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THE RELIGIOUS CONCEPTIONS OF THE PERO PEOPLE

Historical, economic and social
background, with a comparison of religious
beliefs with these of other African tribes.

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VITA

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In September of that year he went as a missionary under the Missionary Society of the Evangelical Church (affiliated in Africa with the Sudan United Mission) to the Pero tribe in Nigeria, British West Africa. Here he assisted with the pioneer mission work among these people, shared in reducing their language to writing, and besides preparing other literature has translated four books of the New Testament into the vernacular of the people.

During his first furlough, in 1934, he was accepted by the Kennedy School of Missions as a candidate for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. From the time of his return to the field in 1935 until late in 1943, when he returned for his third furlough, research in the field of the dissertation was continued.

In October, 1944, he enrolled in the Kennedy School of Missions for the completion of his studies as a Ph.D. candidate, and for the writing of this dissertation.

INTRODUCTION

Before many months had been spent among the people of the Pero tribe the author was struck with the importance that this group of people place upon religion, especially the significant role that their belief in the supernatural world plays in their outlook upon life in general. From this discovery there grew a new interest in the whole realm of their religious thought life. Naturally there followed the desire that this be recorded.

Thus far no written account, in any form, had been made of the Pero people. In his book A Sudanese Kingdom, C. K. Meek, a British anthropologist, makes a mere reference to them. Furthermore material about them was not available at the Government District Office. Of the small neighboring tribes one article in the magazine Africa, July 1934 by C. K. Meek, is all that is recorded. In this article Meek describes the Kulu peoples bordering the Peros on the south. Thus if any information about the Peros was to be had it had to be secured from the people themselves and through their own vernacular. This source has yielded the major part of this material.

Up until the last few years the Pero tribe had to a large extent maintained its tribal unity and the minds of the people were closed to ideas offered by outsiders. But now more and more, through the influences of secularism, Mohammedanism, and Christianity which are making their impress upon the life of

this group, the tribal unity is disintegrating. Therefore if a record of the indigenous religious concepts was to be made it had to be done at once.

In pursuing the study of an African tribe a knowledge of the historical background is most essential in rightly understanding their ways and thought life. Such information, however, is not, in most cases, to be had from written records of which these people have none. But light from accounts of other tribes, made by students of African life, has aided the author in placing the Pero tribe, a segment of a larger group, in the great influx of migratory peoples into Nigeria.

The value of such an investigation is further enhanced by comparing it with the thought life of neighboring and other African tribes. Indeed such a comparison is necessary to obtain an accurate perspective of the cultural setting of a particular group. Hence, from available accounts of such tribes material has been drawn for the discussion in Part II of this study which deals with "The Religious Conceptions". It is of interest to note the differences in the beliefs, but the similarities are amazing.

Furthermore, the study of the people from an anthropological viewpoint necessary to obtain such an account has its compensations when one considers effective missionary work among primitive people. The information gained from such a 'soil-analysis' of the thought and life of a people gives the

missionary a working basis for his teaching; it greatly assists him in preventing incorrect judgments; it makes for an appreciation of the people's abilities; it aids in helping minimize the rapid disintegration of the tribal life; it greatly deepens his sympathetic interest in the needs of the people; and in general, it conditions his outlook upon his important task as an ambassador of Christ.

The second purpose of this dissertation is, through this account of the religious concepts, to point out, contrary to Lévy-Bruhl, the French sociologist, that the religious beliefs, which include "myths, funeral rites, agrarian practices and the exercise of magic" are more than merely the response to "collective needs and sentiments";¹ that there is a High God above and beyond the primitives' practices; and that these practices are an attempt to approach this Supreme Being.

Lévy-Bruhl explains all the practices employed by the primitives on a material basis, and maintains that we have no right even to label them as religion for by so doing we immediately make their thinking follow a pattern similar to our own which it cannot hope to do, since, as he contends, the mentality of the primitives is "oriented in a different direction than our own". He says that although the natives see with eyes like ours they do not perceive with minds like ours.²

1. Lévy-Bruhl, Lucien, How Natives Think, p. 25.

2. Ibid., p. 44.

In accounting for all the practices which enwrap the primitives' lives as a mere "response to collective needs and sentiments" he fails to give any consideration to that one belief held by all primitives which is above and beyond and even within the practices, namely, the belief in a High God.

It is hardly possible for one to spend more than a decade of years among a group of primitive people, learning of their religious thinking and acting while ministering to their welfare in a constructive way, and not come to the conclusion that that germ of religion, or belief in the Great Spirit, indwelling every primitive heart is more than an accidental result of the environment, but has been placed there by the Creator.

The third aim is to show that if the opinions held by scholars like Lévy-Bruhl are only part of the whole picture, their examining the trees having hindered them from seeing the beauty of the whole forest, then Christianity can find a basic background in the religious values of the deep-seated though obscure religious concepts of primitive people. Part III deals with these values or foundation-stones suited for the Christian approach.

The author wishes to express his appreciation to the Board of Missions of the Evangelical Church for granting time for this study. He is deeply indebted to Professor Agnes

C. L. Donohugh in whose classroom in 1929 he was first introduced to a systematic study of the culture of primitive peoples, and who has given much careful help in the preparation of this dissertation. To Dr. Lewis Hodus and Professor P. A. MacDiarmid who have given valuable suggestions and read the manuscript he is grateful. Finally to his wife for her patient and sympathetic encouragement and for her assistance in the preparation of the manuscript he expresses his thanks.

ORTHOGRAPHY

The script used for the vernacular words was that adopted when reducing the language to writing:

Vowels always have their long sounds.

ā is pronounced as the "a" in awe.

ṅ is nasalized as the "ng" in sing.

The glottal or explosive sound, used only with the "b" and "d", is indicated with a dot below the letter as in chiḅa (children), or ḍaḅa (hyena).

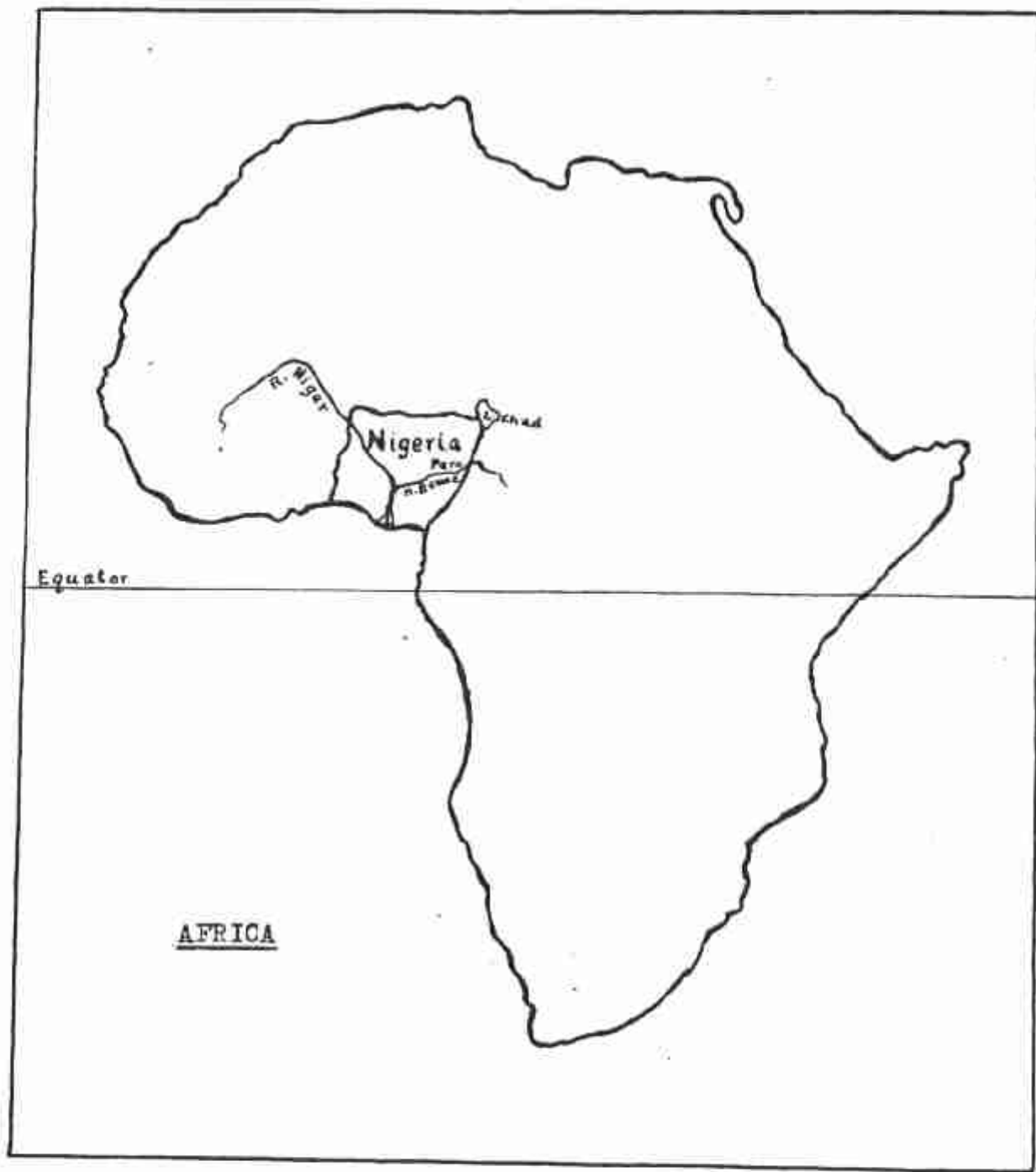


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CHAPTER I

HISTORICAL SETTING

Nigeria, that portion of West Africa which covers 372,674¹ square miles, is inhabited by some 275 different tribal groups. This country has become the home of many scores of tribes whose migration from the east and north found its destination here. Today the total population of this area, according to the census of 1939, is 20,476,795.²

The fact that this "squarish block" of the African continent, which lies between the parallels of 4° and 14° north, is trisected by the Niger river and its great tributary, the Benue, enhances its value to the native peoples as well as to the foreign governing power. The comparatively fertile soil in the river basins and the variety of geography and rainfall, together with the sub-surface minerals are largely responsible for the density of the population which is 53 to the square mile against 47 in the Gold Coast and 13 in Tanganyika.³ Survival here, though with difficulty, was more certain.

1. Nigerian Handbook, 1936, p. 1.

2. Letter from British Information Services, New York City.

3. Perham, Margery, Native Administration in Nigeria, p. 1.

Early Nigeria

As to the events or the peoples who inhabited this territory previous to the Christian era not much is known. Tradition, which is not too reliable a record of the past, usually does not go back for more than fifteen to twenty generations.

From external sources, however, we learn that this area was inhabited and that there was commercial intercourse with Egypt and North Africa. Gold appears to have been the first magnet that drew the Egyptians and Carthaginians to this portion of the continent, notwithstanding the hardships of the desert crossing or the sea traveling. A mere glance at the title of a book by George Peacock, published in 1855, The Guinea, or Gold Coast of Africa formerly a colony of the Ancient Abbyssinians in the reign of King Solomon, starts a train of thought regarding the importance of the West Coast as a source of gold for the early Egyptians. He speaks of the water approach to this part of Africa and says "that the Ophir of Solomon was on the West or Gold Coast of Africa and that sailing expeditions sent out by Solomon went all the way around Africa, traveling from east to west, secured their gold near the present site of Lagos, and returned to Jerusalem by way of the Pillars of Hercules or Straits of Gibraltar."¹ Ward mentions "that the Egyptians sent out repeated

1. Quoted by Bittinger, D. W., An Educational Experiment in the Sudan, p. 20.

expeditions from the Nile valley overland to the Gold Coast in the days of Joseph, the Habrew, or from as early as 2200 B.C."¹

Herodotus, famed Greek historian, born 444 B.C., tells us in his history of the Egyptians that Necho, king of Egypt, purposed to prove that the entire continent, which was then known as Lybia, was, except for that particular part which is connected to Asia, surrounded by sea. He sent an expedition of Phoenicians with instructions to sail from the Red sea and return to Egypt through the Pillars of Hercules. The voyage which took three years was completed about 612 B.C.² This historian in another place refers to the Carthaginian trade for gold with the peoples of the Niger basin.³ According to Talbot, a Carthaginian force, under Hanno, consisting of 30,000 men and women, sailed along the west coast and started trading posts at various places.⁴ He suggests that they advanced far enough to be able to see the Cameroons peak in eruption. Wilson, however, believed that the island of Sherbo was the farthest point reached.⁵

"The only recorded instance of an apparent crossing of the Sahara by a Roman expedition are those cited by Marinus

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1. Ibid.
 2. Beloe, W., Herodotus, iv. p. 200.
 3. Ibid., p. 242.
 4. Talbot, P. A., Southern Nigeria, vol. 1., p. 25.
 5. Wilson, J. Leighton, Western Africa, p. 19.

Tyrius (who was edited by Ptolemy the Alexandrian). Setting out from Fezzan (which the Romans had occupied in B.C. 19), a general named Septimus Flaccus is said to have reached the Black Man's country across the desert in three month's marching. This occurred about the beginning of the Christian era. A few years later Julius Maternus starting from Garama (southern Fezzan) with the king of the Garamantes reached 'Agiaymba' (probably Kanem or Bornu) after four month's march and found the country swarming with rhinoceros (which still abound there)."¹

There are evidences of Egyptian influence upon some Nigerian tribes, especially the Yoruba, as early as 500 B.C. "The terra-cotta heads found by Leo Frobenius in the Yoruba country are precisely similar to Memphite Egyptian work of the fifth century B.C."² The discoveries made by Frobenius give evidence to the belief that a considerable artistic civilization existed in this area sometime before the Christian era. His theory, however, that the Yoruba kingdom extended from Gambia to Angola seems rather fantastic.³ This Egyptian influence besides meaning that the Nigerian tribes migrated from the east, also indicates the extent of Egyptian culture at the time. They exerted the principal foreign influence, furnishing West Africa with all its earliest domestic

1. Johnston, H. H., The Colonization of Africa, p. 12.

2. Talbot, op. cit., p. 26.

3. Frobenius, Leo, The Voice of Africa, p. 325.

animals and cultivated plants.¹

The arrival of the Yoruba nation into Nigeria from the north-east is dated by Talbot as early as the beginning of the second millenium before the Christian era.²

Following this early emigration there came, no doubt, other tribes into Nigeria of which we have no record. "The influx of these tribes may have started the migration of the (resident) Bantu-speaking people right across Africa to Bahr-el-Ghazal and the Congo-Nile watershed where they remained quiescent for a time, but about 400 B.C., according to Sir Harry Johnston, broke out into that extraordinary series of movements which carried them within a few centuries to the Cameroons and to South Africa."³ The Semi-Bantu group, who with the Bantu appear to have been the earliest people in Nigeria, was not so easily forced out. Talbot believes that they "appear to have stretched over the greater part of West Africa. Their descendants in Nigeria, of whom perhaps the Ibibio are the most ancient, now live mainly by the Cross River and in various 'pockets' in the Northern Provinces. ----The remoteness of this age is shown by the extraordinary number and diversity of the speech families and the isolated and peculiar character of some of these."⁴

1. Talbot, op. cit., p. 21.

2. Ibid., p. 19.

3. Talbot, op. cit., p. 20.

4. Ibid., p. 14.

Their strength may be noted from the fact that in spite of the pressure from new immigrant forces through the years, they are by far the largest single nation in Nigeria, embracing approximately twenty per cent of the population.

After the Time of Vaguely Recorded History.

A tribe of early migrant people, concerning whom we can be somewhat more accurate, were the Fulani, who later became the nucleus of the Western Sudanese civilization. Their coming into this part of Africa was evidently some centuries before the Christian Era, for Morel believed that the Carthaginians during their expedition on the West Coast about 500 B.C. had contact with the Fula people.¹ Their origin he indicates is with the Hyksos, or Shepherd Kings, who were found in Egypt between 2136 B.C. and 1626 B.C.² They established strong kingdoms in the Sudan. At a later date their migration tended eastward and into Nigeria where they became very influential. Today their descendants comprise the present ruling class of Northern Nigeria.

It is illuminating to note what explanations there might be as to the reason for the movement of various groups of people westward from Egypt and Arabia. To be sure the density of the population of the eastern countries made the gaining of

1. Morel, E. D., Affairs in West Africa, p. 144.

2. Ibid., p. 143.

a livelihood difficult and so it was only natural that the inhabitants should seek for other more promising lands. Arabia, for instance, where the soil is poor and the rainfall very meager, experienced a widespread emigration approximately every one thousand years. It is almost certain that many of these peoples finally found their way into Nigeria. Dr. O. Johnson, himself a member of the Yoruba tribe, claims Arabia as the original home of his tribe.¹ It seems, however, that he places the event of their emigration at far too late a period in history when stating that the Yorubas were driven out of Arabia as a result of their refusal to become Mohammedans.

In connection with the invasion of Egypt by the Assyrians in 670 B.C. there was a wide dispersion of Sudanic peoples. "Psammatic II (c590 B.C.) is said to have pursued into Nubia a body of no less than 240,000 native troops (Asmakh) who were tired of service and had deserted."² Again in "342-339 B.C. many Egyptians migrated to the south and west when their country was attacked and conquered by the Persians under Ochus, a large proportion of whose troops was composed of Indians and Syrians."³

The more recent migrations into Nigeria from the east

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1. Johnson, O., The History of the Yorubas, p. 7.
 2. Talbot, op. cit., p. 24.
 3. Ibid., p. 26.

have their origin with the rise of Mohammedanism. One of the first aims of this new faith was to make everyone in Arabia a follower of Islam, thus expeditions under the flag of the religion were made against the pagan tribes who had the option of becoming converts or being killed. Their own writings bear witness to the fact that the women were taken by the Moslem warriors as part of their plunder while the men were killed by the sword.¹ No doubt the predominant motive underlying these expeditions was to plunder rather than to propagate the faith. Foreign wars also seemed a necessity to make it possible that Mohammedanism might survive. Going out of Arabia they fought in the name of Islam. Such a program meant heavy taxation upon the people, and thus created much discontent. In view of all of this oppression it is only natural that many people found refuge in the migratory life which finally led them through Bornu into the land of the Niger basin.

Thus we have noted that both the two general causes of the migration of people, namely, expulsion and attraction played largely in the movement of the people, the former being predominant. Geographically the direction taken was most difficult, for though the bridge across this barren stretch may not have been so long in that period of the expanding Sahara,

1. Adams, Professor C. C., In his class on Moslem Religion and Psychology, Kennedy School of Missions. 1944.

nevertheless, it was a trying undertaking to cross the desert. The obstacle of passing through inhabited lands which might give rise to wars did not have to be faced on this desert route. Thus for these oppressed groups this no doubt seemed the line of least hardship.

If we can make any deductions from tradition we note that the emigration from Arabia was not only by those who refused to follow the prophet's religion but also by members of Mohammed's family and so most likely fervent propagators of the faith. "The Ture (Bornu-Kanuri) traditions" says Meek, "is as follows. On the death of Mohammed his two grandsons, Hussein and Hassan, the sons of Fatima, went to Pass (Palestine?) north of Mecca, where Hassan was slain by the heathen. Hussein, with the sons of Hassan, then travelled westwards, and eventually came to Suakowi, west of Gashegar in Northern Bornu. Hussein went on as far as Garab, west of the Niger. Every true Ture, it is said, is supposed to have a written genealogy showing his direct descent from Hassan."¹

However, since both Meek² and Talbot³ place the Kamuri invasion in Bornu at the end of or after the first millenium not too much stock can be placed in the part of the tradition which traces genealogy of the Kamuri people direct to Hassan's two sons who reached Bornu certainly before 700 A.D.

1. Meek, C. K., Northern Nigeria, Vol. 1, p. 70.

2. Ibid., p. 84.

3. Talbot, op. cit., p. 29.

At this point it will be of interest to swing over to the western Sudan in which place the kingdom of Ghana, established by the Fulani, had become important and there note what was probably the first known Christian influence in this part of Africa. Approximately between 640 - 680 "a wave of Christianity reached the western Sudan, perhaps in connection with the expulsion of the Persians from Egypt, led by semi-white men from Nubia who probably got their Christianity direct from Byzantium. There is a legend in Nupe that the followers of Issa (Jesus) introduced weaving and the manufacture of cloth."¹ Meek tells us "that the inhabitants of Ghana were stated by Abdallah - Es - Zohri to have been Christians prior to 1076."² This was about the time that Mohammedanism reached these people. A missionary stationed in the French country just north of Nigeria has related to me that there are faint evidences of early Christian teaching even now among the people of some sections of the territory.

Egypt and Arabia then were the fountain-heads of the migrations from the east; and Bornu, bordering Lake Chad, was the gateway into Nigeria. This Lake Chad area acted as a meeting place for the culture of the East and the West. "Here the influences coming from the East through Egypt met those coming from the West through Morocco and the Niger valley.

1. Ibid., p. 27.

2. Meek, op. cit., p. 73.

Here, too, was the end of a direct caravan route from Fezzan to Tripoli which came across the desert at its narrowest point."¹

Through this gateway there came from the east wave upon wave of Sudanic peoples. There came during the first millenium those groups of Hausa-speaking peoples, who later served as buffer states "between Songhai on the West and Bornu on the East. Intermittently they were overrun and became vassals to one or the other of their neighbors."² As yet they had not become followers of Islam. A legend suggests that the ancient people of Hausaland revered the snake.³ Meek comments that it would appear, however, that some of the Hausa-speaking people had a Coptic origin, or had been in contact with Copts. Ibu Batuta's reference to Gobir as 'the country of the black infidels' would seem to point to Jews or Christians rather than to a pagan people."⁴ At the turn of the millenium Mohammedanism had found its way into the Songhai empire and during the thirteenth century began to enter the Hausa states from the west with the first infiltration of the Fulani. At first there was resistance against this new religion but such could not hold out long against this new invading force.

1. Bittinger, *op. cit.*, p. 55.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 65.

3. Meek, *op. cit.*, p. 77.

4. Meek, *op. cit.*, p. 73.

There came through the gateway the Jukun tribe who are supposed to have come originally from Arabia.¹ Finding the Lake Chad territory a suitable place to live they settled there for some time. It is quite probable that they were the first inhabitants of Bornu and during their time here their strength increased.

In the meantime, or about 1000 A.D., there came the various tribes known today as the "Bura, Margi, Kerikeri, Ngamo, Ngizim, Ngalaga, and various other ancient tribes known collectively as the So."² And in as much as there is a great deal of similarity between the Kerikeri language and that of the Bolewa people it would seem that the latter were also a part of this particular migration. The present proximity of these two groups together with the language similarity lends supports to the theory that they were the same tribe. At what time the division in the tribe came about it is difficult to state.

With the coming of other immigrants, however, pressure was created and the earlier tribes were forced out. This resulted in the Bolewa and Kerikeri, though possibly they were one tribe at the time, moving westward out of Bornu. The other smaller groups also were forced to continue their migration some to the west, others to the south.

1. Burns, A. C., History of Nigeria, p. 64.

2. Meek, op. cit., p. 84.

What is of special interest to us in the migration of the two groups mentioned above is the fact that there is a third section which split off from the main tribe. This section, which divided at some time from the Bolewa and Kerikeri, took a more south-westerly route which carried them to the hill country. The larger part settled around the Tangale hills while the other part, the Peros, the people of our study, pushed on still farther until they came to the range of hills bordering the Benue on the north.¹

Several conjectures as to the explanation and the time of the division are:

1. From a Kano Chronicle which was obtained by Mr. W. R. Palmer it is gathered that there was a wide spread dispersion of immigrants in Bornu as a result of the quarrel relating to the royal succession. It is related that one group of the immigrants moved to Damiski (the former Bolewa capital). Support is given to this inference from the Kano Chronicle by Dr. Meek who says that "the Bolewa are stated to have severed their connection with the Kamuri on the shores of Lake Chad and later with the Shirawa and Babir some 717 years ago and to have established themselves gradually

I. The Kanakuru, or more correctly called the Dera tribe, living in the Shellen division of the Numan district some fifty miles east of Tangale country, number 2,650 people. According to their tradition they claim connection with the Bolewa and their language has resemblances. It seems that they too were once associated with Bolewa, very likely being separated at the same time as were the Peros and Tangales. Meek, Tribal Studies, vol. ii, p. 311.

at various centres to the West and North-west".¹ It may have been at the time of this dispersion that the Pero and the Tangale groups separated from the Bolewa² tribe and began their migration to their present country.

2. It is probable that the division of the larger Bolewa tribe did not occur until after they were settled in their new location, this time being dispersed by tribal warfare which may have originated with the Jukun pressure. Thus the Peros were separated and found refuge in the hills now known by that name.

3. That the Jukuns were a much earlier tribe in Nigeria than the Kanuri and that they early established their kingdom on the Benue. The next inhabitants of Bornu preceding the Kanuri included the Bolewa and others. These, however, being forced out of Bornu by the invading Kanuri scattered in various directions, the Pero group finally settling in its present location.

1. Meek, *Tribal Studies*, vol. ii, p.289.

2. Meek states that "The Bolewa traditions associate the tribe in its earliest days with the Yemen, and it is possible, therefore, that the Bolewa kings belonged to the same group of invaders as the founders of the kingdoms of Kanem and Songhai, who are also believed to have come into Africa from the Yemen. The Yemen tradition, however, is widely current in the Sudan, and like other traditions, is easily adopted by tribes who have no claim to it. Nevertheless, it is not improbable that the Bolewa contain to a greater extent than most other Nigerian tribes a non-Negro element which may have come in from the direction of Abyssinia." Ibid.

The Kerikeri which are the farthest north inhabit the country some thirty miles north-west of the most northerly bend of the Gongola river. To the east and south of the bend of this river are the Bola people. Some fifty miles further south and a bit east is the location of the Tangales, while twenty-five miles southwest from them live the Peros. At a later point we shall have opportunity to examine the languages of these groups.

Pero, who, it seems credible, was the leader of this segment of the Bolewa tribe, brought his people to their present hill location presumably sometime between 600 and 800 years ago. It is likely that they accompanied or were part of the Tangale migration and so it is to be expected that they would be on friendly terms with them. But the contrary is the case. The bitterest enemy the Peros had to fight was the Tangale tribe. Tradition relates more warring expeditions against these people than against any of the other neighboring groups. Having noted the enmity which exists between the supposedly two segments of the split-off from the Bolewa tribe, we must in all fairness state that the Peros never mention having been part of the Bola people. In fact, except for accounts of those who in their recent travels have come in contact with some of Bolewa, none of the Peros are aware of this group who speak a language similar to their own. My attention was first drawn to the connection by an outsider who recognized a similarity in the language used.

Of having connection with the Tangale tribe the Peros are more certain. They relate of one Tangale clan (Todi) whose former home was just above the location of Filiya, one of the Pero towns, and that members of this clan return to their former home at intervals to perform ritual. All of this in spite of being tribal enemies.

As to the time that the Jukuns reached the Benue valley and established their kingdom, the center of which was Kororofa, no certain date can be given. Palmer, for instance, places their exodus from Bornu sometime previous to A.D. 1550.¹ Mr. N. W. Thomas who writes the chapter on Language and Lore in Meek's study says that, "It is clear that the Jukun, as occupiers of the Benue valley ---- must be later comers than the Benue-Chad tribes on either side of them."² The fact, however, that this Sudanese kingdom was so strongly established at Kororofa as to be able to make a successful expedition against Kano in 1600 presupposes their reaching their Benue location at an earlier date. As a result of their conquests during this seventeenth century they were rulers of nearly the whole of the Northern Provinces,³ but by the beginning of the nineteenth century their power had waned, and their kingdom become so disintegrated that the chief of Kororofa in 1800 was paying a tribute to Bornu of one

1. Meek, A Sudanese Kingdom, p. 21.

2. Meek, Northern Nigeria, vol. 11, p. 141.

3. Talbot, op. cit., p. 36.

thousand slaves annually.¹

The Gwana section of these Jukun people exerted influence upon the religious life of the Peros.

Thus we draw to a close the very hasty investigation of some of the African influences, especially the migration of various groups of Sudanic people into Nigeria, which have tremendously changed the color of the scene that this land presents. Its beauty has been enhanced by the external forces that have been blended into the whole. We must now view some of the non-African forces which also have influenced the making of Nigeria, namely, the European impact.

Europeans Discover Nigeria

It was during the latter part of the fifteenth century that many of the major European powers sought to expand. The leader in colonial expansion between 1450-1550 was none other than Portugal. Shortly before Columbus reached the shore of the American continent Portugal, in her effort to find a sea route to India, discovered the coast of West Africa, as far as the Bight of Benin. This was in 1472.

In 1553 the first known English expedition to Benin took place, though Talbot suggests that Englishmen are said to have visited this place previously in Portuguese ships. Spain does not play a part in the affairs of the occupation of West

1. Meek, op. cit., vol. ii, p. 81.

Africa mainly because of the influence of a Papal Bull (in 1493) which allotted the greater part of Africa to the Portuguese while Spain was given other portions of the undeveloped parts of the earth.¹ At the turn of the seventeenth century the Dutch appeared in West Africa, and by "1641 the Portuguese had been driven off the greater part of the coast north of the equator by the Dutch."² But their impact had left its marks upon the people. Among these are three of the important Nigerian crops, cassava, maize and tobacco, which were introduced into Southern Nigeria by them in 1516. The Germans entered the Cameroons just south-east of Nigeria. For almost three centuries a great amount of money, effort and many lives were expended by the various European powers in establishing trading posts and, incidentally, establishing mission stations. But little exploration of the interior was accomplished until in the nineteenth century, with the British as the leaders.

The magnet that drew the European powers to this part of Africa was not mainly to satisfy the desire for new lands. This country so often alluded to as the "white man's grave" would be a poor place into which these powers could expand. The desire for exploration was accompanied by the wish to

1. Burns, op. cit., p. 73.
2. Talbot, op. cit., p. 37.

establish Christian mission stations,¹ but greater than these was the greed for the wealth of the resources of Nigeria, the principal one being the slave-trade.

This traffic in human beings, as far as it concerned West Africa and Europe was begun by the Portuguese. "The first negro slaves and the first gold-dust were brought to Lisbon in 1441."² By 1481 the traffic in this cargo had become so valuable and so much desired that the King of Portugal feared a rival in this business. Accordingly he sent an embassy to Edward IV of England asking him to restrain his subjects from trading on the coast of Guinea, and particularly to prevent a fleet which was then being prepared, from sailing to Africa. Little heed was paid to this request for we are informed that the first Englishman to take slaves from West Africa was John Hawkins who in 1562 took his 300 slaves from Sierre Leone to Hayti. After this success he headed a squadron of seven ships, with the flagship named Jesus, which sailed to Africa to carry slaves to the West Indies. The

1. J. L. Wilson in Western Africa, (p. 481) states that "the Portuguese Government itself, at the commencement of these enterprizes, was influenced as much by a desire to propagate the Catholic faith, as by any expectation of commercial gain." Portuguese missionaries in 1481 began to sow seeds of Christianity among the tribes of Benin. Churches and monasteries were established, but such conversions as were effected do not appear to have been lasting. Efforts to spread the Faith in Benin were finally abandoned. Burns (p. 73) says that for fourteen years (1481-1495) King John II had friendly correspondence with the King of Benin, who showed signs of willingness to accept the new religion.

2. Burns, op. cit., p. 73.

people of those days saw nothing inconsistent in the use of such a name for a slave-ship. It is said that "Queen Elizabeth called the slave-trade 'a detestable act which would call down the vengeance of heaven upon the undertakers' - and knighted Sir John Hawkins. A synod of Protestant churches held in France in the year 1637 decided that slavery was not condemned 'in the Word of God' and was of the right of nations."¹

The gold, ivory, pepper, etc., obtained from the West Coast were soon "dwarfed" by the slave-trade which grew immensely. As early as 1539 it was estimated that some 10,000 to 12,000 slaves were annually sold at Lisbon. Up to 1640 the Portuguese led the traffic in human cargo. Then for a time the Dutch traded a great number of slaves, exporting in 1672 ten times as many as the British. From 1698 - 1707 the British imported 25,000 slaves per annum. The exportation of this human cargo continued to increase, especially as new colonies were discovered and as America was opened, until around 1771 as many as 74,000 slaves were taken annually from the Bight of Benin, which includes the western half of the coast of Nigeria. Of this number British ships were responsible for 38,000; French for 20,000; Portuguese for 10,000; Dutch for 4,000; and Danish for 2,000.² How appropriate the name Slave Coast to this part of Africa!

