas were seized and taken to the chief. She seized the three hyenas, and ate them.

The old woman remained at the border of the kraal; at length she saw some one belonging to her home; he told her son-in-law; he went and fetched her and the water-vessel. The son-in-law continually drank the water which his mother-in-law had brought.

It came to pass on the day the water was finished the old woman said, "Since I went and fetched water, do you go and fetch for me the liver of an *ingogo*." Many loaves were made for him to eat on his journey, for it was a great way off. In the morning, carrying the loaves, he set out on his journey, sleeping in the open air; at length he arrived at the new moon, and found very many *izingogo*, leaping on the bank of a river, at play. He approached them, he too now running and now going on his hands and feet. The old *izingogo* said, "There is our *ingogo*." The young ones said, "What kind of *ingogo* is that, which has hair like a man; and little eyes like a man; and little ears like a man?" The old ones said, "It is an *ingogo:* by such and such things we see it is nought but an *ingogo;* by such and such things we see it is nought but an *ingogo;* by such and such things we see it is nought but an *ingogo*." So the little ones were silent. But when they were by themselves they laughed, saying, "That is not an *ingogo*." At length they returned to their homes.

On his arrival the man had noticed that there was at the kraal a grand-

mother, who was now old. In the morning the others said, "Go, fellow, we are going to hunt." He said, "I am tired; I shall not go today." All the old ones went; the young ones said, "Let us come home by and by, and find that you have already fetched firewood for cooking." The little ones said, "We do not like to leave our grandmother alone with the person who has come." So they went to hunt. At length they returned; on their arrival the little ones were sitting still; the old ones were angry, and said, "We are already come from hunting; but you have not been to fetch firewood." The little ones were silent. The game was cooked. They ate and lay down.

In the morning they said, "Let us go and hunt." He went with them. They went and hunted, and returned in the afternoon; they found the little ones too now returning from fetching wood. They cooked their game. The newly arrived *ingogo* said, when the game was dressed, "Just put aside a leg for me, for I have a pain in my stomach. I cannot just now eat meat." They assented, and put aside a leg for him. They lay down.

In the morning they asked him how his stomach was. He said, "It is still painful." They said, "Let us go and hunt." So they went, and he remained alone with the little ones. As soon as the hunters were gone, he said, "Do you go and fetch me some water from the river, that I may drink." They took a water-vessel and went with it. But the vessel leaked, having a hole in the bottom. They arrived at the river, and dipped water; the vessel leaked. They took a long time in returning from the river. But the moment they had gone, the *ingogo* arose and took a spear, and killed the grandmother of the *izingogo* who were absent. He cut open the chest and bowels; the liver appeared; he took it out; he looked on every side; he looked upwards and saw an *uvati;* he took it down and fled.

When the sun was setting the little *izingogo* returned; when they were in the lower part of the village, they saw much blood which had run on the path, now dry, for he had stabbed the old *ingogo* in the morning. They at once ran home; on their arrival they entered the house; but the house was very long, and not very light inside; they found their grandmother dead. They went out, running with all their might, crying, and looking in the direction whither they had gone to hunt. When they saw the old ones, the little ones cried out again and again, saying, "What kind of an *ingogo* is that who has eyes like a man?" The old ones said, "What has happened?" The little ones replied, "He has killed grandmother." They ran, they threw down their game; they carried their spears in their hands. They asked, "In what direction has the man gone who we thought was an *ingogo?*" The little ones said, "We saw him not; we had gone to fetch water; on our return we found grandmother dead; but saw no more of him."

They followed his track by the blood where it had gone dropping in the path. They ran; when it was dark they slept in the open country. In the morning they awoke and ran with all their might. When it was noon, the man who was carrying the liver looked and saw much dust behind him. He

ran very fast. But the real *izingogo* were more swift than he; for he was a man; they were animals. At midday they saw him. It was as though they flew through catching sight of him. He saw that they would soon catch him. He ascended a very long steep place; when he was at the top, they were reaching the bottom; he descended; he found very much long and thick grass; he took the *uvati*, and sat down, and churned it, and kindled a fire, and set the grass on fire; it surrounded the steep hill; the *izingogo* fled, for they feared the fire; they went back from the mountain by the way they came. And he ran forward until it was dark without seeing them.

He slept. In the morning he awoke and fled. That night he slept at another village on the high land. In the morning he awoke and ran. At noon he looked behind him, and saw the *izingogo* coming to him running. And those who had lagged behind, being tired, now when they saw him ran rapidly; it was again as if their fatigue was at an end. Again he saw they were about to catch him. He churned the *uvati*, and kindled fire, and burnt the grass: when they saw the fire burning, they halted. He ran and saw them no more; until he had slept twice in the way he did not see them. On the third day, the day he would reach his own people, he saw them at noon; they pursued him; he hastened and approached near the villages, and then they turned back.

The *izingogo* returned to their own home. On their arrival they took the grandmother, and boiled her in a large pot. They took a whole day cooking her. Until it was morning they kept up the fire, and during the morning they kept up the fire. At noon they took her out of the pot, and placed her on the feeding-mats; she remained there till she was cold. The old ones said to the little ones, "Let us eat your grandmother, then we shall not die." So they ate her up.

The son-in-law of the old woman reached his home; on his arrival he gave her the liver. She said, "You have done well, my child."

EXPLANATIONS BY THE ZULU NARRATOR

Ugungqu-kubantwana was so called because she was the mother of all animals, for she was their chief; and as regards the pool, the animals used to go to it first and drink, and leave water for her; for she could not drink first, for all the water would have been exhausted before the animals had drunk if she had drunk first; and as to her body, on one side there was a country, on the other rivers and great forests; but the rivers which were in her the animals did not like to drink, for they were like common water; that pool at which they all drank was, as it were, milk; therefore they did not drink at other rivers, they drank at the pool. She was called Ugungqu because when she was still at a distance she was heard coming, for when she was moving

there was heard a great noise, and they heard that she was coming by the *gungqu, gungqu.*

The *izingogo* were apparently men; but it came to pass by their own choice they lived in the open country, until they were called animals, for they lived in the open country, and therefore they ate man. But when there arrived a man who came from other men who practised the same habits as themselves, they rejoiced, saying, he too was an *ingogo,* because he did as they did. But the discernment of the children, who were now sharp, was greater than that of the older ones, for they were on their guard against him, saying, "It is not an *ingogo.*" And even though the old ones were angry and beat them, they denied notwithstanding they were beaten. They used to go and play on the bank of the river; on their arrival they contended by leaping, saying that he who could not leap was not an *ingogo;* the little ones leaped too; and if there came a man feigning to be an *ingogo,* they would go with him to the bank, and tell him to leap like them; for it is said, when they leaped they were light, because they ate red earth.

The *izingogos* used to go on all fours; they had tails; but they talked like men.

[ZULU]

77

The Wife Who Ate the Wrong Porridge

WHAT DO YOU THINK? This is what they did. They went looking for wives, saying, "Let us go and try to marry."

One of them went looking for a wife everywhere. Every one rejected him. At last he, too, like the others, succeeded in making a marriage such as it was.

Well! He brought his wife into the house.

Now, when he married her, he said, "Look here, woman, you will eat porridge of small millet, and no other."

"All right," answered the woman.

"And I," added the man, "I shall eat only kafir-corn porridge."

"All right," said the woman again.

So, after that, they simply ate porridge, the woman millet, the man kafir corn.

Alas! One day the woman, making a mistake, happened to eat the kafir-corn porridge. The man came. "You have eaten my porridge," he said, "yet I told you to eat only millet porridge." Whereupon he picked up an axe and struck the woman. Then he dragged her, drag! drag! drag! and went and threw her away to the west.

After that the man went alone, wandering about.

One day he said to himself, "We are going for a ramble in the bush." He went there and killed game. He then remembered that one woman had been left in the village over there. So he said to himself, "Let us go and marry her."

He went there, received her in marriage, brought her to his home, and said to her, "Look here! You know what killed my former mate. . . . Now don't you ever dare to eat kafir-corn porridge; you shall eat millet porridge, that's all."

"No fear," said the woman, "I shall eat no kafir-corn porridge."

The following day he thought of resuming his expedition to the bush. Leaving his bride alone in the hut, he said, "Now I shall have a walk into the bush." And away he went.

Well! At night when it was quite dark, the new bride heard the sound *kwe! kwe! kwe!* drag! drag! drag! "That must be," she thought, "the former wife, the one that was killed, struck with an axe!"

There she was already at the door, drag! drag! drag! Then she knocked *nku! nku! nku!* knock! knock! knock! Then a song in Ramba:

"*Open, open, little bird.*
Open, open, little bird.
O mother! Be satisfied with millet.
A little porridge of kafir corn is a little bird."

The new bride went to open for her. The old one dragged herself into the hut, and said:

"*Put it on the fire, put it on the fire, little bird.*
Put it on the fire, put it on the fire, little bird.
O mother! Be satisfied with millet.
A little porridge of kafir corn is a spirit."

The old wife herself went ahead and put the pot on the fire. They both then remained quiet. Did you ever! The pot boiled, and the new bride then clearly recognized the former one, and heard:

"*Stir the porridge, stir the porridge, little bird.*
Stir the porridge, stir the porridge, little bird.
O mother! Be satisfied with millet.
A little porridge of kafir corn is a spirit."

The old bride then got up herself to bring kafir-corn meal from the big jar, put it with her own hands in the pot, stirred and stirred her porridge, and then put it in a dish. Just imagine! She actually put two fingers into it, saying:

"*Let us eat, let us eat, little bird.*
Let us eat, let us eat, little bird.
O mother! Be satisfied with millet.
A little porridge of kafir corn is a spirit."

She just ate alone. Her new mate went so far as to put a finger into the porridge, but she did not eat. So the woman repeated:

"*Let us eat, let us eat, little bird.*
Let us eat, let us eat, little bird.
O mother! Be satisfied with millet.
A little porridge of kafir corn is a spirit."

She finished her porridge alone. Her mate had not said a word. The woman then moved away. There! She was going. Drag yourself! Drag yourself! Then she stopped at the door to say:

"*Shut behind me, shut behind me, little bird.*
Shut behind me, shut behind me, little bird.

O mother! Be satisfied with millet.
A little porridge of kafir corn is a spirit."

Now she was out! There she went toward her hole and buried herself in it.

The next day the man returned from the bush, and his wife came to meet him. "Dear me!" she said, "here in the hut where you have left me there is a thing which comes at night. It is impossible to sleep. It keeps one awake with songs."

"What is it like?" asked the man.

"You will see it tonight," answered the woman.

Night came. "Now," asked the man, "how about that thing you were speaking of?"

"We shall see it, sure enough," said the woman.

Then it was dark. The woman was already there. The people inside heard *kwe! kwe! kwe!* drag! drag! There she was already knocking at the door:

"*Open, open, little bird.*
Open, open, little bird.
O mother! Be satisfied with millet.
A little porridge of kafir corn is a spirit."

Heaven help us! The present wife moved to go and open the door. The husband caught hold of her. "Do not go!" he said.

"I will go," she said.

So the little woman got away from his grip and went to open the door. The first wife then came in, dragging herself along.

"*Put it on the fire, put it on the fire, little bird.*
Put it on the fire, put it on the fire, little bird.
O mother! Be satisfied with millet.
A little porridge of kafir corn is a spirit."

She put the pot on the fire, and then sat down. When the pot boiled, she said:

"*Stir the porridge, stir the porridge, little bird.*
Stir the porridge, stir the porridge, little bird.
O mother! Be satisfied with millet.
A little porridge of kafir corn is a spirit."

Then she herself stirred the porridge, took it out of the pot and put two fingers in it, singing:

"*Let us eat, let us eat, little bird.*
Let us eat, let us eat, little bird.
O mother! Be satisfied with millet.
A little porridge of kafir corn is a spirit."

Good gracious! She ate and ate her porridge. Then she again began to drag herself along, but this time in the direction of the bed, saying:

"Let us sleep, let us sleep, little bird.
Let us sleep, let us sleep, little bird.
O mother! Be satisfied with millet.
A little kafir corn porridge is a spirit."

She then began to stretch herself on the bed in which lay her husband who had struck her with an axe. Seeing that, the second little wife rushed outside.

When people came, the next morning, they found in the hut only a corpse, and this already swollen.

And this little story, too, that's all. It ends there.

[BENA MUKUNI]

78

The Twin Brothers

ONCE A WOMAN, after prolonged labour, gave birth to twins, both sons. And each one, as he was brought forth, came into this world with a valuable fetish. One the mother called Luemba, the other Mavungu. And they were almost full-grown at their birth, so that Mavungu, the first-born, wished to start upon his travels.

Now about this time the daughter of Nzambi was ready for marriage. The tiger came and offered himself in marriage; but Nzambi told him that he must speak to her daughter himself, as she should only marry the man of her choice. Then the tiger went to the girl and asked her to marry him, but she refused him. Then the gazelle, and the pig, and all created things that had breath, one after the other, asked the daughter in marriage; but she refused them all, saying that she did not love them. And they were all very sad.

Mavungu heard of this girl, and determined to marry her. And so he called upon his charm, and asked it to help him. He took some grass in his hands, and changed one blade of grass into a horn, another into a knife, another into a gun, and so on, until he was quite ready for the long journey.

Then he set out, and travelled and travelled, until at last hunger overcame him, when he asked his fetish whether it was true that he was going to be allowed to starve. The charm hastened to place a sumptuous feast before him, and Mavungu ate and was satisfied.

"Oh, fetish!" Mavungu said. "Are you going to leave these beautiful plates which I have used, for the use of any commoner that may come along?" The charm immediately caused all to disappear.

Then Mavungu travelled and travelled, until at length he became very tired, and had to ask his charm to arrange a place for him where he might sleep. And the charm saw to his comfort, so that he passed a peaceful night.

And after many days' weary travelling he at length arrived at Nzambi's town. And Nzambi's daughter saw Mavungu and straightway fell in love with him, and ran to her mother and father and cried, "I have seen the man I love, and I shall die if I do not marry him."

Then Mavungu sought out Nzambi, and told her that he had come to marry her daughter.