Gradually as the trade was reaching great numbers, men

1. Ibid, p. 76.

2. Burns, op. cit., p. 80.

like Wilberforce in England were creating sentiment against this unchristian business. In 1807 on the first day of May the slave-trade was declared illegal for all British subjects: and many of the other great Powers followed sooner or later. Declaring the slave-trade illegal, however, meant at first a mere transfer of British income to the Portuguese, Dutch and Spaniard - Spain now having become an important member of the slave-trade business. For some years the British struggled to abolish this evil traffic on the West Coast, with final success.

Lest we get an unfair perspective of the development of trade with the Nigerian people we must remind ourselves that the gateway into this land through which trade passed was not only the southern coast. The outlet to the north which led across the Sahara and to the land of the Moors was also used much as a trade route.

Among the important commodities of this trade across the desert slavery appears again. Denham, one of the three members of the expedition of 1822 - 1824 sent from North Africa to explore Lake Chad and the surrounding territory, says that "the principal return that the Moorish merchants obtain for their goods consists in slaves."¹ He comments that the origin and continuance of the traffic for slaves is due to the Moorish traders who "refuse all other modes of payment for the articles

1. Denham, D., and Clapperton, H., Travels and Discoveries, p. 330.

which they bring."¹ Until this dealing in flesh was introduced by the Moors it was little known in the Bornu country; the prisoners taken in battle sufficed to satisfy the local desire for slaves.

The tonnage of the caravans carrying other articles for trade either way is said also to have been great. The reputation of Kano as a manufacturing city, says Morel,² begins with the conquest of the city by the Fulani. It is estimated that by the middle of the nineteenth century "the annual export of cotton from Kano to Timbuctoo alone amounted in value to some 5000 pounds sterling."³ We gather from the records of Leo Africanus, a Spanish Moor, who travelled extensively throughout the Sudan about 1525 A. D., that the peoples of Northern Nigeria early made their reputation in leather-work. He "tells us that Gobir 'had a good trade and considerable industry, especially in leather-work.'"⁴

According to the "accounts of 'Shereef Imhammed' and 'Ben Ali, a Moorish trader', given in the first published proceedings of the African Association in 1791, the trade between Tripoli and the Kingdom of 'Cashna', i.e., Katsena (Katsina being then in its prime)" consisted in exports from Katsina to Tripoli of "cotton cloths, slaves, goatskins 'of the red and yellow dyes', ox and buffalo hides, gold dust,

1. Ibid., p. 334.

2. Morel, op. cit., p. 59.

3. Ibid., p. 59.

4. Ibid., p. 59.

and civet." The imports to Katsina from Tripoli included "red woolen caps, check linens, light coarse woolen cloths, baiza, cowries, barakans or alhaiks, small Turkey carpets, silk, tissues, and brocades, sabre-blades, Dutch knives, scissors, coral beads and small looking glasses."¹

The enumeration by Dr. Barth in 1851 of the trade between Tripoli and Northern Nigeria, and that of the British Foreign Office in 1897 are surprisingly similar, in the articles listed, to the accounts of 1791. There is one notable exception in that only the earliest of the three reports includes slaves.

Previously it was mentioned that the wealth of Nigeria is greatly enhanced by the fertile basins of the broad Niger river and its great tributary the Benue. Discovering the course of the Niger, which remained a query until a comparatively recent date, proved to be an incentive to numerous explorers.

One of the earliest records of a knowledge of the existence of this river we have from Herodotus' history of Egypt. He records an expedition of Masamonian youths who were sent to explore the solitudes of Africa. Directing their course westward through the desert they finally came to a great river which flowed west to east.² It is possible the river referred to is the Niger. Many of the early conjectures as to the course of this river are of interest at this point. "El Edrisi

1. *Ibid.*, pp. 62, 63.

2. *Beloe*, *op. cit.*, p. 78.

(circa 1153) states that the Niger ---- rises at the same place as the Nile and flows west across Africa into the Atlantic."¹ One who writes about 1355 mentions the existence of the Niger, and states that it flows east. Leo Africanus, referred to above, believed that the Niger flowed west. The same error is reported by the Portuguese cartographers, who evidently considered the Senegal and Gambia to be mouths of the Niger.²

Particularly for the discovery of the route of the Niger there was formed in Great Britain in 1788 the African Association. At least three of the expeditions sent out for this purpose ended in disaster. Seven years later the Association accepted the offer of Mungo Park, a young Scottish doctor, to trace the course of the river. This young man, after making certain that the Niger flowed east - which took him eighteen months - returned to the coast. In April 1805 he started on a second journey, this time as a captain of a large expedition of forty-four Europeans. But before they reached the source of the Niger, which they did on the 19th of August, all except ten had died. On the 17th of November 1805 he wrote that "five only at present are alive." Nothing more was ever heard of Park, and there is no doubt that he perished, with his remaining followers in the rapids at Busa.³

1. Burns, op. cit., p. 86.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., p. 90, 91.

The Holy War

Before the secret of the Niger was disclosed an event took place in Nigeria which has had a lasting effect upon a good share of the population of the Northern provinces. This was the Jihad or Holy War. Previous to approximately 1500 A. D. most of the Hausa people were pagans. And only as the Mohammedan Fulanis gradually filtered into the country of the Hausas was Mohammedanism given a chance to spread among these people.

The comparatively good grass areas and the numerous watering places in Northern Nigeria proved to be an attraction to these nomadic cattle people from the Western Sudan. As they became more numerous in this new location they became stronger and their religion made a deeper impression upon the tribes that were conquered. Gradually the religion of Islam became the belief of entire tribes. The resistance of the disunited groups could not last long except under unusual circumstances.

Sheikh Muhammad of Tunis writing about the affairs of Bornu during the first quarter of the nineteenth century makes the following illuminating comment about the lack of unity of the pagan tribes to the south.

"The idolatrous tribes to the south of Sudan are divided into groups and families. They are vastly superior in number to the Moslems, and it is surprising that they do not overwhelm them.

"The explanation may be found in the spirit of brotherhood which unites the Muslims, whilst the pagans are always divided one against another. When the enemy attacks a village and takes away the women and children the people of the next village look on without attempting to give assistance. They are attacked next, and their neighbours regard them with equal indifference. If these idolaters knew the strength which union gives, none of the Moslem states of Sudan would dare to attack them."¹

Further, the Fulani having "a highly developed political organization" greatly enhanced their ability to organize warring expeditions that were successful. This political organization was the first to be utilized in the policy of administration by the British.²

We note that in 1790 there was a fresh outbreak of Mohammedan religious fanaticism which originated among the Fulani and spread over Sokoto and the neighboring countries. In 1804 began the Jihad, which Talbot says, "was animated more by political than religious motives, since a great part of the peasantry was already Mohammedan."³ It will be remembered that the expeditions in Arabia and Egypt during the first centuries when this religion flourished were carried out in the name of Islam though the underlying motives were

1. Meek, op. cit., p. 82.

2. Hailey, Lord, AN African Survey, p. 28.

3. Talbot, op. cit., p. 42.

also political and economic. Conquering under the banner of Islam not only added to the religious fanaticism but removed any scruples about the method of the conquest.

Usumann dan Fodio, who began the Fulani Holy War, "appointed lieutenants throughout the territories of Northern Nigeria to reduce the local inhabitants."¹ Yakubu, one of Usumann's former pupils was given chief command of the region of Bauchi. It was his armies which are said to have come to the foot of the Pero hills. But being warriors mounted on horses they were not able to compete with the Peros who were accustomed to the rocks and who were able to fight from the higher altitude. It is said that they remained in the area for a short time, but with no success in gaining suzerainty over these people. One mark that Yakubu's men left in the Pero vicinity is the gwaza plant. It is quite likely that the roots were brought by the warriors to be used as food. Some of these having been left behind gave rise to the gwaza that grows wild in the swampy area at the foot of one of the Pero towns. "Yakubu ruled at Bauchi 1805-43, and during this period conquered the whole of the country between Bauchi and the Benue. ---- while further east, with the assistance of Buba Yero (who was put in charge here) 1826-41 the Jukun towns of Pindiga, Gwana, Yankari, etc., were also successfully brought within the Fulani pale."²

1. Meek, A Sudanese Kingdom, p. 53.

2. Ibid.

By 1810 the Holy War was practically completed. Adamawa, the large province just to the south of the Fero hills, and which borders both sides of the Benue river for miles, was almost completely pagan before the Jihad. But now it was placed under the rule of the Fulani. Also "the Hausa states, Nupe --- and parts of Bornu were ruled by Fulani emirs, who were appointed by and paid tribute to, the Sarikin Muslimin at Sokoto."¹

That the Fero, Tangale, Dadiya, Waja, and other tribes were able to check the invaders has proven a lasting blessing to them. Had it not been for the fact that their hill towns were difficult to approach their resistance would soon have been spent. Then, too, the main force of the conquering people followed in the direction of the more or less level country.

Occupation of the Country

Opening up the interior of the malaria infested jungle country of Southern Nigeria proved to be a difficult task. Between 1830-1870 various attempts were made to explore the interior. But again and again their expeditions were unsuccessful because the European members of the expeditions succumbed to the fever and the trials of the jungle country of the river basins.

One of the several attempts to explore the territory from the north, crossing the Sahara desert, that was successful,

1. Talbot., op. cit., p. 42.

was carried out by Major Denham, Captain Clapperton and Doctor Oudney (1822-24). They traversed much of the Lake Chad region as well as Northern Nigeria. The last of the three named, who was appointed Political Agent to Bornu before leaving England,¹ died in 1823 between Katagum and Kano.

The expedition by the German explorers, Barth and Vogel (1849-1855), which also was made across the Sahara, added much scientific knowledge to that which had been gained by Denham and Clapperton. Dr. Vogel in his account of the expedition speaks of traveling through the land of the Tangales on his journey from Bauchi to Benue near Yola.²

Shortly after Vogel and Barth, traveling separately, reached the Benue between Yola and Hamurrua the British (1854) sent an expedition under the command of the two noble explorers MacGregor Laird and Dr. William B. Baikie to investigate and map the Benue. It is remarkable that not one member of the crew, which consisted of twelve Europeans and fifty-four Africans, died, ---"probably on account of the prophylactic use of quinine." Clapperton, mentioned above, and Lander also did valuable work in the mapping of Nigeria. The Royal Niger Company, as it was later called, which was under the direction of Sir George Goldie, was very important in the developing of trade for the British after 1879,

1. Eurns, *op. cit.*, p. 94.

2. Vogel, E., Reisen in Central Africa, p. 280.

especially in the provinces of Northern Nigeria. It also aided in opening up the country and gaining the good will of the various tribes before the Germans and French were able to do so.

Tribe after tribe, and by establishing trading post after trading post, the British influence was gradually extended and confirmed, until in 1900 the entire territory came under their suzerainty. The territory was divided into Southern and Northern Nigeria, but in 1914 these two were amalgamated into the Colony and Protectorate of Nigeria.

Thus, we have come a long way, to present Nigeria. For many centuries its population was in the making. Many and various have been the migrations, and the forces which have played upon its culture to make it what it is today. Some of these have been very disturbing to the tribal life, which makes it all the more remarkable that in spite of these disrupting elements so many individual groups still exist. Nevertheless, to their culture something has been added through these influences.

CHAPTER II

THE PERO PEOPLE

General Description

The tribe that inhabits the northern slope of the range of hills and low mountains forming the northern boundary of the Benue valley at a point opposite Lau is generally known as the Pero, especially by outsiders. The natives, however, more often refer to themselves as Pipero. Likewise they speak of their location as Pipero. From the etymology of this latter name we note that it refers to the place of Pero. Pidi means place, while Pero, it seems likely, was the name of the leader of the tribe in its migration to the hills and the founder of their settlement. In the course of time Pidi Pero was contracted to Pipero.

The chain of hills and low mountains which continues for some sixty miles on the northern side of the Benue, expands in places to more than ten miles, thus forming valleys and plateaus which have been approached from the south and settled by small Bantu groups. The Peros, however, confined themselves to the northern side of the hills - approximately 9.4 degrees north of the equator and 11.3 degrees longitude. The hills at this point serve as the provincial boundary which places this tribe in the southeastern corner of Bauchi

province.

The government census of 1939 showed a population for the Pero tribe of 10,337.¹ Naturally this count would include some outsiders who had immigrated but exclude actual Peros who had moved into other tribal areas. The territory belonging to this tribe includes approximately 140 square miles, thus making the average density 73.8 persons per square mile. Compared with the average density of the total population of Northern Nigeria which is 40.11 persons this figure is high.

Of the total population 5,103 are males and 5,234 are females - a ratio of approximately 102.5 females to every 100 males. As to their age groups it is impossible to gather any data for no Pero keeps record of his age. Suffice it to say that in 1939 there were 3,072 poll tax payers. This group includes able-bodied adult males, though often boys in their early teens are included, the determining factor being whether they are able to assist with the field work or not.

Twenty-five per cent of the territory is very rough, it being a part of the range of hills. In this area the

1. Northern Nigeria, which includes some 281,778 square miles is inhabited by 11,303,476 Africans. This population comprises 265 tribes, only two of which have over one million people. These are the Fulani with 1,951,290 people and the Hausa with 3,137,710 inhabitants. This leaves 6,214,476 people for the remaining 263 tribes.

Yoro peak, 3100 feet above sea level,¹ rises above the mountains in the range. It is on its northern and westerly slope that the Pipero dwell.

From the foot of the slope, at an altitude of approximately 1600 feet, begins the wide expanse of open country, somewhat rolling and slightly wooded. At intervals in this African 'bush-country' volcanic hills rise as do also other stone covered elevations.

For rivers the Pero district can boast of only three small streams in which there is water flowing for about seven months of the year, though these at the height of the rainy season become wide and swift, upon occasion overflowing and inundating the low farm land. All of these streams which have their source at the foot hills or with the small streamlets which make their way through the hills flow in a north-westerly direction where later they form the Pai river and finally empty into the Benue. At the eastern end of Pero country is the watershed dividing the water which flows into the Pai river and that which flows east into the Gongola and thence into the Benue.

In most cases these streams serve as the source of water for those living on the plain. But during the dry season they are forced to seek water from another source; thus shallow but temporary wells are dug which produce small

1. Altitude measured by Dr. I. E. McBride.

amounts of muddy water at their best. Sometimes a large hole in the sand of the stream bed will produce water. The hill dwellers depend upon the large open wells, typical of stoned wells in Bible times, for their supply. These have their source in the springs at the foot of the slope. For lack of attention the water in these wells, also, is often polluted. At the beginning of the rainy season the number of cases of dysentery increases as the result of the consumption of water which has become polluted by the general wash-off from the hillside.

The value of the country is enhanced by the types of soil, most of which are conducive to the growing of good crops. The three main types are the somewhat sandy loam at the foot of the hills, the black loam, and the cotton soil. While the same crops cannot be grown on all of these soils there are crops cultivated by the natives to which the different soils are adapted. Even the rocky hillsides serve as good soil for the crop of corn. The slightly wooded areas seem to have better producing soil than the treeless savanna sections. The surface-washed red clay so often found in parts of Africa is not prevalent in this territory.

Though Pero land is only about thirty-five air miles from the Benue river it enjoys a healthier climate, more invigorating and not so humid. The south-westerly winds which blow from March to the end of September, very often

beginning during the first part of the night and lasting till mid-morning the next day, are refreshing after the heat of the day. The seasons of the year are two - a wet season extending from April or May to October, a dry for the remaining months. The first three weeks of July, during which time there seldom is any rain, might be called a short dry season. The length of this dry spell is very important for it is a determining factor in the amount of crop to be harvested. The annual rainfall approximates forty inches.

The geological conditions determine the type of vegetation to be found. On the rocky hill tops and sides there are various kinds of trees whose growth is stunted by the lack of depth of soil. The grass which covers the hills is not only of a different variety but of shorter growth than that of the plain, where there are large trees of numerous kinds. Most characteristic of this area is the locust bean tree. There are the baobab, the tamarind, a tree resembling the olive, the mahogany, the shea-butter, the bamboo, the acacias and euphorbias, and various thorn trees. Through the center of the plain from east to west the stately palm trees make their appearance and towards the western side they are predominant. Throughout, except for the land under cultivation, various kinds of grasses grow, some six to eight feet tall, some kinds of which are especially good for roofing purposes.

During the middle of the dry season the forest fires sweep through the entire area burning all dry vegetation which would enrich the ground. And in many cases the foliage of the trees is so severely scorched that it is destroyed.

The wealth of the Pero country in fauna is not as great as that of some neighboring districts where the density of population is not so large. But the open country is the home of countless small antelope. A score of years ago before people settled in small hamlets on the plain larger antelope were also to be found. Leopards, hyenas, jackals, and hunting dogs are to be found. Long-tailed monkeys and baboons, both destructive of the crops, abound. Bush-pigs, lynx, civet cats, grey badgers, bats, flying fox are also to be found. The rodents include the rat, squirrel and hare.

Birds of numerous varieties and colors are in abundance. Their beauty is seldom admired. Rather they, as well as the bustard, various pigeons, guinea-fowl and various species of duck, are regarded as food and used as such whenever captured.

The migration of the Peros did not cease entirely with the tribe's settling in its present location. The exodus of a small group from the town of Gwandum, who settled at Balasa some twenty miles distance in a south-westerly direction, probably took place previous to the Fulani attempts to conquer the tribe. It is quite likely that the Peros from the Pelan hill also migrated about the same time to their

present site which is twice the distance of the migration to Balasa.

Settled among the hills along the south-westerly route of this movement of Peros are the Pias, a homogeneous group of people, speaking a dialect of the Pero language as well as the tongue of the Bantu Kulus who mainly inhabit the Benue side of the hill country. The population of the various groups which make up the Pias is estimated at about 5000 people.

Following the event of European occupation of this territory, 35 years ago, the wall of inter-tribal fear began to crumble. The people began to realize that no longer was it so necessary for them to remain close together in comparatively large and well protected towns as was the case when tribal wars were still a common occurrence. The location of the Pero towns on the slopes of hills made the approach by the enemy at night most difficult. Today, the old men relate how they each evening would build a wall of stones across the steep paths leading to their village. The enemy climbing the steep paths in the dark would without fail cause the specially prepared pile of stones to start rolling down the hill, the noise of which would waken the inhabitants of the near-by huts. At that time no man dared go to his fields alone. Very little farming could be done in the fertile plains out some distance from the hills because of the

danger connected with such an adventure. Consequently it was done in the less fertile soil of the hill country - this partly accounting for the poverty of the people.

Already approximately one-half of the Peros have left their hill dwellings for homes on the plain. Some have located at the base of the hills while others have established small villages and hamlets several miles out. To the plain's population have been added during the past ten years more than 500 Pias who immigrated into this district because of the better opportunities for farming which are offered. Mention must also be made of the small Hausa-speaking element that has come in during the past decade. Their settlement numbers fifty-one taxpayers besides women and small children, all of whom are followers of Islam. More and more there is a shifting of population, all of which tends towards the disintegration of this once cannibalistic tribe.

Language

The languages spoken by the various tribes of this hill country certainly present a babel of tongues. To the north, 25 miles, are the Tangales whose language is of the same origin as that of the Peros. But to the east and a little south within a half score of miles one comes to the Lo tribe whose vocabulary is entirely different. Twice that distance towards the south brings us into Kulu country where Bantu

is the medium of speech. Bordering the Peros on the southwest are the Pias, whose language, both in structure and vocabulary, is similar to the one of our study, so much so that members from both groups are able to converse without any difficulty, in fact the present school books printed in Pero serve the schools among the Pias. Twenty miles due west are the Gwana Jukans. It is amazing that in spite of being surrounded by groups speaking different tongues the Pero language remained a separate tongue. Comparing this fact with the rate that Hausa terms have been absorbed during a single decade it seems even more remarkable. The same, however, is true of other groups who by their isolation remained individual groups to a large extent.

Yet the Peros were not able to remain apart altogether; self-preservation necessitated resisting the enemy. Also warring expeditions had to be carried out against the tribal enemies, which gave occasion for obtaining prisoners - usually women, for men prisoners were killed and eaten. These women were kept and permitted to marry. Thus intermingling the language would in time be affected.

For classification, according to Mr. Thomas's system,¹ the language of the Pero falls into the Benue-Chad family of the Central Sudanic Division. And its similarity with the Bolewa and Sura tongues would place it in the Bornu

1. Meek, *op. cit.*, vol. ii., p. 138.

section of the Western group of the division. Both of these two languages have been investigated and are placed by Thomas in this grouping.

It is of interest to note in what respects the Pero language favors the Sudanic or Bantu tongues. First we note that the vocabulary strongly resembles the Sudanic languages, being very closely allied to Bolanchi¹ and the Sura.

A second Sudanic influence is shown by the similarities in its pronouns to those of the Hausa language which is definitely not of the Bantu group. "The question of the position of Hausa is a much disputed one, and some authorities have regarded it as a Sudanic tongue that has undergone Hamitic influence, others as a Hamitic tongue that has come within the Sudanic speech forms and been correspondingly modified."² There are few similarities in the vocabularies of the two tongues, but those in the personal pronouns, shown as follows, are interesting.

<u>Pero</u>		<u>Hausa</u>	
sing. ne	plural minu	Sing. ni	plural mu
ke, shi	ma	ka, ki	ku
chaka, te	shinu	ya, ta	su

When we study the grammar of the Pero language we see both Sudanic and Bantu influences, the latter probably outnumbering the former. "The want of grammatical gender" says

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1. Bolanchi refers to the language of the Bola people, or the Bolewa tribe.
 2. Meek, op. cit., p. 139.

Miss Werner, "--- is a feature which the Sudanian language has in common with the Bantu."¹ This is the case with the language in question. Gender is not expressed by the change of a word. When it is necessary to express the distinction it is sometimes, though rarely, done by using different words as,

kpatin	-	man
pamun	-	woman
jiji	-	grandfather
gaga	-	grandmother

Or else the words for "male" and "female" are placed after the noun to be distinguished, as,

toje shin kpatin	-	male horse
horse is male		
toje shin pamun	-	mare
horse is female		
bwalimi shin pamun	-	mother-in-law
in-law is female		

Again some nouns have a separate word for "male" while none for "female" using the collective noun when the latter is meant, as

kukuruk	-	cockerel	foje	-	hen or a mixed group of chickens
galema	-	male sheep	dinji	-	female sheep or a mixed group of sheep.

There are no less than six methods used in indicating the plural in Pero. Three of these are by inflexion. It should be noted here that "The Bantu languages differ from

1. Werner, Alice, The Language Families of Africa, p. 37.

the Sudanian in having a regular plural inflexion."¹ But there seems to be nothing regular about designating number in this language. The six methods referred to above are as follows:

1. By reduplication of the verb, which is always the case when the actions referred to are done at different times or places, as,

ne yene ni - I called him
I called him

ne yiđine zhu - I called them; different times
I called them or from different places.

2. If the action of the verb takes place at one time and place then the plural is indicated by the pronominal affix to the verb, as,

kpatin fāni ni ti kori - man has arrived from the
man(male)came he from field field.

kpatin fāni zhu ti kori - men have arrived from the
men came they from field field; meaning they arrived
in a group.

3. The plural which favors Bantu influence is by the inflexion of the adjective, as,

korini shin gbuđe - his field is large
field his is large

korini shin gbuđina - his fields are large
fields his are large

By the change in the adjective the noun becomes plural.

1. Berner, op. cit., p. 64.

However, the main way of expressing the genitive is by affixing the possessive pronouns, as,

minano	-	my house
house mine		
minago	-	your house
house yours		
minani	-	his house
house his		

Ne, go, ni, - are the possessive pronouns in the singular, indicating gender only in the second and third persons. In this case they are masculine.

The system of expressing emphasis and description by the duplication of some adjectives, adverbs or verbs is shared by the Peros with other tribes of this part of Nigeria.¹ For instance to emphasize the action of 'slowly' the word is duplicated.

kediq kediq	-	very slowly and easily
alas alas	-	very sparkling
yil yil	-	very shiny
kpindi kpindi	-	very earliest part of the dawn
gbap gbap	-	to shake with fear
gadi gadi	-	the action of a man whose limbs shake very much
shwat shwat	-	to hurry quickly (in Pero)
maza maza	-	" " " (" Hausa)
mvola mvola	-	" " " (" Bambuka)
shak shak	-	" " " (" Lo)

1. This characteristic of the language, says Lévy-Bruhl, is one of the evidences to support his theory that the thought life of the primitive is prelogical and thus on a different level from ours. How Natives Think. pp. 142, 168.

English	Pero	Bolewa ¹	Kerikeri ²	Sura ³	Jukun ⁴	Hause
one	dok, mundi	modi	mudi	mundo	zung	daya
two	pelu	bollo	bellu	vul	piening	biyu
three	gbunup	kumu	kunru	kun	---	uku
four	pedu	fodo	fudu	feir	---	fudu
five	fwat	beddi	bad	pard	---	biyar
six	fwat tura dok	bechi modi	bashogu	pame	---	shidda
seven	fwat tura pelu	bauwulo	bashi belu	povul	---	bokwoi
eight	pidi pidu	fordo	fipedu	pokun	---	tokwas
nine	komvoi	bonum	bannu	pofeir	---	tara
ten	gbomä	bimbeddi	bumbad	larrbwier	dup	goma
eleven	gbomä tura dok	bimbeddi- ri-modi	gum dira dumwai	bamindo	gbanzung	goma sha daya
twelve	gbomä tura pelu	bimbeddi- ri-bollo	gum rap	bavul	gban pienung	goma sha biyu
twenty	ko pelu	ko bollo	rap gumni	larvul	kefiening	ashirin
thirty	yazhi gbunup	ko kunu	---	larkun	---	talatin
blood	tum	dum	dam	tohom	asa	jini
head	kwo	koi	kwai	ka	kini	kai
tooth	wudu	udo	wuro	ahas	ngiri	hakori
nose	wishin	wuntu	waring	puhisin	ngori	hantu
hand	sira	sara	arik	sar	yu fir- ing vo	hannu
eye	ando	ido	yero	yir	zo	ido
hair	chok	sowu	wa-kai kwai	shwop-ka	jini	gashi
woman	pamun	mundu	tamno	mat	wura	mace
moon	tere	tere	tere	tar	sano	wata
arrow	fuzhok	foso	piek	---	abuna	kibiya

1. Migeod, F.W.H., *The Languages of West Africa*, vol. 11, p. 378.
2. *Ibid.*, vol. 1., p. 152; also Meek, *Tribal Studies*, vol. 11, p. 32
3. *Ibid.*, vol. 11, p. 379.
4. Meek, *A Sudanese Kingdom*, p. 212.

It is illuminating to compare further Pero vocabulary with other Bolewa words secured from Bola people while traveling through their country.

<u>English</u>	<u>Pero</u>	<u>Bolewa</u>	<u>English</u>	<u>Pero</u>	<u>Bolewa</u>
water	am	ama	hoe	tumba	fita
tree	furo	shuri	field	kori	kori
horse	toje	doje	savana	pira	piwe
greeting	kale	kale	grass	shāzhā	charo
I	ne	ina	corn	chau	yala
we	minu	mu	dog	bai	kuti
child	lau	lau	meat	la	lo
ear	kumo	kumo	road	kākā	gwogwo
leg	sho	sheke	God	Yamba	Yamba
sun	fori	fori			

On the basis of the foregoing examples and comparison of vocabulary we may conclude that the vocabulary of the Peros is Sudanic as well as are the pronouns. The principal Bantu influence seems to be in the grammatical structure, though in some parts of this the Bantu influence either shares this with, or gives way to evidences of Sudanic origin. The Gwana Jukuns left their impress upon the religious conceptions of the Pero people, yet their language, which Meek says has much in common with Bantu languages south of the equator,¹ shows few

1. Meek, op. cit., p. 7.

similarities. The main likeness is in the method of numeration used. But this resemblance is shared as well, and even more closely, by the other Sudanic tongues referred to. The Fero system is as follows:

one	- dok, mundi
two	- pelu
three	- gbunup
four	- pedu
five	- fwat
six	- fwat tura mundi, five push one
seven	- fwat tura pelu, five push two
eight	- pidipidu, four four
nine	- komvoi
ten	- gbomã
eleven	- " tura mundi, ten push one
twelve	- " " pelu, ten push two
sixteen	- " " fwat tura mundi, ten push five push one
nineteen	- " " komvoi, ten push nine
twenty	- ko (yazhi) pelu, heads twice
twenty-one	- ko pelu tura mundi, heads twice push one
thirty	- yazhi gbunup, yazhi three times
forty	- " pedu " four "
sixty	- " fwat tura mundi, yazhi six times
sixty-six	- " " " " tura fwat tura mundi, yazhi six times push five push one
hundred	- sik
two hundred	- sik pelu, hundred twice

As was and still is the case with many African tribes the language of the Peros until recently was only in a spoken and unspoken form. Its reduction to writing, in which the author shared, was begun by Rev. and Mrs. V. E. Walter in 1929, and to date more than 800 pages of literature are available for the

I. As to the exact meaning of the word tura I have not been informed. It is not the word for 'and' nor for 'times' for which kan and sho are used respectively. Tura is not used in any other connection. And unless it has a separate meaning I suggest it is the same word as used in Hausa meaning 'to push'.

Peros in their own tongue.

Having mentioned the fact of the language being also in an unspoken form it will be illuminating to list examples when such a medium of conversation is employed. We allude to the gestures used by the people in giving expression to their thought.

1. Gratefulness for money or gifts received from persons of a superior standing is shown by extending both hands opened together with the palms upward. Receiving the gift with two hands indicates, not greediness, but that the gift is large in comparison to what was deserved. A chief, to express the same but in greater degree, often covers the palm of his hand with part of his garment when receiving a gift of money or the pay for some service rendered to a superior.

2. When indicating the heights of animals the hand is straightened horizontally and the palm of the hand is held in a vertical position. While for humans, especially children, the height is expressed by the hand which is opened wide with the palm down.

3. A girl will slap her body with her upper arm to show refusal of a proposition that a would-be-suitor has made her.

4. Ignorance of the information asked including a feeling of non-interest is often expressed by a shrug of the shoulders. This gesture is more commonly used by the women.

5. Assent to a statement is given by a klick made in the

back part of the throat.

6. A sort of sucking-hiss sound is made to denote reluctant agreement.

7. When a matter between two people, who are among others, is to be kept a secret the one will firmly press the other's foot or arm with either his hand or foot. This means that complete secrecy about the matter is to be maintained.

8. Europeans use the opposite gesture from the Peros when beckoning people at a distance. Here the gesture used is the outstretched arm with the palm of the hand downward and the motioning of the hand towards the body.

9. The man whose hunt is to be staged the following day will, after having told some people of the fact, go to the starting or gathering place for a hunt and there build a fire which proclaims to all who see it that there will be a hunt on the morrow starting very early. This gathering place is on the plain just at the foot of the hill on the slope of which the people live.

10. Objects nearby are pointed out with the forefinger but those at a distance are denoted by pointing with the whole arm and snapping the forefinger and thumb at the same time.

The Peros are profuse in their use of idiomatic expressions in their speech. These are not only interesting but open for us a door into their thought life which revolves so closely around their everyday needs and desires. For a list

of such idiomatic expressions the reader should turn to the appendix.

Economic Life

Primitive peoples may be classed by ethnologists in four groups in the following order: (a) Hunters and gatherers; (b) Fishermen; (c) Pastoralists; (d) Agriculturists. The lowest stage is that of hunting and gathering.¹ Though the Peros have periodic hunts when the entire male population turns out to join the sport, they depend almost one hundred percent upon agriculture as a method for obtaining their livelihood. Thus according to the above classification the people of this tribe would appear to belong to the most advanced group. This, however, is not the case for their culture places them with the most backward, the most unclothed and the most loosely organized tribes of Northern Nigeria.

Agriculture.

The size of the average farm for a Pero family is approximately five acres. This is not all in one place. The field for peanuts is usually nearer the foot of the hills where the soil is sandy, the type conducive to the growing of peanuts. Certain textures of the black loam also produce good crops of peanuts. For the crop of guinea-corn the black loam of the valleys or the wide expanse of cotton soil

1. Meek, Northern Nigeria, vol. 1., p. 103.

are both well adapted.

The ownership of the land is communal. No one can buy or sell land. A man or family have use of a piece of ground as long as they continue to farm it. He may even choose to allow the piece of ground to lie fallow for one year. Indeed, this is the practice with the peanut ground for it is sandy soil and its fertility is not too high. But should the farmer of the particular piece of ground leave it idle a second year then it becomes free land again, and may be farmed by the first one hoeing the ground the following season. Filiya, one part of the Pero tribe, formerly kept land strictly within relationships, and no stranger without permission could farm an untilled piece of ground which belonged to a particular family. However, this latter custom of ownership of fields was put aside in 1940 upon the request of the people concerned and by sanction of the British Government official.

Less than one half of the tillable land, of which there is approximately six acres per capita, is under cultivation. It has just been mentioned that five acres is the size of a family farm. Thus any farmer wishing a new field needs only to choose a piece of this untilled land and work it. It is his as long as he uses it to a good purpose. But should the location be a good building site desired by some one else for the erecting of his house the farmer must give way. The

use of the land for a living place takes precedence over its use for farming. Generally speaking dwellings may be placed anywhere; new-comers, however, will secure the consent of the chief. With this priority often goes the land near the new house.

The fields usually are separated by a row made of stones found on the farm. Sometimes a small ditch denotes the boundary line. Fields of casava are enclosed with fences made with thorns, or of stalks from the guinea-corn or bulrush-millet.

The acquaintance of the Pero with the principles of agriculture is very slight; of rotation of crops, fertilizing, seed selection, they know little. Were it not for the extensive untilled area which permits them to farm virgin soil when a certain piece of ground loses its fertility the gaining of a livelihood by agriculture would be more trying than it is. Also after fields have remained untilled for five to ten years they become productive again.

It has only been during the past five years that any of the Peros welcomed the Fulani herdsman with his cattle. Each year just as the corn is being harvested the cow-people migrate from the north country permitting their cattle to feed upon the grass, the harvested peanut vines, and the corn stalks left in the fields. After a month or more they continue on their way to the Benue valley, there to spend the

remainder of the dry season. During April and May they return to their homes mainly in the Gombe area to the north. Various Pero farmers now are eager to have the nomadic Fulani with their herds camp on their farms. They are slowly becoming aware of the value of manure for fertilizer.

With the value of ashes for fertilizer they are better acquainted. Thus in beginning a new field they cut down practically all the trees, lop off the branches and carefully pile them around the stump. After allowing them to dry for two or three months fire is set to the heaps and the ground is in readiness for planting.

Guinea-corn is the chief crop, providing the grain for the main food - a thick corn mush. Peanuts come second in importance, largely because it is the money crop whereby the annual poll tax money is obtained.

Beans are planted among the corn and provide a good portion of the food. Some of the neighboring tribes are noted for their large crops of beans. Bulrush-millet has been grown by the Peros for only a few years. Rice is grown in small patches in swampy places by some farmers. Practically every farmer has a small patch of maize which ripens some three months before the guinea-corn and so often tides the family over the period when food is scarce. Beniseed, squash, tobacco, cucumber-like melon, are among the group of minor crops. Cassava, sweet potatoes, yams and papaya have all been

introduced recently, but are already affecting the diet of the natives. From the missionaries they have learned to grow bananas in abundance, the mango, various kinds of citrus fruits especially the lemon, and a second variety of sweet potatoes.

The legends in connection with the origin of the peanut and tobacco are interesting at this point.

The Peros knew nothing about peanuts until one day a crow, nyak, brought a peanut to feed her young in a nest that hung in a tree near one of the houses in the town of Shwake. The peanut fell to the ground and was picked up by the man of the house who shelled and planted the kernels. When he harvested them the kernels tasted good and so he kept seed which he planted the next season. Later he gave seed to other people.

Tradition has it that tobacco was given to the Peros by a rock cony, gek. A man named Ammiro, is supposed to have hunted for conies. With him he had his dog. Together they chased a cony into a deep hole which was large enough for the man and his dog to enter. After the man had gone into the hole some distance the rock cony came back and closed the opening to the hole. Three days were spent by the man in the hole. His relatives thought he was dead. But on the third day the cony opened the hole and presented her captive, the man, with tobacco seed which he was told to plant, for it is good.

It is amazing that such a legend has gathered about the origin of a crop introduced within the last two or three centuries and bearing the foreign name taba.

Discussion of Fero agriculture will be made easier with a glance at the calendar. The year, which begins during September, is divided into months, or rather moons¹. But in the following calendar we shall briefly give the work done in the months as we know them. Naturally, due to the time and extent of the rains there is variation in the schedule of the year's work.

September. - Last of the heavy rains. The early peanut harvest begins. Roads to the fields and to villages are hoed out. Tobacco is planted. Beniseed plants are thinned out.

October. - The rains cease. Peanut harvest takes up most of the month. Squash become ripe. Fiber for rope is gathered. Gourds used to make calabashes are harvested.

November. - Peanuts are marketed to obtain money for tax. The tax is collected. Early guinea-corn and beans are harvested.

December. - The guinea-corn harvest is the principal task. The men begin cutting roofing grass. Bush fires are seen on the hill sides. Guinea-corn is brought in from the fields by the women. The Fulani cow people immigrate with their cattle.

1. For the festivities connected with the New Year see page 232.

January. - The harmattan dust from the Sahara be-clouds the sun, and the days and nights are cooler. The last of the guinea-corn is brought in from the fields. Last of the roofing grass is cut. The men start their hunting. New houses on the plain are started. Roofing rope is made by the men.

February. - Hunting is continued. The climate is very warm and hot, the period being called chuba meaning sweat. Granaries are built. Yams are planted. Special efforts for gathering fire-wood are put forth by the women. Slack month.

March. - This is the month of ritual festivity and the marrying season. Farming rites are performed (see page 225). Following the rites the hill people may begin the building of their houses. Clouds begin to appear.

April. - First showers are expected. The fields are cleaned and the rubbish burned. Bulrush-millet is planted. The women begin to make pottery. This is the time when a great amount of smithing is done in preparation for the farming season.

May. - More rains come. The guinea-corn and maize are planted. Peanut fields are prepared. Good month for hunting as the fresh green grass is growing. Also a good month for pottery for the air contains more moisture.

June. - Peanuts, beans and squash are planted. The guinea-corn plants are thinned out and the first cultivation of the crop takes place. Peanuts also are weeded. Cassava

is planted.

July. - Usually in this month there is a dry spell of three weeks before the heavy rains commence. The guinea-corn is weeded. Virgin fields are chosen. The single round ground nuts are planted.

August. - The heavy rains commence. Maize is harvested. Virgin fields are hoed, the trees cut, and the beniseed broadcasted on the new land.

Both sexes are employed in working the farms, the men, however, to a much larger extent than the women. Women help with the cleaning of peanut fields, some hoeing, and do a good share of the harvesting of the peanuts. It is, of course, the women's task to transport the harvest from the field to the granary. During the heavy farming season the men will spend three to five periods of five to twenty days each in what they call "sleeping in the field" or shun kori meaning that they do not retire to their homes in the evening after the day's work but sleep in temporary shelters constructed near the field. The purpose is to take better care of the fields, to protect the new planting, the young corn, and peanuts from the danger of guinea-fowl, birds and monkeys. And, too, the farmers are able to accomplish more work in this fashion for sometimes the fields are as much as eight miles from the village. At least every other morning food is brought to the men by the women and girls.

Farms are generally worked on the family system. But periodic co-operation is common, a man's relatives and friends turning out in a body to help him when the work is heavy. The payment these helpers receive is bountiful supplies of beer for the day. They, of course, expect similar assistance when their own work is heavy. A young man engaged to a girl will be required to work so many days on the farm of his prospective father-in-law.

The Peros use two hoes for all the farming. For light hoeing a small adze hand-hoe is used. The handle made from a tough wood is about fourteen inches long. The iron blade four or five inches wide and about six inches long is fitted by the tanged method to the shaft at a right angle. Another hoe is used for heavier work. It is made in similar fashion but almost one-half again as large. Harvesting of the corn is done with a light axe with which the tall stalks of corn are cut to the ground, the heads then being cut off with a knife.



Hoe



Light axe

Seldom is any of the guinea-corn marketed, for it is the main crop that stands between them and hunger. A good supply of it is also important for the next farming season for assistance in farming is not to be expected if the helpers cannot

be served with plenty of beer or food. Sometimes, however, small amounts of the grain are traded for salt or other delicacies at the weekly market.

Peanuts are the main money crop. And except for a comparatively small amount needed for the gravy on the corn mush, the dowry, and the next year's planting they are used as means of gaining other commodities. The other crops, which are minor, are used mainly for food, though some are bartered for other articles and food stuffs.

Mention should be made of the use of the fruit of two trees, the locust bean tree and the baobab. The former provides a kind of porridge made from the yellow covering of the seed. The seeds are cooked and ground and provide the chief ingredient of the gravy which is eaten at almost every meal. The flour of the fruit of the baobab is also used in making a kind of drink which is quite common. The leaves are used as greens and the bark of this tree provides a much used fibre.

Livestock.

Even though agriculture is regarded as the principal mode for obtaining subsistence almost every farmer aims to have some livestock which will give him meat and stand him in good stead whenever he is called upon to make a ritual-meat-offering. Livestock also passes from one family to another as part of the bride-price. Goats, sheep and chickens make up

the natives' possessions in livestock. Very seldom are any of these killed merely for eating, at least such was the case formerly. Then, as to a large extent now, most of the livestock was used for ritual killings. But those that are blemished and therefore cannot be used for sacrifices are butchered. No animal or fowl that is blemished is acceptable to the ritual leaders. The old Hebrew custom has similarities. The meat that comes from those which die from diseases, etc., is eaten by the people.

A dog is owned by almost every household, and is valued mainly for hunting. During the hunting season the owner takes special care of his dog and shows pride in him, especially if he is able to assist in the capture of game. Dogs also are used for ritual offerings, one being killed upon the death of every married man. The meat is eaten only by the men as is the case with horse flesh of which there seldom is any. Only the chiefs own horses.

Hunting.

Hunting all kinds of game, from the buffalo to the mouse is a great sport, and a good part of the dry season is taken up in this pursuit. But with such a density of population game is scarce and therefore the amount of meat gained by hunting is almost negligible. And with the people building small villages in what once used to be more or less 'bush' country game has become even more scarce.

It is indeed a sight to behold the men starting out on a big hunt. On the various paths which come down from the hill towns and converge a short distance out one can see black lines of the hunters walking single file, or on a slow trot going towards the area designated as the sphere of hunting for that day. Except for a few who may be wearing a loin cloth the men are entirely nude. Each has in his hand two or three spears and a round leather shield made out of buffalo or antelope hide. The head of each spear is smeared with a poison while the shield is used as protection against other spears or against the claws of the leopard. The feet of every hunter are shod with sandals. Game is also captured by various kinds of traps, the fashioning of which indicates ingenuity on the part of the people.

Industries.

The industries of the Pero are limited to their needs, as for instance smithing which is necessary in a locality where farming is done with metal implements. Some products from the blacksmith's shop are hoes, spear heads, adzes and axes, bracelets, tweezers, etc. In some tribes blacksmithing carries with it a stigma¹ but not so among the people of this tribe with whom the trade is a most respectable one.

Since the advent of European trade the use of surface iron-ore has almost been discontinued and its place taken by

1. Meek, op. cit., vol. 1. p. 149; also Selligman, C. G., Pagan Tribes of the Nilotic Sudan, p. 446.

that which is imported. The iron is used over and over again. Two or three old worn-out hoes may be brought to the blacksmith who will re-make them into a single new one. Rusty spear-heads are heated and beaten into knives. Each smith is responsible for obtaining his own fuel which is in the form of charcoal made from wood of the dry kiriya trees which have become so hardened by the weather over a period of years that it is impossible to drive a nail into the wood. Fire is put to logs of this wood which after a period is extinguished with water and the charred wood is broken into pieces the size of walnuts. It is now ready for use. Frequently the blacksmith will ask those who seek his service to bring charcoal as the fee for the work to be done.

Sometimes stones serve as the only anvil, though more often a large-headed spike-like anvil made from iron is used. The point or base of this spike is placed on a log which is buried in the ground. The tongs and hammers used are also made from iron. The bellows consist of the skins of two goats which instead of being skinned in the usual way were pulled off the carcass so that the skin is as a sack with both ends open. One end of each skin is fastened to a tile opening which leads into the fire-box. To the other end of each two sticks are tied thus elongating the opening. One man, holding the ends of the skins in his hands manipulates the bellows with alternating strokes, each time the hand comes up the skin

is opened and permitted to fill with air which on the downward stroke is forced into the fire-box, on the opposite side of which sits the blacksmith at his work.

Any young man who is willing to serve as an apprentice to a blacksmith may become a smith on his own at a later time. He will be given the necessary tools by the man whom he served and helped in various ways, on the condition that he later will help some other young man get started in the trade.

Pottery comes second in the group of industries. Here again only those pots that their needs demand are made. Good pottery, which will hold water and withstand the fire, demands special skill, and for this some of the women are noted. Though it must be said that their reputation is only within the tribe. Neighboring tribes, Jukun and Kulu, are more skilled in this work and sometimes the Peros resort to the use of pots made by these neighbors.

A dark yellow clay which is gathered by the women is used in pottery. After a number of pots, approximately twenty, have been molded by hand each one is painted with a mixture of thin red clay. While the pot is being molded various designs are placed on some by a metal instrument as a knife. The kiln is an opening in the ground about one foot deep and from six to ten feet in diameter. Into this the dry pots are meticulously placed. Over the top small sticks in abundance, bark and corn chaff is put in preparation for the fire. The burning

continues for about twenty-four hours after which it takes a number of more hours for the pots to cool enough to be taken out. The woman who made the pots alone has the prerogative to bring each one from the kiln. As far as my knowledge goes there are no taboos connected with pottery.

The work of her hands is then bartered to her fellow tribes-women who bring peanuts, corn or salt. When peanuts are the medium of trade then the amount asked for a certain pot is determined by the number of peanuts that pot will hold.



For cooking

For carrying water

For general use

Sleeping mats generally are not used by the Peros. Consequently the art of making mats is not known by many. Many of the mats in use have been obtained from the Hausas who are experts at this art. The few mats that are made by the Peros are from palm fronds which they have plaited together. Instead of beginning in the center when making a mat their

method is to begin from a corner.

In the making of various types of baskets they are more skilled, especially in making the large baskets used for carrying produce from the fields. One such includes a framework made from very pliable sticks and a closely woven basket which sets inside the carrying frame. In size they vary greatly, but the average one would be a little larger than a bushel. Each household has several baskets of different sizes.

Basketry, which is performed by the men, is begun about corn harvesting time when for the first time since the heavy rains there are a few slack days. From the jungle growth along the streams certain very pliable sticks which have the diameter of a pencil are gathered, as are also rolls of a very fine vine which is the size of cord string. This is braided before using it to tie the sticks into shape at the bottom. Each stick is then turned upwards, crossed with other upright sticks and tied securely with this braided vine.

The inside basket is made from reed-grass bound together with fibre on one edge. The beginning of the plaiting is much like that of a mat. However, when the bound edge is the length of the circumference of the basket to be desired the opposite edge will be drawn together and the ends of the mat sewed to each other. After this operation it looks like an upright cylinder standing on the edge that was bound. The loose ends at the top are now tied and the result is much like

the formation of an ordinary boy's stocking-cap. The basket is then packed with grass after which it is turned wrong side up. By keeping this packing moist for a few days the proper shape is given to the basket. It is now ready to be used in the frame for which it was designed. Various other smaller and less sturdy baskets are made from plaiting the palm fronds.

Wood carving serves the purpose of a hobby for a number of men during their slack time. The principal articles carved are stools, hoes and adze handles, and the board needed for the game kayu edau which is similar to our backgammon. Certain individuals carve images to be revered and other various kinds of fetishes.

Of recent years the Peros have become noted for their rope making. Such rope is used almost entirely for roofing purposes. While the people of the neighboring tribes make their roofing rope from grass the Peros use a soft fibre that is taken from a plant similar to the Hausa rama. The stems of the plant are soaked for a number of days previous to the bark being stripped off and torn into small fibres. Both braiding and twisting are the methods used in rope making. One hundred feet of good three-sixteenth inch rope is sold for approximately two cents, the price of one measure or two pounds of guinea-corn.

The leather-work done by these people consists of the making of hunting shields, sandals, leather bags for carrying

peanuts, and the tanning of skins worn by the men.

Property.

The average Pero is not wealthy in this world's goods. But as hill dwelling primitives go their possessions compare favorably with other hill dwelling tribes of the Benue valley. An inventory of the possessions of an average family taken during the dry season just following the harvest would read as follows: one hundred and twenty bundles of guinea-corn (each weighing about twenty pounds); ten bushels of peanuts; two bushels of beniseed; five bushels of beans; six goats; four sheep; five chickens; one dog; six spears; two leather shields; two pair sandals; eighty bwami (iron currency worth approximately two cents each); four hoes, two axes; twenty pots of various sizes; seven calabashes for food; and about thirty calabashes for beer feasts. The total value of the belongings would approximate twenty-five dollars in United States currency.

Medium of Exchange.

Both intra-communal and extra-communal systems of exchange are common for these people. The most prevalent type of exchange is by barter. The indigenous currency consists of bars of iron twelve inches long and approximately one-fourth inch thick with the center two inches of the bar an inch in diameter and one fourth inch thick. This iron currency called bwami makes up one of the most important parts of the bride-price.

Hoe blades as a medium of exchange are seldom used today. The actual value of these depended upon their size and the fineness of smithing. However, the system of currency introduced by the British, coined specially for all of British West Africa, is rapidly becoming the most important medium of exchange.



Pero indigenous currency, bwami.

Some old men one day related to me the story of how they learned the value of British coin. To several of the group of town leaders various coins were given by the visiting white Government official. He told them to take the money to the nearest trading post on the Benue river, some thirty-five miles away, and see what they could get in exchange. Naturally they were delighted to get such large returns in colored cloth for the minute coins they presented. Realizing the buying power of the money soon gave it value in the thinking of the people, and no longer was this power determined by the size of the metal and the fineness of smithing. Indeed, a real mental change had taken place.

The Market.

Formerly, the few needs of the people were readily

supplied from the products of the field and the benefits of the community life. However, with the coming of western influences as well as those from the Hausa trader new needs were created, such as could not be satisfied by their home grown products. A taste for white salt was developed, clothes of various patterns and beads of many colors attracted their attention, and even if the desire for soap was not motivated by a fondness for cleanliness it, nevertheless, made the body feel better. These desires having taken root and the Hausa trader ready to supply the demands it was only natural that a market be established.

The Perc market, which is held every Monday, was begun in 1932 and unlike many neighboring markets, which are born and die within a few months or years, it has flourished right from the start. Its growth is due in part to the two main Perc towns being the center of the population of the district. The smallest crowd is drawn during the farming season, while almost every Monday throughout the dry season the market is well filled. Especially is this the case when part of the afternoons are spent in wrestling by the famous would-be-heroes from the various villages. It is not unusual for people to come distances of twenty miles to chu kasua, meaning to eat the market.

As head of the market a sarikin kasua or chief of the market is appointed by the paramount chief with the sanction

of the Government officer. It is his duty to inspect the animals to be slaughtered, though if the ox is able to move under its own power and does not show too many ribs it readily receives the inspector's stamp. He is supposed to watch the prices of the various commodities, and lastly he is responsible for keeping the place comparatively clean.

Both barter, and buying and selling for money take place at the Pero market, with the former predominating. A cone of tobacco will be bartered for a loin cloth; peanuts may be traded for corn, measure for measure; cassava may be given in exchange for salt; while beer, of which there is plenty, and pieces of meat, beads and garments are usually paid for in cash.

Aside from the attendant evils of the usual African market there are some values of such a weekly gathering, chief of which is the availability of a greater variety of food-stuffs. A central market helps dethrone the high prices that individual sellers ask and furnishes a market for the produce of those who are unable to travel to the trading post. Then too, there is value in the social contacts made at such a place.

CHAPTER III

THE PERO PEOPLE Continued

Social Organization

In this section we have to deal with the three principal social groups of the Pero people: (1) the Family; (2) the Clan; (3) the Community.

The Family.

The basis of Pero society is the patrilineal family, not, however, the primary unit as we think of it which consists of a man, his wife, and children, but the larger group of related persons united under the control of the oldest man of the relationship. This extended family, which is determined by consanguinity and not by affinity, is composed of smaller units which consist of the man, his wife or wives, and their children. The last are regarded as belonging not only to the biological family but to the larger extended group as well. Often the children, between the ages of three and six, will live with their grandparents on the father's side. Some are reared in the home of paternal uncles, who frequently show more ability in disciplining the children than do their fathers. In the larger family they are all one. Consequently, the native gives the title 'brother', mulli, not merely to the sons of his father and mother, but to all members of the family group

who are of the same age as himself.

Each biological family has its own compound which consists of the cluster of huts used by the whole family for sleeping, cooking, storing, and protecting stock at night. In the compounds on the hillsides the peripheral huts are usually connected with walls of mud or stone, leaving only one entrance to the compound. On the plain the huts more often are not connected by such walls but the whole group of them is surrounded by a tall grass mat enclosure which also usually has only one opening.

The guinea-corn bins which are made from clay are either built on large flat rocks or on a platform of stones gathered together. Usually they are located near the huts, though sometimes the granaries of a whole section of a village will be located together on some stony ledge. The desire to build on stone is to keep the grain from the destructive termites.

The hut for the goats and sheep is usually near the sleeping quarters mainly because should there be any wild beast attempting to break into the goat hut the people would be awakened to the rescue. A second protection is made by surrounding the goat house with various kinds of logs and thorny bushes. A small hut the size of an ordinary single chicken coop houses the few chickens owned by each household.

The circular mud hut with a thatched conical roof is the type of dwelling used by the Peros almost entirely. The only

exceptions are some recent efforts which tend towards a rectangular house. It seems, however, that the circular hut with conical roof is the type best suited to the country. It is more easily erected, the roof is more water-proof and as a whole it involves less investment.

The major part of the work of building the huts is done by the men. The women assist in carrying the water that is needed to soften the clay before it will stick and can be molded into short cylinder like portions each about 2 by 8 inches. These in turn are molded into the circular wall which is between two and three inches thick and from four to five feet high. After the wall is dry the conical roof is fashioned on the ground, the supports of the thatch being bamboo poles. The roof upon completion is lifted by about ten men onto the wall. Now except for smoothing the clay floor the hut is ready for use.

The largest of the three to ten huts that make up the compound is the central one or the sitting place. In this, which is usually about ten feet in diameter, the corn is ground and the food is cooked. During times of rain or in the early mornings it serves as a gathering place for the family or neighbors. From this general purpose hut openings lead to the sleeping huts of which there may be one or as many as a half-dozen, depending largely upon the number of wives owned by the man. Each wife must be provided with her own hut.

Because the larger hut is cooler the natives purposely make their sleeping quarters small, more often only about eight feet in diameter.

In recording the house furniture we need not dwell long for such furnishings are few. The beds are made of palm-branches laid side by side on two or three cross sticks which are supported by forked posts planted in the ground. These smooth sticks soon attain a high polish from the oily body of the occupant. Some of the more recent beds are made from dried mud. These are between ten and twenty inches high. Sleeping mats, of course, must be used on these mud beds. In every compound there are a few wooden stools made from various kinds of wood. More often the stools jok are used by the women, the men being content to sit on stones or on the ground. A mother with a baby in her arms is always given priority in the use of stools. The more energetic folk will roll a log into the court yard and use it for sitting purposes.



The stool

The cooking must necessarily be done inside during the rainy season. But when the dry season has begun the three

cooking stones are moved outside where the task is less disagreeable and the danger of fire not so great. In between these three hearth stones which support the cooking pot the fire is kept by pieces of fire-wood which are cut about three feet long.

The principal meal is prepared and eaten in the evening. The menu most always is corn mush with a gravy made from the ground seeds of the locust bean tree or from ground peanuts. When meat is available its flavor greatly adds to the gravy. Substance is given to the gravy by adding the slimy, foaming fluid obtained from massaging the bark peeled from the fugi plant. Some evening meals consist only of cooked cassava or calabashes of cooked beans. It is amazing how the people are able to work all day without eating, satisfying their appetite with the single meal of the evening. However, more and more the custom of partaking of a porridge drink made from grain flour before going to the field, or in mid-morning is being adopted. Besides the above, the diet is varied with the use of meat, beniseed, melon seed, squash, round ground nuts, a carrot-like vegetable, sweet potatoes, and rice, all of which are of minor importance. The addition of salt to the food is relished by all the people and before the foreign white salt was known that which was made from the earth of salt marshes was used extensively. A salty solution is also obtained from running water through perforated pots filled with a certain

kind of wood ashes.

The Pero men who are served first eat their food apart from the women and children. It formerly was considered taboo for a woman to eat anything in the presence of her husband. Generally, the food is eaten with the right hand each waiting for his turn to dip into the calabash. The thumb and first two fingers are used. Women during menstruation use spoons made from wood.

Beer brewed from the guinea-corn, maize, and the millets plays a large part in the diet of the Peros. It is not only regarded as a beverage but also as a food. The brewing of the beer, which is a tedious task, is done by the women. First the grain is allowed to soak until it germinates. It is then ground into a mash, cooked several times, and on the seventh day strained, after which it is ready for consumption. Large quantities of it are consumed at every festival, at the communal farming efforts, and on numerous other occasions.

The ambition of every Pero man is to have children and many of them. For he, who upon his death fails to leave any offspring, is not regarded highly by his fellow tribespeople. Both the sterile man and the barren woman are the objects of taunts and ridicule. It follows then that when the woman becomes pregnant special care must be taken to assure the maturing of the foetus and the safe arrival of the baby. Though the woman does continue with much of her ordinary work she is

very careful not to lift heavy loads during the last months of her period of gestation, which is considered by the Pero women as ten months. For some other man to have sexual intercourse with her is counted a serious offense and if abortion is the result the punishment to the offender is imprisonment.

When the time of delivery has arrived the woman usually goes to her mother's home. In some cases, however, she may remain in her own home with neighboring elderly women assisting as midwives. Midwifery is not a profession followed by women but some of the older women who have assisted in numerous cases are noted for their ability in lending help at this time.

Whether the birth takes place inside the hut or out in the open depends upon the weather. There in a sitting position on the edge of her stool with one of the midwives supporting her shoulders, or in a kneeling position with her legs apart as she holds to some object or person the Pero woman delivers her child. It is permitted to drop to the ground and must remain there until the placenta comes. To sever the umbilical cord before the placenta has been born is not permissible. In a few cases, where I was called when the placenta was delayed, I was able to persuade the woman to permit me to tie and cut the cord, and the baby was taken away and washed. With them the cord is never tied. It is merely severed with the sharp edge of a reed or the hard shell of a corn stalk and to keep

it from hemorrhage earth is rubbed on the severed part. If the birth is normal the placenta and the woman's dress of leaves which has come in contact with blood are placed in the bottom of a broken water pot kulubul and buried behind the house. But should the birth have taken place on the road or at some relative's house the placenta is then returned to the woman's house to be buried. The placenta of the first child may be buried at the woman's mother's home.

When the birth is completed the mother eases her soreness with a good hot bath. Following this she will return home, if the birth took place in another home. Her main task now is to care for the baby. A helper, usually a young girl, comes and assists with the work of the home. For a period of seven days the mother is "unclean" and forbidden to make food or draw water. This taboo is lifted by the husband offering a chicken to the tunjo spirit on this day. In the case of twins two chickens are offered, and at a later time the malevolent spirit teba is appeased with an offering of four chickens, two goats and two pots of beer. (See p. 261)

Though twin babies are not killed, as they are by the Tangales, they are looked upon with disfavor, partly because of the difficulty of nursing two infants and the meager possibility of either one surviving.

It is of interest to note that upon the news of the new arrival women friends take gifts of grain and prepared food as

a greeting to the mother and family. At this time of rejoicing they wish to lend assistance to the needs of the home.

The usual mother-love expresses itself in giving the baby the best of care that is known, but with the ignorance of rules of sanitation and feeding this care fails in more cases than survive. Only about three out of every ten babies pass their second birthday. The strongest alone are able to survive.

Most children are well advanced in their second year before they commence to walk. Even then they are still nursed for it is thought that the longer a child can be fed in this manner the better chances for survival it will have. But in numerous cases the nursing after a certain period is indeed harmful. As is the case with many tribes, cohabitation with her husband is not permitted the mother until the child has been weaned.

Children among the Peros are indeed interesting to observe. For their exhibitions of satisfaction and discomfort are so like those of white children. Not many months pass before the baby imitates its mother in certain movements. When the daughter is a little older she is sure to copy her mother in grinding corn. How delighted she is when she has some object tied on her back, which she can carry about and put to sleep even as her mother cares for the infant. Boys imitate their fathers by using the hoe and by fashioning spears from sticks and reeds after which they stage a hunt.

Childhood, however, is not only play. Before they are really able the children must help with the work. A very common task for both boys and girls is to care for smaller children who have been strapped to their backs. Later on the girls also assist with the carrying of water and the grinding, while the boys help on the farm and see that the livestock is turned out each morning and brought home safely in the evening.

With what we have said about the desire of every Peruvian man to have children it is expected that the sex life would play an important part in his thinking. Indeed, it overtowers every other phase of his life. Of the cases that come to the magistrate's court the majority have their origin in sex.

Even before marriage sexual intercourse by the boys and girls is permitted. Upon these precocious acts the adults look without disfavor. They regard them as innocent play. To be sure such intercourse is part of the method of courting, and one girl may have several suitors in a single night. For a Christian, who purposes not to follow this custom, it is most difficult to win a helpmate from among the non-Christian people. With such a situation it would be expected that there would be numerous illegitimate children. But this is not the case for most of this free intercourse takes place before either party is mature.

Once the girl has chosen the young man she wishes to marry, and the engagement is announced, she no longer is common property. Her sexual quality now belongs to one man only, and any infringement upon his right is looked upon with disfavor. When the girl becomes his wife she is his property, and any one who commits adultery with her is punished, the amount inflicted depending upon the husband's angry disapproval.

When the courting has developed to the point where there is an agreement between the two parties concerned, the young man approaches his father or elder brother, telling him of the courtship. Thereupon the father or an elder brother acting for the son presents the girl with an ordinary farming hoe. By accepting the hoe she gives her consent and the two are betrothed. Should the courtship come to a climax during the rainy season then a chicken takes the place of the hoe. But with those who have become accustomed to wearing clothes a colored cloth is the sign of engagement.

As soon as the betrothal is sanctioned by the girl's parents they inform the young man regarding the dowry or marriage contract. Among the Peros this consists of livestock, grain, native currency, and labor. The amount given varies with the different towns and not necessarily the clans. Some parts of the dowry are fixed while other parts depend upon the parties concerned. But each suitor must build three

granaries and one hut for the father-in-law. Usually about twenty baskets (bushels) of peanuts, twenty bundles of guineacorn and several large baskets of beniseed must be given. From fifty to one-hundred and fifty bwamis (native currency) are asked for by the girl's family. During the farming season, the prospective father-in-law requests the young man to help with his farm work from time to time. Besides this he must farm a field of peanuts.

During the year that usually elapses between the betrothal and the marrying the suitor tries his best to pay as much of the bride-price as possible. He seeks the help of his family and friends, for it is impossible for the young man to pay the amount of the contract by himself in a single year.

Should the wife die before birth has been given to a child the payment of the we diga (things of marriage) or bride-price automatically ceases. But if the wife has given birth, then the husband must pay the dowry even though the woman leaves him and marries another. However, if she marries again, husband number two will be asked to pay the price to husband number one. If the woman upon leaving her husband takes some of his belongings by theft then the payment of the dowry automatically ceases. The woman defaulted. Among the people of Filiya, one of the Pero towns, the children continue to pay the remainder of the dowry even though the mother and father have both died, should the father's brothers so request.

No Pero ever completely finishes the payment of the bride-price. To fulfil completely all of the requirements of the guarantee contract and thus discharge the husband of all responsibility towards his wife's family would be unwise. It is thought that then the wife would not live long.

March is the season for marrying. It is a time of festivity, coming at the same time as the main feast to the ancestor cult, for the favor of these spirits is most necessary for the success of the marriage. (See page 223).

Polygny is a common practice; almost every man desiring to have more than one wife, being limited only by his own attractiveness and his ability to meet the demands of the bride-price. The more wives a man has the more highly is he regarded and the more offspring he is likely to have. But this system of polygny in a society where there are only 102.5 females to every 100 males results in many able men being without wives. A man, in such a predicament, seeks opportunity to win the love of some married woman who then leaves her first husband in favor of this new mate. At a later time the former husband may win her back again or he may gain the hand of someone else's wife. Thus the vicious system of quick marriages and easy divorces begins. Polygny which produces scarcity of women also means that every woman, whether fit or not, is married and permitted to bear children. This cannot mean the best for the race.

Though the system of polygny among the Pero is not "adelphic", that is, where the wives of one man are sisters, it is, however, "disparate", that is, one of the wives has a position superior to that of the others. As a rule and almost without exception the first wife married holds this position. There are cases, however, where, because of poor health or lack of suitability the first wife married holds an inferior position. The wife of the husband's choice becomes the chief companion. Provision is made for each wife separately, and that for the inferior spouse or spouses is generally less. It is surprising that some of the second or third wives for whom the husband fails to provide seem content to beg corn at the threshing floor, or to do the threshing for other women. This seems all the more amazing when one realizes that there are scores of energetic men who because of the scarcity of women are unable to secure a wife.