"Go and see her first," said Nzambi, "and if she will have you, you may marry her."

And when Mavungu and the daughter of Nzambi saw each other, they ran towards each other and loved one another.

They were led to a fine *shimbec;* and while all the people in the town danced and sang for gladness, Mavungu and the daughter of Nzambi slept there. And in the morning Mavungu noticed that the whole *shimbec* was crowded with mirrors, but that each mirror was covered so that the glass could not be seen. And he asked the daughter of Nzambi to uncover them, so that he might see himself in them. And she took him to one and opened it, and Mavungu immediately saw the perfect likeness of his native town. And she took him to another, and he there saw another town he knew; and thus she took him to all the mirrors save one, and this one she refused to let him see.

"Why will you not let me look into that mirror?" asked Mavungu.

"Because that is the picture of the town whence no man who arrives there returns."

"Do let me see it!" urged Mavungu.

At last the daughter of Nzambi yielded, and Mavungu looked hard at the reflected image of that terrible place.

"I must go there," he said.

"Nay, you will never return. Please don't go!" pleaded the daughter of Nzambi.

"Have no fear!" answered Mavungu. "My fetish will protect me."

The daughter of Nzambi cried very much, but could not move Mavungu from his purpose. Mavungu then left his newly-married wife, mounted his horse, and set off for the town from whence no man returns.

He travelled and travelled, until at last he came near to the town, when, meeting an old woman, he asked her for fire to light his pipe.

"Tie up your horse first, and come and fetch it."

Mavungu descended, and having tied his horse up very securely, he went to the woman for the fire; and when he had come near to her she killed him, so that he disappeared entirely.

Now Luemba wondered at the long absence of his brother Mavungu and determined to follow him. So he took some grass, and by the aid of *his* fetish changed one blade into a horse, another into a knife, another into a gun, and so on, until he was fully prepared for his journey. Then he set out and, after some days' journeying, arrived at Nzambi's town.

Nzambi rushed out to meet him, and calling him Mavungu, embraced him.

"Nay," said Luemba, "My name is not Mavungu; I am his brother, Luemba."

"Nonsense!" answered Nzambi. "You are my son-in-law, Mavungu." And straightway a great feast was prepared. Nzambi's daughter danced for joy and would not hear of his not being Mavungu. And Luemba was sorely troubled, and did not know what to do, as he was now sure that Nzambi's daughter was Mavungu's wife. And when night came, Nzambi's daughter

would sleep in Luemba's *shimbec;* but he appealed to his charm, and it enclosed Nzambi's daughter in a room, lifting her out of Luemba's room for the night and bringing her back in the early morning.

Luemba's curiosity, too, was aroused by the many closed mirrors that hung about the walls; so he asked Nzambi's daughter to let him look into them. And she showed him all excepting one. This she told him was the one that reflected the town whence no man returns. Luemba insisted upon looking into this one and when he had seen the terrible picture he knew that his brother was there.

Luemba determined to leave Nzambi's town for the town whence no man returns; and so after thanking them all for his kind reception, he set out. They all wept loudly, but were consoled by the fact that he had been there once already, and returned safely, so that he could of course return a second time. Luemba travelled and travelled, until he also came to where the old woman was standing, and asked her for fire.

She told him to tie up his horse and come to her to fetch it, but he tied his horse up only very lightly, and then fell upon the old woman and killed her.

Then he sought out his brother's bones and the bones of his horse, and put them together, and then touched them with his charm. And Mavungu and his horse came to life again. Then together they joined the bones of hundreds of people together and touched them with their charms, so that they all lived again. And they set off with all their followers to Nzambi's town. And Luemba told Mavungu how he had been mistaken for him by his father-in-law and wife, and how by the help of his charm he had saved his wife from dishonour. Mavungu thanked him, and said it was well.

But a quarrel broke out between the two brothers about the followers. Mavungu said they were his, because he was the elder; but Luemba said that they belonged to him, because he had given Mavungu and them all life. Mavungu then fell upon Luemba and killed him; but his horse remained by his body. Mavungu then went on his way to Nzambi's town and was magnificently welcomed.

Now Luemba's horse took his charm and touched Luemba's body, so that he lived again. Then Luemba mounted his horse and sought out his brother Mavungu and killed him.

And when the town had heard the whole story, they all said that Luemba had done quite rightly.

[BAKONGO]

79

Kenkebe

THERE WAS ONCE a great famine in a certain country, and the people were obliged to eat wild plants to keep themselves alive. Their principal food during this time was *nongwes* which they dug out of the ground.

There was living at that place a man called Kenkebe, and one day his wife said to him, "My husband, go to my father and ask him to give us some corn."

The man said, "Yes, I will go."

So he rose up early in the morning and went on until he arrived at his father-in-law's village, where he was received with every mark of kindness. A very large ox was killed for his entertainment. It was so large that it was six days before it was all eaten. His father-in-law asked of him the news.

He said, "There is no news to tell to friends. All the news is this—that at my home there is not a grain to be eaten. Famine is over our heads. Will you give us some corn, for we are dying?"

His father-in-law gave him seven bags full of millet, and his wife's sisters went with him to carry them. When they came to a valley close by his home, he told his sisters-in-law that they could now go back to their father.

They said, "How will you manage to carry all those bags alone?"

He replied, "I shall be able to carry them all now, because we are not far from my home."

So the girls went back to their father.

Then he carried the bags, one by one, and hid them in a cave under a great rock that was there. Afterward he took some of the millet and ground it. When it was ground very fine he made it into cakes just like *nongwes*. Then he dug some real *nongwes* out of the ground and went home to his wife.

He said to her, "There is a great famine at your father's also. I found the people there eating themselves."

He told his wife to make a fire. Then he pretended to cut a piece of meat out of his thigh and said, "So are they doing at your father's village. Now, my wife, let us do the same."

His wife cut a piece from her leg and roasted it, but the piece that Kenkebe put on the fire was some meat that he had brought home with him.

Then Kenkebe's little boy said, "Why does my father's meat smell nice in roasting and my mother's meat does not smell nice?"

Kenkebe answered, "It is because it is taken from the leg of a man."

After this he gave his wife some *nongwes* to roast. He took for himself some of those he had made of corn.

The little boy said, "Why do my father's *nongwes* smell nice in roasting, and my mother's do not smell nice?"

Kenkebe said, "It is because they were dug by a man."

After eating, he went outside, but he had dropped one of his *nongwes* by the fire. When he went out, the boy found it. He broke it in two and gave half to his mother.

He said, "There is a difference between our *nongwes* and those of father."

His mother said, "Yes, my child, this one is made of corn."

The next morning, just at the very beginning of dawn, Kenkebe got up and went away with a pot in his hand. The boy was awake and saw his father go out. So he called to his mother and said, "Mother, mother, wake! My father is going away with the pot in his hand!"

So she got up and they followed after Kenkebe. They saw him go to the cave where he took some corn out of one of the bags and began to grind it. Then they went on top of the rock, and rolled a big stone over.

When Kenkebe saw the stone coming he ran away, but it followed close behind him. He ran down the valley, but the stone kept running too. He jumped into a deep hole in the river. Down went the stone, too. He ran up the hill and up went the stone. He ran over the plain but, whenever he turned to look, the stone was just there behind him. So it continued all that day. At night he reached his own house and then the stone stopped. His wife had already come home and had brought with her one of the bags of corn.

Kenkebe came in crying.

His wife said to him, "Why do you cry as if you were a child?"

He said, "Because I am very tired and very hungry."

She said, "Where are your clothes and your bag?"

He replied, "I was crossing a river, and I fell down. The stream carried away my mantle, my bag, and my kerries, indeed everything that was mine."

Then his wife gave him his mantle, which she had picked up when he was running away, and she said to him, "You are foolish to do such things. There is no food for you tonight."

The next morning Kenkebe rose early and went out to hunt with his two dogs. The name of the one was Tumtumse, and the name of the other was Mbambozozele. He found an eland with a young calf which he drove to his place. He cut an ear off the calf and roasted it in the fire. It was fat, and he liked it so much that he cut the other ear off and cooked it also. Then he wished to kill the calf, but he said to himself, "If I kill this calf, I shall not be able to get milk from the eland."

So he called his two dogs and said to the one, "Tumtumse, my dog, if I kill this calf, will you imitate it and suck the eland for me?"

The dog said, "No, I shall bark like a dog."

Kenkebe said, "Get out of my sight and never come near me again, you ugly, useless animal."

He said to the other, "Mbambozozele, my dog, if I kill this calf, will you imitate it and suck the eland for me?"

The dog said, "I will do so."

Then he killed the calf and ate it. He took the skin and put it upon Mbambozozele, so that the eland thought it was her calf that sucked before Kenkebe milked her. But one day the dog was sucking too long, and Kenkebe wanted him to leave off. He tried to drink just a few drops more, when his master got angry and struck him with a stick. Thereupon the dog began to howl, and the eland saw how she had been deceived. At once she ran after Kenkebe and tried to stick him with her horns. He ran one way and the eland ran after him, then he ran another way, and still the eland chased him.

His wife came out and saw him running. She cried out to him, "Jump up quickly on the big stone." He did so, and the eland ran with such fury against the stone that it broke its head and fell down dead.

They then cut the eland up and wanted to cook it, but there was no fire. Kenkebe said to his son, "Go to the village of the cannibals that is on that hill over the valley and ask for some fire; but do not take any meat with you, lest they should smell it."

The boy went, but he hid a piece of meat and took it with him. When he got to the first house he asked for fire, but they sent him to the next. At the next they sent him farther, and so he finally had to go to the house that was farthest away. An old woman lived there. The boy gave her a little piece of meat and said, "Do not cook it until I am far away with the fire."

But as soon as the boy was gone she put it on the coals. The smell came to the noses of the cannibals and they ran to the place and swallowed the old woman, and the meat, and the fire, and even the ashes.

Then they ran after the boy. When he came near his own house, he cried out, "Hide yourselves, you that are at home!"

His father said, "My son is saying we must gather wood that will make coals."

His mother said, "No, he is saying that we must hide ourselves."

The boy cried again, "Hide yourselves!"

Then his mother hid herself in a bush. An old woman who was there covered herself with ashes, and Kenkebe climbed up into a tree, with the breast of the eland in his hand. The boy slipped into a hole which was by the side of the path.

The cannibals came to the place. First they ate the eland. Then one of them said, "Search under the ashes."

There they found the old woman, and they ate her. Then they said, "Search in the tree."

There they found Kenkebe. He cried very much, but they would not spare him. They ate him and the breast of the eland. Then the wise one said, "Look in the bush."

They looked there and found the wife of Kenkebe. They said, "We will eat her another time," and so they took her home with them. They did not look for the boy.

The woman made a plan to escape. She made beer for the cannibals and they all came to drink. They sat together in a big house, and drank very much beer. Then she said, "May I go out?"

They said, "You may go, but come back quickly."

She said, "Shall I close the entrance?"

They said, "Close it."

Then she took fire and put it on the house and all these cannibals were burned to death. So the woman escaped, and lived happily afterward with her son.

[XOSA]

80

The Giant of the Great Water

THERE WAS ONCE a small boy who was herding the goats, and his father came and pointed out to him some long and luxurious grass and told him to take the goats there to feed. So he pastured them there that day and took them there again the day following. Now the next day while the goats were feeding, the owner of the pasture appeared, and he said to the boy, "Why are you feeding your goats on my grass?" And the boy said, "It is not my doing, for my father told me to come here." And he said, "This evening I will go to your father's house and talk to him." Now the owner of the grazing ground was a man very big and tall, and his name was Mukun'ga M'Bura, so in the evening he came to the home of the boy and he said to the father, "Why were your goats eating my grass when you could see I had closed it to you?"

The father said, "That is my affair." Mukun'ga M'Bura said, "As you have done this, I will eat you and all your people." To this the father replied, "You shall do no such thing." So the young men made sharp their swords and got ready their spears, but Mukun'ga M'Bura was too strong for them, and he ate the father, and the young men, and the women, and the children, and the oxen, and the goats, and then he ate the house and the barns, so that there was nothing left. The only person who escaped was a little boy, who ran away and hid in the grass so that Mukun'ga M'Bura did not see him.

The boy made himself a bow and shot wild game and became very strong and built himself a house; and at last he said, when he was full-grown, "Why do I stay here? I am big and strong. Mukun'ga M'Bura, who killed my father and all my people, still lives."

So he took his sword and made it very sharp and went to the district where Mukun'ga M'Bura lived, and as he drew near he saw him coming up out of the great water where he lived. He shouted to him, "Tomorrow I will come and kill you." And he went back and ate more meat so as to be stronger than ever. The next day he went again, but Mukun'ga M'Bura was not to be seen. The third day he met him again, and he said, "You have killed all my people, so I will kill you," and Mukun'ga M'Bura was afraid and said to the warrior, "Do not strike me with your sword over the heart or I shall die, but open my middle finger," so the warrior did so, and he said, "Make a big hole,

not a little one." And the warrior made a big hole, and out came first the father, whom Mukun'ga M'Bura had eaten, and then the young men, and the women, and the cattle, and the sheep, and the houses, and the food stores just as before. And the warrior said, "No, I will spare you, for you have restored my father, his people and his goods, but you must not eat them again." And the giant said, "They shall be safe."

The warrior and his people went back and rebuilt their homesteads, but the warrior thought to himself, "Now this Mukun'ga M'Bura is big and strong and very bad. He has eaten many people. He may come again and destroy my father."

So he called the young men and asked them to come and fight Mukun'ga M'Bura with him, and they all made ready for war and went to the home of Mukun'ga M'Bura. He saw them coming and said, "Why are you here to slay me? Have I not given you back your people?" But the warrior replied, "You are very evil; you have killed and eaten many people; therefore you shall die." Then they all fell upon him and slew him and cut off his head and hewed his body in pieces. But a big piece separated itself from the rest of the body, which was dead, and went back into the water, and the warrior returned to his home and told his brother that he had slain Mukun'ga M'Bura, all but one leg. "Tomorrow," he said, "I will go into the water and get that leg and burn it." And the mother besought him not to go, but the next day he went, and when he got to the place there was no water to be seen, only cattle and goats, for what remained of Mukun'ga M'Bura had gathered together his children and taken all the water and gone very far. The beasts, however, he had not taken but left behind. So the warrior went back and brought his people, and they gathered the cattle and goats together and took them back to their own homestead.