A widow, if she so desires, may re-marry. But the one whom she chooses to marry must be from among her deceased husband's married or unmarried brothers. She is considered property belonging to the family and therefore is not free to marry a stranger.

The only redress that a wife has in case of cruelty from her husband is to return to her parents. Invariably this is done when she thinks she has been mistreated. But because of the force of the marriage guarantee contract the father, if he

believes that his daughter was not mistreated will persuade her to return to her husband. Should the husband have defaulted in beating his wife, then he through some brother will have to make reconciliation with the father-in-law before the wife is permitted to return. This procedure is not always so easily done and usually, it calls for gifts from the husband.

Inasmuch as the family is patrilineal only the male children count in the meager inheritance of the deceased father at whatever time the entire group of kinsfolk decide to share the belongings. But the amount of the world's goods is small and inheritance causes the Peros little concern. Should the biological family have only daughters then the inheritance goes to the father's brothers.

Though the Pero family is patrilineal it is not entirely patrilocal. The new couple may have their new home in a part of the husband's father's compound or they may choose to build elsewhere. With the tribe disintegrating there is even less adherence to the patrilocal system of dwelling.

The attitude towards old age is one of respect and admiration, for while it may be the middle aged men who administer the laws and impress the customs upon youth it is the old men who are the store-houses of tribal lore. Their advice is often sought and never disregarded. By virtue of their age they are supposed to be possessed with special wisdom.

and deep insight. To be called an elder is an honour in Pero country.

The Clan.

The social group which is more inclusive than the family is the clan.¹ Indeed, the term used for clan, pidi pera meaning place of origin, at once assists us in understanding the Peros' use of the word and definitely delineates the boundary of the grouping which is more or less fixed. Lowie points out a significant distinction between family and clan when he says that "the former is a loose, the latter a fixed, unit. Divorce and migration rend the family asunder; but the sib bond is permanent."

Unlike the Ba-ila the Pero clans are not totemistic. Nor is the mark of belonging to such and such a clan as prominent among the Peros as it is among the neighboring Bantu Kulu people where the clan name is usually attached to every man's name.

All the Pero clans have their origin in the belief in the common descent from either some ancestor or the common habitation of a village, district or hill. Tracing their descent to common habitations, all of which are in the district

1. "Clan is an exogamous, unilateral group of persons, all the members of which are held to be related to one another and are bound together by common ties of clanship. This tie may be a belief in common descent from some ancestor, real or mythical; it may be the common possession of a totem; or the common habitation of a village or district." By E. W. Smith, quoted by Dodge, R. E., Missions and Anthropology, p. 73.
2. Lowie, Robert H., Primitive Society, p. 112.

predominates. None of the clans are named after animals.

Of the twenty-one clans listed below the majority refer to common origin in such and such a district.

- | | |
|--------------|----------------|
| 1. Pileme | 12. Yape |
| 2. Shagga | 13. Pegema |
| 3. Ya-kpandi | 14. Yankarakat |
| 4. Gbware | 15. Fwago |
| 5. Bula | 16. Kwele |
| 6. Pishemo | 17. Kula |
| 7. Dagam | 18. Diimbira |
| 8. Bangindap | 19. Pesho |
| 9. Shagam | 20. Pizilap |
| 10. Gundali | 21. Shwake |
| 11. Fokutu | |

With a few exceptions that are the result of the current disintegrating influences the clans are exogamous. Normally, no man belonging to the Bula clan, for instance, would think of courting or marrying a girl of the same pidi pera. Both parties to the marriage must be of different clans.

The mode of transmitting the clan is definitely patrilineal. The children of a couple where the father is of the Kula clan and the mother is a Pileme will belong to the Kula grouping which is the father's pidi pera. The mother, however, does not change her clan, she remains a Pileme. In fact it is impossible for any one to become a member of another clan.

Within the clan, which is a "mutual-aid society", the members are bound to render help wherever needed. Should someone need assistance in obtaining the proper amount for a ritual killing he will not be refused by a fellow clansman. Naturally it is for the strengthening of the group to assist

a young man with the dowry needed. During tax time the generosity of the more industrious men is depended upon by the indolent. Nor would anyone be permitted to starve as long as there is food within the clan. If some member is wronged by an outsider the whole clan is injured. Should a Pileme young man be refused a Gundali girl the former clan will in turn refuse girls to any suitor from the latter group until amends have been made.

The larger pidi pera have their own festival times as well as joining in those for the whole community. Thus during the rainy season the Dagam first celebrate their damban feast. The Pileme follow with their three days of festivity.

In olden days debts were despised. They were mainly incurred by women and usually in the borrowing of corn at the threshing floor. But men feared debts, for inability to pay the loan meant that the delinquent would become a slave to the person to whom he was in debt and for whom he would then have to work. No longer would he be a free man. Only the force of the united clan was able to execute such judgment. What an excellent method of dealing with an evil which is so prevalent in Africa today and which means the destruction of that Spartan character for which some Africans were noted.

Thus we have noted that the clan grouping has definite values for the society. There is, however, another side to the influence of the system; which is, that it keeps submerged

that quality, the lack of which is partly responsible for the stagnation of African society. All expressions of initiative are frowned upon and individual efforts are only good as they serve the whole clan. The result is an attitude of resignation.

Community.

The use by the Peros of the word mina in its largest sense means the same as our word community. True it is, mina may mean only the community of one biological family or of the extended family. Again it is the only word they have for house. But it is also used when referring to the town as a whole and we shall use it in this sense here. A chief when speaking of his entire town or community will use the term mina.

Such a community may include all of one tribe or it may be composed of a part of one or of parts of several tribal units. With the Peros the two large towns of Gwandum and Filiya are made up of people of Pero stock, with the exception of a very few outsiders who have married into the tribe. The villages of the Gundali community consist of Pero and Pia elements. In 1939 the Gwandum community included 5166 people, Filiya 3424 people, and Gundali 1829 people.

Each one of these three communities has a chief as its head. He is called mai by the Peros and kup by the Pias. It is worth-while to note that the Kanuri word for chief is also mai.

As far as possible the chieftainship is hereditary. The whole society being based on the patrilineal system it is quite in order that this lineage be followed in the transmitting of this office. Women chiefs are unknown to the Peros. To them a woman would seem incapable for such a task.

Upon the resignation or the death of a chief the most capable son who helped his father in the execution of the duties of his office is likely to be chosen by the people as the successor. The news of this choice is given to the paramount or district chief who in turn gives it to the European official for sanction or veto. Usually, the official makes it his business to be present when the choice of the heir to the throne is to be made. The one chosen then acts as chief for a period of six months probation after which time, if he has proven satisfactory, he will be "crowned", meaning that he will be fully installed and given a robe by the Government.

The present chief of Gbwandum was installed in 1934. His predecessor resigned mainly because of age. The son, a rightful heir, was not liked by the people so the names of three other men were also put forward as candidates for the office. At the appointed time, when the Government official was present, all the men of the town gathered. The four candidates were asked to sit apart and the people were told to sit with the candidate that they desired as chief. The one having the most followers became chief. Thus was Antapi, not of the

former chief's family though he had helped in the office, chosen to the chieftainship.

For his services each chief receives a monthly salary from the Government. Any fines kept or bribes taken are not according to order.

The duties of the chief are many. New comers go to him to receive suggestions as to where they may farm. Travelers, unless they are known in the town, always seek out the chief's compound with the expectation of receiving food and lodging for the night. Much time is required in dealing with the cases that come to his court. Among these are requests for divorce which must be investigated, children whose paternity is undecided are brought and the chief with his council determines to which family the child must go when four or five years old, arguments over field boundaries are heard and adjusted (this often means a trip to the field), fights are settled and sometimes penalized by imprisonment as are also thefts of various kinds.

The collecting of the Government tax, is one of the biggest jobs the chief has and in times of depression is a most trying responsibility. During the summer months the annual census of every village is taken by natives sent by the Government for this purpose. Upon the basis of these returns the poll tax to be imposed upon every male who is able to assist in the gaining of a livelihood is computed. The average annual

tax is five shillings. In some neighboring areas where the people are more poverty stricken the amount is not so high while in areas where the people are all plain folk and thus considered more wealthy the levy is higher. The tax is collected in November after the peanuts have been harvested and can be taken to the trading post to be exchanged for West African currency.

During my time among the Peros I have noted a decided change in their attitude towards this obligation. Formerly the people rather resented having to pay the assessment and hesitated as long as possible in doing so. Now they realize somewhat the value of this responsibility for the good of their own community in the way of better administration, policemen, prisons, markets, some medicine and roads, and they pay the tax as soon as the money is gotten together, each individual or town taking pride in themselves when they have finished. In short the attitude is, "this is our obligation, the quicker we pay it the sooner we can carry on with our other work."

The periodic cleaning of the roads is the responsibility of the whole community. Sections of the roads are assigned to certain village headmen and their people, who are accountable for keeping them free of excessive weeds. The hoeing of these paths, for most of them are only that, is done usually towards the end of the rainy season when there is little chance

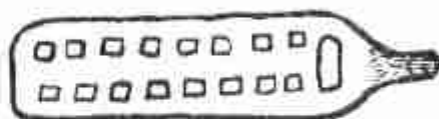
of another growth beginning before the dry season sets in. The paths leading to the fields are also cleaned out once. These, however, are the responsibility of the various farmers who utilize the way.

The importance of the community in the social fabric of the society is increasing and as it increases that of the clan decreases. True it is the head of the community is a determining factor in this change as is also the impact of the foreign influences.

Recreation and Aesthetic Life

Games.

Among the games played by the Peros, the one which is akin to backgammon, is the most common. This game called kayu adau is played mainly by the men and boys, and usually only during the dry season or when the farming is not heavy. It is played on a board, approximately twenty inches long, six inches wide and two inches thick on which are cut two lines of eight small holes and one large hole in which the nuts are stored when the board is not in use.



Four nuts are placed in each hole after which one of the two

players commences the redistribution, which is continued in a regular fashion by the players until one player has captured all of the opponent's nuts.

Children in the absence of a board play this game using holes dug in hard clay and small stones in the place of the round nuts.

A European is struck with the willingness of the players to follow the advice of a half dozen or so on-lookers who at times even do the moving of the nuts, much to the disgust of the opposing players. There is little respect for individuality, even in this game.

The spinning of tops made from small snail shells is a great sport for the young men and boys and sometimes women. Gambling and much excitement are very common in connection with this game which is played during the late wet season.

During the dry season the girls and sometimes boys spend hours playing a game that is akin to tug-of-war, but instead of using a rope each girl clasps her arms about the body of the preceding girl. The two center girls, who are facing each other, have their hands interlocked.

A game of guessing by three or four boys, and which reveals a spirit of daring on the part of the players, is played around a group of concentric circles made in the sand as follows:-



Each player places a stone on the outer circle. Another stone is held by one of the players who will hold his hands closed to one of the others who in turn must guess in which hand the stone is. Should he fail to guess the right one the holder of the stone moves his stone up to the second circle. But if the conjecture is right the stone is forfeited to the person who guessed correctly. The game carries on in this fashion until all the stones are moved to the pit in the center after which they are covered with sand. The loser must then pick the stones out of the pit as quickly as possible for the other two boys delight in punishing the hand of the loser with small switches while it brings out the stones.

In one of the games, a boy, imitating an animal, pulls along the ground a large fruit of the jido tree, attached to a string, while others with small bows and arrows shoot at the fruit. When an arrow strikes the target the boy is supposed to become angry as the animal he represents and chase his 'killer', punishing him as he wishes.

Wrestling is a sport that is in season the whole year, although it is mainly done by boys. The first one falling to

the ground no matter in what position is defeated. During recent times wrestling in many cases is done to the tom tom of native drums, the drummers receiving pennies given by the audience.

Singing and Dancing.

The Peros are lovers of song. Nearly every muscular activity, whether work, play or traveling, is accompanied by humming or singing which gives rhythm to the muscular exercise and undoubtedly makes the activity seem easier. Before one can see the long lines of women coming in from the fields with fire-wood or corn their approaching is recognized by the singing. With the singing there is dancing at the intervals for rest. Men, while working in the fields, whether individually or in groups are constantly humming or singing. Many of the dances are accompanied by singing, most of which is antiphonal, one person singing a line as a solo, followed by several lines in which all the party joins. A man walking along after dark will sing to drive away his loneliness.

The co-operative effort of cleaning the roads is usually accompanied by the services of one or two drummers. Probably the most successful way of getting men out for such a task is to send a few drummers through the town announcing again the order that the chief proclaimed the night before. It might not be amiss to relate here an incident told me by one chief of how the effect of music prevented strife. The Pero people had been

asked by the Government to construct a wooden bridge where a main thoroughfare crosses the river. Hundreds of men turned out to help with the work. In the afternoon as the men became weary a quarrel began between two groups, which had the color of turning into something more than words. But someone began whistling at the top of his ability. Gradually the sweet music of the whistler began to charm the angry crowd, the bitterness lessened and before long the bridge was built.

Of all forms of recreation enjoyed by the people the dance is undoubtedly the most important. It provides an outlet for that stored-up energy possessed by the young people. And to break the "round of work and idleness" many of the late afternoons and evenings, and especially the moonlight nights, are spent in this exercise by both men and women.

Some of the dances consist of those partaking forming two lines and each person in turn skipping across to clap the hands of one of the opposite sex. In another dance the line of people goes round and round everyone heavily shuffling his or her feet to the rhythm of song. Even the older people join in the dances that are associated with the rites, such as the kop and damban. These both are dances to religious cults and only performed at certain seasons. For the former every man wears four or more iron rings on each leg. One side of each ring is hollow and as they clang together the rhythm, which can be heard for more than one-half mile, is maintained. The damban

dancers wear a head-gear made from white chicken feathers, and their freshly oiled bodies are whitened by the beniseed which has been made to adhere to the oil. The chief actions of the individual dancers are the shuffling of the feet and the moving of their bodies backwards and forwards.

Not only are some of the dances accompanied by singing and drumming but the enthusiasm of those partaking is heightened by the consumption of gallons of native beer which keeps them carrying on sometimes until the early hours of the morning.

Musical Instruments.

The small range of musical instruments indigenous to the Peros gives evidence of the fact that the art of fashioning such instruments is undeveloped. The same is true of the neighboring tribes.

The instruments used are mainly stringed arrangements and drums. The garaya, which is principal among the former is played by plucking the two strings stretched along on a round smooth stick about thirty inches long, one end of which is fastened in a calabash which serves as the resonator. The xylophone, or any variation thereof, common among some African tribes is not known by the Peros.

The two membrane drum is used extensively now. It appears that it was derived from the Jukun people. The large pizhi drum which is a single membrane instrument stands about three and one-half feet high and is about eighteen inches in diameter.

Except for its having three legs it is shaped much like a tall sherbet dish. With this drum the Pias broadcast the killing of a leopard, but the Peros use it only in connection with the death of a male adult and upon other religious festivals.



The pizhi

Various other kinds of single membrane drums of the hour-glass type with bracing strings are used. The horn of the roan antelope is used in announcing the new year and other feasts. The corpse on its way to the grave is preceded by a man playing a whistle-like instrument, the same as is played at the head of a procession of hunters returning with their trophy - a leopard. The abun is a hollow piece of pottery shaped like a dumb-bell and beaten on the open ends with the palm of the hand. Various musical instruments made from corn stalks are fashioned like a flute or a fife. A harp-like instrument made from large stems of grass brings forth beautiful musical tones. The stringed

instruments, as the three-stringed lute and a type of fiddle now used by the Peros, have been borrowed mainly from either the Jukans or the Hausas during the present generation.

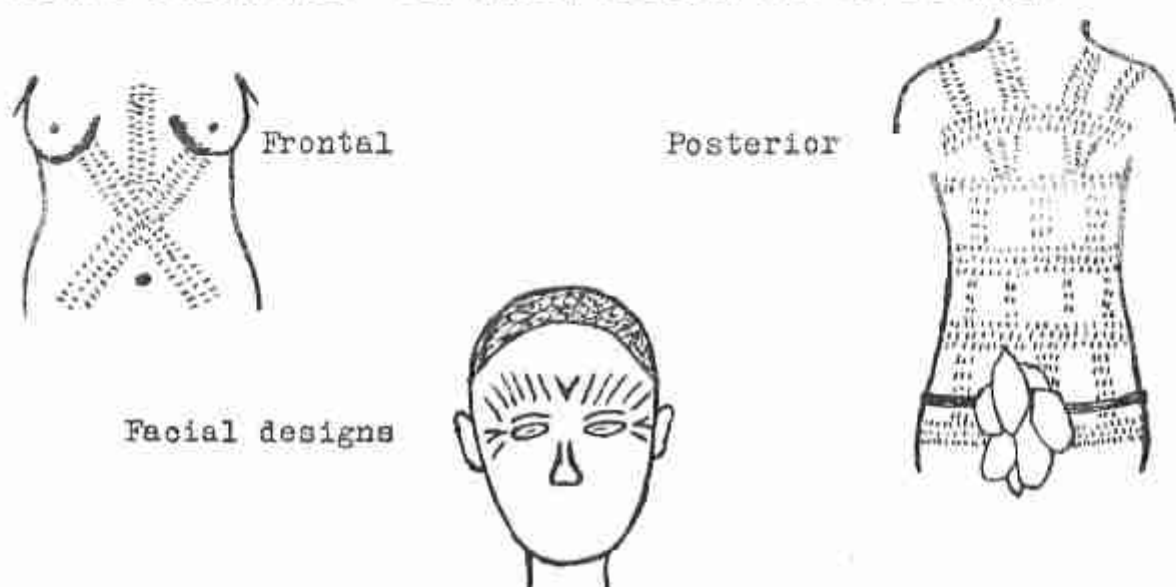
Decorative Art.

In decorative art the Peros have shown little aptitude. Hausa and Jukun tribes pride themselves in the decorations on their houses, but not so the Peros. Yet there are attempts at decoration, probably most notable is the personal appearance of the natives themselves. Formerly, both sexes went entirely nude save for an animal skin thrown over a man's shoulder and a leather cap for his head, while for a woman a string or leather belt about the body from which are hung two corsages of leaves, one in front and one in back, suffices. Now probably fifty percent of the men wear a loin cloth while a few of the more fortunate possess other garments as well. Women, except for about one percent of the group, consider their dress complete when they put on fresh leaves.

Hair-dressing for the women is taking on a new importance, for some now have their hair plaited where formerly they were satisfied to have it shaved off when it grew too long for peace and comfort or during mourning. Elderly women often attempt to improve their appearance by dyeing their hair with a mixture of powdered red stone and oil, this being rubbed into the kinky hair. Men are gradually discontinuing hair-dressing. Once some desired a small patch of the hair left unshaven, no doubt

a Jukun influence. When the hair on this patch became of sufficient length it would be braided into a pigtail, similar to the Chinese queue.

The appearance is further enhanced by cicatrization of the body. The marks are first drawn with a wisp of straw, the tip of which has been smeared with charcoal. The lines then are incised with a lancet which has a triangular blade. Into the incisions the operator rubs charcoal dust, and following this the patient rubs himself with shea-nut oil. The cutting is not completed at one sitting, nor does it have any ritual connection. The bodily designs are as follows:



The ear lobes of all girls are pierced when the girls are about ten years old. A wisp of grass is inserted, which later is replaced by a disc of guinea-corn stalk. This disc in turn is replaced by a larger one until the final hole may be as much as one and one-half inches in diameter. Formerly the custom of

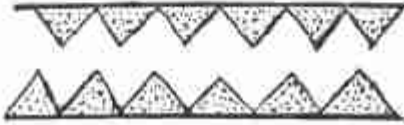
piercing the ear lobes was followed by many of the males as well. The piercing of the center of the nose, which once was done by members of both sexes is gradually being discontinued. Both wings of the nose and in many cases both the lower and upper lips of females are pierced. These are performed by the use of a bush thorn which is about one inch long.

In most cases both the upper and lower incisor teeth are chipped, the effect being a bit of space left between the teeth which are brought more or less to a point. The chipping is done with a chisel-like tool which is hammered by a heavier piece of iron or a stone. Needless to say that a dentist chair is a luxury as compared with the native custom of beautifying the teeth. Several guesses as to the origin of this custom may be of interest. It may have started from the desire for beauty, or to provide sharper teeth for eating human flesh not too well cooked, or again to appear cannibalistic before their enemies.

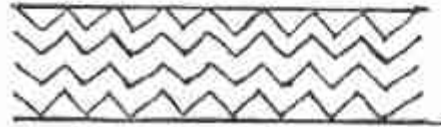
Such methods of beautifying the body seem rather repugnant to us. Nevertheless, it is only an effort to make the appearance of the individual more attractive, and in this innate trait we Europeans are one with the Africans. It is worthy of comment at this point that as the use of clothes increases and provides means for making the person attractive the former method of cicatrization decreases in importance.

Another attempt at decorative art is evidenced in the

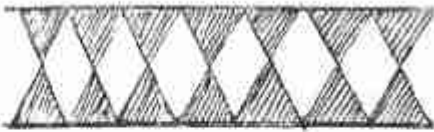
markings of calabashes, hoes, axes, and the necks of water pots; the former being made by burning the design with a pointed heated iron.



Calabash marking



Pottery marking



Markings on some hoes, axes, drums, and walking sticks

Folk-lore, Proverbs, and Riddles.

Like most African tribes the Peros are rich in folk-lore some of which are used by the elders of the tribe to impress truths. The proverbs which are right to the point open to us a wide door into those principles of life which seem most important to the Peros. And by the conundrums which are told around the fire at night we get a glimpse into their mental amusement, of which there is altogether too little. (For examples of the above see appendix).

CHAPTER IV

DEATH AND FUNERAL RITES.

Origin of Death.

The Peros have a horror of death such as is universal to mankind. This dread of death results not so much from the thought of pain that often accompanies dissolution as it does from contemplation of the forced separation, its results upon the survivors, and the mystery with which death is cloaked for all alike. This horror has caused man to believe that death is not in the order of things, and so from the beginning of time he has tried to escape this grim monster. True enough the legends of the origin of death do not hold the Creator responsible but rather they place the cause for the origin of death in the disobedience, the failure or the mis-doing of some member of mankind or of the animal world.

African legends of the beginning of death are many and various, though in numerous ones there are close resemblances. More often than not it is some animal upon whom the origin of death is placed. Thus we have the word of the Pero elders who inform us that in the beginning there was no death. In fact the Creator sent a crow to proclaim to all people the good news that people would not die. After announcing this good news to a few people the crow was enticed by the good food

made from nuts finely ground (a delicacy to the Peros) that he saw at the next place to which he went. Here he stopped to enjoy himself and so his message was delayed. In the meanwhile the Creator ordered a chameleon to follow the crow and when he over-took the crow, which was delayed by feasting, he should proclaim to all people that from that time on they would die. The chameleon spread this sad news to all people and since then death has respected no one.

A legend having a very close resemblance is that of the Bantu-speaking Bavenda tribe of the Transvaal. According to their tradition "the Creator sent a millepede to go quickly to tell the people of the world that they would never die. On the way to deliver its message it saw a tutulwa tree and, feeling hungry it wasted time eating the fruit. Meanwhile the slow hesitating chameleon was sent to tell the people that he was the messenger of death. The chameleon arrived first and delivered his bad news, and when the millepede finally arrived it was too late. So today the chameleon is feared and disliked by every MuVenda, who kills it by forcing open its mouth with a stick and filling it with snuff."¹

In the Ba-ila tradition the chameleon is instead the first messenger sent by the Supreme Being. This chameleon was sent from God saying: "'Go and tell men that they shall die and pass away forever.' He started on his journey but

1. Stoyt, H. A., The Bavenda, p. 362.

travelled very slowly, and rested often on the way. Then God saw that he delayed and sent Hare, saying: 'Tell them that they shall die and return.' On his arrival Hare announced to the people: 'You shall die and return.' But Chameleon contradicted him, saying: 'No, that is not what God sent us to say. He sent us saying: 'They shall die and pass away forever!' But Hare would not have it so: 'That is not the message! He said: 'They shall return!' Thereupon Hare returned to God in anger and said: 'You person whom you sent he has told them: 'You shall pass away forever!' And God answered: 'All right, let it be as he has told them.'¹

According to Junod's report² the Thonga legend is very similar to the foregoing traditions. The Baganda people, also of the Bantu, have, however, a different story of the origin of death. It is said by them that one day a man went hunting with his dogs. They chased a rat into its hole and then followed it in the hole until the dogs got so far ahead of the owner that he had to inquire of the people in the hole as to whether they saw the dogs. One named Death informed him which way the dogs ran chasing the rat. Death further told the man not to tell what he saw in the underground. If he did he would be killed. So when the man found his dogs

1. Smith, E. W. and Dale, A. M., The Ila-Speaking Peoples, vol. ii, p. 100.

2. Junod, Life of a South African Tribe, vol.ii.,p.350.

and the rat he returned home. Various people asked him where he had been for such a long time. At first he refused to tell, but finally, to his mother alone he related a bit of what happened on the condition that she would tell no one. Soon Death came to the man in a dream and told him that he would have to die since he had told about the things he saw in the underworld, and that death would take place when he had expended all of his property. Even while spending the man sought to escape death by hiding in the wilderness, but to no avail. Death was always upon his trail, so finally when he had spent all of his possessions he resigned himself to die. "Hence" says Roscoe "comes the saying 'To be worried into telling a secret killed the man.'"¹

Another tradition that is different in that the source of the message is the moon is the Hottentot version. Also here we get a glimpse of the belief in the on-going cycle of life and possibly an inkling of a faint belief in a resurrection. The Hottentots say that "the hare was charged by the moon with the message to men: 'Like as I die and rise to life again, so you also shall die and rise to life again.' But the hare conveyed the message thus: 'Like as I die and do not rise again, so you shall die and not rise to life again'. The angry moon split the hare's lip with a blow; but the mischief was done and was irremediable. Hence the hare is a tabooed

1. Roscoe, op. cit., p. 466.

animal to the Hottentots."¹ It is interesting to note here the ceremony of the Mambila people² of the Cameroon mountains in connection with the rising and waning of every moon. By them the moon is thought of as a deity which says to the people at the ceremony for its waning: "I am dying and am leaving you. But on the third day I will rise again and come unto you. Meanwhile abide in peace, and when I return receive me with rejoicing and offerings of gratitude."

"In Calabar a dog and a sheep are rival delegates; and it is through the fault of the dog that we die. The ill-will of the antelope is alleged by a tribe on the Ivory Coast as the reason for death. A man was sent to the great fetich of Cavalla for a charm against death. He was given a stone to block the path by which it came. But the antelope, offering to assist, maliciously sang a spell which rooted the stone to the spot."³

Going from the Ivory Coast to the farthest western extremity of the African coast we note the belief of the origin of death as held by the Kono people of Sierre Leone. "The first man and woman", says Parsons, "had one boy child, and God told the three of them that they would never die, but that when their bodies grew old he would give them new skins. Their old ones could be shed and by putting on their new ones,

1. Hastings, J., Encyclopedia of Religion & Ethics, p. 412.

2. Meek, Tribal Studies, vol. 1., p. 549.

3. Hastings, op. cit., p. 412.

they could be young again. God wrapped the new skins up in a package and gave them to the dog to carry to the people. The dog carried them until he met all the other animals who were having a big feast of rice and pumpkin. He put the package down and went to get his share of the feast. While he was eating, one of the animals asked him what he had in his package, and he told the whole story, how that there were skins there that would make it possible for the man, woman, and child to live and never die.

The snake heard the story and when the dog was not looking, he stole the package and carried it to his home and shared it with the other snakes.

When the dog reached home, the man asked the dog for the skins, but the dog said that the snake had stolen them. When they later told God about it, God said that he could not take the skins from the snake, but that from then on the snake could not live in the town with other animals but would be driven out to live by himself. So now, when man grows old, he must die."¹

Though a legend as to the origin of death as believed by the Jukuns is not recorded Meek gives us an interesting note on how these people depict death. To them he is a spirit. "It is related that in former times Death walked on the Earth and when he met a man challenged him to a bout of wrestling,

1. Parsons, R. H., Religion in African Society, p. 214.

on condition that if the man won he should remain alive, but that if he lost he should die. But later an ant pointed out to Death that if Death would follow the methods of ants he would obtain more victims. For ants work slowly and unseen until suddenly the edifice falls. So Death followed the advice of the ant, and he now enters the human body secretly and eats away the inside slowly until the victim suddenly collapses and dies."¹

The beliefs as to the origin of death may be numerous but the explanation of death as it is met with daily centers in three causes: God, an ancestor spirit, or the spirit of an enemy.

If death comes directly from God then nothing can be done about it. And such are the deaths of people who have reached a fair age and who die normal deaths. It is not expected that man should live forever, nor does his departure necessarily disrupt the society, rather it often serves as a blessing to the deceased as well as to the community. The death of small children is also often attributed to God. Since a good share of them die before they are one year old, such a death is a common experience, and for an everyday happening they need not seek the cause in some special agent. It is enough to say: "Yamba mungã, chaka sadugã" (God gave, He has taken).

1. Meek, A Sudanese Kingdom, p. 201.

But if the spirit of some dead forebear is responsible for the death then the case is more complicated. Such a departure reveals that some spirit was angered by the wrong doings of the deceased; it may be that the sin is adultery, or theft, or an omission of performing the proper ritual, or the breaking of some taboo. Any acts contrary to the accepted ways of the community are bound to give offense to the spirits of the dead. And the only way the anger of these spirits can be placated is by the offender making some ritual offering to them.

Death that is due to the spirit of a human enemy is indeed disturbing to the life of the community for it means in many cases that the enemy must die. Justice must be satisfied or the spirit of the deceased will seek out revenge on the enemy or even on some member of his family. Thus the diviner is summoned to smell out the adversary. When he is ascertained he must go through the poison ordeal to prove his innocence. Until then he completely denies the accusation. Other members of the family sometimes voluntarily undergo the ordeal to prove their innocence.

The term used by the Peros to express death in its general sense is mura["]. But the more meaningful term is the one often used immediately after the last breath has been taken, which is, chaka kaka^{" "} meaning he is gone. Or again the words a kam kan doni m are used which mean he is not with his eyes.

It is worth noting here that this last phrase is also used, in variation, when one is asleep or awake. Thus one just awakened would be spoken of as kan doni meaning with his eyes. It seems that death is only a very temporary condition for it is believed that within a few hours the soul, which left the body at death, has arrived in that other-world.

The Death Wail.

It is not uncommon to be awakened around five o'clock in the morning by the wailing of women and girls in the near-by town or the lamentation of the one or two passing by our house on their way to inform relatives in the next town of the death of some kin. If the death occurred after the people retired then no wailing is permitted until the next morning, though it is always well under way long before day-break. The lamentation for deaths that occur during the waking hours begins as soon as it is determined that life in the human form is extinct.

On several occasions I have been called to the place of the death when the people were quite sure that the life was extinct but they possessed a faint hope that I might bring some reviving power. When I confirmed their unuttered decision all at once the wailing burst forth. To do so before the departure of the soul was certain, would definitely

frighten the life sustainer away. Thus the grim monster death is announced by the wailing. If the death is of an old man then a long drum made from a hollowed out log is beaten three times by someone appointed to do so.

Among the Peros as is the case with most Africans it is only the women and girls that do the crying. Seldom does a man shed a tear even though it be his wife or one of his parents that has expired. Meek informs us that among the Zumper people the men sometimes join the lamentation.¹ In their wailing the Pero women yell at the top of their voices singing, sometimes speaking words of lamentation - all the time waving their arms and beating their breasts. Some will dance about while others will throw themselves on the ground. One mother, immediately after the death of her child was announced, went out into the rain and having thrown herself on the ground she kept sliding back and forth in the slippery mud. Upon the death, especially of an older person, all hilarity and dancing ceases.

Among the Jukuns the death of a chief is not announced until a year later. His non-appearance is explained by saying that the chief is ill. "And when finally announced it is given out in metaphor." Meek suggests that underlying this custom is the thought of the denial of death. He continues with evidence to support this suggestion by informing

1. Meek, Northern Nigeria, vol. ii, p. 107.

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us that a meal is given to the deceased and friends sleep with him in the same hut. The women of the Bachama tribe also sleep with the corpse to give it company. And among the Berom a sister will don the deceased's clothes and imitate his favorite pursuits.¹

There are various reasons why the death wail plays such an important part in the funerals of these people. We have already mentioned that the first purpose of the cry is to announce the death. Thus it serves as a signal to the kin of the deceased to come and join in the funeral which is to give honor to the departed and to comfort the sorrowing. The greater the deceased was while on earth the more wailing is done for him. And for such an important one the wailing may last two or three days. One author believes this wailing to have as an object the driving away of the spirits that have snatched the dead man's soul.² Evidences of such a purpose for wailing do not seem to be forthcoming from among the Pero beliefs. Rather they point out that the principal purpose of the lamentation is that it is an expression of their fear of death. The wailers are sorrowing for the time that death will come to them as they all know it assuredly will some day. Death is feared for against it there is no medicine. And if we judge from the contents of the various

1. *Ibid.*, p. 108.

2. *Meek*, *op. cit.*, vol. ii, p. 107.

death cries we are made to believe that they also are expressions of sorrow, many of which are very sincere. The dramatization of grief helps to support the sorrowing. In some of the cries the thought of being bereft seems to be prominent. The Pero mother, for instance, upon the death of her child, will cry:

Aye, ne dokeno, ne dokeno

Ne yiege go niya?

Kabu no we shi ne dakelugo.

Oh, I am alone, I am alone

What have I done to you?

Tell me in what I have wronged.

The request as expressed in the second line gives voice to the belief that the death resulted from the anger of some ancestor spirit.

Junod reports¹ a very similar wailing of a wife over her deceased husband in the following word. "I remain alone in the lonely plain. Where have you gone? You have left me." He tells us that brothers weep together without shouting saying: "You have gone first. We shall soon follow you, because there is attraction in death." The thought of this last song concurs well with the main purpose of wailing as conceived by the Peros.

Many of the weird death cries are composed at the time

1. Junod, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 143.

of wailing and so naturally there is much variation as to content and length of the song. The following one wailed by Fero women on the occasion of the mother's death gives us a glimpse of closeness with which even the women think of the other world.

Oh the hawk has started, he has speared me,
My eyes have melted after her. You grandfather
or grandmother may you take her into your bosom,
and wipe her tears away.

Mother (the deceased) has taken her own.

The Creator is mean,

he did not write her name correctly.

We are indebted to LeRoy for a death song from among the Gabon people. This wail is worth recording for "it lacks neither movement nor ideas nor beauty."¹

O father, alas! alas! why, father, do you abandon your home?

A man has slain you, O father.

You will seek vengeance for his death.

Your shade will pass to the opposite shore.

O father, why do you abandon your home, father?

The sky has brightened; and the eyes have grown dim.

The water (the life) falls from the tree drop by drop.

The rat (the soul) has gone forth from its hole.

See! It is my father's house.

1. LeRoy, Alexander, Religion of the Primitives, p. 99.

Gather the funeral herbs, sprinkle to right, sprinkle
to left.

A man now sees the things invisible!

Preparation of the Body.

Another very important part of the funeral ritual is the preparation of the body. For the important individuals of the community this ceremony is in great detail. Great care must be taken to perform the various rites in the proper way lest through default the spirit of the deceased be offended and the survivors not be left in peace. Thus there is great concern about the funeral ritual for between these two worlds it "is like a mysterious bridge that leads the soul to its destination."¹

The crying of the women announces the death. At once relatives and friends make their way to the home of the deceased, the women staying near the corpse and helping with the preparation while some of the men congregate in the shade of the tree and others will proceed to the grave. Every kin feels obligated to visit the home of the deceased for it is likely that his absence might be looked upon as his being implicated in the cause of the death.

The main preparation of the corpse at one of the funerals that I attended consisted in bathing and severely massaging the body. (Those who never married are not bathed.)

1. LaRoy, op. cit., p. 98.

During this process of washing the body, which included the lifting and turning the corpse, pouring water on it and rubbing it with green leaves, as many as a dozen pots of water each holding approximately four gallons were used. Every part of the body was thoroughly washed. It was turned in many directions, and the stomach was squeezed until the contents were vomited. No doubt the reason for doing this is to prolong the time before decomposition takes place.

Then came the 'breaking of the body', which was more than a severe massaging, every joint of the body even those of the fingers were loosened and bent back as almost to break them. The same was done to the neck. And thus it was worked and massaged until it was called for by those who had prepared the grave. In the next world a limber body will be more useful, so the Peros believe.

The whole process of the preparation of this young married woman's body thus far seemed so cruel and repulsive that I had to turn at intervals to look out upon the near-by fields to gain new poise for the situation.

Willoughby reminds us that fracturing the back bone prevails among many tribes. This he says is to facilitate the binding of the corpse in the pre-natal posture.¹ But the people of this tribe though they do attempt to fracture the back bone and break the joints, they do not, as we shall have

1. Willoughby, W. C., Soul of the Bantu, p. 9.

opportunity to note later, bury in the pre-natal position.

The corpse should be given a good appearance for its last journey. Thus in this case they aimed to make it look that of a bride and be frolicsome. The chilim dara or spirit of clever playfulness was to be taken with her into the next life. The hair which was long and braided was merely cut short. But when the hair on the head of any deceased is worn short then the head is shaved. Then the woman's face was painted in various designs with a concoction made from red stone powder mixed with peanut oil. Two strings of beads to which were tied two small bells fashioned from brass were hung one over each shoulder. And in her hand was placed a garland of leaves.

While the Peros bathe the corpse with water the Tangales, the next tribe north, anoint the corpse with grease to prevent stiffening. The Berom wash the body with a mixture of water and beer and then smear it with oil and red earth.¹

The Peros always close the eyes of the deceased as soon as death takes place, and while washing the body one woman with her two hands covers the eyes completely. In the Cameroons to the east of Nigeria the Bana people "tie up the eyes of a corpse and fasten the hands and feet before they carry the body out of the house ----- The Warangi and Wambagwe tribes of East Africa, when a death has occurred,

1. Meek, op. cit., vol. II, p. 115.

kill a goat, extract fat, and rub it on the eyes of the corpse in order that the ghost of the deceased may not see new-born children and injure them by his evil looks."¹

Furthermore, the Peros cover the face of all corpses in the grave with a section torn from an old grass sleeping mat or from a grass basket. Sometimes the basket cut open will suffice to cover the full length of the body. When no mat is available a small section will be matted quickly from green grass, and some have even used pieces of old clothing to cover the face.

The first response given when an inquiry is made as to why the eyes are closed and kept covered when the body is washed, is that it gives the appearance of sleep and because the glazed fixed look of death is something to be feared. The open eyes might see too much. It is also believed that the vision of the departing spirit is darkened in this way. The covering of the face of the corpse in the grave is to protect it from the earth and also, no doubt, to hinder the spirit from departing. Such a belief evidences the fact that the spirits of departed are looked upon with fear. Those who are acquainted with the African's logic in these matters find no difficulty in his saying at one moment that death is the departure of the spirit from the body while in the next instance he puts forth every effort to keep the spirit in the

1. Frazer, J. G., The Fear of the Dead, vol. iii, p. 32.

corpse.

When preparing the body of a man for burial, in addition to the above procedure, three grains of corn, three grains of beans, some beniseed and other ground nuts are mixed in a calabash and placed beside the body. A hoe is placed in the man's hand. After the corpse has been taken for burial the grain is then scattered on the ground. Any of the grain that escapes the craving chickens and birds is permitted to grow and is supposed to bring forth fruit in abundance.

The funeral rites for all, however, are not the same. For instance not nearly so much attention is paid to the burial of minors and bachelors. Though the latter have an additional rite performed for them in that a penis-sheath made from a large palm tree seed into which a hole is bored is put on, and the corpse buried with this added. It is interesting to note that Meek tells us that "among those people who wear the penis-sheath (regularly) the sheath is usually removed before the body is laid in the grave."¹ Small cuts also are made on the forehead to inform the ancestor cult that this man was a bachelor.

A somewhat similar custom is that of marking the body of a sterile woman. At the grave a cut is made with tweezers on the umbilicus, deep enough to draw fluid. It is said that God will by this cut know that she was barren and it is hoped

1. Meek, op. cit., vol. II, p. 116.

that in the next world she will be made a fertile woman.

It is worth noting here that the condition of the bachelor was referred to kinema, the ancestor cult, which does not have the power of re-creating people. The bachelor evidently counts even less in the next world than he does on earth. There being no need for his procreating organ it was closed off with a large palm seed. On the other hand the sterile woman is marked and referred to God who is able to re-fashion people. God is a benevolent Being while kinema is malevolent. That these two were referred to different gods opens a door into the thinking of the people about the next world.

A woman who dies in pregnancy is marked the same as is the barren woman, and with a similar purpose, namely, so God will know of the misfortune the woman had. The Peros do not practice the custom of removing the foetus before burying the woman and placing it by her side as do the Tangales, who believe that removing the foetus saves the women from the pains of child-birth when she is re-born.¹ Junod informs us that among the Thonga the woman who dies in pregnancy "must be cut open to see what the sex of her child is."² And this, he says, is done inside the grave. The Ila people remove the foetus before burying the woman.³ The Bavenda have a curious custom in this matter. They bury a woman dying during

1. Meek, op. cit., vol. 11, p. 124.

2. Junod, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 166.

3. Smith and Dale, op. cit., vol. 11, p. 114.

pregnancy "on the bank of a river and a little channel of water is directed to run over the grave. The baby is generally removed and buried separately."¹

It should be noted that some tribes have the custom of drying the corpse out in the open air or over fire before it is buried. Thus the Igara and Efik peoples smoke-dry the bodies of men of note and distinction. These same people were not observed by Leonard to practice cremation except that "the Efik and Andoni mothers burn the bodies of their infants as a warning to the spirits to desist from depriving them of life and society of their infants."² "The Mashona" according to Willoughby, "smoke and dry the corpse of a chief and place it in the cleft of a rock, or in a cave. The Bemba make an attempt at mummifying such a corpse by repeatedly rubbing it all over with boiled maize till the skin becomes dry and shrivelled."³ He cites an observation by Abbe Frogart who writes in 1776 that the Loango and Kakongo people "were accustomed to place the corpse on a scaffold, and underneath it light a fire which throws up a thick smoke. After the corpse was sufficiently smoked, they exposed it for a few days in the open air, placing a person to keep the flies away."⁴ This custom of drying the corpse is not practiced by

1. Stayt, op. cit., p. 153.

2. Leonard, The Lower Niger and its Tribes, p. 175.

3. Willoughby, op. cit., p. 21.

4. Willoughby, op. cit., p. 22.

the Peros nor by any of the neighboring tribes.

Burial Rites Denied.

While all are entitled to a ceremonial burial so that the spirit may be conveyed properly to the ancestor world yet not all receive such attention. The Peros, for instance, have no ceremonial burial for one dying from small-pox. The bodies of such are sometimes left in the hut, the walls of which are then caved in after which fire is put to the roof and the entire burned. Others, it is said, are placed in crevices in the rocks and left there to be destroyed by hyenas. These practices definitely seem to be attempts to kill the spirit of such people so that it will not return, yet it is said that after three or so years it is possible that the spirit might be brought forward in the divining. Then there are those buried in normal graves. A witch or wizard is burned alive by tying the person and piling fire-wood on him. The fire soon converts the wood and body to ashes.

The Chamba and Dakakari who have no burial-rites for a child are similar to the Peros in this respect. "No funeral rites are performed for a suicide" by the peoples of the Niger Delta. "In such a case the body is stripped and carried on a roughly made hurdle to a place in the bush, where it is left."¹ The Peros likewise have no ritual for the

1. Talbot, Tribes of the Niger Delta, p. 245.

interment of a suicide. The Idoma have no ceremonial burial "for consumptives. In the Aliyaru district of Borgu burial was not accorded to a hunch-back. His body was sealed in a pot, which was thrown into the river or placed in the branches of a tree far out in the 'bush'. The Chamba give full burial rites to a slave, but his head is left protruding from the grave. And scant respect is shown by the Berom to one who had died without bearing a child, for such a one had a spirit too feeble to resent neglect."¹

Besides using water, fire or permitting the body to be torn asunder by hyenas, examples of which we have just noted, other methods of attempting to hinder the spirit of the deceased from returning are employed by Africans. Mutilating the corpse is supposed to disable the ghost from enticing into its fellowship of death any of the survivors. Dr. Nassau, an excellent authority, describes this custom for us. "Of one tribe in the upper course of the Ogowe, I was told, who, in their intense fear of ghosts, and their dread of the possible evil influence of the spirits of their own dead relatives, sometimes adopt a horrible plan for preventing their return. With a very material idea of a spirit, they seek to disable it by beating the corpse until every bone is broken. The mangled mass is hung in a bag at the foot of a tree in the forest."² Among the Ba-ila speaking people of

1. Meek, *op. cit.*, vol. ii, p. 111.

2. Nassau, R. H., Fetichism in West Africa, p. 234.

Northern Rhodesia a man who dies childless is regarded with contempt. When such a one dies "they cut off his little finger and little toe, and enclose a piece of charcoal in his fist, before burying him. Their reason for doing this is obscure. They suppose that it will either prevent his being reborn, or if it fails to that extent, at least they will be able to recognize him by the absence of those members should he return to earth."¹ The marking with small cuts of the forehead of the corpses of Pero bachelors, mentioned above, has evidently the same intent as this Ba-ila practice. The Danakil tribe on the southern borders of Abyssinia break all the bones of the corpse,² evidently for the same purpose as the dreadful custom followed by the Ogowe. Though the Pero custom of 'breaking the body' referred to previously in this chapter has similarities to the practice of the Danakils, their motive, judging from what I was told and what I observed, is different, being mainly to assure that the body will not be hindered in the next world by stiff joints.

The Burial.

Within a few hours after death the corpse is ready to be buried, it being kept no longer than it takes to prepare the grave. This time varies somewhat for it depends upon the able men at hand and also upon the texture of the earth

1. Smith & Dale, *op. cit.*, vol. ii, p. 1.

2. Frazer, *op. cit.*, vol. ii, p. 69.

into which the grave is dug. A death which occurs at night will be concealed until shortly before daybreak when the wailing begins. At daylight the proper men proceed to the task of digging the grave.

The Berom tribe, to whom we previously referred, and also the Bata, do not bury a man of importance until two days after death, and the Basange not until four days. The Qwari wait several days with the burial of an important man.¹ Some twenty miles west of Pero country live the Gwana Jukuns who wait from four to seven days for the burial of a chief,² while a commoner is buried as soon as the grave is completed. It seems that the tribes of the Ashanti hinterland keep the corpse of every adult three days, making an effort during those days to inform relatives who live in other towns and to perform the ritual required by custom.³ Twenty-four hours, according to Basden, is the utmost limit of time between death and burial among the Ibos.⁴

Undoubtedly the first European to travel through the country inhabited by the Tangales, neighbors of the Peros, was Vogel, a German, who, on his journey from Bauchi and eastward to the Benue in 1853, noted that these Tangale people who were cannibals did not eat the corpses of their sick as

1. Meek, *op. cit.*, vol. ii, p. 113.

2. Meek, *A Sudanese Kingdom*, p. 167.

3. Rattray, *Tribes of Ashanti Hinterland*, vol. i. p. 194.

4. Basen, *Niger Ibos*, p. 175.

was at first thought. He mentions that they performed proper ritual for such dead, and that the bodies of the dead were kept in a sitting position for seven days after which they were interred in a large sepulchre.¹ From my little observation of the Tangales, it seems that this custom of keeping the bodies in such a position for this period is now in disuse.

The place of normal interment for some tribes is more defined than that for the Peros whose principal interest, it appears, in locating the burial ground is the proximity to the town and ease with which the grave can be dug. Thus their cemetery includes all the sandy foot hills below their hill dwellings. Any convenient spot outside the village is suitable. It should be added, however, that the grave of small children is usually to the rear of the hut. The land chief, the ritual leader of greatest importance and who is responsible for the fertility of the soil, is the only adult male privileged to be interred in a prominent courtyard among the houses of the village.

The similar practice of burying commoners outside the village is followed by the Chamba, Jarawa, Dadiya, Munshi,² and others. Though the Namnam of Ashanti bury as many as twenty corpses in one grave they do so outside the compound.³

1. Vogels, *Reisen in Central Africa*, p. 280.

2. Meek, *Northern Nigeria*, vol. ii, p. 117.

3. Rattray, *op. cit.*, vol. ii, p. 371.

Over against this custom some Nigerian tribes as the Yoruba, Ayu, Eata, and Bachama, Irigwe, Bunu, Aworo, Igbira, Owe, Kamberi, and the Mada bury their dead in the hut.¹

Graves of the Peros are of one type only, namely, the shaft with niches in two directions. The circular shaft which is about three feet in diameter widens as it lowers. Into the wall of one side a step is dug. When the opening is between three and four feet deep the two recesses are made one in the south-westerly direction, the other in the north-easterly direction, the entire distance between the extremes of these niches being determined by the length of the body to be interred. The earth is loosened with the ordinary farming hoe and removed with a small calabash which later is broken into pieces on the grave. In this connection it is interesting to note that the Berom people "dig their grave with sticks, the use of iron on such an occasion being tabu."² The Thonga, according to Junod, use ordinary hoes for only the main opening to the grave while the actual place for depositing the body is dug out with a wooden board.³

Being that the burial places of Peros are only temporarily marked it is expected that when digging a new grave in an old cemetery they would come upon the remains of others. When this happens, or even if the edge of a former grave with

1. Meek, op. cit., p. 117.

2. Meek, op. cit., p. 118.

3. Junod, op. cit., p. 136.

remains is touched the digging will be abandoned for another site.

While the women prepare the corpse the men, usually about six or seven, dig the grave. Only the married men who have 'buried' some of their own offspring, be it even an infant, are free to help with the making of a grave. A similar custom prevails among the Ba-Ronga where the grave diggers must be married, though not necessarily have mourned the death of one of their own. The reason for this, Junod says, is that an unmarried man would have no one with which to wash away the defilement.¹

Professional grave diggers as are employed by the peoples of Ashanti hinterland or by the inhabitants of Dahomey are entirely unknown to the Peros. I once had occasion to refer to the custom of using professional sextons. This idea was looked upon with contempt by my African friends. Among the Dagaba of Ashanti the sextons are specially trained from youth up and receive for their services cowries which are assembled by the elders.² Herkovits informs us that the Dahomey people must send a gift of cowries to the grave digger to ask him to come and dig the grave.³

During the operation the elders of the clan gather near the place. If it is early morning they will build a fire and

1. *Ibid.*, p. 137.

2. *Rattray, op. cit.*, p. 421.

3. *Herskovits, M. J., Dahomey*, vol. 1, p. 354.

and sit around it warming themselves as they talk about any sort of subject, seldom conversing about their fellow tribesman whose last resting place is being prepared. At mid-day the shade of a near-by tree is a more comfortable place while the more able perform their task. For the final inspection of the grave one of the older men is called. At this time the main consideration is whether the walls and ground floor are straight enough and whether the over-all length is large enough to hold the body. I have observed that sometimes to test the length of the grave one of the diggers will prostrate himself in the sepulchre.

When the job is nearly completed word is sent to those at home to bring the body, or in case of a shortage of men two of the grave diggers will go after it. Several of the male relatives who remained behind were busied with the task of preparing the bier which usually is made from a part of an old palm-stick bed tied firmly to two cross bush poles. On this litter the corpse is laid on its right side and tied securely to prevent its falling enroute to the cemetery.

For important men a colored cloth is used as a shroud between the house and the grave. Usually the bier for men and women is covered with a grass basket which has been cut open. This will later be used in the grave. On his feet the deceased man will have a pair of sandals which will be removed before burial. As the procession hurries to the grave

they zig zag between the houses with the corpse in an effort to deceive the spirit. The leader for the funeral procession of an important man continually blows a whistle while another man runs along side the bier tapping on the deceased's hunting shield which he carries for the same purpose as the zig zagging between the houses. The soul which escaped upon death is not supposed to know the whereabouts of its former domicile.

Only men are permitted to come near the place of burial. The women, wailing intensely as this is their last contact with their own, follow the bier until they are turned back by the men, some one-hundred yards from the grave. Since it would be next to impossible for the women to cease their lamentations the men do not wish them about the grave.

Upon reaching the grave the pallbearers continue going around the grave three times - if it is a man's body they go around clockwise while in case of a woman counter-clockwise. When the corpse is placed on the ground it is untied from the bier, the shroud, if it had such, the sandals, the bells on the strings of beads, and any bracelets are removed. The Nuba of the eastern Sudan remove the cloth and skin in which the corpse was carried. The belt made from beads provided by the wife specially for burial, as well as beads put on the body by relatives are taken off before it is buried. After washing the beads they are used again for any other purpose.¹

1. Seligman, Pagan Tribes of Nilotic Sudan, p. 407.

Though with the Peros, the two strings of blue beads with the bells attached are used only to bedeck the dead on their last journey, and when not in use are stored in a granary.

The body is handed to one of the men who stands in the grave. It is laid full length in the grave - if a woman, facing west towards the setting sun which is the time when the women should busy themselves preparing the evening meal, and if a man, facing east towards the position of the rising sun when men should be going to their fields. A small stone will serve as a pillow while the arms are straightened out in front of the body, the hands lying one on top of the other. If a woman, the string used as a belt to support her dress of two corsages of leaves is now cut. Stones are used to prop up the body so that the proper position will be kept. The same position of the corpse is the custom followed by various non-Bantu tribes. And interesting enough is the fact that the purposes in using this position show much resemblance. The Tangale, the Kwotto of central Nigeria,¹ the Lober of Ashanti² follow the Pero custom in most every detail. Cardinall informs us that among the natives of the Gold Coast the "women are laid apart from men and face west, whilst men face the dawn, because all evil comes from women, and if they see the sunrise they would spoil the day."³ The

1. Haffenden, Captain Wilson, The Red Men of Nigeria, p. 288.

2. Rattray, op. cit., p. 445.

3. Cardinall, A. W., Natives of the N. Territories of the Gold Coast, p. 104.

Red Men or cattle Fulani, an important tribe in Northern Nigeria, bury males facing east at the west end of the cattle resting-place in the camp. The women, conversely, are buried in the extreme east of the camp, facing west.¹ In either case the facing is towards the cattle camp, evidently so that even after death the departed have a share in guarding the cattle, which was their chief preoccupation during life.



A Pero in the grave.

Against this custom of laying the corpse full length in the grave is the burying of the body in a sitting position which is done by the Kulu's, neighbors to the Peros on the south. The Kulu practice is separately different from that of other tribes of the district. The common custom of burial among the Bantu is the embryonic posture of the body.² The thought being that life will start all over again from an embryo as it did in the womb, and that the various stages of life will again be experienced. Of all groups the Niger Ibos

1. Haffenden, op. cit., p. 137.

2. Willoughby, op. cit., p. 2.

seem to pay least attention to the posture of the corpse in the grave. "The body" says Basden, "is laid upon its back; no thought is given as to position, that is, whether it faces east, west or in any other direction."¹

Though "burial in skins is common all over Africa, from the Lybian desert to Rhodesia ---- and the dead chief of Awok (thirty-five miles north-east from Pero) is clothed in seven gowns,"² the primitive Peros, as well as their neighbors, bury their dead naked, only covering the face and part of the body with a piece torn from an old mat or a basket which has been slit open. The loose earth neatly piled in one place is then pushed into the grave and at intervals is packed with a stone so that every space about the body is filled. The packing permits every bit of the earth to be replaced leaving no kind of a mound whatsoever. Then with hoes the surface around the mouth of the grave is disturbed and grass strewn over the whole so that it is no longer possible to distinguish the grave except by the calabash, used for removing the earth, which is now turned upside down on the grave and smashed to pieces. For some burials the very top part of a granary cap will be set up on the grave and surrounded at the base by a row of large stones. It is underneath the pieces of the calabash or in the upright grass enclosure that the spirit of the deceased is to be collected.

1. Basden, op. cit., p. 275.

2. Meek, op. cit., vol. ii, p. 116.

The breaking of the calabash on the grave has a close resemblance in the practice of the Thonga who during mourning break pots and handles of assagais, etc. over the grave.¹ The Kulu finally smash a calabash of beer over the grave, while "six utensils of the deceased, filled with water and samples of all the crops he had been accustomed to farm, are smashed at the door of his hut by his widow or some old woman."²



Small grass hut on the new grave - 18 inches high.

Other than either of these two temporary symbols there is nothing to mark the grave, nor do these symbols have that as their purpose. The following season the location will be farmed as any other place. The bier is thrown out into the grass not to be used again.

Before the men disband, at least for some deaths, a prayer will be said by one of the elders. The following is a prayer that I overheard at the burial of a young married man who died after being ill for six days. "May you go well. Whatsoever has caused your death come back and tell us so that the cause may be corrected and we be left to live in peace."

1. Junod, *op. cit.*, p. 143.

2. *Africa*, vol. vii, July 1934, p. 267.

Having witnessed a number of burials I ventured to observe this one with a kodak in my hand. When the corpse arrived I asked the young men pallbearers to stand still long enough to permit the taking of a picture. This they did and then proceeded with the burial. Another picture I took of the little grass hut placed on the grave. Then one of the elders sitting in the shade of a tree close-by was, according to custom, supposed to come near the grave and speak the above prayer. But none would rise to the duty. So after a short interval one of the older men who helped with the burial spoke the petition. I was afterwards informed by some of the younger men that the elders refused to participate as was the custom because the younger men had allowed me to take a picture. I am sure the old men knew nothing of what I was really doing. Nevertheless they were suspicious that I might have seduced the deceased's spirit.

Another burial prayer - "May you go east well, to the ancestor world. (Both are thought of as one) There ask your master. And during the coming days give us good dreams about you (the spirits) yonder." Should anyone of the near relatives dream during the immediate days he will seek out the diviner to learn what caused the death. The verdict if unfavorable will be cast aside and the matter will be divined until a favorable answer is given.

A prayer spoken by the Kwottos, to whom we have previously

referred, is of interest at this point. "O elder brother, now that thou has died, may Hinegba (the Sky-God) grant that thou mayest rest in peace. If a man killed thee on purpose, may he die a sudden death. And, as far as we who are left, we beseech thee to help us, that our farms may prosper, as also our other occupations, and our women may be found with child. May Hinegba grant that you may enter the womb of a woman and be born again."¹

Meek, who has made a study of a number of the Northern Nigerian tribes, speaks of the common custom of burying some of the possessions of the deceased with him in the grave. Thus the Tula chief has a hoe placed under his head and a gourd of beer is buried with the Tera. The Kugama heap corn on the corpse, and the Yergum put flour and cowries in the right hand of their chiefs. "Among the Longuda a spear, hoe, axe, and knife are buried with the dead, and pieces of meat are also attached to the dead man's arms. Women are given a hoe, an axe, a calabash, and a bunch of fibre with which to tie up wood in the underworld."²

The Peros have the same idea of burying possessions with the deceased. It is said that every married man is buried with a hoe in the hand with which he held the tool when farming. Should the deceased be an exceptionally rich man five

1. Haffenden, *op. cit.*, p. 288.

2. Meek, *op. cit.*, vol. ii, p. 124.

hoes will be buried with the man. Or if he was noted for his wealth in goats one is killed at the time of his death and a piece of the skin about six inches by fourteen inches is taken from the belly skin and stuck to the belly skin of the deceased. Some sections of the Pero tribe bury the param, a wooden paddle used in shaping the neck of a new granary, in the hand of a builder. Other sections merely hang the param at the door of the house together with the deceased one's hunting weapons.

I must add, however, that though the Peros have this tradition of burying possessions, I have never seen any article actually buried in the graves of all the commoners whose interment I observed. Rather, I have witnessed, as mentioned heretofore, the removing of sandals, bracelets, beads and a woman's leather belt. Either the custom of burying possessions has fallen into disuse or its content is entirely spiritual.

But the motive from which the tradition arises is revealing nevertheless. Just as the dog must accompany its master on hunting expeditions in the next world so he must have a hoe with which to farm, a paddle with which to build granaries, and the spirit of the goat conveyed in the piece of skin will aid in making him a man with wealth in goats in the next life.

It is interesting to note that it is believed that anyone, who, when opening field mice holes or digging a hole for

some other purpose, accidentally comes to the five hoes held in the hand of the occupant of that grave he is privileged to appropriate the same for his own use. And the significance of this accidental discovery is that the finder will likewise become a rich man. However, it is said that no one must willfully hunt for the hoes.

Burial of the Living.

This custom no longer openly prevails, largely through the good influence of the ruling Administration. But just ten years ago an attempt was made by a young woman, discouraged by the cruel treatment from her brothers, to enter the open grave of her father. Five years previous to that time the missionary among the Peros, Rev. V. E. Walter, was approached, one morning, by a lad in his early teens with the news that his mother would be buried alive that day. The sister, the only daughter of the widow, had finally died after an illness and now the mother having nothing more to live for decided to follow the practice of others, for whom life held nothing and who merely ended all by being buried alive. And too, the mother grieved over the loss of her daughter.

The grave was prepared and the corpse deposited. Then came the time for the mother to let herself into the grave. At that point the missionary, who made it his business to be

present at this burial interfered with the burying of the mother, and the grave was closed upon the slender body of the daughter alone. The case was reported to the Administration who upon investigation imprisoned three of the leading men. Since that time there have been no known burials of live persons.

It is said that this kind of burial was often chosen by Pero lepers. They realized that as the result of this affliction their days were numbered. Incapacitated to farm as they once did made them a burden upon others, a position not too much to be desired. If a man, then his wife would eventually leave him and marry someone else. Further, the spirit of a deceased leper seldom being recognized in the ancestor world was the last straw that broke the camel's back; so why not end it all by being buried alive. When such was the desire of the leper, relatives took it upon themselves to prepare the grave. Around the open grave the leper would perform a dance prior to his letting himself down into the grave, and then his life would be snuffed out by the earth which was packed about his body. Very few funeral rites are performed for such a burial.

Ritual Relation to the Ancestor World.

Immediately after burial the ceremony called paya is performed, which is that a small gourd of gruel made from

corn flour and warm water is taken to the hut for worship to the departed spirits. Here it is poured on the altar-like place called tengazha, which is formed by a small pile of potsherds. It is thought that by this time, which is several hours to a half day after death occurred, that the soul has arrived. The drink is to welcome the new arrival into the spirit kingdom and also to give comfort to the soul which suffered so much on earth. With the actual flight of the soul to the 'beyond' we shall deal in the next chapter.

The killing of a dog at the death seems a common custom among Nigerian tribes. The Peros, for instance, kill a dog upon the death of every married man. The rite is in honor to the deceased, for whom, if he owned no dog himself, one is secured by the relatives who also later eat the meat. It is note-worthy that such a ritual killing which must be performed by a relative is not done in the usual way but the animal is clubbed to death after which its throat is cut. The spirit of the dog must accompany the man into the next world. He was a friend on hunts and thus he will be needed on the hunting expeditions that will be enjoyed in the underworld.

Talbot informs us that the Ibos besides killing a fowl, a goat and a cat at the death of a chief also kill a dog. "First the head of the dog is struck off and the blood drawn

in a circle round the corpse. This was said to be done 'because dog is a wise animal, a good watcher and keensighted to see danger drawing near'. The sacrifice of a dog is supposed to bestow keen and far sight, as well as the power of clairvoyance, upon the dead."¹ The Waja people, in their hospitality, give nourishment to their deceased, in the form of pieces of goat's, dog's and chicken's flesh mingled with salt. A sacrifice of a goat, a fowl and chickens is made by the Baushi, though the poorer people of the tribe offer a dog and a cock.²

Besides the use of the dog the Peros also utilize goats and chickens for ritual killings at the time of the funeral.

In this connection it seems well to mention a word about the death beer or second funeral rites. This usually takes place about six weeks after the death. It is more a time of feasting than mourning. The original burial is accompanied by much lamentation, but with less ritual. This second ceremony has a program that is reversed. To give the spirit a hearty welcome in the ancestor kingdom seems to be the purpose of this time of festivity.

For the Peros one of the important items on the program for this occasion is the beer and food which in case of all, except poor families, is sufficient for all guests. Friends

1. Talbot, op. cit., p. 247.

2. Meek, op. cit., vol. ii, p. 112.

and relatives from near and far will come to partake. A special effort is made to inform people of the day. As is expected, on this day offerings of food and beer are taken to the cult worship place where all except two portions of corn mush and one small pot of beer are consumed by the men. The remainder is left for the spirits to appropriate. On this occasion also a palm seed shell full of beniseed oil is placed in the worship hut where it is left for the deceased to anoint the feverish body with which he was encumbered on earth.

Among the funeral rites of the Peros there is an act performed only for those, now old warriors of the tribe who in the tribal war days were fortunate enough to have killed some of the enemy. The head of the victim was cut off. And, the Peros being cannibals, the remainder of the body was prepared for the cooking pot. So now to give due honor to these brave men an enemy skull, produced from the storing place for such, is placed on the peak of the deceased's house at the time of his death. Usually it is painted with some concoction to give it a pinkish color. Feathers, indicating the number of enemy killed are stuck in the grass roof of the house.