[AKIKUYU]

81

A Woman for a Hundred Cattle

ONCE UPON A TIME there were a man and a woman. They lived for many days in the land of Pata, and a son was born to them. Their fortune consisted of a hundred cattle. Beyond these they did not have a single calf; they had nothing but the cattle.

As time went by the son grew and became a big child, and when the boy was fifteen years of age, his father died. Several years later, his mother also died. So the young man had a heritage from both his parents—he inherited the hundred cattle which were left to him. He stayed in his home and observed the time of mourning for his parents. When he had finished mourning he felt an urge to look for a woman to marry.

He said to his neighbours, "I want to marry a woman, for my parents are dead and I am all alone now. I cannot stay alone. I must get married."

His neighbours said to him, "Surely, get married, for indeed you are lonely now. We shall look around for you so that you may find a suitable woman to marry."

He said, "Yes, be it so."

Later, he said, "I would like somebody to go out and look for a woman for me."

They said, "If God wills it!"

So one of the neighbours rose and went and looked for a woman whom the young man could marry, until he found one. Then he came and said to him, "I have found such a woman as you want, but she is not from this town."

He asked, "Where, then, does she live?" The neighbour said: "In a different town, pretty far away. I think it takes eight hours of travelling from here to get there."

He asked him, "Whose daughter is this girl?"

And the neighbour said to him, "She is the daughter of Abdallah, and her father is very rich. This woman owns six thousand cattle. The father has no other child, just this one daughter."

When the young man heard this, he was all full of desire to obtain this woman, and he said to his neighbour, "Would you go there tomorrow and carry my answer—which is that I am agreeable."

The neighbour said, "God willing, I will go there tomorrow." And at dawn, the matchmaker rose and travelled until he came to old Abdallah, and he carried the young man's message to him, and related all that had happened.

Finally the father answered him, saying, "I have heard your words, but I desire that anyone who wants to marry my daughter should give me a hundred cattle as a bride-price. If he gives such a bride-price I will give him my daughter for wife."

The matchmaker said, "God willing, I shall go and carry the answer to him."

The father said to him, "Yes, do that!"

The matchmaker rose and went back, and gave the young man the answer. He told him everything that had been discussed.

The young man said, "I have heard your words, but he wants a hundred cattle as a bride-price, and I have just a hundred cattle. If I give them all to him, what will my wife have to live on, if she comes to me? I have no other fortune but these hundred cattle which I have inherited from my father."

Finally his neighbour said to him, "Well now, if you do not want her, tell me so. Then I can go and carry back your reply; or if you want her, tell me so definitely."

The young man bowed his head and meditated and, when he raised his head again, he said, "It does not matter, go and say that I accept. I will go and fetch the hundred cattle and give them to him."

So the matchmaker got up and went to the father of the girl and said to him, "The young man is willing to pay the hundred cattle."

And the father said, "I am willing then that he should take my daughter." They talked over the details, and then someone was sent to bring the young man. The latter came and was amiably received, and they discussed the marriage. So the young man was wedded to the girl and paid the hundred cattle, and the wedding feast was celebrated.

Then the young man took his wife and travelled home. There they remained at first ten days; but when the provisions which they had taken along were used up, the young man had nothing for his wife to eat. Then he said to her, "Dear wife, now I have nothing left to eat. Formerly, I had my cattle. These I milked and thus I had my sustenance; but now I have given my cattle away for you and, therefore, I have nothing left. Dear wife, I will go now to my neighbours and from those who have cows I shall obtain some milk, however little it be, so that we shall have something to eat."

Then the woman said to him, "Yes, dear husband!"

So the young man went out and this now became his occupation. Every day he went out and milked other people's cows, so that he could have something to eat for himself and his wife. This he continued to do every day.

One day his wife went out and placed herself in front of her door just as a very handsome young man passed by. When he saw the woman standing

by the door, he was seized with a desire to seduce her. Thereupon he sent a procurer to talk to the woman.

The woman said, "God is my witness that I have heard the message you convey to me, but you must wait a little longer, until I have made up my mind, and then I will let you know. I cannot answer yet." So the procurer rose and went home.

Three months later, the woman's father thought to himself, "I must go and pay a visit to my daughter and her husband." So he started on his journey and went his way until he came to his son-in-law's house. Arrived there, he knocked at the door. The daughter got up and answered, "Who is there?"

The old man said, "It is I, Abdallah."

The daughter rose and said to him, "Will you not come in?"

So he entered and exchanged greetings with his daughter, and she invited him into the hall, and the old man sat down there. The father asked the daughter how she was getting along, and she said, "Pretty well, my father."

Finally the daughter got up, went away from where her father was sitting and went into her room, cogitating and crying profusely, because there was not the slightest bit of food in the house that she could cook for her father. Then she left by the back door, and when she looked behind the yard, she noticed the young man who wanted to seduce her, and he called to her to come nearer. So she went over to him and said to him, "How are you getting along, sir?"

He said, "I once sent someone to you, and you said that you would come to me for a visit, but you have not come. Why are you so wavering? Since I saw you that day when you were standing by the door I have not been able to sleep any more; every day, when I lie down, I dream only of you in my sleep."

The woman answered him, saying, "God be my witness, I shall not harass you any more. If you long for me I shall come without delay. First, however, get a piece of meat for me, so that I can cook something to eat for my guest. I shall come afterward."

The young man asked her, "Who is your guest?"

The woman replied, saying, "It is my father whom I receive as a guest."

Thereupon he said, "You wait here, and I will bring you some meat right away."

So he rose and went out, and the woman remained standing there. A little later, he returned with a quarter of beef and said to her, "Here is the meat, but now do not put me off any longer."

She said, "God be my witness, I shall not put you off."

He stretched out his hand and gave her the meat, and the woman took it and went back into her house. Then he who had given her the meat paced up and down outside and waited for the fulfilment of the promise that the woman had made him.

After the woman returned, she took the meat, cut it into pieces, and put it into the pot. As soon as she had placed it in the pot, her husband came back and found his father-in-law sitting in the hall. As he saw his father-in-law sitting in the hall, his blood rose. He could not find a word to say, nor did he know what to do. He went closer until he came to where his father-in-law was sitting. He greeted him according to custom and asked him how he was getting along. After that he went to his wife and found her cooking meat and asked her, "My dear wife, what are you cooking there?"

She said, "I am cooking meat."

He asked, "Where did you get this meat from?"

She said, "I received it from the neighbours; they have given it to me." When her husband heard this he remained silent and became sad because he was so terribly poor.

Then he said to his wife, "My dear wife, what shall we do now that we have not only ourselves to feed but also a guest?"

His wife answered him, saying, "I do not know what we shall do."

Then the man said, "I will go out to the rich people where I milk the cows and tell them, 'I have a guest staying with me now, and I would like you to give me something, whatever it be, to cook for my guest.' " So he rose, went to the rich people where he worked, and apprised them of everything that had happened to him.

These rich people were sympathetic and gave him a little meat and a little milk, which he took. Then he went home.

At his house, in the meantime, his wife had finished cooking the meat that she had received from her would-be seducer. When her husband returned with the meat, the woman put out her hand, accepted it, and laid it on the floor. Then the husband rose and washed his hands and went into the hall. The woman in the kitchen withdrew the meat from the pot and placed it on the platter from which they were accustomed to eat.

Now the would-be seducer had remained where he was, walking up and down, until he saw that the time, which had been agreed upon with the woman, had passed. Then he said to his heart, "The best thing for me to do is to pass by the front door and look inside. Perhaps I shall see the woman." So he went off and passed by the door, and encountered the woman's husband and the father-in-law sitting and chatting. When the wicked man saw that, he greeted them, and the woman's husband answered the greeting, inviting him to approach. So the wicked man came up and sat down.

Then they conversed together, the woman's husband having no inkling of the stranger's plan and of what he really wanted. Thus they conversed with each other—the woman's father, and the woman's husband, and that impious creature who wanted to disturb the peace of the young man's house. The three men stayed together in the hall.

As soon as the woman inside had placed the meat on the platter, she

brought it out into the hall. As soon as her husband rose to be handed the meat, the woman said, "Eat now, you three fools!"

Thereupon her father began, saying, "Well now, wherefore am I a fool?"

His daughter answered him, saying, "Please, father, eat first. Afterwards I shall tell you all about your foolishness."

But the father said, "No, I shall not eat, but you shall first tell me about my foolishness. After that, I shall eat."

Thereupon the daughter rose and said, "My father, you have sold an expensive object for a cheap one."

Her father said to her, "What is it that I have sold too cheaply?"

She said, "It is I, my father, whom you have sold too cheaply."

He said, "Why so?"

She said, "Father, you have no daughter and no child except only me and you went and sold me for a hundred cattle, yet you, father, have six thousand cattle anyhow. You have regarded a hundred cattle as more valuable than me. That is why I have said, 'You have given up a valuable thing for a cheap one.' "

The father answered, "That is true, my child, I was a fool."

Then her husband rose and said, "Now, please, tell me the nature of my foolishness too."

The woman said to him, "You are even a greater fool."

He said, "Why that?"

She said, "You inherited a hundred cattle from your parents; not a single calf more did you inherit. And you took them all and wedded me in exchange for them, in exchange for all your hundred cattle; yet there were so many women in your own town whose bride-price amounted to only ten or twenty cattle. But you did not look at them. Instead, you came and married me in exchange for all your cattle. And now you have nothing, not even anything to eat for me and for yourself, and you have become a servant of others. You go and milk the cows of other people to get something to eat. Had you kept half of your herd of cattle and married a woman with the other half, you would have had something to eat. Therefore, this is your foolishness, my dear husband."

Then the worthless knave asked, "And wherein does my foolishness consist? Tell me!"

Thereupon the woman rose and said, "You are even a greater fool than both the others."

And he asked her, "Why is that?"

She answered him, saying, "You wanted to get with a single quarter of beef what had been bought for a hundred cattle. Are you not, therefore, a fool?"

He jumped up in a hurry and ran away as quickly as he could.

The woman's father stayed with them for two days. On the third day he made his preparation for taking leave and then went home. When he ar-

rived at his house, he unhobbled the cattle which he had received from his son-in-law and sent them back to him. With them he sent another two hundred. Thus his daughter could live in comfort with her husband for many days.

[SWAHILI]

Epilogue

SHE WAS AN OLD WOMAN of a family with a long genealogy. Leza Shikakunamo—"The Besetting One"—had stretched out his hand against her family. He slew her mother and her father while she was yet a child; and in the course of the years all connected with her perished. She said to herself, "Surely, I shall keep those who sit on my thighs"—but no, even they, the children of her children, were taken from her. She became withered with age, and it seemed to her that she herself was at last to be taken. But no, a change came over her: she grew younger. Then came into her heart a desperate resolution to find God and ask the meaning of it all. Somewhere up there in the sky must be His dwelling: if only she could reach it!

She began to cut down trees, immense, tall trees, joining them together, and so planning a structure that would reach to heaven. It grew and grew, but as it was getting to be as she wanted it, the lowest timbers rotted and it fell. She fell with it, but without being killed or breaking a bone. She set to work again and rebuilt the structure, but once again the foundations rotted and it fell. She gave it up in despair, but not her intention of finding Leza. Somewhere on earth there must be another way to heaven!

So she began to travel, going through country after country, nation after nation, always with the thought in her mind: "I shall come to where the earth ends, and there, where the earth and sky touch, I shall find a road to God, and I shall ask him, 'What have I done to Thee that Thou afflictest me in this manner?'"

The old woman never found where the earth ends, but, though disappointed, she did not give up her search. As she passed through the different countries the people asked her, "What have you come for, old woman?"

And her answer would be, "I am seeking Leza."

"Seeking Leza! For what?"

"My brothers, you ask me! Here in the nations is there one who suffers as I have suffered?"

And they would ask again, "How have you suffered?"

"In this way. I am alone. As you see me, a solitary old woman: that is how I am!"

And they answered again, "Yes, we see. That is how you are! Bereaved of friends and kindred? In what do you differ from others? Leza Shikakunamo sits on the back of every one of us, and we cannot shake him off!"

She never obtained her desire: she died of a broken heart.

[BAILA]

Sources of the Folktales

Glossary

Sources of the Folktales

BELOW are listed the works from which the tales are drawn. The table of sources, following, refers to this list. Where required, other information about the treatment of the material is given. Page numbers in the source are given only where the original title has been very much altered.

BEECH, M. W. H. *The Suk: Their Language and Folklore.* Oxford, 1911.

BLEEK, W. H. I. *Reynard the Fox in South Africa.* London, 1864.

——— and LLOYD, L. C. *The Mantis and His Friends: Bushman Folklore.* Edited by Dorothea F. Bleek. Capetown, 1923.

———. *Specimens of Bushman Folklore.* London, 1911.

BRUTZER, ERNST. *Der Geisterglaube bei den Kamba.* Leipzig, 1905.

BÜTTNER, C. G. *Anthologie aus der Suaheli-Litteratur. Berlin,* 1894.

———. "Märchen der Ova-Herero," *Zeitschrift für afrikanische Sprachen* (Berlin), 1888, 189–216.

CALLAWAY, HENRY. *Nursery Tales, Traditions, and Histories of the Zulus.* London, 1868.

CARDINALL, A. W. *Tales Told in Togoland.* London, 1931.

CHATELAIN, HELI. *Folk-tales of Angola.* (American Folk-Lore Society Memoirs, I.) Boston, 1894.

DAYRELL, ELPHINSTONE. *Folk Stories from Southern Nigeria.* London, 1910.

DENNETT, R. E. *Notes on the Folklore of Fjort.* (Folk Lore Society Publications, XLI.) London, 1898.

DRIBERG, J. H. *The Lango, a Nilotic Tribe of Uganda.* London, 1923.

HOLLIS, SIR CLAUD. *The Masai, Their Language and Folklore.* Oxford, 1905.

HUFFMAN, RAY. *Nuer Customs and Folk-Lore.* London, 1931.