On the day of the death beer the skull is returned to its storing place in some sacred cave in the hills. However, in returning this symbol of bravery a mock warfare is acted out by the present able-bodied men, all the way from the house to the cave. Each man is dressed in a warrior's garb, and spears

and shields are in hand. The name of the ceremony, yu nibit, may give us a clue as to its meaning. Yu nibit means to be adroit, and on this occasion the men rehearse the cunningness of the fallen warrior, each one trying to out-do the other.

What that able British ethnographer, C. K. Meek, says about some Nigerian tribes, who, after a period of time remove the skull of a buried corpse, makes one suspicious that there are resemblances in the motive back of this custom and the Pero practice of placing the skull of an enemy on the peak of the house and returning the same as part of the final funeral rite. For instance, "the Berom" he says "remove the dead man's skull after forty days. The Mumuye remove their skulls when the flesh has decomposed, and the Jarawa remove theirs after the expiration of a month, the priest cleaning the skull carefully with locust-beans. The Chamba hold a ceremony at the end of a year, the priest removing the dead man's head from the grave and smearing it with some mixture. The head is then taken to the sacred grove, and placed in a pot beside the other family skulls."¹ He also suggests that the object of these second ceremonies is the final dismissal of the dead man's soul.

Mourning and Purification.

A very widespread practice among Africans when mourning

1. Meek, op. cit., vol. ii, p. 129.

the loss of some relative is the cutting of the hair short or shaving the head. Though Frazer mentions that the opposite custom of letting the hair grow is practiced in a few instances. "Among the Agoni of British Central Africa", for example, "women usually shave their heads, but in times of sorrow and trouble, and therefore no doubt in mourning, they allow the hair to grow. In both men and women, the dirtier they are, the deeper the mourning."¹ This latter custom finds a close similarity in the practice of the Yoruba and Basa who do not wash or shave until the completion of the funeral rites.² The occurrence of death induces a state of taboo, and those in this state have certain distinguishing marks.

Immediately following the burial the Pero mourners, both men and women, shave their heads. In Togoland it is only the widow that has her head shaved upon the death of her husband.³ The Ba-Ronga, who also cut the hair at the time of mourning, though the men may cut only one strand from each side, say that this shaving or cutting the hair "is an act of respect for the dead, also a sign of sadness and a means of preventing the impression of the hair standing on end from fear of death."⁴

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1. Frazer, op. cit., vol. iii, p. 56.
 2. Meek, op. cit., vol. ii, p. 130.
 3. Junod, op. cit., p. 146.
 4. Frazer, op. cit., p. 218.

The Pero widow or widower has several turns of newly made string tied loosely about the neck. This is an indication that they are unclean, in which state they remain until the death beer is celebrated and the spirit of the deceased has been given its final honor. The custom of tying a string about the neck at the time of mourning is likewise followed by the Mada, the Mana and the Ninzam.¹ Those who have grown accustomed to wearing clothes put on only the least amount at this time of sorrowing. Women who wear clothes revert to bunches of leaves entirely. All work and traveling ceases for three days. During this time and any time following friends come to express their condolence to the mourners.

As the ancient Hebrews accounted every one who in any way contacted the corpse or grave or was in the tent where the corpse lay as unclean for seven days² so are the Peros accounted, but only for a period of three days. Thus on the third day after death is the important ceremony for purification. The unclean among the Hebrews had to be sprinkled on the third day and again on the seventh day with the "water of separation". Thus again we note the similarity of using water for purification. Aulo am meaning 'wetting water' is the term applied to this ceremony which is performed at the home of the deceased. Early in the morning of the third day

1. Meek, op. cit., vol. 11, p. 130.

2. Numbers 19:13 ff.

one of the immediate female members of the deceased's family warms some water which she pours into another pot that is set just outside the doorway. It is said that some clans color the water red with tree bark. The size of the pot used varies - for grown people it would contain about three gallons of water while for children a smaller pot containing probably only one-third as much will be used. At day-break, when the water has been prepared, the priest of the ancestor cult comes and says a prayer over the water after which he puts his hands into the water for an instant, and then slightly wringing them walks away. Following this every adult relative and friend makes his way to the house of mourning to aulo am, which is to wet his hands and rub them as did the priest. Some even slightly wash their faces.

This ceremony which is performed upon the death of every man, woman, child or infant concludes the general period of mourning, and with it the taboos which death imposed are released. It should be mentioned that one of the Pero clans, strangers, perform this rite on the first day after death while the Lo tribe, neighbors, eleven miles to the south-east, do it on the second day.

Before investigating the reasons for this particular ceremony let us note similar purification rites from other parts of Africa. Thus in the late afternoon the mourners among the Dahomey people go to their houses within the compound.

They bring with them "a medicine of leaves crushed in water, and they sprinkle the entire compound to disinfect it of the evil that had brought the death."¹ The wives of a dead Bavenda man stay in the hut for three or four days. The women then appear and the priest sprinkles them and the sacrificial goat, after which they are told to bathe in the river.² "The closing day of the Ba-Ronga purification", says Junod, "is the 'the day of the sprinkling' (shuba). All the women sit down with their children on their backs and the men stand in line. The doctor sprinkles his hot concoction over them all with a branch covered with leaves. Following this the doctor goes with his pot, sprinkling all the villages, the huts, the doors, the backs of roofs, the fence, the belongings of the deceased which are kept to be distributed amongst the heirs."³

We have already mentioned that aulo am or wetting the hands is a purification rite. But it seems that there is another equally as important implication in the ceremony. This was explained to me by an old African one day as I questioned him about the motive in performing this rite. Heretofore no one was able to give me a clue as to why they aulo am. That day this elderly friend suggested that the purpose of the rite was to prevent the steps of the deceased from killing anyone. In other words, according to this man, the survivors

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1. Herskovits, op. cit., p. 382.
 2. Stayt, op. cit., p. 165.
 3. Junod, op. cit., p. 149.

hereby clear themselves of any complicity in the dead man's death.

Again we compare the custom of the ancient Hebrews in the case when one was found slain in the field and the slayer was not known. It was required that the elders of the nearest village to the field sacrifice a heifer in the valley, and that they wash their hands over the beheaded heifer, saying, "Our hands have not shed this blood, neither have our eyes seen it." Thus they were to put away the guilt of innocent blood.¹ "Among the ancients, Romans, Greeks, and Jews it was customary for a man, after he had shed blood to wash his hands, thus symbolically cleansing away the stain; and the conscience-stricken governor (Pilate) had water fetched to him and in sight of the assemblage and washed his hands, exclaiming: 'I am innocent of this blood'."² On occasion I have suggested to the Peros the similarity between Pilate's washing his hands and the aulo am ceremony and the thought of a single underlying motive seemed plausible to them.

Among some Nigerian tribes the guilt attached to unexpected deaths is sometimes cleared by the poison ordeal. Thus the Idoma villagers "clear themselves of complicity in the dead man's death by drinking the oath draught, and calling down death on themselves if they have lied."³ The Jukuns

1. Deuteronomy 21:1-9.

2. Smith, David, The Days of His Flesh, p. 486.

3. Meek, op. cit., p. 109.

take a similar oath at the grave side as they sprinkle dust from the calabash on the grave.¹ In a footnote Meek tells us that some sections of the Jukuns believe "the sacrifice of the chicken is an essential part of the oath of the relatives that they had not been responsible for the dead man's death, the chicken being regarded as the carrier of this declaration to the dead man."²

It should be noted that in the rites which are definitely for purification as described above that the purification water is sprinkled upon the people and objects by a priest or a clean person as was the case with the Hebrews. The rite when it has to do with putting away of guilt must be performed by the individuals themselves. No one else can do it for them, for this is a matter of conscience.

The Pero sulo am rite has then a dual purpose, that of purification and that of publicly renouncing any responsibility for the death. Added to this there is a third purpose which, though not so prominent, is to pay respect to the deceased.

In conclusion we note that funeral ritual is aimed at pleasing the deceased and so the best is provided and nothing is left undone. But in reality the detailed ritual is not so much to satisfy the dead as it is for the good of the living. The performance of the customary rites eases the minds of the survivors - they have done what they should. Surely now they can expect to live in peace.

1. Ibid.

2. Meek, A Sudanese Kingdom, p. 220.

CHAPTER V

THE HUMAN SOUL

The Psychic Faculties

"There is", says Talbot, "a general belief that each person possesses four souls: first an ethereal one, the double and inner frame of the physical one; secondly the soul proper, the consciousness, the thinking or mental body; thirdly, the spiritual, or minor Ego; and fourthly, the Over-Soul, or Chi, the great spirit, which often includes several lesser Egos and always 'stays with God'."¹ Miss Kingsley likewise speaks of four souls, though her classification is different from the foregoing. Every Calabar man, she says, believes in four souls; that soul that survives death, the shadow on the path, the dream-soul, and the bush-soul.² When thinking of the Peros we would, however, agree with Willoughby, who, when speaking of the Bantu, suggests that they have done very little speculating concerning the nature of the soul.³ LeRoy's findings are even more negative. He says, "In reality, the Blacks know nothing at all about it. They have no consistent theory on the subject; their psychological ideas do not retreat in the presence of grave incoherencies."⁴

1. Talbot, Southern Nigeria, vol. III, p. 259.

2. Kingsley, M. H., Travel in West Africa, p. 313.

3. Willoughby, The Soul of the Bantu, p. 10.

4. LeRoy, The Religion of the Primitive, p. 94.

Rather than speak of the personality of the Peros as being made up of four souls we would make a distinction between those elements of the personality which are located in the organs of the body, which die with the decay of the physical frame, and that spiritual soul which continues to exist within or without the body. The former are psychic faculties of the animal life while the latter is the spiritual "Over-Soul" or chilim.

For the psychic faculties the Peros, like the Thongas,¹ have a quantity of names and locate them in the organs of the body. Thus the seat of goodness and badness is in the liver and the identification is so complete that this virtue, as most of the others, cannot be expressed except by the use of the name of the organ, which in this case is rāshā. "A good man" would be a man with fāk rāshā wala (mouth of the liver that is good). When referring to the virtue in this case the prefix fāk meaning mouth is used. Kindness is denoted by a "soft liver". To be patient is to sumbā rāshā (suck the liver), evidently an attempt to get all the patience possible out of the liver. Compassion is expressed by the liver being "dried or fixed" on someone. A converted man is one with a "new liver".

In the head resides the sigā which is the faculty for memory and concentration. To forget is to lose the sigā and

1. Junod, The Life of a South African Tribe, vol. II, p. 361.

to concentrate on a physical or mental errand is to put your sign on it. Sometimes absent-mindedness is expressed by asking "Where is your head?" Again, a "hard head" means obstinacy.

The neck or bon is very important in the personality for it is here where decisions are made. Ele ya bon or "voice of the neck" is the conscience. The bon is also the seat of anger and disappointment, the latter being expressed by ya bonno dakeloga meaning "my neck is spoiled".

Similar to the expression "bowels of mercy" used in Biblical times we have the Peros placing the origin of genius and intellectual gifts as well as skill in crafts shen in the stomach, yaga. Sometimes a "good stomach" signifies goodness. While it is the body in general that fears, the seat of fright is in the stomach. Thus one suddenly frightened would express his feeling by saying that his "stomach came out", yagani fadoga. Unlike the Jukun and the Hausa beliefs the heart with the Peros does not seem to be the location of any special faculty.

The Nature of the Soul.

While the residences of these psychic qualities are known to every native that of the soul chilim is not so defined. Rather, it is that which "beats in the heart and arteries, that breathes, that shines in the eye: it is the soul that is the

principle of life and, as such, disappears momentarily when a man falls into a swoon or lethargy and definitely when he dies."¹ In the chilim the psychic faculties are integrated, and their functioning definitely depends upon the presence of the chilim in each one. "Soul-stuff", as Smith and Dale² call it, or "soul-substance" the name given to it by Ackerman,³ pervades the whole body and is specially active in some organs.

This "soul-substance", though in a lower form, is that power which the primitive thinks also lies behind the phenomena of the inanimate world, which, aside from the explanation, he is unable to understand. Or "if an animal lives and moves, it can only be, he thinks, because there is a little animal inside which moves it."⁴ It is that power which was contained in the Golden Stool of the Ashanti nation, and on which their power, wealth, bravery and welfare depended.

From his own experience the primitive has learned that there was with him another self, not only the visible one but also a seemingly more important part of himself which could not be seen. While his body was asleep his chilim was able to travel to other villages and engage in conversation with friends and enemies. And because it was able to perform

1. LeRoy, op. cit., p. 95.

2. Smith and Dale, Ila-Speaking Peoples, vol. 11, p. 162.

3. Ackerman, M. W., Concepts of the Soul, p. 10.

4. Ibid., Intro. p. v., quoting J. G. Frazer.

exploits that could not be done in the flesh it was regarded with much importance.

The Pero word for chilim has several meanings though in essence they are all one and the same. Besides the above connotation it is the only word used for shadow, reflection in the water, the image on a coin, or the representation of a person in a picture. At the same time it is closely allied to the breath, or the nature of a slight breeze, for it is thought that each patient must be breathed upon by the medicine man to effect recovery. "The cessation of breathing is a noticeable sign of death; hence the close association between breath and life."¹ Again, we see a symbol of the double in the individual in the veneration paid to the after-birth. Previously we have remarked that the Peros take great care in properly disposing of this,² the same as do the Berom.³ Among the Ibos this double is called chi.⁴

Although the people of our study identify the shadow with themselves and use the word chilim for it, they are not superstitious of this image, nor are there taboos connected therewith, as is the case among the Ibo who believe that to tread upon another's shadow will not only harm, but may even kill the one whose shadow is cast.⁵ Upon the portrait of one

1. Willoughby, op. cit., p. 10.

2. Cf. p. 78.

3. Meek, Northern Nigeria, vol. 11, p. 34.

4. Meek, A Sudanese Kingdom, p. 207.

5. Talbot, Tribes of the Niger Delta, p. 262.

deceased the Peros look with more misgiving, for to be in the possession of such, they believe, is not only terrifying but spells misfortune. To them it is the soul of a deceased relative.

Its Importance to Life.

More important to life is the chilim than are the members of the physical body. Without it the individual soon dwindles away and death takes place. Consequently the loss of this chilim is indeed a serious matter.

The hard fall one day from a tree by a woman chopping fire-wood caused her chilim to flee, so it was believed. Shortly afterwards she developed dysentery and as a last resort came to the mission for medicine, where for three weeks she lingered prior to her death. Her brother stated that the only remedy for her recovery was to engage a medicine-man who would take a new, but imperfect, calabash full of leaves from the locust bean tree to the place of the fall and there by gathering some earth catch the chilim. Thus it could be transported and buried at the center bedpost of the patient's bed, from where it would be able to enter the body and revive the emaciated form.

A similar incident happened before our view one morning when as a result of a quarrel, which ended in a fight, a young man struck a grown girl. Others immediately took side. Soon

The case was taken to the chief's courtroom, but it was after dark before the parties were dismissed. On their return journey home the girl was bitten by a poisonous snake and became seriously ill. Failing to show signs of recovery on the second and third days, even though the usual medicines had been administered, it was decided to employ other measures. The diviner, who was then consulted, revealed that the girl's chilim, which they believed was knocked out at the time of the fight, would need to be recovered before health could be regained. Accordingly, after the father offered the ritual chicken, the medicine-man at daybreak the next morning proceeded to the place where the trouble occurred. Here with a stone he slightly pounded some locust bean leaves into the dust. Three days later the ritual leader returned to the place to take the chilim, which in the meantime was supposed to have lodged itself in a spider that was to be found among the leaves. At the ritual leader's hut this was mixed with water. Then by pouring the mixture over the sick girl's body it was hoped that the chilim would re-enter and enable the girl to recover. But three days after the above ceremony the wailing announced the death. The snake was the victor. The girl had erred by starting the quarrel, else she would not have died.

It is of interest to note that the Berom have a like belief of the soul residing in a spider. For each Berom man,

says Meek, "has a double which resides in a spider, and if he falls sick his double has been entrapped by some displeased or greedy ancestor. The assistance of the priest is sought, recourse is had to the ancestral grave, and the old man's spirit is appeased by a gift of a goat-skin. --- A search is then made for the spider, and when found, it is taken away by the priest, and the patient soon recovers."¹

With this importance of the presence of the chilim in the body in order to remain well it is easy to understand why, in instances when the chilim is believed to be on the verge of escaping, special efforts are put forth to prevent it from leaving the body. Thus in the procedure of treating a normal snake-bite patient a smudge is made nearby so that the patient's head is constantly enveloped in smoke. It appears that some organ of the head is the way of escape for the chilim. For at least seven days and nights such a patient is not permitted to sleep. If due to fatigue the patient falls asleep he will be aroused at once. For during the time when the body is unconscious the chilim wanders about and this is risky indeed when the individual is at the point of death. It is thought that the body might die before its life-giving power the chilim returns to its domicile.

Besides this chilim leaving the body voluntarily or due to a shock of some kind it may be snatched away by individuals

1. Meek, Northern Nigeria, vol. ii, p. 33.

who are endowed with special power, such as witches or wizards. But with these mediums we shall deal in the chapter on Witchcraft.

The chilim then, according to the Pero belief, is that vitalizing "soul-substance" without which it would be impossible to exist. Upon death when the chilim is released, the relatives remark chilimni kākā, meaning "His soul has taken the road".

Its Journey to the Ancestor World.

It is this "road" which has its destination in the ancestor world that we must examine at this point. The Peros believe that immediately upon death the chilim starts on its journey in the eastward direction to the place where they believe the creation of black people took place. Just as to the exact location of this place they appear to know very little, only saying that it is in the east. It is thought that some time, approximately a half day, is needed for the chilim to make its journey. It stops enroute, the first at Japa, a town some twenty miles east, and the second at Shakema, fifteen miles south of the former. At neither of these places are there Pero people living, nor, according to my knowledge, is there any tribal connection. When, however, the people of these two villages see the chilim of a Pero on its flight they will give it a drink of corn gruel, and upon

occasion report their good deed to relatives of the deceased. Only the one giving the drink is able to view the passing soul. A similar custom is noted by Claridge who writes of the Wild Bush Tribes of Central Africa. He states that "when souls are passing over, those who remain send greetings to those who have gone before."¹

The Peros believe that on the journey some of the souls may get caught in trees. To dislodge them the services of the priest are sought. But in spite of his help some never reach their destination. It is not without interest to note that the souls of Ibos take refuge in trees. "When a good man dies his soul is gathered into the branches of the family tree, there to dwell amid kindred shades until the time for re-incarnation comes round. Ill-doers, on the contrary, are refused admittance to such peaceful refuges, but are driven forth to enter into crocodile, serpent, bush-cat or other evil shape."² The Ibos report that sometimes in the middle of the night cries from these trees are heard. This is evidence of the ghost being there.

The custom of repairing to the dead man's grave on the third or fourth day, there to release and nourish the soul, and in some cases escort it to the deceased's hut is a common practice among various African tribes. Thus the Ba-ila believe the deceased to be able to get up three days after

1. Claridge, G. Cyril, Wild Bush Tribes of Central Africa, p.293.
2. Talbot, op. cit., p. 284.

death and set out on his journey east. As he comes to each kraal, the people give him food.¹ On the fourth day, says Basden, the Ibos make the formal visit to the deceased's grave which is beneath the floor in his hut and bring the spirit outside where it is given nourishment.² The Kono people of Sierre Leone believe that "it takes four days for a dead man to reach "Fa" (the town of the dead); and a woman three days",³ therefore, on either the third or fourth day the celebration called "Tanjama" (on the Reaching Day) may be held. On the third day after death, the Jibu of eastern Nigeria give nourishment to the soul which is thought to have been ill in the grave for the two nights fighting for his life.⁴ Among the Kulu the ceremony of transferring the soul, whose vehicle is believed to be the ritual chicken, is performed on the fourth day.⁵ This practice of the Kulu, no doubt, originated with the Jukun, who also believe that the soul rides to the kindo on a chicken which is killed at the time of burial and laid at the feet of the corpse. In other groups, Meek says, the chicken is not killed but merely held by the senior man of the family, who says: "Here is a pullet, mount it and find your forefathers."⁶

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1. Smith and Dale, op. cit., vol. II, p. 103.
 2. Basden, Among the Ibos of Nigeria, p. 124.
 3. Parsons, Religion in African Society, p. 62.
 4. Meek, Tribal Studies, vol. II, p. 511.
 5. Africa, vol. VII, July 1934, p. 267.
 6. Meek, A Sudanese Kingdom, p. 220.

The ceremony called "taking the kek" performed by the Peros on the third day is similar to the practice of the tribes referred to above. The chilim which evidently reached the "east" is now supposed to have returned to the grave there to view the possessions which were buried with the corpse. Here on the grave it resides in a spider which is supposed to be present among the pieces of the broken calabash or under the little grass hut placed on the grave. After the old men have gathered at the grave for this ceremony, and have poured a libation of beer on the grave, the kek, which is in the form of the spider, is put into the bosom of the deceased's companion, whether a man or woman, and thus it is transported in the body of the spider to the deceased's hut and buried by a bedpost. Here it is allowed to remain until the time of the death beer (cf. p.143) after which it is taken to an ancestor worship hut and definitely becomes a member of that otherworld. If perchance no spider is to be found the kek cannot be taken and the matter is dropped.

Thus, after a short interim following death, the soul which was so important to the life of its owner becomes a member of the ancestor world, and now may become, so it is believed, even more powerful and influential, for good or bad, upon the descendants, as well as the community at large. Previous to its flight to this other world it is referred to by the Peros as chilim, but now is known as a kinema, and seldom

is the former term used. Likewise, in the next chapter, when referring to a kinema we shall use the word "spirit" rather than "soul".

CHAPTER VI

ANCESTOR WORSHIP

Survival after Death

Survival after death is not a matter for argument by the Peros; it is taken for granted. From the youngest to the oldest there is the belief that there is life after death and that this life is a continuation of the life here upon earth. Hence the belief that much in the after life is similar to the earthly existence. It is difficult to conceive that a single Pero would even think of death as the end of life. Often when conversing in an informal way with some of the older men of the tribe the thought of death and after death came to the fore. The mere mention of murá a kpadan fúki m (death is not the end) created expressions of hearty assent on the faces of these elders. Even those who pay little attention to the ritual connected with the worship of the spirits of the dead do not doubt the existence of this invisible world. "The champion scamp believes in survival after death as thoroughly as the most trustworthy and respected of his neighbours."¹

Often using the same expression for death as is used for one sleeping, a kam doni m (without his eyes), the great effort put forth by those who prepare the corpse to keep it

1. Willoughby, The Soul of the Bantu, p. 2.

limber until it is buried so that the owner will have a limber body in the next world, the method of burial and the ceremonies following, are evidences that death to them is only a temporary experience. Such practices presuppose a belief in the future life.

Of this life after death little is known by the primitive, nor does he attempt an explanation. His concern is not so much about the form and fashion of this other world and its inhabitants as it is about the activities of the inhabiting spirits as they relate themselves to everyday life. A section of the Bantu echo the thought of the Peros when they remark, "Death is like the moon, who has seen its other side."

What gives rise to Ancestor Worship?

"The belief" of life after death and the worship of the spirits of the dead "appears to be as old as the human race; the funerary rites of the cave-men of the Upper Palæolithic Age prove that they, at any rate, thought it necessary to provide for the future well-being of those whom they buried."¹

It is an almost universal belief among the Africans that this world and its inhabitants, both in the plant and animal kingdom, do have their origin in a Creator, of whom we will have more to say later. Man himself, however, did not observe the creation. Though the ancestors were not able to witness

1. Willoughby, op. cit., p. 3.

the creation they nevertheless were the ones to whom the revelation was first addressed. For this reason alone they should and do occupy a unique and singular position in the thinking of many people.

"The first ancestor" comments Schmidt, "receives among many of these people a cult, the importance of which often competes with that of the Supreme Being Himself. The first being which in the history of religions is capable of pushing aside the Supreme Being and of appropriating for himself the cult due to the Supreme Being is the first ancestor: The religion addressed to him is the first rebellion against the old religion, is the oldest of all heresies."¹

By observation the primitive has discovered that that self which is able to make its exit from the body when it slumbers has greater powers than he did in his human flesh. This soul, it is believed, is even able to carry on after the body from fatigue becomes unconscious. Furthermore, it is independent of the laws of space and time. Though it be invisible it sees things hidden to the human eyes, returns at its convenience and reports upon its expedition. Consequently it is only natural that the primitive realizes that the most important part of his make-up is not that which he sees and can handle but his invisible self. After the death of the body when this soul or self is free to continue its existence

I. Schmidt, W., Message for Princeton Seminary, 1935, p. 9.

it should not only be honored but feared for it has more power, for good or for evil, than is possessed by human beings.

It is not an extraordinary thing that the spirits of the deceased elders of the tribe should be revered. For in this earthly life the youth are early taught to respect their elders. The elders demand it. For instance children or youths are never permitted to sit with the elders when they are discussing matters. They often are driven away, sometimes for no reason except for those of more advanced age to have an opportunity to show their authority. Knowledge of the tribal tradition, about creation, first people, migration, periods of hunger and periods of plenty, and the general folklore is in the hands of the old men. Reliable information is to be had only at the feet of these seniors. Thus it is natural for this respect of the elders to be carried into the worship of the spirits of those who once controlled life.

"A Zulu put the general thought of Africans into words when he said: 'We give worship to those who are of us and have knowledge of our way of living.'¹ Tylor points out that the principles of the worship of ancestors, or "Manes-worship" are not difficult to understand, "for they plainly keep up the social relations of the living world. The dead ancestor ---- simply goes on protecting his own family and receiving suit and service from them as of old; the dead chief still watches

1. Smith, African Beliefs, p. 47.

over his own tribe, still holds his authority by helping friends and harming enemies, still rewards the right and sharply punishes the wrong."¹

This quotation from Tylor projects the question as to whether the spirits of the dead are regarded as friendly or unfriendly. To be sure there is much of either attitude in the devotion to them. However, it would seem best to deal with this question in the summary at the close of this chapter.

Is Ancestor Worship the Root of Religion?

This question has been discussed by eminent thinkers, one group of whom maintain that from this reverence to the spirits of the deceased, which was the first evidence of religion, there evolved the worship of a Supreme Being. The other school see that the worship of this Supreme Being though it be in a very faint way was the initial stage of religion and that the ancestor cult is of later development. Crooke writing in Hastings' Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics suggests that the theory that the cult of ancestors is the basis of all human religion is usually associated with the name of Herbert Spencer.² He summarizes what according to his description might be called a "hero cult".

1. Tylor, E. B., Primitive Culture, vol. ii, p. 113.

2. Hastings, Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, p. 425.

"Anything" says Spencer, "that transcends the ordinary, a savage thinks of as supernatural or divine: the remarkable man among the rest. This remarkable man may be simply the remotest ancestor remembered as the founder of the tribe; he may be a chief famed for strength and bravery; he may be a medicine-man of great repute; ---- or he may be some one of a superior race gaining predominance by conquest. Being at first one or the other of these, regarded with awe during his life, he is regarded with increased awe after death; and the propitiation of his ghost, becoming greater than the propitiation of ghosts which are less feared develops into an established worship. There is no exception then. Using the phrase ancestor-worship in its broadest sense as comprehending all worship of the dead, be they of the same blood or not, we reach the conclusion that ancestor-worship is the root of every religion."¹

Allen supports Spencer's theory when he writes that,

"Religion has one element within it still older, more fundamental than any mere belief in a god or gods, - nay, even than the custom or practice of supplicating and appeasing ghosts or gods by gifts and observances. That element is the conception of the Life of the Dead. On the primitive belief in such a life all religion ultimately bases itself. This belief is, in fact, the earliest thing to appear in religion."²

Analogous to Spencer's theory which makes gods out of ghosts is Tylor's viewpoint. He holds that

"man first attains to the idea of spirit by reflection on various ----- experiences, such as sleep, dreams, trances, shadows, hallucinations, breath and death, and he gradually extends the conception of soul or ghost till all nature is peopled with spirits. Of these spirits one is finally promoted to supremacy, where the conception of a supreme being occurs."³

Having set forward the arguments of some of those who hold that religion has its roots in the worship of the spirits of

1. Ibid., p. 427.
 2. Ibid.
 3. Ibid.

the dead we must now look at the other side of the problem. It may be, the ancestor cult being so much more prominent than a belief in a separate High God, that the sequence of the two was reversed in the thinking of some people.

Schmidt points out "that there is not a single religion which consists of ancestor-worship alone; that this is never more than one element of religion."¹ The falsity of Spencer's theory that the worship of ancestors is the beginning of all religion "is shown by the mere fact that ancestor worship is very feebly developed in the oldest cultures, while a monotheistic religion is already clearly and unmistakably to be found there. But in addition, the numerous nature deities cannot possibly be all explained as originally ancestral figures, especially as the natives themselves usually distinguish clearly between the two."²

To support Schmidt's ground "that there is not a single religion which consists of ancestor-worship alone" we quote LeRoy. He says that to give the theory that the African's religion has its beginnings in ancestor-worship, "a serious foundation, it would be necessary to show that the beliefs set forth relative to the manes and spirits, hold the field alone and do not co-exist among the savages along with other points of view."³

1. Schmidt, Origin and Growth of Religion, p. 64.

2. Ibid., p. 71.

3. LeRoy, The Religion of the Primitive, p. 113.

Lang very ably refutes the theories of those who would make gods out of ancestor spirits with a five-fold argument.

1. "Among certain of the lowest savages, although they believe in ghosts, the animistic conception, the spiritual idea is not attached to the relatively supreme being of their faith. He is merely a powerful being, unborn, and not subject to death.
2. "In all known savage theological philosophy, the God, the Maker, the Master, is regarded as a being who existed before death came into world.
3. "The Vui of Melanesia and the Atua of the Tongans are beings, anthropomorphic, or very often bestial.
4. In some instances "the powerful and omnipotent divine beings are looked upon as guardians of morality ----- both in this world and in a future life. ----- Such gods, not receiving sacrifice, 'lack the note of descent from hungry food-craving ghosts'.
5. "We often find" in the barbarian stage of culture, "a highest deity who is seldom worshipped with sacrifice, who has become otiose, a mere name, finally a jest and a mockery; while 'ancestral ghosts, and gods framed on the same lines as ghosts, receive sacrifice of food and of human victims'.¹

Although he does not believe that religion has its source in a revelation from the Supreme Being, neither, says Radin, does it have its roots in the veneration of the spirits of the dead. He holds that it takes a strong, complex civilization to elaborate a consistent theory according to which the spirits will be venerated. "Among the vast majority of tribes this (ancestor worship) was not the case, and the strength of religion lay in its being rooted in the everyday life and demands of the community."²

In summary, there seems to be no logical reason why man's

1. Hastings, *op. cit.*, p. 428.

2. Radin, Paul, Primitive Religion, p. 16.

idea of the Maker should not be prior to man's idea that there are such things as souls or spirits. Roscoe says, "The last, and possibly the most venerated, class of religious objects were the ghosts of departed relatives."¹ The folklore of numerous tribes show that the Supreme Being preceded death. In most instances where there is a story of the origin of death (cf. pp. 104-109) it is this Being who sent the first messenger to proclaim that there would not be death. His delay made it necessary to send a second messenger who either by mistake or by order proclaimed that from then on people would die.

With the Peros we note that a completely different attitude is held toward the Supreme Being than is held toward the ancestor world. The former is friendly toward the people, while the latter is usually seeking revenge. Indeed this spirit world is referred to at times as murá or death. It seems quite logical that the one farthest removed in time, memory, and space, should be considered the friendly One. We find that the Supreme Being is the most important figure in the thinking of a great majority of primitive people. This Being unborn and not subject to death has neither wife nor family; and the primal pair from whom the tribe descended are under and were created by him. Therefore in view of these facts we conclude that the roots of religion are not to be found in the worship of the spirits of the dead, for these

1. Roscoe, John, The Baganda, p. 273.

roots already existed in something which preceded the ancestor cult.

The Peros' Conception of the Ancestor World.

The term used by the Peros to denote the ancestor world and its inhabitants is kinema. As far as this tribe is concerned the term kinema, and probably also the system of worship, originated with a small group of Gwana Jukun people who lived for several score of years near the two large Pero towns. Of the Jukun influence we shall have more to say later. Suffice it to say here that the Peros accepted kinema from the Jukuns.

As could be expected the ancestor cult for these people had its beginning with a primal pair whose names are Bishokpanđi and Gurunku. It is said that Bishokpanđi was the first man, that he was not born but came out of the Pero mountain. Later he married Gurunku and to this union there was born Adani, who married Makelam. It is with this latter couple, however, that the worship of ancestors really became a ritual. It is related that upon the death of Adani, Makelam his wife, became ill with a fever. Immediately upon becoming ill Makelam sought the help of the diviner to determine the cause of the fever. Thus it was revealed that the fever had come upon her because she had not as yet performed any kind of worship or made any sacrifice following the husband's death, that the deceased

husband desired her to make some sacrifice and failing to do so he had sent the fever, that she should perform the ceremony of washing hands and make an offering of beer, and finally, that her husband, Adani, had been chosen to become the kinema. The fever having subsided suddenly after the diviner finished his revelation was sufficient proof that the cause and remedy of the fever was correctly diagnosed. Three days later the ceremony of washing hands was performed and the beer was offered.

The worship of this ancestor is the beginning of kinemaism for the Peros. The spirits of all the ancestors of the tribe have joined Adani and make up the spirit world. The Peros believe the abode of these spirits to be in the ground, but of the fashion of this underworld they have no information. Willoughby mentions that "the Akikuyu also believe the ancestral spirits live underground; so do the Bambala; and the Tumbuka".¹

About once every two years the kinema is supposed to make its appearance. However, not once during the more than ten years that I lived among the Peros did it show itself when I was at the station. Its only appearances during this period were when I happened to be away from the station, either on furlough or for a month's holiday. When it appears it is supposed to come out of the ground and wander through the town,

1. Willoughby, op. cit., p. 57.

in the form of three men each completely be-decked with gowns made from heavy red cloth. Each figure carries a knife-like disc on his shoulder. It is said that the purpose of the kinema carrying these discs as it stalks through the town on this grave occasion is to increase the fear toward this their ancestor god. Should anyone during the past period have failed to give the proper obeisance to the ancestor cult the disc is to be hurled at that particular individual. Though it was not reported that the instrument was actually hurled at anyone.

In this spirit world it is believed the inhabitants carry on much the same as they did when they were on earth, at least in their attitudes towards one another and the satisfaction of their desires. With the event of death the need and craving for food did not cease, hence the call for offerings. Since polygamy is the custom of marriage on earth naturally it would be desired in the next world. A man's companion will be the first wife he married. A woman who went from one man to another while on earth will have the same privilege now. It is her privilege to choose which of her husbands she wishes; the same as was her custom while living. Adultery is not frowned upon any more in kinema land than it was here in the land of the living. And the belief that children are born in the spirit world is only the natural desire carried over into this realm. There is one exception, however, in the modeling

their spirit world after the pattern of their tribal abodes which is rather unexpected. This is that marriage as such does not take place in the spirit realm. Similarities to this Pero belief are found in other African tribes.¹

"The life of the other world is regarded by the Thonga, a Bantu tribe of South Africa as an exact reproduction of this terrestrial existence; the spirits of the dead are supposed to depart to a great village under the earth, where they till the fields, reap great harvests and live in abundance, and they take of this abundance to give to their descendants on earth."² He further very ably points out that the spirits "are not better than they were as men. Their character is that of suspicious old people, who resent any want of respect, or attention, on the part of their descendants. They wish to be thought of, and presented with offerings. ----- They must eat the first fruits, and have their share of the tobacco leaves. They are jealous, and avenge themselves when forgotten. The only sin which seems to be deserving of punishment is to neglect them. The natives ask for one thing only: that they may live in peace, and that their gods may interfere with them as little as possible."³

Of the Ba-ila ghosts it is commented that "in putting off the flesh they have not divested themselves of human

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1. Willoughby, *op. cit.*, p. 73; Meek, *op. cit.*, p. 211.
 2. Junod, *The Life of a South African Tribe*, vol. 11, p. 375.
 3. *Ibid.*, pp. 426, 428.

frailties and weaknesses. As ordinary people in life may at times be jealous, touchy and fickle, so it is with the ghosts; you can never be quite sure of them; any omission on your part to do them reverence will be visited by them on your head or on the head of some one dear to you, and when that happens they must be placated by offerings."¹

This characteristic of supernatural power that the spirits are believed to possess causes the living great concern. The fact that they are invisible and not limited by space or time enhances their position. The Mochuana "believe that the dead have power over the lives of the living to bless or curse, to send prosperity or the reverse to their relatives and members of the clan."² "The power of the ghosts for good or evil is incalculable"³ writes Roscoe of the Baganda. In this connection it is of interest and importance to note that Frazer states that "This belief in the continued power of the dead to affect the life of the survivors for good or ill is one of the most marked differences between the primitive and the civilized conceptions of life after death."⁴

The Percs' thinking does not go far enough to attempt to learn whether the spirit will have an earthly or re-fashioned body, or if it remains a mere spirit being invisible. They do

1. Smith and Dale, The Ila-speaking Peoples, vol. ii, p. 168.

2. Frazer, The Fear of the Dead, vol. 1, p. 55.

3. Roscoe, op. cit., p. 273.

4. Frazer, op. cit., p. 11.

not believe in the resurrection of the body.

The distinction between kinema and Yamba (God) in the thoughts of the Peros is not only of interest to us but revealing. Yamba, of whom we shall say more in a later chapter, is thought of as friendly; in fact some of the elders have referred to him in our conversation as an-kh^hlã meaning a friend. On the other hand kinema is sometimes referred to as murã meaning death. Some have spoken of it as an-kich meaning enemy. It is something to be feared because of the consequences should the ill-will of some spirit be incurred.

Identically the same term, murã, was used towards us in the early days when mothers seeing us approach their compound would scare their children to get them into the house quickly and then they would follow. The mothers would merely repeat a few times the phrase murã fãna which means death has arrived, and all the children and women would run and hide. Similarly in later years, when they got to know us as friendly, they would upon our coming way-lay the fears of the children by asking "Chaka murã de?" meaning "Is he death?" It is quite likely that the fear for white people in the early days had its origin in the experience they had when the tribe was put into subjection by the ruling European power. But it must be added that all unexpected approaching calamities are referred to as murã.

The first kinema worship hut for the Peros was built by the Jukuns, so we are told. Some half-dozen such sacred huts are scattered through each town; each large clan having its own. They usually are located in rather secluded places, at the edge of town or near some thicket. If no such site is to be had near-by then quick growing trees or bushes will be planted about the building, though it is next to abusing the term 'building' to label one of these worship places as such for they are very crudely put together. The round wall which is usually about two feet high is merely made of stones laid loosely one upon the other, no mortar being used between the stones. A quickly made roof, made from mats instead of the ordinary thatching used for dwelling places serves as the covering. The inside diameter of such a hut approximates twelve feet. In the center of the floor which is the bare earth there is placed what might be called an altar consisting of a small group of broken pieces of pottery, making a circle about eight inches in diameter. On this altar portions of the ritual offerings are placed; it may be three bits of food, three measures of beer, or three pieces of the liver of the animal that is being sacrificed.

Influence of the Gwana Jukuns.

It has been mentioned that a small group of the people of the Jukun tribe once inhabited a part of the area just above

the Pero towns. The latter being located about one-third way up the uneven slope of the mountain Yoro which is of the Pero hills.

The Jukun-speaking peoples of Nigeria were once a large and strong united group. They were a war loving tribe and made a number of conquests against other large tribes. "Indeed, it is possible that a main incentive to the Jukun kings in carrying out war into distant regions such as Kano and Bornu was the acquisition of slaves, who could easily be disposed of to European dealers."¹ It is suggested that Calabar was the port to which they consigned their slaves. As the intermediary tribe between the Jukuns and the Calabar coast Meek suggests the Chuku of the Southern Provinces. "It may help us to understand the military success obtained by the Jukun in distant northern regions if we remember that the Portuguese and other European traders supplied the local rulers with guns and powder which enabled them to overcome all opposition in the quest for slaves."²

Today the Jukun-speaking peoples number only some twenty-five thousand people divided into six groups living in widely separated areas. The absence of tribal cohesion is responsible for the disintegration which followed the Fulani conquests at the beginning of the last century. Since, however,³

1. Meek, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 29.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 1.

our pursuit concerns the Jukuns only as they influenced the Peros we are forced to leave the examination of the general historical background of this 'Sudanese Kingdom' though it be intriguing. Our concern here is only with the Gwana section of the Jukun race, for it is part of this group that once lived in Pero land.

"It is quite clear", says Meek "that the Gwana are a late seventeenth or early eighteenth century offshoot of Pindiga which proceeded to Pittuk and was eventually driven by the Fulani to Gwana."¹ This bit of history fits in well with what little the Peros were able to give me and that which I obtained from the present Gwana chief and his men during a second visit there five years ago. It is quite likely that this offshoot spent some time at Pittuk. But finally to evade the Fulani raiders altogether all of the group or possibly only part found refuge in the Pero hills. These Fulani slave-raiders were noted for their taking of children from the conquered tribes. Consequently there was much fear and a good deal of moving about by these remnants of the Jukun tribe. The enemy never proceeded as far south as the Pero country.

Tradition tells us that after spending not many scores of years near the Pero towns this group of refugee Jukuns started wandering again. First they returned to Pindiga, from there to Kashere, and from there to Gataru or Gwana their

1. Meek, op. cit., p. 32.

present location, which is approximately twenty miles west from Pero. When they finally reached the Gwana hills which then were virgin territory they requested Gbwandum¹ people to cut the bush for them hoping that they might also be of help in warding off the slave-raider. The name Gatari refers to the leader of this wandering segment who according to the Gwana tradition have now lived in the approximate present location some ninety-eight years. Each year the group is decreasing in size so that now not more than two hundred remain, many having moved to the plains some near and some farther away.

To say that the time of their actual residence among the Peros was probably fifty years is mere conjecture. The principal result of the contact was that the kinema ritual, at least in contour, was accepted by the Peros. This of course is no small item. In the Pero tradition there is no thought of an ancestor cult previous to the Jukun influence. It should be noted, however, that a number of Jukun cults are to be found among the groups inhabiting the Benue valley south-east of the Gwana location. Mr. Meek says that even in pre-Fulani times the Jukuns directly controlled or at least exerted a strong influence on these plains' peoples and the hill tribes which would include the Peros.²

1. Gbwandum is one of the two large Pero towns with whom the Jukuns were more intimately related.

2. Meek, op. cit., p. 33.

When we examine the similarities that exist between the Jukun and Pero languages we are convinced that their residence here was temporary. From a list of ninety-one words in the Gwana and Pero tongues we learn that only nine words of this group show any similarity. Seven of these nine have definitely been influenced by the Jukuns. The fact that the similarities are found in the different Jukun dialects, some used by Jukuns living a long distance from Pero country, reveals that the influence was from Jukun to Pero rather than the reverse. Furthermore, when we compare the rate with which words of the Hausa or trade language are at present being absorbed by the Peros with the fact that so few similarities exist with the Jukun tongue we must conclude as above that their definite influence was only over a short period.

Naturally many of the terraces of their temporary residence remain to this day. And judging from these the number of Jukuns who actually lived there was small, probably several hundred. Surely not enough to make a lasting impression. But this is what they did, and it is remarkable.

Etymology of the Term Kinema.

This term which was accepted by the Peros, and which for them includes everything of the ancestor cult, has meanings which are differentiated by the donors of the term. For instance, kindo means the abode of the underworld to the Jukuns,

ama or ma means the earth deity which dwells in and rules this underworld.¹ By joining these two Jukun words as well as the meanings, that is kindo meaning underworld and ama or ma meaning earth goddess, we have kindoma or kinema, which to the Peros is the sum total of their ancestral world. They are not aware of the separate connotations of the term, at least so we gather from their use of it. Again, the Jukuns when they refer to the spirits that inhabit this kindo they call them dindi. But the Peros merely call them kinema or more seldom chilim which also means spirit. This lack of making any etymological distinctions of the term is a further evidence that the influence was Jukun to Pero. Nassau writing of the Gabun tribes states that their word for the souls of the dead is sinkinda. It is possible that this is a combination of chilim and kindo.

It might help to clarify our thinking if it were mentioned here that the Jukun thinking includes two High Gods, a Sky-god and the Earth-deity, the latter to which we referred above. The Sky-god who the Jukuns say is their father is named Chido, and Ama is their mother.³ That this Ama which is the earth deity, the creatrix,⁴ and the ruler of the underworld should be feminine is to be expected.⁵ And it would

1. Meek, op. cit., p. 190.

2. Nassau, Petichism in West Africa, p. 239.

3. Meek, op. cit., p. 130.

4. Ibid., p. 179.

5. Though Meek mentions that sometimes Ama is thought of as masculine. p. 189.

follow then that when this ama or ma is joined to kindo that the result, kinema, would be thought of as feminine. This, however, is not the case for to the Peros the ancestor cult is not referred to as either masculine or feminine.

Another very significant thing is that though the Jukuns gave the term kinema to the Peros, they do not call their own ancestor worship by that term. Their worship of the dead which is much like that of the Peros is labeled aku. This aku refers to the Jukun chief. And "all Jukuns look to Aku uka (chief of Wukari) as their spiritual head."¹ Here the Pero belief departs, for with them there is no suggestion of 'chief worship'. However, the fact that they are privileged to worship one with the other supports the theory that there are basic resemblances.

When considering the etymology of the word kinema the account that Rattray made of the tribes of the Ashanti Hinterland giving comparisons of the vocabularies used by eight of the tribes must be examined.² In four of these as we shall note the word used for spirit of the dead is either kyima, kpim, kyima or kpine, all of which have some similarities to the Pero term for ancestor spirits. In some other terms used in connection with the religious observances there are resemblances as well. But only those words that show any likeness are listed in the following outline.

1. Hogben, The Muhammedan Emirates of Nigeria, p. 196.

2. Rattray, The Tribes of the Ashanti Hinterland, vol. 1, p. 45.

English	Mole	Kusal	Nankane	Dagare	Pero
Shrine	Bagere	Bag'r	Bagere	Bogore	Mina waba
Soul (of the living)	Siga or sega	Sig	Sia	Sia or sie	Sika (of the mind)
Spirit (of the dead)	Kyima	Kpim	Kyima	Kpime	Kinema
Sooth-sayer	Baga	Ba'a or Bakolog	Baga or Bakologo	Bogobura	An-kari

Some comment on this outline is necessary. First we note that the terms used by the four Ashanti tribes for shrine are very similar to the Pero word for soothsayer, the prefix ba serving as the noun agent the same as an in an-kari. The 'k' and 'g' are interchangeable. Thus the root words gere and kari appear to have the same origin. Secondly, the Ashanti words for soothsayer, as baga, correspond exactly to the Pero term for the priest of the ancestor cult, namely kpage as it is spelled but which is pronounced much like baga. The last comment regards the word for soul. Siga to the Peros refers, not to the soul, but only to that essence of the individual which aids him in remembering and in concentrating on some particular matter. One who has forgotten would say "A kam siga no m" meaning, "I have no siga." See p. 153)

Ashanti Hinterland is in about the same latitude as the Pero country but some eight hundred miles west. To have such resemblances when so many other languages are spoken in the territory between is noteworthy.

Membership of the Ancestor Cult.

When thinking of the membership of such a cult our minds picture two things; those who belong to the spirit world, and the living who pay homage to the departed spirits. With the former we shall deal first.

The spirits or chilim of both adult males and females go to the ancestor abode shortly after death. Though it be believed that the spirits of both males and females join the spirit world, it is only the ghosts of the males that have any influence on the descendants. Again exactly as the primitive thinks of this earthly life so it must be in the next.

Of the spirits of children joining the ancestor world the Peros are not clear. Practically no ritual is performed at the act of the burial of a child nor afterward. Such a burial is done back of the hut. Nor do they relate of the spirits of such departed as being propitiated or re-incarnated. What Junod reports of the Thonga is quite true of the Peros that "If children die in infancy no religious ceremony is performed over the grave nor any prayers offered to them."¹ The women of the Mbershi, according to Miss Shaw, think that very little children who have not developed reason pass right out of existence after death.² On the other hand we have the interesting

1. Willoughby, op. cit., p. 14.

1. Willoughby, op. cit., p. 14.

folk-tale related by Willoughby¹ of two Zulu men who dared to explore the underworld. One of the two who was the most daring traveled until he crossed a river. On this other side of the river he heard dogs barking and children crying as he came upon a village. At once he retraced his steps, walking backward so as to mislead any vagrant dweller in the underworld who should happen upon his spoor.

Those dying from leprosy, small-pox, snake-bite, or suicide have very few funeral rites performed for them. Only one pot of beer is drunk to honor these spirits while for a normal death three pots of beer and two calabashes of food are offered. The same lack of homage to the spirit of a bachelor is practiced.

The fact that in pre-administration days often lepers were buried alive and this at their own request evidences the discouragement on the part of these unfortunates and also their being considered of little importance. Among the Kulus to the south of the Peros leprosy is particularly dreaded because the spirit of such a one never reaches the ancestor world. The spirits of those dying from these unfortunate causes are of little consequence. Though among the Thonga the corpse of a suicide is buried according to ordinary rules. "The tree on which the man hanged himself is cut down. It is taboo; other people might commit suicide at the same place. Its wood is

1. Willoughby, op. cit., p. 59.

not used for fuel."¹ The Peros believe that these spirits finally reach the ancestor world but being of little import they seldom come forward in the divining and then only after three to five years.

Another group of those unfortunate persons who cannot look forward to their departed selves one day playing an important part in kinema are the strangers living in Pero country. They may be those who wandered to the hills after escaping from a slave-raider and made this their home, or they may be those of other neighboring tribes who decided to reside amongst the Peros. In which-ever case the spirits of these are excluded from kinema. They have no part therein.

Even as the ancestor world is an exclusive arrangement so the group who are privileged to join the worship to these forbears is exclusive. As is to be expected a bond of fellowship exists between those who are members of this worship cult. This is often expressed, when referring to various groups of people, in the two words kinema dok meaning one and the same kinema. This feeling of friendship with other members of the cult and the remote feeling towards all outsiders becomes at times a determining factor in thinking and acting. To be sure, the Peros believe the benevolent influence of the good spirits arising from the ancestor abode are only for those who are members of the clan or tribe.

1. Junod, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 166.

Another expression which is not only interesting but very significant and which determines the extent of the bond of unity among the kinema worshippers is kätän dok. The term literally means 'one shield'. All of those who were allies in the days of tribal warfare have one and the same shield. Having been united against the common foe they also are one under a common shield of faith or worship.

Although the spirits of the women proceed to the spirit world upon the death of their owners the women are kept entirely ignorant of all that goes on during the time of worshipping these ancestors. In fact they are not permitted to come near the worship places. Their task is to prepare the food and beer which are to be used for ritual offerings and deliver them to a certain location from which these will be taken by the men. While the men eat the offerings they make various loud noises in falsetto voices thereby informing the women that the spirits have come and are partaking of the offerings. Children likewise are forbidden to know anything about the cult except to fear it.

Though it is quite true that many of the men regard the cult as a means of deceiving their women folk, yet all of them believe in it wholeheartedly. To be sure among the primitives there are few sceptics. By means of this cult they have an avenue for the expression of their religious awe and emotion as well as a medium for obtaining material and physical advantages.

Every man is bound to complete secrecy about the cult. Not even his wife is privileged to know. Women who have told me that they knew something about the system feared to reveal their information. Should a man who has just returned from such a place of worship reveal what took place he would be punished severely. Such punishment is served to the offender in various ways. It may be a flogging given him by members of the cult. Or some morning, so I was informed, a woman may awaken to discover that her husband is not with her in the hut but is lying in another strangled to death. Those who have done the deed are never found out. Or it may be on a big hunt that the one guilty of revealing secrets of the cult will receive his punishment. On such an occasion a spear will be thrown at the offender, by someone of the inner circle, at the same time that a number of spears are thrown at the game. The deed will be labeled an accident. Talbot writes of similar punishment wreaked upon those among Southern Nigerian tribes guilty of revealing the least secret.¹

If, however, punishment of this kind was inflicted in pre-administration days it is quite certain that such methods among the Peros are no longer in vogue, though up to fifteen years ago they still buried individuals alive in spite of the European administration.

Initiation into membership which comes for the young men

1. Talbot, Life in Southern Nigeria, p. 285.

when they are about fifteen years old is called showing the boys to kinema. Upon the completion of the ceremony the novice is privileged to partake in the worship to the spirits of his forbears. It is possible, however, that some boys for particular reasons are never initiated into this cult. One such explained to me the two reasons why he was not admitted. First, he said, his father did not take enough interest in his son to introduce him to this worship; and second, he was refused the initiation rites because the ritual leader or priest thought he might reveal the secrets of the cult to others. It is doubtful though that he would be excluded forever since he was a member of the Pero tribe.

Ritual Leaders.

It is only natural that where there are religious beliefs that there should evolve a ritual leader or leaders. In every religion there are certain functions, ceremonies, and rites, and these to maintain their strength cannot be performed indifferently by all. Such leaders are necessary for only they are acquainted with the rain-rites, seed-rites and the general ritual for the many and various occasions and circumstances of the life of the community. This is not to say that their system is well organized. To expect that from a people who carry out their ritual entirely from memory is to expect too much.

We here will introduce and explain the several leaders of

the ritual used in the religion of the Pero people, especially those leaders having to do with the ancestor cult.

Priest.

The priest or an-kpaga is probably the ritual leader most in demand, for he is the head of the worship to the ancestor spirits. This means that he acts as the intermediary between the people and the other world which has a very potent influence upon this life. Each clan is proud of such a head.

All the ritual offerings are made through him. Among some sections of the Peros if perchance the priest is not around when some worship is to be performed then a blind man will be chosen to act in his place to make the presentation. Should neither the an-kpaga or a blind person be available the worship cannot be carried out because it is not permissible for a commoner to make the presentation - should his eyes see what he was doing he would be sure to die. A priest, however, by virtue of his office is free to see when giving the offering and others may watch him. Some clans permit the oldest person present to substitute for the priest.

Among the Ibos "until quite recent times, any one sacrificing for himself was killed by indignant townsmen, because they believed that such brought offerings to the pythons which dwell in the depths of the stream, in order to bribe these to seek out and slay any man against whom he might have a grudge."¹

1. Talbot, op. cit., p. 43.

The priest for Bantu tribes "need not despatch the victim or offer gifts with his own hands; but he orders every act in the ritual, and personally invokes the gods, offers the gifts and presents the petitions."¹

The role of a priest is not necessarily desired in that a man would aspire for the position. To be such a ritual leader is looked upon as a serious matter by both the people and their head. Much depends upon him. Should he fail to perform his duties properly it would mean his life. Of the Kalus "it was even said that the priest of the cult would himself be slain by Basali for wanton disregard of his duties."²

This intermediary between the people and the ancestor world is chosen for life. Upon his death a successor is found among the family group. As soon as one of the family members comes down with a fever the diviner reveals that he, the feverish man, has been chosen as priest by the ancestor spirits. The fever is evidence that the spirits have possessed the man. He may be anyone of the elders of the family group, though he must be married. At the large annual feast to the departed spirits - a "Feast of All Souls" - the new priest is installed.

Moral qualifications are evidenced in the fact that the likely successor, because of age etc., cannot be chosen if he has committed adultery for which he has not made an offering to the kinema as retribution. While there is guilt on his

1. Willoughby, *op. cit.*, p. 334.

2. Africa, vol. vii, July 1934, p. 263.

hands he cannot become head of the worship. Such a successor must, of course, be one respected by his predecessors for in the execution of his duties he will time and time again appeal to the former holders of the priestly office.

That this office is generally hereditary is shown by descriptions of other tribes. Both among the Ibo and Yoruba "the first-born son is considered sacred, and occupies, during his father's lifetime, the position of family and officiating priest."¹ To the south and east of these two tribes are the Bantu of whom Willoughby says "the patriarch of patriarchs in a clan is the only possible high priest at shrines of the clan-gods."² Among the Thonga "the right of officiating in religious ceremonies is strictly confined to the eldest brother."³

It is interesting to note that some tribes have priestesses as well as priests. For instance Talbot reports finding one case among the tribes of Southern Nigeria where a woman acted as the head of a Juju cult.⁴ And for the Ashantis where matrilineal descent exists not only the priest but also the priestess officiates. She is spoken of as Queen Mother.⁵

Land chief.

The an-pebe is the chief of all ritual connected with the

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1. Lenord, op. cit., p. 395.
 2. Willoughby, op. cit., p. 334.
 3. Ibid., p. 334.
 4. Talbot, op. cit., p. 33.
 5. Rattray, Ashanti, p. 122.

farming; such as rain rites, seed-time rites, and harvest rites. As the priest of the ancestor cult is much in demand so this chief of the land is of great importance. In fact, the livelihood of the whole tribe depends upon his office.

An-pebe literally means the one of the land or earth. Pebe refers to land not in the sense of soil but with the more inclusive meaning as we have in the word world; and an is the noun agent.

While there is a ritual priest for every clan the Peros until recent years only had one land chief. Now there is one for each of the two main sections of the tribe. Since so much upon which the welfare of the community is constituted depends upon this land chief he is, no doubt, the most important of the ritual leaders. This importance is shown, in part, by the fact that upon death his corpse is not buried in the common burying place at the foot of the hills but in the grave of his predecessor. This grave is in an important courtyard in the town of which he was a citizen. Should death accidentally overtake him while away from home his remains would be returned and buried in the tomb of his predecessor. For no other official head is this performed.

Two other ritual leaders, whose offices now are almost a thing of the past, also had the honor of being interred in prominent courtyards. These are the mai-mina, chief of the town; and the an-kopan, head of those who claim to be the

original Peros. The town chief, who was not only the chief of civil affairs but also of many religious matters, has been replaced by the chief selected as the go-between the people and the European administration. The British government dealt, at first, through the mai-mina. However, when a successor was chosen it was the desire of the people that the chieftainship of the town and the chieftainship for the European administration be separate positions. The two offices were continued for some twenty years, but now the office of mai-mina has become a thing of the past. Likewise the an-kopan has practically lost his importance, if not altogether. The land chief, however, upon whom the people depend for all granaries continues his important role.

The office of land chief has no reward attached to it other than the privilege of partaking liberally of the various ritual offerings made. Again, this office is hereditary. When the current head becomes too old or is incapacitated in some other way so that he no longer is able to go to the field, it is his duty to appoint a successor from among his descendants. The present land chief for one section of the tribe was given his position one year ago by his father who was incapacitated by blindness. The father held the office for only two years, but during his reign the crops were not good, so he, when no longer competent, readily selected a successor. The first season while the son acted as land chief the crops were very

good, and the blind father sought to regain his office. Upon this the townsmen assembled and discussed the matter and by divining it was revealed that the young man was the right person for the office since they all reaped bountiful crops under his leadership. The plentiful harvest proved God's favor upon this young man as the an-pebe.

The importance of this land chief is further evidenced in the fact that he is not allowed to go away from home any distance that will necessitate him to sleep in a house outside of the tribal area. For him to sleep in an outsider's house would spell ill for the Peros whose fertility of crops he guards. The corn chaff which is supposed to be on his person contains the spirit of the corn. Should he sleep in such a stranger's bed some of the chaff would fall on the ground in this foreigner's hut. This would confer the spirit of the corn, or the fertility of the crops, upon these outsiders and deny the same to the Peros. Moreover, it would be difficult to regain the spirit of the corn if once lost.

The custom among the Berom tribe, who live some two-hundred miles west, has resemblances. "The chief of that tribe may not wash his body from the first day of planting until the grain has been gathered into the granaries; for if he washed, the soul of the corn would be destroyed."¹

Also the chief of the Yergum people is the only one among

1. Meek, The Northern Tribes of Nigeria, vol. 11, p. 46.

that tribe who remains uncircumcised, for if he were to be circumcised, the crop would be destroyed by blight.¹

Diviner.

The diviner or an-kari is the next important figure that we have to deal with. The word kari means to divine, and an is the noun agent. The diviner discloses by divination the will of the invisible world. His significance lies in the fact that both the priest and the land chief get their pre-ordained decisions from the instruments for divining which of course are in the hands of these specialized in this art. He is the first ritual leader sought in the case of sickness, death or any other calamity. Always when discussing matters of consequence for an individual or for the tribe as a whole the elders will never question the diviner's medium. Its decisions must stand irrefutable.

The reward that such an office carries with it is the fees exacted from everyone who would profit by the diviner's services. No one would think of seeking information from this source without first presenting him with a gift which usually is in the form of a measure of corn. It follows then that a diviner's position would be one sought after by those craving for power and having a desire for wealth. Such is the case. It is not inherited as are the positions of the two ritual leaders previously referred to.

1. Ibid., p. 106.

Among the instruments used by the Pero diviners there are two that are used more than others. The more prominent and interesting of the two is called chiruk. It is made with the skin of the cat-like animal by that name. In fact all of the skin, feet and the entire head are left intact. On the head red berries are studded in the wax covering. A bit of a sheep's mane is fastened erectly on the top of the head. A ring with bell-like iron attachments is passed through the nostril. The diviner, placing his foot on the tail, inserts the dangling iron attachments into a calabash of water, the whole resting on the edge of the calabash. The verdict then is disclosed by the position these iron bells take.

Another medium employed is the baga, a goat's horn. Into the large end of this horn stiff hair are fixed with wax, the hair protruding about two inches. At the smaller end of the horn a hole is drilled through which a strong string is passed one end of which is tied about the diviner's large toe and the other in his hand. And by slight quick movements of the wrist the apparatus is made to climb up or down the taut string. The location the horn takes on the string determines the information to be given.

An old friend of ours, himself a diviner, brought me upon my request a chiruk, much to my surprise. After turning it over to me he asked if I wished to have him show me how it worked. So he came with me into the house, sat on a native

stool and started working the apparatus. At first I was puzzled about its ability to jump up and down on the edge of the calabash. He asked me to try the medium. In my hands it failed to work as it did in the hands of this adept. Then said he, "If you do not have Yamba (God) in you the chiruk will not work." Our inference is that the diviner is supposed to have a supernatural power in or about him which others do not have and therefore he is able to see farther into the invisible world. This being the case why should not the people look to him for revelation?

Feast of All Souls.

Corporate feasting to the ancestor spirits for a whole clan or tribe does not seem to be a widely practiced custom for African tribes. Those writing of the Bantu peoples fail to find any trace of such a time of festivity. From what Smith says about the Ba-ila, where the man has only to do with the divinities of his own family with the implication that he has nothing to do with others, and where it would be an offence for a man to appeal to his wife's divinities or she to his, we gather that to expect a time of general festivity to the ancestor spirits would be out of the question. "In our black world, says LeRoy, "fixed days must not be looked for when all the people have a holiday periodically

1. Smith and Dale, op. cit., vol. 11, p. 166.

for the celebration of their worship. So far as I know there are never any ceremonies to be performed on the same day in all the villages or all the different groups of the tribe."¹ Willoughby, that most able authority on the Bantu, tells us that Bantu ancestor-worshippers know nothing of a feast of all souls.² But coming to West Africa where we have non-Bantu or semi-Bantu tribes we have reports, though few in number, contrary to the above custom of Central Africa. First we have the word from Rattray that the Ashantis have periodic celebrations to their departed rulers. At this ceremony, universally held throughout Ashanti, and which is observed twice in every successive period of forty-three days, the spirits of the departed rulers are propitiated, their names and deeds recalled, and favours and mercy solicited.³ The prayer offered by the chief on that day has a very general tone--being directed to the "spirit grandfather".⁴

Among the Kulu groups "the rites of Basali and Aku, held annually in July or August, are a commemoration or pacification of the dead. The men enter the hut of Basali, and perform various rites, the head of the clan saying, 'You, so-and-so, who died last year, we are conducting you today to your ancestors and leaving you finally. May you remain in peace

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1. LeRoy, *op. cit.*, p. 194.
 2. Willoughby, *op. cit.*, p. 179.
 3. Rattray, *op. cit.*, p. 92.
 4. *Ibid.*, p. 96.

with them and give us peace also.' The head of the clan then drinks some beer and gives some also to the deceased's youngest son."¹ Meek in his study of the Jukuns refers to the annual "feasts of all souls" as the times when the living relatives hand to the officiants of the cults gifts of gowns and cloth. The Jukuns believe that the spirits of the departed suffer from cold if not occasionally refurnished with garments. Though these gifts are appropriated and sold by the officiants, the substance, nevertheless, is believed to be conveyed to the spirits.²

The misfortune, drought or pestilence which has come upon the people may be the action of some ancestor spirit which has been neglected. But which spirit has been offended? To whom shall the propitiatory offering be made? It may be the spirit of an ancestor who recently died. Or it may be the result of the spirit of some chief who left this life long ago. His spirit, however, may have returned and is seeking revenge. The African "knows that no native forgets an injury - even after the lapse of many years, an old grudge or quarrel may break out; and this law of revenge runs into the other world as well as right through this"³. The inability at times to be able to determine which spirit it is that is responsible for the misfortune so that it can be propitiated, and to insure

1. Africa, *op. cit.*, p. 268.

2. Meek, A Sudanese Kingdom, p. 213.

3. Hetherwick, Alexander, The Gospel and the African, p. 75.

against future calamities of unknown origin, is no doubt the main reason for the observance of a festival to all ancestor spirits in general.