JUNOD, HENRI A. *Les Ba-Ronga.* Neuchatel, 1898.

———. *The Life of a South African Tribe.* London, 1913. 2 vols.

LINDBLOM, GERHARD. "Tales of Supernatural Beings and Adventures" in his *Kamba Folklore.* (Archives d'Études Orientales, XX, 2.) Lund, 1935.

MEINHOF, CARL. *Afrikanische Märchen.* Jena, 1921.

Posselt, F. W. T. *Fables of the Veld.* London, 1929.

Rattray, R. S. *Akan-Ashanti Folk-tales.* Oxford, 1930.

Raum, J. *Versuch einer Grammatik der Dschaggasprache.* Berlin, 1909.

Roscoe, John. *The Baganda: An Account of Their Native Customs and Beliefs.* London, 1911.

Routledge, W. S. and K. *With a Prehistoric People: The Akikuyu of British East Africa.* London, 1910.

Smith, Edwin W., and Dale, A. M. *The Ila-speaking Peoples of Northern Rhodesia.* London, 1920. 2 vols.

Stayt, Hugh A. *The Bavenda.* London, 1931.

Talbot, P. Amaury. *In the Shadow of the Bush.* London, 1912.

Theal, G. McCall. *Kaffir Folk-lore.* London, 1882.

Torrend, J. *Specimens of Bantu Folk-lore from Northern Rhodesia.* London and New York, 1921.

Tremearne, A. J. N. *Hausa Superstitions and Customs.* London, 1913.

Wandres, Carl. "Texte" [i.e., contribution of Nama and German texts, pp. 149–77] in: Meinhof, Carl. *Lehrbuch der Nama-sprache.* (Lehrbücher des Seminars für orientalische Sprachen, XXIII.) Berlin, 1909.

TABLE OF SOURCES

Prologue: Talbot.

1. Rattray. English revised.
2. Cardinall. A number of passages have been combined.
3. Cardinall.
4. Rattray. English revised.
5. Dayrell.
6. Bleek and Lloyd, *Specimens.* English completely revised.
7. Lindblom.
8. Bleek and Lloyd, *Specimens.* English completely revised.
9. Talbot.
10. Talbot.
11. Cardinall.
12. Brutzer, as reprinted in Meinhof, pp. 65–66. Translated from German.
13. Bleek, *Reynard.*
14. Rattray. English revised.
15. Smith and Dale, Vol. II.
16. Roscoe.
17. Chatelain. Completely rewritten.
18. Smith and Dale, Vol. II.
19. Bleek and Lloyd, *Mantis.*
20. Roscoe.
21. Rattray. English revised.
22. Bleek and Lloyd, *Mantis.*
23. Büttner, *Märchen,* as reprinted in Meinhof, pp. 139–44. Translated from German.
24. Bleek, *Reynard.*
25. Callaway.
26. Hollis.
27. Dennett.
28. Dayrell.
29. Hollis.
30. Junod, *Life,* Vol. II.
31. Torrend.
32. Rattray. English revised.
33. Rattray. English revised.
34. Smith and Dale, Vol. II.
35. Beech.
36. Smith and Dale, Vol. II.
37. Theal.
38. Huffman.
39. Wandres. Translated from German.
40. Rattray. English revised.
41. Bleek and Lloyd, *Specimens.*
42. Dayrell.
43. Bleek, *Reynard.*
44. Posselt.
45. Hollis.

46. Routledge.
47. Hollis.
48. Torrend, pp. 85–89.
49. Torrend, pp. 14–17.
50. Torrend, pp. 66–72.
51. Dayrell.
52. Dennett.
53. Hollis.
54. Rattray. English revised.
55. Rattray. English revised.
56. Rattray. English revised.
57. Rattray. English revised.
58. Rattray. English revised.
59. Rattray. English revised.
60. Rattray. English revised.
61. Callaway.
62. Junod, *Ba-Ronga.* Translated from French.
63. Driberg.
64. Raum. Translated from German.
65. Lindblom.
66. Tremearne.
67. Tremearne.
68. Routledge.
69. Smith and Dale, Vol. II.
70. Dayrell.
71. Driberg.
72. Dennett.
73. Stayt.
74. Routledge.
75. Tremearne.
76. Callaway.
77. Torrend, pp. 50–53.
78. Dennett.
79. Theal.
80. Routledge.
81. Büttner, *Anthologie*, as reprinted in Meinhof, pp. 54–61. Translated from German.

Epilogue: Smith and Dale, Vol. II.

Glossary

THIS LIST contains African words (including some of the proper names, when translations of their sense were to be found) and some other unfamiliar words. In general, words clearly onomatopoeic are not included. Occasionally, an explanation is quoted directly from the original translator or editor; the references pertain to the list of works on pp. 309–10. There is no attempt to give pronunciation. African words are usually pronounced phonetically, though the Zulu words, with their clicks, are a thing apart (see udonqa).

A

abedee—*antelope of an unidentifiable kind. (Ashanti word.)*

Abosom—*minor gods, tutelary spirits, of the Ashanti.*

adduwa—*according to the translator, a thorny tree from which gum is obtained; also described as the desert date-tree.*

adwo—*apparently a greeting.*

adwobere—*cool and gentle.*

ah-loo-rookok—*nonsense syllables as song refrain, approx. "fa-la-la."*

amasi—*a specially prepared whey or buttermilk, similar to yoghurt. (The "milk" of tale 37, "The Bird That Made Milk," is actually this.)*

assegai—*a slender hardwood spear, usually tipped with iron; also, a tree of the dogwood family from whose wood such spears were made. (Not a native African word, but one derived by the Boers from the Portuguese, who had it from the Arabs, the ultimate source apparently being Berber. Through Arabic, it is related to the Chaucerian "launcegay.")*

asuanu—*gold dust to the weight of approx. four pounds sterling.*

asuanu-and-suru—*gold dust to the weight of approx. five pounds sterling.*

asuasa—*gold dust to the weight of approx. six pounds sterling.*

awa—*a bag of skin carried on the back, for burdens, including children.*

B

bakoo—*an exclamation, approx. "Good heavens!" or stronger.*

bana—*an exclamation, approx. "Dear me!"*

baobab—*an African tree, whose trunk sometimes attains a diameter of thirty feet. Its fruit, called monkey-bread, are edible; its leaves yield medicines and condiments; its bark, besides being medicinal, is made into rope, cloth, and paper. The trunk of the living tree is sometimes hollowed out as a dwelling. The Hausa consider the tree the home of spirits.*

biridi—*swish.*

birrim—*boom, as of a drum.*

brim—*plop!*

C

Calabar—*southeastern seacoast of Nigeria.*

choo awaba—*onomatopoeic for a type of snore.*

cowrie—*a small yellow-and-white shell, particularly of the Indian Ocean, once used as money in many parts of Africa, and used widely for ornamentation.* (Cf. *plate 23.*)

D

Dasse—*wife of the Mantis, in Bushman folklore.*

dinn—*chirp of the cicada; also, the Ashanti word for silence.*

duiker—*a small antelope, given to diving* (duiker = *Dutch "diver") suddenly into the bush.*

E

eddo *or* koko-yam—*an edible starchy tuber* (Colocasia esculenta), *the taro of the Pacific, the dasheen of the southern United States, the elephant's ear of the garden.*

Egbo—*"The Egbo Society has many branches, extending from Calabar up to Cross River and as far as the . . . Cameroons. Formerly the Society used to levy blackmail to a certain extent and collect debts for people. The head Ju-Ju, or fetish man, of each society is disguised, and frequently wears a hideous mask [cf. plates 15–17]. There is a bell tied round his waist, hanging behind and concealed by feathers; this bell makes a noise as he runs. When the Egbo [i.e., the fetish man] is out, no women are allowed outside their houses. . . . The Egbo very often carries a whip in his hand, and hits out blindly at anyone he comes across. He runs round the town followed by the young men of his society beating drums and firing off guns. There is generally much drinking going on when the Egbo is playing. There is an Egbo House in most towns, the end part of which is screened off for the Egbo to change in. Inside the house are hung human skulls and the skulls of buffalo . . . ; also heads of the various antelopes, crocodiles, apes, and the other animals which have been killed by the members. The skulls of cows and goats killed by the Society are also hung up. A fire is always kept in the Egbo House; and in the morning and late afternoon, the members of the Society frequently meet there to drink gin and palm wine."—Dayrell (1910), p. 4.*

ekpa ntan—*house without walls.*

eland—*largest of the African antelopes; the bull may be six feet at the shoulder and weigh over 1,200 pounds.*

erriten-kuan-kuan, gau-gaubu-ti—*Bushman phrases said by the translator to be untranslatable. They apparently constitute the magic name of the wind's son.*

eto—*yams, first boiled and then pounded.*

F

fatting house—*a room where a girl is kept for some weeks previous to her marriage. "She is given plenty of food, and made as fat as possible, as fatness is looked upon as a great beauty by the Efik people." Dayrell (1910), p. 3.*

fufu *or* fufuo—*yams or plantains boiled and mashed up. The resulting doughy lump is often then put into the soup.*

fura—*"Travellers take dry flour in bags and mix it with water en route, and evidently enjoy the paste thus formed, though it looks very uninviting to a European. A little sour milk makes the . . .* [fura] *a very dainty beverage."—Tremearne (1913), pp. 475–76.*

G

gemsbok—*the largest and handsomest species of the oryx, an antelope with long, nearly straight, ribbed horns.*

goat's gall bladder—*a term of flattery; for, inflated and dried, the bladder is stuck in the hair as a sign of honour.*

gungqu—*onomatopoeic for the noise produced by the* Ugungqu-kubantwana, *"said to resemble that made by a heavily laden wagon passing over a bad road. . . . She was so-called* [*also*] *because she swallowed everything that came in her way, so that when she moved the contents of her stomach rattled."—Callaway (1868), p. 176 n.*

gyedua—*umbrella tree (though perhaps a different sort from the American umbrella tree or magnolia). (Ashanti word.)*

H

hae—*an exclamation of joy, approx. "hurrah."*

halala—*to shout for joy.*

hartebeest—*a fairly large antelope, formerly common in south Africa, now nearly exterminated. The horns form a U.*

hemp—*the herb* Cannabis sativa, *from which bhang, hashish, and marihuana are derived.*

Hill Damara—*a little-known people of South West Africa, thought to be of Bantu origin, though some authorities consider them akin to the Hottentots, whose language they speak. They were enslaved, persecuted, and driven into the hills by both their kin the Herero (or Cattle Damara) and the Hottentots. They are held in small esteem: one of their names means "dung people."*

honey-guide—*a small African bird (genus* Indicator) *that actually leads men and animals to bees' nests.*

I

I—*exclamation of astonishment.*

ichneumon—*the mongoose, a small carnivorous mammal which, in its Indonesian form, was celebrated by W. Somerset Maugham for killing snakes. In Bushman folklore, the ichneumon is one of Kwammang-a's sons.*

imvuma—*goat slaughtered by the bridegroom's family to show that they acknowledge the betrothal.*

ingogo—*see* izingogo.

intontela—*a military kraal of the Zulu king; presumably this force was sent to do battle with the monster.*

Isikqukqumadevu—*a bloated, squatting, bearded monster. When spelled with an initial U, the name is personalized and flatters the monster, as if to say "Madame Monster."*

izingogo (*singular:* ingogo)—"*fabulous animals, degenerated men, who by living continually apart from the habitations of men have become a kind of baboon. They go on all fours, and have tails, but talk as men; they eat human flesh, even that of their own dead.*"—*Callaway (1868), p. 177.* (Cf. *also note at the end of tale 76.*)

J

juju—"*all the uncomprehended, mysterious forces of Nature. These vary in importance from elementals, so powerful as to hold almost the position of demigods, to the* mana . . . *of herb, stone, or metal. In another sense the word also includes the means by which such forces may be controlled or influenced* [*such as amulets, charms, figures, masks, etc.*].—*Talbot (1912), p. 49. It may also mean the fetish-man himself; see* Egbo.

K

kafir corn—*a cereal, variously identified as a kind of millet and a kind of sorghum.*

Kamba—*adjectival form of the tribal name Akamba.*

kaross—*a square cloak of skins, basic garment of the Bushman.*

kerrie—*short club with a knobbed end, used originally as a missile weapon.* (*From a Hottentot word.*)

khhwe—*as pronounced by a Zulu, an exact imitation of the croak of a frog.*

kirijakija—*the cry of the guinea-fowl.*

koko-yam—*see* eddo.

kraal—*originally, a Hottentot village or cattle enclosure, now used in this sense throughout native Africa.* (*Of Portuguese origin; cf. Spanish* corral.)

kudu—*a large antelope.* (*From a Hottentot word.*)

kuisse—*an unidentifiable edible root.* (*Bushman word.*)

Kurtiale—*sense unknown, but apparently a mythical country. It may be noted that the Masai word for caterpillar is* ol-kurto, *so that this may be the archetypal homeland of caterpillars.*

kutlu—*adverb indicating satisfaction.*

Kwammang-a—"*a mythical person not identified with any animal, but seen in the rainbow.*"—*Bleek and Lloyd,* Mantis *(1923), Introduction, p. v. He is married to Porcupine and has a son, "brave and quiet like his father," also named Kwammang-a.*

kyere-he-ne—*unknown, but apparently "jump down."*

L

Leza Shikakunamo—*Leza is the supreme being of the Baila; Shikakunamo is an attributive name, "besetting one."*

M

macuta—*a Portuguese colonial copper coin, now worth 5 centavos or about one sixth of a U. S. cent. (From an Ambundu word.)*

mametu—*a typical Zulu oath, literally "my mother," which is elliptical for "What I say is true; if not, I could be guilty of incest with my mother."* Mamo *appears to be a similar usage.*

mamo—*see* mametu.

Mangi Kihuti—*unknown, though the second word is thought to mean "tree."*

mason-wasp—"*the Prometheus of the Baila, with its indigo-blue wings, yellow abdomen, and black and orange legs, . . . builds its cell of mud not only on fireplaces, as the tale narrates, but also (and in this it is a great nuisance) on walls, books, and pictures in one's dwelling. In the cell it lays its eggs, together with a caterpillar or grub [the* Ngongwa *of the tale], and seals them up. . . . As the young grubs hatch out they eat the insects, which have been benumbed but not killed by the sting of the parent. . . . The [natives] suppose Ngongwa to metamorphose into a mason-wasp.*"—*Smith and Dale (1920), II, pp. 346–47.*

mateva—*unknown, other than that it is a palm.*

mat-house—*a hive-shaped temporary shelter used on trek, consisting of rush mats stretched over poles stuck into the ground in a circle.*

mfulimuninga—*berries, exact kind unknown.*

mpintini—*a kind of wood tambourine.*

mpunia—*highway robber and murderer.*

Msura Kwivire-vire *etc.—untranslatable magic nonsense syllables.*

munsanje—"*the totemic name for 'rabbit,' more or less what the family name is for us.*"—*Torrend (1921), p. 170.*

N

Ngongwa—*see* mason-wasp.

ngururu—"*shrill sounds produced, generally by women, by moving the tongue rapidly right and left. They mean triumph or welcome.*"—*Torrend (1921), p. 86 n.*

N'jenge—"*a [mythical] animal which lived in old times; it was about the size of a sheep, had four legs, and was covered with hair. It fed on shamba [garden] produce, and it also ate meat.*"—*Routledge (1910), p. 315.*

nkoroondo—*berries, exact kind unknown.*

nongwe—*the edible bulb of a plant identified by the translator merely as belonging to the genus* Hypoxis.

nsenkene—*unknown, according to the translator.*

nte—*a game of marbles, details unknown.*

ntenda—*basket.*

ntikuma—*a species of spider.*

Nzambi—*Mother Earth.*

O

odawuro—*a kind of gong to be struck with a stick by the public crier in making a proclamation; also used at public meetings, at certain plays, in the dances of fetish-men, and for such ceremonial purposes.*

odum—*a timber tree valued for its finely mottled wood.*

o-gaul'-iminga—*feller of lofty thorn-trees.*

okra—*the mucilaginous vegetable.* (*From an Ashanti word,* nkurum.) *Also, the Ashanti word for "cat."*

okraman—*dog.* (*Ashanti word.*)

olo—*an exclamation, approx. "halloo!"*

o-nsiba-zimakqembe—*one whose feathers are long and broad.*

oribi—*a small antelope having short straight ringed horns.*

osua—*gold dust to the weight of approx. two pounds sterling.*

P

paint-house—"*A girl arriving at the age* [*of puberty*] *is closely watched. The moment of her first menstruation is marked by the firing off of a gun, and this is followed by a dance. And now, while she little suspects it, she is caught and forced into . . . the paint-house. Here she is painted red, and carefully fed and treated, until . . . she is washed and led to her husband.*"—*Dennett* (*1898*), *p. 20.*

pui-pui—*a cry of lamentation.*

pusu—*shake.*

Q

qaa—*exclamation indicating exasperation.*

quagga—*a pretty wild ass, related to the zebra. It could be trained to draw a little carriage; however, it was hunted for its handsome skin, and exterminated at the height of the Victorian period. The last quagga died in the gardens of the Zoological Society, in Regent's Park, London, in 1872, the year Stanley published* The Finding of Livingstone. (*Hottentot word.*)

R

rock-rabbit—*actually, the hyrax, a rabbit-sized rhinoceros.*

roodebok—*a reddish duiker* (*q.v.*).

rows—"*Lady Rows*" *is a literal translation of the character's African name.*

S

sango, sanguri—*apparently magic words connected with the eagle.*
sanguri—*see* sango.
sepirewa—*a musical bow; one assumes, a primitive violin.*
shimbec—*hut.*
silk-cotton tree—*one of the family* Bombacaceae, *which yields kapok, the stuffing of life-jackets.*
sommo—*an iron which, heated red hot, is used to burn the hole through a pipe stem.*
spit—"*Purposely mistranslated. The correct rendering will be sent with pleasure to anyone who requires it for scientific purposes,*" *wrote Major Tremearne, in 1912.*
springbok—*a south African gazelle noted for its habit of springing lightly, gracefully, and suddenly into the air. It is brown with a white dorsal stripe and rump.*
sui sui—*onomatopoeic for a kind of snore, or perhaps snoreless breathing.*
suru—*see* asuanu.

T

tie-tie—*a prickly kind of palm; also said to be a rope of creepers tied together.*
Tororut—*the supreme being of the Suk; also, the sky.*

U

ubenthle—*a fibrous plant, from which garments can be woven.*
udonqa—"*a small bush which bears white berries; when ripe they are gathered and bruised and formed into a paste; the body is first anointed with fat, and then rubbed over with the paste of the* udonqa. *This is one mode of cleansing, which is supposed more effectual than water.*"—*Callaway (1868), p. 243 n. (The italicized* q *indicates a click in the Zulu speech.)*
Ugungqu-kubantwana—*a mythical animal; see* gungqu; *also note at end of tale 76.*
umdhlubu—*garden of ground-nuts, i.e., peanut garden.*
unkosi-yasenthla—*king of the highlands.*
unkosi-yasenzansi—*king of the lowlands.*
unomabunge—*mother of beetles.*
unthlatu—*boa-constrictor man. (The character so called had bright and slippery skin, like a snake's.)*
untombinde—*tall maiden.*
uselese—*frog-man.*
Usikqukqumadevu—*see* Isikqukqumadevu.
uvati—*fire-making apparatus of the Zulu, consisting of two sticks, a pointed one about a foot long, called the male, and a larger one, notched, called the female. The one is rotated or "churned" in the other.*

V

varan—*a monitor lizard. (Word of Arabic origin.)*

vlei—*"a depression in the ground, sometimes dry, sometimes covered with coarse grass and rushes, and sometimes filled with water."—Bleek and Lloyd,* Specimens *(1911), p. 105 n.*

W

wakra—*Have you awakened?*

wari—*a game similar to draughts, played in many ways all over west Africa.*

water chevrotain—*a small, hornless, deerlike ruminant, standing about a foot high, and sometimes called the mouse deer.*

wau—*answer to a call.*

wawa-wawa—*an unidentified tree, purportedly large. (Ashanti word.)*

we—*the innermost partitioned portion of the hut, where the wife sleeps, and the husband when feasible.*

wheatear—*a small European bird, also called the stonechat. The translator may have substituted the name for an African one. The name has nothing to do with wheat or ears but was originally "whitearse."*

Y

y'aku—*a greeting.*

yepu—*the sound one makes when one is out of breath.*

yiridi—*hurry.*

Z

zwart-storm—*a large tree, according to the Bushman narrator, with yellow flowers and no thorns.*

AFRICAN NEGRO SCULPTURE

Introduction[1]

THERE ARE two ways of looking at African Negro sculpture that, for fifty years, have impeded a true understanding of that art. One is the notion that an African carving or casting is "pure art" and that its quality can be fully assessed by European aesthetic standards, without reference to the culture in and for which it was made. The other and opposite view sees in an example of Negro sculpture not a work of art but merely a primitive utilitarian object made by a tradition-fettered artisan for a barbarous community devoid of aesthetic feeling of any kind.

It is true that African sculpture was first recognized in Europe as an art by a group of sophisticated painters living in Paris, who found it interesting because it expressed and satisfied some of their own aesthetic ideals. Vlaminck, Matisse, and Derain, among others, began about 1905 to collect African carvings. Before that, such work had been studied merely as ethnographic document (as in some quarters it continued to be until much later).

These were the French painters who, a few years later, were to be described as *les fauves*, "the wild beasts," because they intentionally distorted their drawing and intensified their colours to express strong emotions or to achieve forceful decorative contrasts. They thought they found similar characteristics in African art.

Up to this time practically nothing had been written upon African sculpture as art. This fact in itself appealed to the younger artists of the day, who were tired of art so overlaid with literature that its basic core of form was difficult to uncover. Anthropologists and ethnologists in their writings had completely overlooked the aesthetic qualities in the artifacts of primitive peoples or had only mentioned them perfunctorily. Leo Frobenius was the first European anthropologist to call attention to the productions of Africans as art.[2]

1. Some of the following material was originally published in an essay which the author contributed to *African Negro Art* (New York, 1935), the catalogue of an exhibition held at the Museum of Modern Art under the author's direction. It is used here, in revised form, with the kind permission of the Museum of Modern Art. Political names are as of 1952.

2. But his articles, "Die Kunst der Naturvölker," *Westermanns Monatshefte*, LXXIX (1895–96), 329–40 and 593–606, and "Die bildende Kunst der Afrikaner," *Mittheilungen der Anthropologischen Gesellschaft in Wien*, XXVI (1897), 1–17, still treated the subject primarily from non-aesthetic points of view.

The first book devoted entirely to what its author believed to be African sculpture—that is, plastic art—was Carl Einstein's *Negerplastik*. It was not published until 1915. Einstein felt that African art illustrated attitudes and qualities neglected or missing in modern European art. In his opinion African sculpture was "true sculpture," was in fact the only sculpture that, by direct methods, solved basic problems of expressing mass. For him European sculpture was infected by a pictorial treatment which, in the hands of modern sculptors, was "dissolving" three-dimensional form.

But those first painter-amateurs and their follower Einstein had only a subjective interest in African art. They treated it as if it were an adopted child of European art and not a self-consistent creation. They looked at it solely against a backdrop of European aesthetic theory, not against the spiritual setting from which it had sprung. European painters, sculptors, and critics in the first two decades of this century were constantly on the lookout for examples of primitive art that did not conform to the naturalistic convention which had dominated the art of their continent for most of two thousand years. African art gave them an ideal example of another tradition. More than that, it offered to their jaded taste the tonic of the unfamiliar, the appeal of the exotic, the intuitive and, from their point of view, the naïve. These were the qualities that attracted the first generation of European amateurs—and more especially such painters as Vlaminck and the others. And since their time European artists in each generation have been able to find in one or another aspect of Negro art something that seemed to justify their own theories; the expressionists found an emotional use of colour and distortion of shape, the cubists found "structure," the surrealists found fantasy, mystery—even a pathological inspiration.

Today such arbitrary and limited attitudes to African art are no longer tenable. Perhaps an undue emphasis on form in a work of art has lost its vogue. Perhaps in our own European art we are taking a more humanistic interest than did the painters and sculptors of forty years ago. Perhaps such field researches as those of Marcel Griaule, Michel Leiris, and their colleagues among the Dogon of French Sudan, or of Bernard and William Fagg in Nigeria, or of Frans Olbrechts among the Bushongo, have given new directions to our interest—and greater richness, too, by combining ethnographic and aesthetic viewpoints in expectation of the day when our meagre documentation will be expanded into a significant background.

In any case, we now realize that an over-simplified approach, long popular among amateurs of African art, has impoverished rather than enhanced our understanding. It seems as dangerous as it is absurd to separate an object from the thought that produced it and to look for emotions and seductions in material forms created by unknown hands, particularly when all the serious field research that has been done among Africans shows that their art's "aims, media, and products are primarily religious" and that "there is a sort of wilful misunderstanding in speaking of an art which should be separated from the

intentions of its users, in order to comply with our definitions." [3] To do so is practically to put ourselves in a position similar to that of an African native never out of his parklands or forests to whom we might present for critical appraisal a late Turner. Or more fundamentally, it is as if we were to try to study mediaeval sculpture or Renaissance painting without any knowledge of Christianity.

This is the generally accepted outlook today—a much sounder attitude than that upon which the appreciation of African sculpture was based, in Europe, in the two opening decades of the twentieth century. If we are serious in our effort to enjoy African art with any degree of discernment, our view of it must combine ethnographic and aesthetic considerations, not rely on one or the other in isolation.

During the past fifteen years such ethnographers as Griaule, Fagg, and Olbrechts have been steadily contributing to our fund of information regarding the beliefs and sentiments underlying those African productions, which by themselves (owing to the unfamiliarity of their representational conventions) would convey to us little, if anything, of their native inspirations. Griaule, for example, gives a vivid description of the origin of certain masks and figures of the Dogon people of the French Sudan in the light of their legends and religious beliefs.[4] William Fagg, in his observations of the contemporary Yoruba of southern Nigeria, has shown what a strong aesthetic interest exists among both the present-day sculptors and the native patrons of their work. "The tribal artist," as Fagg has recounted, "is, in reality, a distinguishable and original personality, just as much as Cellini or Turner or Matisse, even though in most cases we know him only through his works. . . . I was constantly surprised at the individuality of the work of different traditional carvers. . . . It is quite true that tradition usually prescribes the general nature of the work . . . , but these traditional influences are in effect the framework within which the artist must work and create; . . . if he is a poor artist he will be completely dominated by them, but I should doubt whether they are any more restrictive of genius than were the conventions of religious art in Renaissance Italy." [5]

Fagg reports that in a district of Nigeria where traditional carving still flourishes, though on a limited scale, in northeastern Yorubaland around the towns of Illa, Omu, and Otun, "one may readily refute the common idea that there is little or no conscious articulate aesthetic appreciation, as such, among the Africans." Certain sculptors whom he met "competed for patronage over a wide area; one minor chief at Illa commissioned [the sculptor] Bamgboye, twenty miles away, to carve two large masks, and [another sculptor] Areogun of Osi, thirty miles away, to make some small figures carved in memory of

3. Marcel Griaule, *Folk Art of Black Africa*, trans. by M. Heron (Paris and New York, 1950), p. 24. (Orig. published as *Arts de l'Afrique noire*, Paris, 1947.)

4. *Ibid.*, pp. 60 ff.

5. William Fagg, "The Dilemma Which Faces African Art," *The Listener*, XLVI: 1176 (Sept. 13, 1951), 414.

dead twins. Again, some owners of early works by Bamgboye apologized to me for their quality, as they were done 'before he became perfect.' " [6]

What Griaule and his colleagues have brought to light in the Sudan gives us a hint of the rich legendary and religious setting to which all the fine sculptures of Negro Africa belong, but from which, in most cases, they have been torn with little hope of any possible restoration. Fagg's observations among the Yoruba can be taken as indicative of the probable existence of a similar aesthetic consciousness among their ancestors, the people of Benin and Ife, as well as among less closely related peoples in other quarters of the sculpture-producing Guinea coast and Congo. Furthermore, Fagg's observations show us standards of judgment guiding both the creation and the evaluation of native arts in Africa that are quite foreign to ours.

For all this, however, we must still face the fact that our knowledge of the background of African art is elementary. And while we keep in mind the vital importance of enriching, wherever possible, the communication of a piece of Negro sculpture through the marriage of ethnographic and aesthetic considerations, we should not quixotically deny ourselves the aesthetic gratification which this art is able to provide each new generation of observers, foreign as that gratification may be to the essential character and message of Negro art. Too many scruples about our lack of background data, too much conscience about looking at an art from a foreign standpoint, would deprive us of some of our richest aesthetic pleasures.

For we look at all art, more or less, through a stranger's eyes. This holds for contemporary art that may be a decade in advance of the observer's experience and his ability to respond to it, as well as for paintings of the Ming period—and perhaps even more than we readily admit for European Renaissance and Baroque art. We may not appreciate the poetry of Homer, Dante, or Langland as their authors conceived it to be appreciated. When we enjoy reading it aloud, we may not even hear the same sounds their authors intended to give it. Still, it would be nonsensical to refuse on these grounds the pleasure our minds and ears are accustomed to receive from it. The same holds for much of the finest Negro sculpture, which has been torn from a framework that can never be completely replaced no matter how much we learn of other African works of art through the researches of Griaule, Fagg, Olbrechts, and their followers.

And we have to remember that it was artists, in spite of their limited information, not scholars, who revealed African Negro art to European taste. In fact they did so with little more knowledge of provenance or former history than in what curio shop they had been lucky enough to find the object and whether the dealer had a dependable source of supply.

Many examples of African art at the time had already been gathered into ethnographical museums, where they were usually lost in a clutter of other

6. *Ibid.*

exhibits, since their aesthetic character was of no interest to their discoverers or owners. One has only to look through the catalogues of W. D. Webster, an auctioneer of ethnological specimens, located in Bicester, Oxfordshire, at the prices paid for his sales from 1897 to 1904, to realize how little the finest African work was esteemed in those days. (It was from Webster that such fine continental collections as that of Berlin Museum für Völkerkunde drew some of their richest treasures.) Travellers, traders, and soldiers brought objects back to Europe as curiosities. The pieces of ivory or gold had an evident worth. Too often the gold objects would be melted down. Or the gold would be stripped off carved wood statuettes from the Gold Coast, where it was customary to cover them with precious metal. But objects made of material of no intrinsic value soon found their way into the hands of such dealers in ethnographical specimens as Webster, or, more often, into the hands of dealers in odds-and-ends. It was in such curiosity shops that the first French and Belgian amateurs made their acquaintance with Negro art.

The vogue at first was paid little commercial heed. But gradually it began to spread, and the supply, always extremely limited, dwindled. Dealers began to take steps to assure themselves of importations—practically always, without the slightest regard for any serious ethnographic documentation of their wares. An early and ready source of supply had been the liquidation of the estates of soldiers who had taken part in punitive expeditions against the natives. Then traders began to ship to Europe whatever they could persuade the Africans to part with. Even in Africa, however, the supply was small: fine pieces were no longer being produced in any quantity, owing to the decadence of the natives, which duly followed on their exploitation by the whites. Soon the traders were reduced to employing natives to manufacture copies for the growing market. When this in its turn failed to satisfy the demand, European forgeries, which soon surpassed the native copies in "character," began to appear in unfortunately generous quantities in Brussels, Paris, and other centres.

Today, Africa rarely yields art of the quality that we find in the great collections of Europe, formed half a century ago. From time to time, some unexploited region is opened up. But usually, as in the case of the Ife and Esie discoveries [7] of the last decade or so, it is work of a dead past, not the flowering of an active art. So, while African art may be considered "modern" on the ground that very few of the examples we know can have survived more than a century and a half (excepting, of course, certain ivories, the

7. ". . . in 1934 no fewer than seven hundred and sixty-five [stone] figures and heads were discovered in a clearing among oil palms, one and a half miles from Esie, in Ilorin province, Nigeria. . . . In the majority of these carvings the features are sufficiently individualized for them to be considered as portraits; their naturalism, however, is naïve and typically African."—Leonhard Adam, *Primitive Art* (revised edn., Melbourne [Penguin Books], 1949), pp. 120–21. Also see J. D. Clarke, "The Stone Figures of Esie," *Nigeria* (Lagos), No. 14 (June, 1938), 106–8, for a fairly detailed account.

Benin bronzes, and the Ife bronzes and terracottas), at the same time we must accept the fact that the art of Africa is already an art of the past.

But for all the physical youth of the examples of African art we know, particularly those carved from wood, there is no doubt of the antiquity of the tradition underlying their production. The collection of Armbraser and Weickmann in the Museum of Ulm, Germany, contained ivories and weapons brought back to Europe before 1600. And since the Middle Ages we have heard tales from travellers and explorers of kingdoms along the Gulf of Guinea and to the south of the Sahara, tales of fabulous wealth and culture. Undoubtedly there was a certain exaggeration in the reports. Still, we find sufficient evidence of a basic element of truth. And while the sculptures that we actually know are for the most part modern, there is no doubt that the traditional forms which they reflect in a broad way as a guide or framework have been handed down within the tribes for generations.

Long before the Portuguese, encouraged by Prince Henry the Navigator, had actually reached Great Benin in the last quarter of the fifteenth century, we have reports of other great Negro kingdoms to the north and west. In the early fourteenth century some Genoese seamen had already worked their way round the west coast of Africa considerably beyond the Canaries; and, in 1364 a party of Dieppe sailors are said to have gone probably as far as what is the Gold Coast of today. But it was usually from travellers in the interior and from traders that the more striking reports came; for example, descriptions of the vast Negro kingdom of Ghana (Guinea), which in the tenth and eleventh centuries extended from the Senegal River east to the bend of the Niger; of Melle, successor to Ghana in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries; and of the Songhai empire of Gao, in the Niger bend, which rose from Melle's ruins, reaching its great power in the sixteenth century, when it extended from Lake Chad west to the Atlantic. To the north lay the Hausa states that grew out of the seven towns of Biram, Gobir, Kano, Rano, Zaria, Katsina, and Daura and were originally peopled by a Negro nation apparently related to the early Songhai. These original inhabitants were conquered in the tenth century by another people of obscure affinities, from the east. And these conquerors in their turn founded an empire which survived (with intervals such as the conquest by the Songhai, in 1512, and that by the Moors, in 1595) until they were subjected by the Fula, in 1807. Further south, along the coast, lay the kingdom of the Yoruba. At its height it comprised the whole region between the Niger and the Gulf of Guinea, extending westward from the mouth of the Niger as far as Ashantiland. And among the native civilizations of Africa it is of an outgrowth of Yoruba, the kingdom of Great Benin, that we possess the fullest documentation.

While this documentation is not really extensive, or even historically exact, the fact that we have some concrete information regarding Benin has inclined us to lay a very likely undue importance upon it and its culture, in

contrast to the other great Negro kingdoms and empires that have left us no records beyond such evidence of artistic genius as surviving sculptures may provide. Nevertheless, our few facts about Benin have played an important role in the consideration of African art. For they have helped to dissipate the notion that Negro art is a chance production of a people entirely lacking in culture or social organization.

The first Europeans to reach Benin were, as we have said, a group of Portuguese; this was in 1472. The company actually reached Great Benin, or Oedo, as the capital was then called; and from its members we have report of other important contemporary Negro kingdoms to the north and west. The chronicler João de Barros tells us that Alfonso d'Aveiro brought back with him from Benin a native ambassador to the court of Portugal.

The first descriptive details of the capital, however, became known in Europe about 1600. The publishers De Bry printed a description given them by a certain mysterious traveller, "D.R." The city, according to this account, lay about seventy-five miles inland from the mouth of the Benin or Formosa River. Its main street was seven or eight times wider than the great street of Amsterdam and stretched out of sight into the distance.

Somewhat later, in 1668, a Dutch traveller, Dr. Olfert Dapper, added some further details about the wealth and importance of the city. It was fortified by a solid rampart ten feet high. A similar wall protected the royal palace, which "was as large as the whole city of Haarlem." The magnificent structures that composed it were linked together by impressive long colonnades of wooden pillars, covered from top to bottom with bronze plaques depicting battle scenes. Thirty broad streets ran the length of the city, each lined with carefully constructed houses. The dwellings were low but large, with long interior galleries and numerous rooms, the walls of which were made of smooth red clay polished till it gave the appearance of marble.

In 1704, another traveller, named Nyendael, found the city practically in ruins, scarcely inhabited. The corridors of the palace were now supported by wooden pillars so rudely carved that the chronicler was scarcely able to discern what was represented. There was no longer any evidence of the bronze plaques that had formerly attracted so much attention. And since no traveller after Nyendael makes any mention, it may be supposed that, during the civil war which ravaged Benin in the last years of the seventeenth century, they had been hastily pulled down and hidden in the storehouses where the British were to find them two hundred years later.

In the course of the eighteenth century, the city rose again from its ruins. It never returned, however, to its ancient splendour. And in 1820, the palace was again destroyed during an insurrection.

It was not until 1897 that the first bronzes from Benin reached Europe. The British had established themselves in 1851 at Lagos, on the coast. The oba, or king, of Benin had for centuries maintained by force of arms a hegemony

over a wide area of southern Nigeria west of the Niger. In 1896, the British consul, J. R. Phillips, attempted to enter the capital city during a religious festival, to come to an understanding with the reigning oba, Overami, who was notorious for the savagery and scale of his human sacrifices. Overami had prohibited the consul's visit during the festival. Phillips and his party were ambushed and killed. "A punitive expedition reached Benin in January 1897, deposed the Oba, established British rule there, and removed, as an indemnity, the accumulated riches found, largely in a state of dire neglect, in the Oba's palace, and in the houses of some of the chiefs. . . ." [8]

The bronzes and ivories were shipped to London either as curiosities or as scrap. Felix von Luschan, in his catalogue *Die Altertümer von Benin*,[9] was later able to list twenty-four hundred objects. So at a stroke almost the entire artistic remains of a great but decayed culture left Nigeria for Europe. Pieces soon began to reach the market through such channels as Webster, the Oxfordshire auctioneer, or second-hand shops in England or on the continent to which the returning officers of the British expedition or their families had sold them.

Out of these spoils three great collections (as well as many smaller ones) came into being, two of which are still in England—in the British Museum and in the Pitt-Rivers Museum, at Farnham, Dorset—while the largest of all, which went to Berlin in 1898, was, as William Fagg has written, "evacuated to Silesia during the late war and has vanished, apparently eastwards." [10]

These Benin pieces both from a technical and an artistic point of view completely mystified Europeans who realized what their quality implied. At the turn of the century Africa was still regarded as the "dark continent" as much for its unenlightenment as for its vast unexplored areas. The natives were "savages," and their productions hitherto had held no interest for Europe save as evidence of their barbarism or at best as souvenirs of a sojourn rarely looked back upon with relish. When the bronzes from Benin appeared, of which von Luschan wrote, "Cellini himself could not have made better casts, nor anyone else before or since to the present day," an explanation had to be found. It could not be supposed that unenlightened savages had produced such remarkable examples of bronze-casting without aid. Finally the representation of certain figures in Portuguese garb on some of the plaques suggested that the method of bronze-working had been imported by the Portuguese on their first visit to the capital, in the fifteenth century. To bear out the theory, one English researcher managed to discover a tradition, allegedly local, to the effect that one Ahammangiwa, a member of the first party of white men to set foot in Benin, in the reign of the Oba Esigie, introduced bronze-casting.[11]

8. William Fagg, "Ancient Benin," foreword to the catalogue of an exhibition, "Art of Primitive Peoples," Berkeley Galleries, London, Dec. 1, 1947, to Jan. 31, 1948.

9. Berlin, 1919; 3 vols.

10. Fagg, "Ancient Benin."

11. C. H. Read and O. M. Dalton, *Antiquities from the City of Benin and Other Parts of West Africa in the British Museum* (London, 1899), pp. 6–7.

This theory, however, has now been generally abandoned. There is no evidence that the Portuguese had any such skill to communicate. And in the light of a better knowledge of African history, an analysis of the stylistic features of Benin art shows it to be fundamentally negroid. Finally, the discoveries made in 1910 by Leo Frobenius at Ife, only a hundred and ten miles away, as well as subsequent disclosures there, confirm the tradition of the Bini, the natives of Benin, that they had learned the art of casting bronze from the Yoruba of Ife, who in their turn had possibly come under the influence of the cultures of the upper Nile. While the actual origins of this art are still a matter of deep uncertainty, Fagg offers the following as a working hypothesis: "In the course of the first centuries of the Christian era, the Yoruba, having come from the east (perhaps the banks of the upper Nile), had already before this migration a knowledge of the techniques of bronze-casting by the *cire-perdue* process [12] well known to the Egypt of the Pharaohs and to the last Graeco-Nubian civilization of Meroë (although their casts were of a much more reduced scale than those of Ife and of other bronze manufacturers); and a germ, if one may so express it, of decadent realism appropriate to Greek art subsisted, slight as it was, from the odyssey of the Yoruba and found its rebirth and a considerable development after their establishment on the Gulf of Guinea." [13]

Despite the great weight of historical data we possess in regard to the kingdom of Benin, the chronology of its artistic productions is still almost as uncertain as that of other regions of Africa. Tradition among the Bini has it that bronze-casting by the *cire-perdue* method was introduced into Benin from Ife under Oba Oguola about 1280.[14]

This date is not impossible in view of the attributed resemblances between the Benin and Ife work and the superior quality of the latter. The age of the Ife heads that we know is still uncertain. But it is generally accepted that they date from the fifteenth century, at the latest before the arrival of the Portuguese. In any case, we can feel safe in dating the period of production of the finest Benin bronzes earlier than the decadence which set in after the civil war in the latter part of the seventeenth century.

The German ethnologists von Luschan and Bernhard Struck have attempted to date the Benin bronzes by a system of reference to the royal

12. In the *cire-perdue* ("lost wax") process of metal-casting the sculptor builds up a wax model around an earthen core. The wax of the model is then covered with several coats of fine potter's clay in a completely liquid state. Each coat is allowed to dry separately. When the coats are of a satisfactory thickness, the model is enveloped in earth, which solidifies in drying. When sufficiently dry, the whole is heated, and the wax melts and escapes through vents arranged for the purpose. Molten metal is then poured through these holes and takes the place left empty by the melted wax. After the metal within has cooled, the mold is broken off, leaving a precise reproduction in metal of what the artist had originally modelled in wax. The oldest method of metal-casting known, it is still practised throughout the world.

13. William Fagg, "De l'art des Yoruba," in *L'Art Nègre* (Présence Africaine 10–11; Paris, 1951), p. 116. (Author's translation.)

14. Adam, *op. cit.*, p. 114.

chronology of Benin. Such a classification is clearly unsatisfactory. Perhaps a greater precision may be possible when scientific excavations on the site of Benin itself have been carried out.

We can see that the history of African art still remains its least rewarding facet. Such a summary review, however, of what we know of Benin, the most powerful kingdom of the Guinea coast over a long period—how it was influenced by Yoruba and in turn exerted its artistic influence over such neighbours as Abomey and Zagnanado, in Dahomey—gives us a notion of what may have been the culture and power of those great empires of Melle and Ghana in the north and of Lunda in the region now Belgian Congo, of which we know even less than we know of Benin. Also it helps us to envisage, at least in part, the standard of culture that doubtless obtained there and its results: seemingly a general prosperity; large, populous cities; extensive areas of land under cultivation; and orderly, peace-loving inhabitants keenly sensitive to beauty in their environment, habiliments, and art. Finally, we may agree with Frobenius, who observed that the legend of the barbarous Negro current in Europe during the latter half of the nineteenth century is primarily the creation of European exploiters who needed some excuse for their depredations.

Those regions, however, of whose past we possess any information (even through oral tradition) make a very small part of the vast area of central and west Africa which has produced art which may be said to offer predominantly negroid characteristics. At the same time, when we consider the vast areas drawn upon, the production of Negro sculpture as we know it seems incredibly small. For the area from which this art comes embraces the greater part of that region in which the "true" Negro [15] peoples predominate, as well as the immense "heart of Africa" peopled by the western branch of the Bantu-speaking peoples. The relative integrity of this sculpture-producing area, its more or less stable racial pattern over the last several centuries, is actually the result of ethnic movements. Tribal expansion was the prime stimulus to migration. But we also find another reason for it among the Negroes: a craving for salt and a concomitant desire to control the sources of supply. As a result, in west Africa there was a continuous movement towards the sea, which had its effect in disseminating tribal traditions. And the difficulty in allocating stylistic traits of Negro art with certainty to definite regions or tribes may in great part be attributed to it.

Cultures were also bound to vary with different types of country, different conditions of environment. For example, the large states and federations such as Ghana, Melle, the Hausa, the Yoruba, and Lunda were all outgrowths of parkland and forest edge, where communication was not difficult. In the denser forest, central control of a wide area was impossible—each village remained small and independent, and architecture never received the attention accorded it in the capital cities of the more open areas.

15. For an explanation of the term "true Negro," see the preface of this book.

The type of religion of the Negro, also determined in great part by environment, we find particularly reflected in his art. Ancestor worship is most common among peoples who through seeing men wielding great power in this world come to feel that the souls of the great should still be powerful after death. This is the cult that in many regions of Africa has been productive of the finest sculpture, not only through symbolizing the dead as in the stylized burial fetishes of the Ogowe River district, in Gabon (Plates 142–44), but also through actual portraits. Without doubt many of the ancestor figures of Sudan, Benin, and Congo fall into this category—for example, the famous royal statues of the Bakuba kings (Plates 81, 82), which the English ethnologists E. Torday and T. A. Joyce found in the Belgian Congo and felt could be dated with confidence on the basis of their portrait character. They were clearly individualized in feature—evidently intended as realistic portraits though somewhat altered in keeping with the sculptural conventions of the region—and recognized by the natives as representing certain rulers still known and reverenced by name.

Still more realistic "portraits" survive in the bronze heads, the terracotta heads, and the half-length figures found at Ife and nearby. In the bronze heads, particularly such as those in Plates 132–38, African sculpture in the naturalistic convention achieves a level of subtlety rarely matched, much less surpassed, in the Mediterranean region during classic times or the Renaissance.

Ancestor worship, however, is practically confined to the parklands and the forest edge. In the denser jungle, where the tribes are disseminated, we find little evidence of it. There animistic beliefs predominate. Trees, streams, rocks, even animals, take the character of minor supernatural forces, and each has its cult celebrated by rituals in which sculptured masks and fetishes play an important part.

Religion with the Negro, as with all races, has been the main stimulus to artistic expression. Even in minor manifestations we find it as productive in Africa as in Europe. For example, some of the finest expressions take the form of fertility idols such as those in Plate 46 from the Sudan, Plate 60 from northeast Yoruba, or Plate 84 from the Belgian Congo; fetishes for conjuration, such as Plates 96–97, and the well-known "Konde" nail-studded figures (Plate 79) used for driving away illnesses by one's hammering a nail into the figure at the moment of conjuration; representations of the spirit of the dead (Plate 142); and figures to insure successful childbirth as well as protect the child till the age of puberty.

Certainly the broadest variety of expression, if not the highest, in Negro art is in the ritual mask. Masks range in form from the most realistic, employing monkey hair (Plates 34–35), or even human hair, to heighten the representation, to the most purely architectonic (Plate 6) or non-realistic (Plate 29); in size, from the immense casques of the Baluba fetish-men (Plate 22) or the huge and awesome "Kakunga" masks of the Bayaka (Plate 28), to the small dance masks worn by women and children. Some masks that are intended to be

handed down from one fetish-man to another within the tribe are meticulously carved; others, to be worn at a single ceremony then to be thrown away, may be crudely contrived out of soft wood and painted with gaudy colours in some traditional pattern. The purposes of the masks are as numerous as their varieties: sanctuary masks, fetish-men's war masks, hunting masks, circumcision-ritual masks, masks worn at funeral and memorial ceremonies—different variations of type in every tribe for every purpose—in wood, wicker, cloth, straw, parchment, ivory, and endless combinations of materials.

Still, African Negro art is by no means restricted to ritual objects. In practically every accessory of life, even the commonest utensil, the Negro's sensitivity and craftmanship are illustrated; spoons (Plates 54–55), bobbins (Plates 56–58), headrests (Plates 93–95), musical instruments (Plates 53, 63, 76, 78, 80). In the Belgian Congo, particularly among the Bushongo along the Kasai River, we find textiles woven of coco-palm fibre in elaborate patterns which have their relation to the surface patterns of the sculpture of the region.

Even tattooing among the Negroes is art itself, to such an extent that the patterns which we find on the bodies of the natives are often the basis of those with which they decorate their sculptures (Plates 85, 86–87) and permit us in many cases to assign them to styles of specific tribes. On the northern shore of the Gulf of Guinea, especially in the Gold Coast and Ivory Coast, we find a curious expression of lyric fantasy in small bronzes produced by the *cire-perdue* method and used by the natives for weighing gold dust. These are frequently as remarkable in their technical mastery as they are individual in their imaginative conceptions (Plates 106–8).

Although the materials employed are usually dictated by circumstances of environment and expediency, immediate availability is not always a controlling factor. This we see illustrated by one of the main arguments in favour of the theory of Egyptian rather than Portuguese influence in the Benin bronzes. For while tin is ready to hand in southern Nigeria, it has been found that the copper employed by the Bini in their earliest work was brought down from Egypt. In most cases, however, we find carving done in wood because of its ease of handling. When stone is used, it is almost universally steatite (soapstone). Gold work is practically limited to those regions where the mineral is found in surface soil or streams. The finest matting and tufted textiles are produced from the fibre of the coco-palm in the Congo region. Ivory, however, is widely employed, from the Ivory Coast as far east as Tanganyika.

Because of the migrations and intermingling of tribes, it is difficult to attribute stylistic traits in African art with any confidence. And our knowledge of Africa is still so slight that names are frequently as misleading as they are helpful. In an attempt to simplify the classifications of types, names have been applied with very little scientific basis. And the political boundaries dictated by Europeans mean little to influences which have been spreading among the natives for generations. As an example, the characteristics which we might be

tempted to associate with Gabon are frequently to be found in Rio Muni (Plate 74) and the Cameroons (Plate 68).

Certain features, however, are notable. For example, the definite character of surface decoration in Bakuba cups and boxes (Plate 91) offers a ready contrast to the simpler, more architectonic though somewhat more naturalistic sculpture of the Baluba tribe (Plates 83–84), also of the Belgian Congo. In carvings from Gabon, masks and figures alike, we find a suavity of harmonious relationships in the rounded surfaces and a swelling, bulbous character in the volumes (Plates 72, 77) that offer a distinct contrast with the severe staccato counterpoint of angular forms in Sudan statuettes (Plates 39–43) or masks (Plates 1, 2). And the surface decoration of an ornate Ivory Coast mask is readily distinguished by the emphasis it lays on relationships among its unit masses (Plate 9) from the strictly linear patterns of the Belgian Congo (Plates 90, 91).

In the end, however, it is not the tribal characteristics of Negro art nor its strangeness that are interesting. It is the sculptural quality—its vitality of forms, its simplification without impoverishment, its consistent three-dimensional organization of structural planes in architectonic sequences, and above all its uncompromising truth to material.

This is the basic language through which African Negro art must always speak to outsiders and possibly through which the great African art of yesterday must speak even to African Negroes of today. But a view of African art in this light should not exclude the importance of as full a knowledge as possible of the framework in which and for which it was made.

We speak of the African sculptor's "respect for his materials." This was one of the qualities which first recommended African Negro sculpture to European artists. In it they recognized an apparent willingness on the part of the Negro sculptor to allow the material in many cases to dictate form or variations of form—to allow it to collaborate, as it were, in the final product. Griaule stresses the fact that as a result of the Negro's animistic religious outlook the raw materials he employs are never inert. "The trees they cut down are the elaborate dwellings of supernatural powers; the Mbanga, the Na, and the Kulfa of [the river] Salamat kill them with assegai blows as if they were alive." [16] The European's sensibility to natural materials and their quality has gradually dulled, but the African Negro, through his religous respect for the spirit immanent, continued to enjoy his; and the vitality of the result appealed even to those Europeans who were unaware of what lay behind it.

Form and the organization of forms are the language through which sculpture of all ages and peoples must first speak to us—our own, as well as the Sumerian, the Mayan, or the Egyptian. Without some knowledge of the human setting in which and for which it was made it remains only the bare bones of expression, much as the music of the *Paradiso* would remain to one with no knowledge of thirteenth-century philosophy, history, or religion.

16. Griaule, *op. cit.*, p. 47.

The non-African can only hope to respond directly through his visual experience—his personal non-African eye. But the more he can bring to the basic sculptural expression the richer will be his response and enjoyment. That will be the gift of the ethnographer; the widening of horizons, the broadening of our embrace, the opening of new fields of aesthetic experience to explore into which, alone, we might never find our way.

1952 *JAMES JOHNSON SWEENEY*

Postscript (1963)

And that is what has happened in the past dozen years. Not only have fresh sources of African art been opened up and numerous hitherto unfamiliar expressions of it been disclosed, but by study and research we have acquired a deeper understanding of its meaning within the philosophico-religious system that tribal art embodies—a meaning largely foreign to Western thought and action and the West's more materialistic basis. The result is that African art has today an aesthetic interest per se which it did not have for its first European amateurs five decades ago.

In 1905 the newly found art of African tribes interested its discoverers primarily for the remedies it offered to European art. For that earlier generation it was a dramatic example of what might strengthen certain weaknesses, supply lacks, or correct abuses which they recognized in the Western painting and sculpture of their day. They saw in African art, on the one hand, a frank stress on basic three-dimensional form and its aesthetic order and, on the other, an encouragement of emotional expression, reinforced by the exaggeration and distortion of conventional representational forms. The consequence of this approach was that African art was seen more often than not in this subsidiary relationship to European art rather than as an artistic expression in its own right.

But within the past thirty-five years African art has assumed its place as an art entirely independent of European associations and has shown itself to possess its own logic—"far from the Cartesian," as William Fagg has said, but equally as rigorous. This changed perspective is due principally both to the wealth of objects that have come out of Africa—or have been discovered in Africa and remained there—and to the broader and deeper interest in the psychological, sociological, environmental, and philosophical background of African tribal art which these new disclosures have stimulated.

The variety of fresh work of quality is in itself astonishing. Each month for the past ten years and still today there are unfamiliar arrivals from Africa or the report of new discoveries there: new types of ritual items—masks and fetishes—and new types of utilitarian objects carved as symbolic figures. These finds have been in many widely separated places—Ijara, Ife, Guinea, Mali, Upper Volta, Chad, Esie, Nok—and often they are vastly different in character from those objects which first won the interest and admiration of Europeans in the early years of this century.

An example is the "porpianong" (Plate 175), a type of stylized representation of the hornbill, made by the Senufo, of Ivory Coast. Though sometimes more than seven feet tall, these birdform fertility symbols are worn on the heads of members of the tribe's Lo Society during rituals. They have become known outside Africa only in recent years. Another unfamiliar cult object is the "kakilambe" (Plate 177). These great serpent figures of polychrome wood are made by the Landuma, in Guinea, and are nine or more feet in height. They are stylizations of the Gabon viper and symbolize at once both fertility and survival after death. Butterfly masks of painted wood and braided rope (Plate 173) are worn by the Bobo, of Upper Volta, in dances celebrating the approach of spring, heralded in that region by swarms of butterflies. When the butterflies appear, the tilling of the fields begins afresh, and ritual dances invoke the "do" spirits to imbue the soil with their divine powers. From this area also come the same tribe's owl-like bird masks (Plate 166), worn principally in hunting rites, and the antelope head-dresses (Plates 167 and 168) of the Kurumba, worn in the mourning ceremonies to drive the souls of the deceased out of the village. And an object strictly utilitarian, but dignified by symbolic carving, is a housepost over six feet high made by the Dogon, of Mali (Plate 178). In the past dozen years there have also been major new examples of familiar styles to come out of Africa, such as the famous "Queen" (Plate 181), from the Bambara (Mali), so closely akin to other masterpieces of dramatic carving previously known to us.

But perhaps more important than the discovery of such types of cult expression, stimulating as they may be, are the links in the chain of tradition which have appeared during the past decade and the breadth of development they illustrate, as well as the antiquity of the sculptural arts in Africa to which they testify. For example, in November 1957 a workman leveling a low mound at Ita Yemoo, on the outskirts of the town of Ife, came upon a group of evidently ancient works of art, "the first fruits," as Fagg has described them, "of what may well prove to be the richest site yet discovered in all West Africa." And this small group, according to Fagg, "has thrown much new light on the Ife culture already, and, what is perhaps more valuable, it has raised a number of new problems." [1] One of the most unusual items of the Ita Yemoo find is the pair of royal figures with linked arms (frontispiece). The face of one figure was damaged by a workman's pick; but, as Fagg points out, entirely aside from any aesthetic considerations, this piece and the figure of

an Oni of Ife found with it establish a major point in our view of African bronze sculpture. Frequently in the past it was suggested that the idealized naturalism of the Ife bronzes in contrast to African wood carving—even those of the Yoruba, in the same region of Nigeria—was a consequence of the importation of foreign metalworkers. Until this recent discovery no full-length Ife figures had come to light. Now with this royal pair and the Oni statue found with it we have the fact established, as Fagg writes, "once and for all that the sculptures were made by Africans." Their proportions evidence this: the heads, despite the idealized naturalism of the faces, are on a markedly larger scale than the bodies; they are twice as large as the natural proportion—just as in modern Yoruba wood carvings. "Modern Ife," Fagg writes, "is built on twenty-five feet of potsherds and other remains. . . . If it is not, as its traditions hold, the place where the world and man were created, it was without doubt a fountainhead of artistic impulses whose diverse effects on neighbouring peoples have still, for the most part, to be brought to light."

Compared with the Nok terracottas, the Esie stone figures, and the recent discoveries at Ijara—all in Nigeria—and with the 15,000 pieces of bronze and terracotta found in 1948 at the sanctuary of Tago in the Republic of Chad, these Ife works are, for all their mystery, relatively young. But young or old, it is just such discoveries as these which have given the scholar during the past few years a wider and more profound view of the religious, philosophic, and even historical environment of African art. And from this wider view and the greater familiarity with the fundamentals of African expression which it provides has come that desire to look at African art for itself rather than for its associations with the art of Europe: a desire that has developed so notably in the recent past and continues to grow in the present.

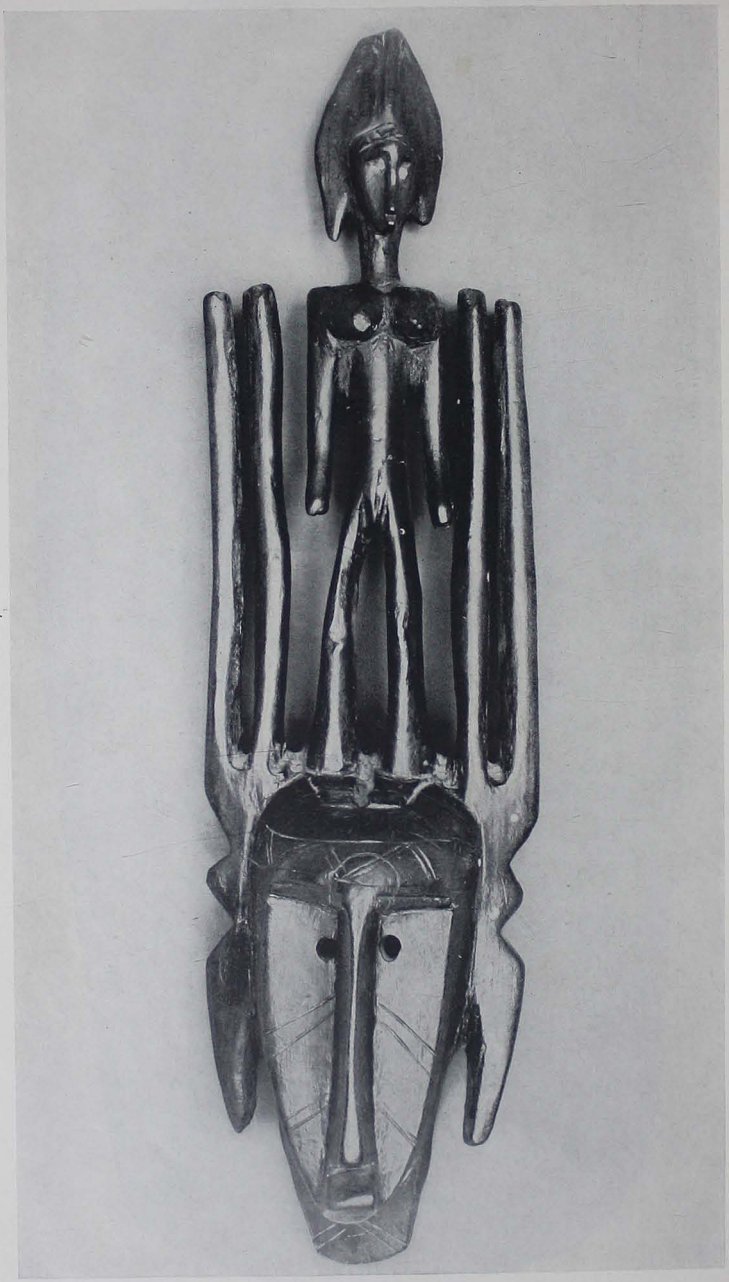
JAMES JOHNSON SWEENEY

1. William Fagg, "Ife, the Original City," foreword to the catalogue of an exhibition, "The Latest Ife Finds," The Museum of Primitive Art, New York, October 29–December 2, 1958.

PLATES

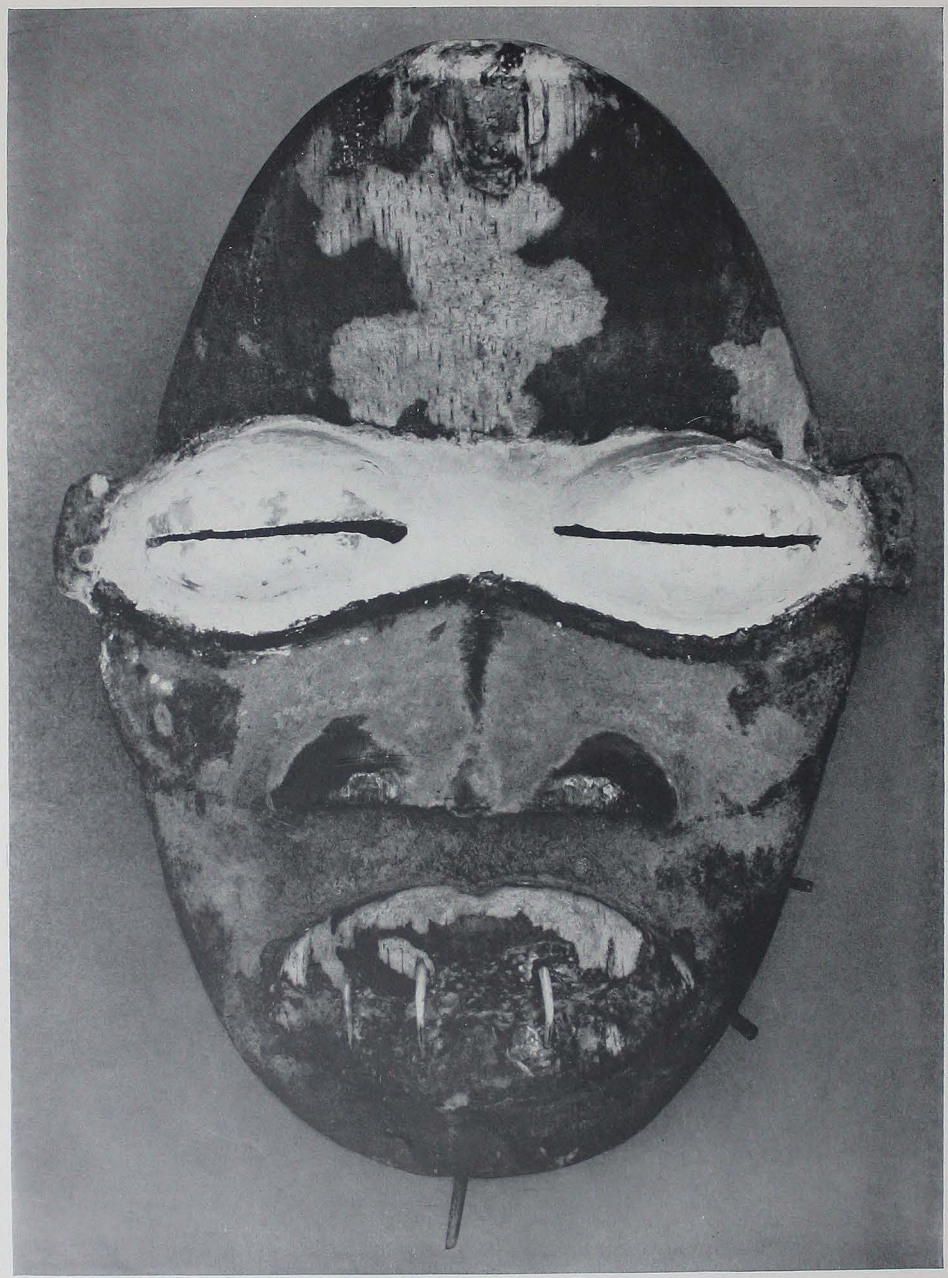
The Catalogue of Plates follows the plates.

1. Mask. Wood, h. 14½ in. *Dogon, Mali*



2. Mask. Wood, h. 25 in. *Bambara, Mali*

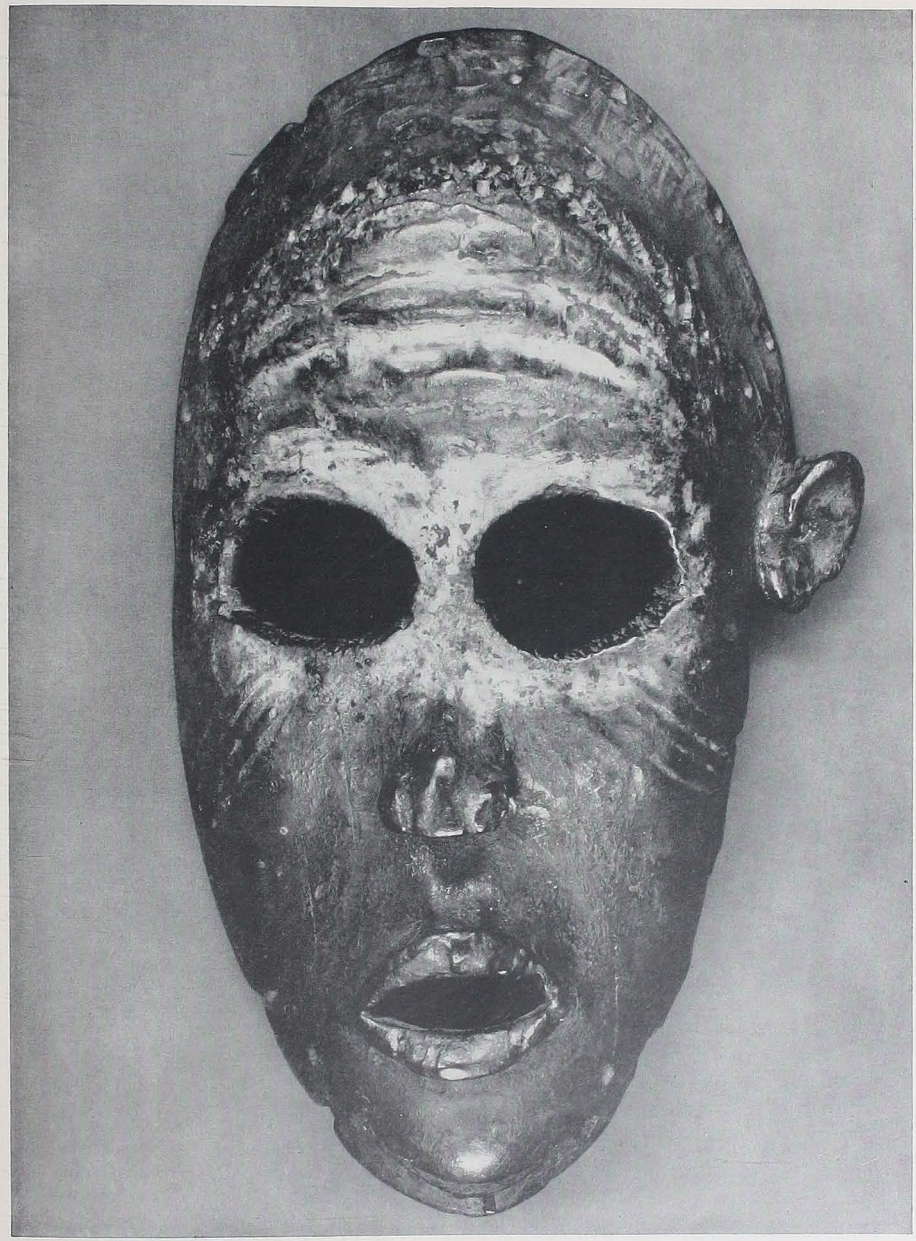
3. Mask. Wood, h. 22½ in. *Toma, Liberia*



4. Mask. Polychrome wood, h. 9 in. *Dan, Liberia, border of Ivory Coast*

5. Mask. Wood, h. 9⅛ in. *Dan, Ivory Coast*

6. Mask. Wood, h. 9½ in. *Dan, Ivory Coast*



7. MASK. Wood, h. $10\frac{5}{8}$ in. *Dan, Ivory Coast*

8. Mask. Wood, h. 18½ in. *Bambara, Mali*