For the Peros the most important time of festivity is their ten day annual celebration called naka. This feast looked forward to by every non-christian Pero has a triple significance. First there is the homage paid to ancestors individually and collectively. Secondly, this is the time when most marriages are completed. Lastly, the ritual for seedtime is performed during these days of merrymaking. To anyone acquainted with the primitive's ways of thinking it is quite clear that the three purposes are closely entwined. For the good will of the departed spirits is not only necessary to guarantee productiveness to the seed bed but also to secure fertility for the young bride and groom. To obtain this blessing of fruitfulness all of the ancestor spirits must be implored, at least as many as can be recalled and named. It is at this feast that the successor to the priesthood, that office which is separate from that of the land chief and whose officiant is the intermediary between the people and the ancestor world, is installed.

The nature of the naka other than the performing of the actual ritual in connection with the three-fold significance of the feast is that it is a time of merrymaking. No actual work is performed during the period though it would not be

taboo to do so. The only travelling that is engaged in by the men is to reach a neighboring village where more beer is to be had. Part of the merrymaking is accounted for in the fact that it is the marrying season which for most people, not only primitives, is a time of gayety. It might be said that beer, food, meat and dance, given in this order because of their importance, is what the celebration means to many people. Each day at high noon the men gather in and about the various worship places where they consume the offerings of food and libations of beer, all the time making loud ranting noises which are to inform the women, who are not permitted to come near, that the spirits are partaking of the offerings.

The time for the naka is usually in March and the day on which the feast starts is determined by the priests who before they can announce the opening day must worship at the ancestor shrines three times during three consecutive days. The month of March chosen for this celebration precedes the planting season by a few weeks, and just following the naka the seed-time ritual leader plants the first seed. It also happens that this land chief is head of the big naka festival.

Naturally previous to this observance no one, as would be desired in case of early rain, is permitted to do any planting. Most clans are forbidden to roof their new houses until after the celebration. This has served as an inconvenience in a number of cases when the rains came early and washed down the

walls. So now those who have moved to the foot hills, to get around this difficulty, have amended the Pero custom saying that the restriction doesn't apply to huts built on the plain.

Again toward the end of the rainy season there is a time of feasting called min murã which means the "beer to the dead", and includes homage especially to the spirits of those dead who did not have the usual death beer ritual performed for them during the second month after the burial. This min murã likewise is of a general nature. Thus we see that the Peros, besides their many occasions of family group veneration to the family's ancestors, have also a major and a minor annual period of worship to the spirits of the dead belonging to the tribe.

CHAPTER VII

ANCESTOR WORSHIP, Continued

The Spirits of the Dead Reveal Themselves

Having observed that the ancestor world is a very real thing to the Peros and that they regard the spirits inhabiting this world as worthy of veneration and to be feared it follows that our next task is to describe the ways these invisible powers have of making themselves known to the living.

Dreams.

No doubt, the first method of revelation of the unseen forces ever discovered by man was through dreams. These wanderings of a part of himself, his soul, and the knowledge gained thereby often had to do with his intimate friends and close relatives. Proof of such meetings with ancestor spirits was the good luck or misfortune which followed. Subsequently, the dead used this medium of revealing themselves to their living kinsfolk.

The Pero custom of eating nothing during the day and then after nightfall gorging with food which consists mainly of heavy corn mush naturally tends to make the people dreamers. While the youth will spend hours following this single daily meal dancing and singing many others will recline shortly after the taking of food and in not too long a period their

subconscious self will become busily engaged with the spirits of the living or the departed.

Wilson's account of the West coast tribes is not only interesting but gives us a good insight into native beliefs. "All their dreams," he says, "are construed into visits from the spirits of their deceased friends. The cautions, hints, and warnings which come to them through this source, are received with the most serious and deferential attention, and are always acted upon in their waking hours. The habit of relating their dreams, which is universal, greatly promotes the habit of dreaming itself, and hence their sleeping hours are characterized by almost as much intercourse with the dead as their waking are with the living. This is, no doubt, one of the reasons of their excessive superstitiousness. Their imaginations become so lively that they can scarcely distinguish between their dreams and their waking thoughts, between the real and the ideal, and they consequently utter falsehood without intending, and profess to see things which never existed."¹

Most dreams, especially those revealing misfortune, are taken seriously by the people; and in these cases the diviner is sought to interpret the vision. Dreams where the spirit of some deceased ancestor has appeared, or those where a deadly snake has forced its poison into the subject's body usually are interpreted by the diviner to mean that there are hidden

1. Wilson, Western Africa, p. 395.

transgressions of certain laws laid down by the ancestor cult.

When in his dreams the Pero has a vision of good crops it means that the crops will be poor, and when he dreams of meager crops the harvest will be plentiful. Analogous to this belief that the opposite of the dream will be the actual result is the Bakaonde belief who say "that to dream of wealth means poverty to the dreamer, and vice versa; and that when one is absent from home and dreams that he is at home, it signifies that he will never go to his home again."¹

Naturally with this background dreams are not treated lightly, and they do play a part in steering the course of life. While on trek our cook came to us one morning saying that his body was 'broken' for he dreamed that his daughter back home died during the night. After trying to console him by telling him not to put too much stock in the dream he said, "If it wasn't she that died, then it was some other child in the relation". The native actually feels hurt when a European disturbs his faith in dreams, that important contact with the invisible world shared alike by all people. To substantiate the cook's belief in the dream that he had was the news brought to us by a messenger two days later which said that a son of one of his cousins had died following a few hours of sickness. Naturally his faith in the European lessened while that in dreams was strengthened.

1. Willoughby, op. cit., p. 94.

Calamity.

In a world such as the African inhabits where there are spirits everywhere it is not out of the ordinary that he should attribute every calamity, whether drought, sickness or death of any kind to these unseen forces. Those calamities not accounted for by witchcraft or nature spirits originate with the ancestor spirits. And "when the attention of a tribe is fixed on the cultus of ancestors, it becomes a natural inference that disease or other misfortune is due to neglect of their worship".¹ In the early days of the mission even the ringing of the school bell was considered a call from us or the ancestor spirits for someone to die.

In general when things go wrong the Pero is directed to the diviner and thus he will be informed what ancestor is in need of sustenance. An oblation of beer and porridge is made and the misfortune is supposed to pass by. It is not unusual when inquiring as to the cause of such and such one's illness or death to receive the terse reply "kinema", meaning the ancestor cult.

"Sometimes, again, the spirit is provoked on account of a sin committed by his people. Among the Banyoros of Uganda, the death of a man by lightning is attributed to the anger of the Bachwezi, or ancestor spirits, on account of some sin committed by the dead man, or wrong-doing on the part of members

1. Hastings, op. cit., p. 429.

of the clan. To appease them, a sacrifice is demanded."¹

What happened one day when one section of the Pero tribe were on a big hunt shows us clearly how the ancestor cult operates in cases of those who have offended its members. One of the young men, Jonjo by name, failed to disclose all of his transgressions as he made confession to the priest. But the offering required as retribution for this confessed sin was started. This being in the form of beer, which is made from guinea corn, the time for its completion was seven days. In the meantime Jonjo planned a trip with a load of peanuts to the European trading post. When the morning came for him to start for the trading post he changed his mind and went hunting with the other men of his town.

On the hunt a monkey was spied in a tree and the men in their excitement quickly surrounded the large tree, each man being eager to try his luck with his spear. One of the spears, however, passed on through the tree and pierced Jonjo's chest through to the back as he was looking up. He died, almost immediately, and was buried in an ant-eater's hole since the surrounding country at the place of the accident is hard clay and it was next to impossible to dig a grave. This calamity was not a mere accident but by the will of the ancestor cult. And the fact that Jonjo had an offering in the process of preparation for a certain guilt at the time of this disaster

1. Ibid.

proved that there were unconfessed transgressions.

"Possession".

A third method the spirits of the ancestor world have of making themselves known to the living is by their entering in and possessing certain individuals. In this spirit filled world a constant danger lurks about the African. "Often" they tell us, "we are obliged to be on the watch against wicked spirits lying in wait for us, or against disembodied souls that wish us ill. There is, for instance, the danger of our becoming 'possessed'¹".

These mediums, who more often are women than men, are able to see and understand things that are hidden to the ordinary person. Consequently these unusual persons are called upon by the ritual leaders to disclose their revelations in which much stock is placed. They are feared by the people lest in displeasing them the spirit would possess them. This fear to rebuke these people, temporarily insane, only encourages the "possessed". It is of interest to note that the Pero word for this phenomena is limbi which is the same term applied to those who are insane. The use of this term to include both "possession" and insane corresponds with what Willoughby says of the Secwana people of the Bantu group. "To be 'possessed' is a literal translation of the commonest phrase for 'to be insane'." He believes that this phenomenon "must unquestionably

1. LeRoy, op. cit., p. 178.

be classed with insanity, epilepsy, monomania, melancholia, and other forms of neurotic and mental disorder".¹

However, among the Peros most of the "possession" is by other than ancestor spirits.

Re-incarnation.

"The belief that a child is nothing more or less than an ancestor re-born on earth is found almost throughout the world." Crooke who writes thus supports his assertion by examples of this belief produced from various parts of the world. For instance, he cites the northern tribes of Australia who believe that every new child is the incarnation or re-incarnation of spirit children left by remote ancestors.

"Among the Thinkets of N. America, the spirit has the option of returning to this life, and generally entering the body of a female to form the soul of the new born child. If the child resembles a deceased relative or friend then it would be given the name of this relative or friend."²

Reports analogous to those just cited come to us from various parts of Africa, especially from West Africa. Though Willoughby believes that for the Bantu the evidence in favor of re-incarnation, that is the belief in the re-birth of the souls of deceased as new-born babes, is too scanty and patchy to warrant the assertion that it is a common article of Bantu

1. Willoughby, op. cit., p. 110.

2. Hastings, op. cit., p. 429.

¹
 faith. He does admit, however, that proof of such a belief is forthcoming from West Africa.

"The Akamba of Kitui (Kenya Colony) believe that crippled children are re-incarnations of deceased people who were similarly affected; and they give such children the names they bore in their previous lifetime."² Of the Gabun people Nassau writes, "The dead, some of them, return to be born again, either into their own family or into any other family, or even into a beast. Who thus return, or why they return, is entirely uncertain. Certainly not all are thus born again"³. Among the tribes of Southern Nigeria the ghosts of the dead are re-incarnated after a period of two or three years, generally in the same family unless they consider themselves to have been ill-treated in their former life.⁴ Talbot believes that the ambition of the natives is to be a member of a large family. And therefore this idea that the departed spirit will seek to be re-born in the family if its owner was treated well when on earth has considerable influence in bringing about kind treatment of relatives. About other Nigerian tribes we take the following quotation from Meek. "Yoruba, Hausa, Nupe, Gwari, and various other people believe that resemblance to dead relatives is to ascribed to the re-incarnation of those relatives; and among

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1. Willoughby, op. cit., p. 169.
 2. Willoughby, op. cit., p. 171.
 3. Nassau, op. cit., p. 237.
 4. Talbot, op. cit., p. 129.

the Igará and Okpoto posthumous children are regarded as the re-incarnation of their dead father. ----- Young children that cry excessively are such hungry spirits returned to earth."¹

Referring again to the peoples of Southern Nigeria we note that when "one child after another dies in a family - or as most people here say, 'The child keeps on dying', since it is thought to be the same soul trying to incarnate - a finger or toe is cut off or the body burnt, so that the troublesome visitor may leave the mother in peace"². In this belief we have evidence of the mutilation of the body which is supposed to keep the spirit from returning. Among the Peros the spirits of children and women are not re-born. It seems that only those males for whom the full funeral rites were observed are included among those who may be re-incarnated. This, of course, would exclude lepers and those dying from small pox or snake-bite.

According to the Peros the spirits of the departed spend two to five years in kinema land before they return to be re-incarnated in the life of some child. This is not to say that all spirits qualified to return do so. In this the Pero belief corresponds to what Nassau mentions of the Gabun peoples that "not all are born again". The period of a few years elaps-

1. Meek, Northern Nigeria, vol. ii, p. 37 sq.

2. Talbot, op. cit., p. 151.

ing between death and the time of re-incarnation seems quite general. The reason for this appears to be in the fact that the mind more readily accepts the belief in this phenomenon after the physical form has been absent from the earth for a period.

The term fule kinema meaning pregnancy of the kinema at once sheds light upon the Pero's conception of re-birth. In fact every case of re-incarnation is a fule kinema. Should a woman during her time of pregnancy be ill with fever or have some abdominal pains she promptly makes her way to the diviner who will inform her that the spirit of such and such an ancestor has entered the fetus and will remain there until the kinema ritual is performed which is done after the child is able to walk. Those women who have no trouble during pregnancy do not give birth to a child that has been re-incarnated. The woman with a fule kinema is less fortunate and is looked upon with awe. The same is the case with the child.

That pregnancy is the time when the spirit enters the fetus is also evidenced by Talbot who tells us that when an Idnong woman first knows that she is pregnant, she is brought by her husband to the priest of the cult.¹ In the Mweru-Bangweulu district of the Bantu-speaking peoples the diviners often discover cases of pregnancy where the spirit of some relative has been incarnated. Here "every difficult case of

1. Talbot, op. cit., p. 127.

birth is supposed to be a case of re-incarnation."¹

It already has been mentioned that only the spirit of a male can be re-born. Though Basden in writing of the Ibos remarks that a woman "may be re-incarnated through her daughter, daughter-in-law, or through one of the close female relatives at the old home"². It seems orthodox, however, that in a patrilineal society such as is the case among the Peros that re-incarnation only be possible by the spirit of either parent's deceased father or if the husband has died then it is likely his spirit that returns to take its abode in some child. Should a woman have had more than one husband the last mate to die is given preference in being re-born.

Cases of fule kinema demand that certain rites be performed upon the birth of the child and also at a later period. At birth two calabashes of food are taken to the priest. When the child is two or three years old the fumigation rites are performed. These seem to have as their purpose to release the enclosed ancestor spirit, for after this, the child becomes as other free and normal children. On this occasion the offering required consists of seven pots of beer, one goat, and two chickens. At this event the child's hair, which now is long and stringy, is cut for the first time. In connection with the medical work, I have, when treating a sore on the head of

1. Willoughby, op. cit., p. 171.

2. Basden, Niger Ibos, p. 285.

such a child, asked the parents' permission to cut the hair for the sake of cleanliness around the wound. The reply always was "fule kinema", and the attitude with which they replied was inspired by awe. A third part of the ceremony is the giving of a name to the child. Previous to this time it had no particular designation. Other children have a name attached to them when they are old enough to be weaned, though there is no particular ceremony for this event.

The Pero's belief in re-incarnation is so strong that they used to believe that we white people are merely their ancestors who have come to life again, male or female. In former days when the people would go to the nearest European trading post, some thirty-five miles distance, they would remark when seeing a white man or two saying, "that man is so and so's father returned to life but with a skin of a different color". Even the first European Government officials and missionaries were believed to be able to speak the Pero language, but that they refused to do so lest they be known. Surely the spirit re-incarnated would be able to speak its native tongue! Not using the Pero language, they believed as part of the white man's cleverness.

Divination.

In the event of very bad dreams, calamity or re-incarnation the diviner is usually sought to give what information of the unseen world that has come to him by the use of his instruments.

But these practitioners are also consulted to give guidance about matters where such direction is not forthcoming.

One incident which happened in connection with a Christian young man who became ill may suffice to illustrate the procedure followed by the diviners to gain information. The young man, the only Christian in the section of the town was living with his mother. His sudden illness was reported to me, upon which I visited him to administer medicine. Already he had become unconscious from the toxic effects of the hook-worms, and it was difficult to give the proper treatment. I asked to have him carried to the mission compound where better treatment could be given. This was flatly refused because, they said, the sun was already high. That evening he seemed worse and therefore it did not seem wise to move him, though I was able to give him some more medicine.

However, early the next morning I again made my way to the patient's home and found him in about the same condition. I asked permission to have him moved to the mission, but again was refused, this time some thirty or forty people, mostly women, having gathered to keep him from being moved, though they knew that the chances for the patient's recovery were few. Several of the men, however, who had a bit of faith in the white man's medicine got together and decided that advice should be asked of the diviner as to whether it would be alright to permit the patient to be moved in spite of the women,

including the mother, who were holding out so strongly.

About two hours after I had returned home word was sent to me that the spirit limbi (not necessarily an ancestor spirit) had informed them that it was alright for the missionary to move the patient to the mission compound. My reply was that I was not at the beckon of the diviner's instruments and therefore would not move the patient. Though I did treat him in the home as best as possible and in about ten days time he was well on the road to recovery.

In this case the advice was asked of a tall tree stump that stood near the site where the patient once had built a house contrary to the laws of the ancestor cult. This transgression, of course, was disclosed as the cause of the illness. Offerings of food were given the diviner who consumed the same with his helpers. The main purpose of this appeal to the spirit world was to obtain the consent for what these men deemed best. They knew that such information alone could persuade the women to release the patient. And no woman dare stand out against the decrees of the spirit world. In other words this ability to wield the community life by the use of sanctions from the spirits becomes the "big stick".

Help is Sought from the Ancestor Cult.

Birth.

From what has already been said about the relation of the

ancestor world to re-birth one would expect that with all newly born children there would be some sort of ceremony or recognition to the spirit cult for the safe delivery of a child. Such is the case, but while the Peros offer two calabashes of food and later seven pots of beer, one goat, and two chickens for a child that is a re-incarnation of an ancestor spirit, they only give one chicken for the birth of a normal child. If twins are born then two chickens are called for. This ritual giving seems to contain much more of thanksgiving for a safe delivery than to satisfy the longing of some departed ghost.

Among the Bantu tribes we note that "some ceremony for relating the newly born to the ancestral spirits, or for securing the interest of these spirits in the child, is general"¹ to the whole group. The ceremony performed by the Ashantis for a child on the eighth day is significant. On this day it is named after which it is taken to the grandfather who spits in his grandchild's mouth to strengthen the spirit already there.² That the proper ritual be performed at this early period in life is very important for the child's development depends on the good will of the invisible powers.

Marriage

The big naka festival held in March is the time for

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1. Willoughby, op. cit., p. 182.
 2. Rattray, op. cit., p. 56. The Peros do not swallow their saliva thinking that it would be harmful for them to do so. I was told that a Jukun father of Wukari passes his blessing on to his son by spitting in the son's hands which are extended to receive.

marrying among the Peros, though it should be added that there are some couples that are married at other times of the year. These are mainly those where the couple has eloped or where the girl has been seized from another young man and married to the victor.

The marrying season corresponding to the annual feast to the ancestor cult gives evidence of the fact that the people look to these spirits for blessing upon the newly-weds. In return for this blessing an offering consisting of a goat, a chicken, some beer, and food made from beniseed is made to the kinema.

On the day of the wedding the bridal couple enter the groom's hut to remain there for six days. During this time the bride is not allowed either food or drink. She may be permitted a little water to wash out her mouth. The groom is given beer only. Naturally the bride becomes very weak through this six days of hardening process. It was said that sometimes the girls faint from abstaining from food for such a time. Among the Meban of the Nilotic Sudan, "the husband and wife remain in the hut for nine days, and during this time may eat nothing only wash their mouths out with water, it was indeed said that starvation at marriage was widely practiced. On the tenth day they have one mouthful of food, and on the eleventh four, and on the twelfth a feast takes place. The woman stays inside the enclosure till she gives

birth to a child or for one year."¹ This practice savours of a different attitude toward the bride than is the case with the Ibos and other tribes where the brides-to-be go into the fattening-house for a few months to a few years before the time of marriage.² Should the Pero groom marry two wives on the same day both will abide the six days with him in the hut. This custom of the newly-weds confining themselves to their hut for this period is called cha tãvãk meaning going down on the mat.

Freedom comes to them on the seventh day when an oblation of beer is taken to the kinema hut by the groom, at which time the priest of the cult offers a prayer for blessing upon the groom. Simultaneously the bride makes her way to her mother-in-law's home where the prayer for blessing is offered by the mother-in-law. The prayer for the groom may be as follows, "May you go well, may you have many children, may you meet another woman that you may marry, and may you never forget to worship kinema with food and beer." The prayer at the marriage ceremony and said by the parent or close relative just before the bride goes to her new home has a similar essence. "This marriage is ordered by the fathers. May you go well. And may you soon become pregnant." This petition is repeated by as many as ten people sometimes. The nature

1. Seligman, Pagan Tribes of the Nilotic Sudan, p. 446.

2. Talbot, op. cit., p. 203.

of these supplications seems to be a general characteristic of prayers by pagan Africans for the nuptial pair.

The day following this ritual to the ancestor spirits becomes a time of feasting. The best of food is taken by the groom to his bride's home where it is enjoyed by the female members of the house. The groom and male members of the father's house will feast upon guinea corn mush provided for them by relatives. Contrary to our custom the groom, or his family, is responsible for the victuals for this day of merrymaking.

Seedtime.

That the good will of the ancestor cult should be sought upon the land and seed-time corresponds to the normal procedure among primitive people. "Ancestor-spirits tend all the world over to become gods of growth, who give life, fertility, strength, and victory."¹ In Africa where so many unforeseen things can happen in connection with the gaining of food due to the presence of numerous spirits both good and bad the performance of seedtime ritual becomes a necessity. To be sure, "ritual tends to be present where elements of chance and danger occur, but is likely to be absent where pursuit is certain, reliable, and well under control of rational methods and technological processes."² As for instance there is

1. Willoughby, *op. cit.*, p. 204.

2. Notes and Queries on Anthropology, p. 175.

much ritual connected with the growing of crops, which for the same people is absent in connection with the trees which also supply food. With the latter seldom is there any mishap in the giving of food.

The agricultural year for the Peros begins with the naka celebration. So shortly following this main feast to kinema the an-pebe or land chief takes guinea corn seed from three heads of the grain stored for this purpose in a particular place following last harvest season and plants them in his garden. Following this planting Dingiling, a land chief of years ago, is beseeched by the an-pebe with a prayer. "May Dingilin clap his hands for me, may the children grow, and may the corn germinate well. And now let the children go to the fields and plant." When the seed has come up another petition is made, though this time it is directed to God. "May God follow closely upon his (Dingiling's) foot tracks." It is said that this ancestor resides with God, though the Peros are not able to make a definite distinction between God and kinema. It is said that the only time the main kinema dance is performed especially to God is when there is special concern about the crops. In case the seed planted by the farming chief fails to germinate then the matter is referred to the diviners who will reveal what misconduct has interfered with nature.

The Kagoro farmer beseeches the favor of the spirits by

pouring out beer on the land. The Kagoma does the same as he sacrifices a chicken, pouring out the blood on the soil. "The Gwari observe religious rites at sowing, the tutelary genius being called forth, clad in his kilt of grass and his body smeared with clay. The festival lasts seven days, and during this time all sexual relations are forbidden."¹

The explanation for the forbiddance of conjugal intercourse lies in the belief that this interferes with productivity of the land. Pero farmers, because their fields are such distance from their homes, spend weeks at a time in their fields, sleeping in temporary shelters which usually are very uncomfortable. At least every other day, and in many cases each day, food is brought to the men by the women. Sexual intercourse taking place when the women go with food to their husbands is strictly forbidden. Such a transgression would hinder the fertility of the land.

It is of interest to note here an illuminating statement given by Prof. Moore regarding the fertility of the land, though here we have just the opposite custom from that of the Peros and the Gwari people but with the same purport. "A widely distributed type of fertility magic, which also was eventually taken up in religion, rests on the primitive assumption of what we might call in Stoic phrase the sympathy of nature, more exactly, the identity of the reproductive

1. Meek, Northern Nigeria, vol. ii, p. 45.

processes in all nature, animal and vegetable. In consequence it was believed that the germination of the seed and abundance of increase could be promoted by the exercise of the generative function of human beings, originally no doubt by the cultivators of their own fields."¹

Drought.

The measure of this calamity varies greatly with the amount of rainfall needed. Thus we find that in the more arid sections more emphasis is given to the requests for rain in the supplications of the people to the ancestor cult. And also in some localities when the rain is heavier than usual and too much for the good of the crops the diviner is asked to disclose the reason. Since the Peros usually received enough rain for good crops they only resort to special ritual for this purpose in times of actual drought, and these are not frequent. But when such occasions occur the prayer of the land chief is to God and the request is that God would cause earth worms to deposit moisture at the roots of the corn. Evidence of such a deposit is the numerous worm casts so prevalent in some kinds of soils. The Jukuns believe that the ancestor spirits live on earth worms beside what is offered them in sacrifices. From the thought of the above prayer a similar belief to that of the Jukuns is to be expected, but the Peros informed me to the contrary.

1. Moore, G. F., Birth and Growth of Religion, p. 60.

The methods used by the rain makers of the Waja tribe and reported by Mrs. T. Miller is of interest in this connection.¹ The Wajas live some seventy miles north from Pero country. "The lack of rain became so alarming that something had to be done. People had planted their crops several times before anything sprouted, or if plants came up they soon wilted and died." First an offering of a chicken was made. Then a female who evidently was "possessed" was presented with cloth, salt and money, all to no avail. "Then somebody noticed a black crow nesting in a tree. Now it is commonly believed that if a crow lays an egg, no rain will fall until the egg is hatched." Consequently the egg was torn out of the nest, but still no rain. Up to this time the men had blamed the women for withholding the rain. But now the men realized that they had wrongly accused the women, so to show their apologies they performed the women's work for one day. Right in the centre of the village the men ground the corn and cooked the meal. Some even donned women's clothing. But even this did not bring the much needed rain. So some days later the women, wearing their old clothes and carrying broken pots on their heads left the town. Three hours later rain fell in torrents; and the women returned rejoicing.

Plague of locusts.

Another disaster that the Nigerian farmer has to contend

1. Evangelical Christian Magazine, April, 1943.

with at times are the locusts. Occasionally they come in such clouds that it is impossible to do anything to protect the crops. In the fall of 1930 just after we had moved into an incompleated house swarms of the hoppers came, from the west this time. More often they seem to go from east to west depending no doubt upon the wind. The ground was literally covered with these hoppers still too young to fly. Our house being in the way of this army it was overrun. Through the openings made for doors and windows not yet installed they came. We attempted to smoke them out, but to no avail. They finally became so numerous that we gathered up what belongings we could and moved out. All the day long the natives were busy catching as many as they could, their thought being "they eat our corn so we will eat them." The next morning the tide had past and we were able to return to our home.

Either the swarms of the hoppers on the ground or the clouds of the locusts flying over-head can almost overnight ruin the crops of a whole town. And because of this the community must be prepared to ward off this catastrophe. Though Willoughby tells us that the "Becwana prayed for locusts much more frequently than they prayed to be delivered from them: locusts came when the granaries of the improvident were empty, and the succulent morsels were a godsend to the famished people."¹ Notwithstanding, the destruction that lies in their

1. Willoughby, Nature-Worship, p. 21.

wake is a serious matter and the ancestor spirits are implored with petitions and offerings.

Though several writers tell of shrines at which sacrifices are made to protect the tribe from the plague, only Roscoe, describing the Baganda, tells of anyone appointed to be particularly responsible to keep the plague away. "The clan" he says "had a fetich which was kept in a small shrine with a fence round it. An old Munyoro woman was in charge of the shrine, the fetich was supposed to protect the clan from the plague."¹

Corresponding to this we have the Pero locust chief, whose office today is not prominent. It seems that Gang, a former locust chief and a member of the sub-group of Gbwandum was killed by Filiya in the days of tribal fighting. His skull was taken by Filiya as a premium and buried with others in a secret cave. But this proved a misfortune as was evidenced by the destruction of crops by the locusts. So Filiya upon request gave the skull to Gang's clan who buried it some years ago at the place where I witnessed the exhuming. This year was already the third year that the pests had destroyed the crops. So the older men under the leadership of the an-pebe, the land chief, assembled to discover, if possible, what misconduct was responsible for the ill-wind blowing this way. By divination it was revealed that

1. Roscoe, op. cit., p. 144.

the ancestor spirits were angered, and that to repair the misconduct the locust chief's skull should be exhumed and re-interred in the locality of his relatives.

Some two-hundred men attired in the usual garb for sham battles (a leopard skin, a special head gear, sandals, spears and shield) gathered to perform the ceremony, and Gang's skull was buried the third time.

Gang had one son and one daughter. The son, Mujo by name, became the protector of the people from locusts upon the death of his father. He, however, reigned only a few years. Since his death no one has occupied the office. The daughter, who is now in her twenties, is not legally married for it is hoped that she will give birth to an illegitimate child which according to Pero law belongs to the mother's family and thus would be a rightful successor to Mujo as locust chief. If she married, her child would belong to the husband's clan. Among the Peros patrilineal descent is strong.

New Year.

The Pero New Year is proclaimed a few days after the new moon in the last part of September or the first part of October. On this day all possessions are supposed to be hung outside of the owner's hut. Besides the hoes, spears, and shields, three gourds, one with three grains of guinea corn, one with three beans, and one with benin are hung out-

side. In the afternoon the possessions are returned to their storing place. The seed is kept for the next year's planting season. For three days following this ceremony everyone is forbidden to go to the fields. Should anyone even touch a corn leaf it would be considered a sin against the ancestor cult.

The Pero calendar, noted on page 55, is calculated by this New Year. It is also at this time that the minor min murá, or beer to the dead, is drunk for those departed who were not permitted the same by their families. All such omissions for the past year are taken care of in this general homage to these dead.

The day on which the possessions are exposed is considered the beginning of the New Year. A week previous, for instance, is referred to as last year. We have a resemblance to the Pero calendar in the thought of the Becwana's who believe the Year to begin with the moon that is renewed in August, though with them no celebration is connected therewith. The Bura and Fabir year, consisting of twelve lunar months and an intercalary period, begins with the wet season when the home guinea corn is planted.²

Harvest.

The last occasion for ritual in connection with the farming year is harvest. The performing of rites at harvest time

1. Willoughby, Soul of the Bantu, p. 227.

2. Meek, Tribal Studies, vol. 1. p. 144.

appears to be a general practice. No one is permitted to eat of his crop until thanks have been given to the ancestors through some intermediary who is first to partake. It was customary for the Israelites to offer of the first fruits. The Ila-speaking peoples perform certain rites when the first maize is ready. "The man goes to the field and plucks a few ripe ears of maize and takes them to the village. He strips off the husks and takes the cobs to the grave of a certain ancestor. He sweeps around the grave and then kneeling before the grave, says, 'So-and-so, here is some of the maize which is ripe first and which I offer thee.' Having done this he returns to his home, and at the threshold of his hut makes another offering in the same way: afterwards hanging some of the cobs over the door, or in rafters."¹ The Ibos perform a detailed ritual previous to harvesting.² The Gwari of Northern Nigeria "commonly go through a ceremony of washing at harvest time, and before reaping the crops, ring bells to drive out evil spirits from the grain." "Among the Jukun (Wukari) the harvest festival is a corporate thanksgiving to the entire tribe."³ They spend the first day in making offerings to the ancestor world. The seven days of festivity which follow are filled with drinking beer brewed from the previous year's millet. After this the harvest may be gathered

1. Smith and Dale, *op. cit.*, p. 180.

2. Talbot, *op. cit.*, p. 188 sq.

3. Meek, *Northern Nigeria*, vol. 11, p. 117.

and used by both man and beast.

When the corn harvest, the principal in-gathering for the Peros, draws near the land chief breaks three heads of corn from anyone's field. His children follow breaking enough for three bundles (each about twenty pounds). The regular harvesting is done with metal instruments but the corn for this ceremony must be broken by hand. Three days later some beans are burned at the place of worship to the ancestor spirit, after which beer is begun. Again for a period of three days a taboo is placed upon the corn, this time that it must not be touched with a metal instrument, though it may be broken by hand. The prayer of thanksgiving for the corn crop runs like this, "Dingilin, this is what you have given us, now after three days give us blessing in the harvesting." The prayers in connection with farming recognize Dingilip, a land chief of years ago, as the controlling force as regards fertility, and to whom the present land chief must make his petitions for blessing upon the crops.

Hunting.

This activity, which takes up a good part of the Africans time when the grass is not too tall nor his farm work requiring too much time, is followed by the Peros for two reasons. First, he is anxious to have some meat in his diet, and secondly, he receives a good bit of enjoyment from this sport.

Because the matter of chance is a big item in hunting he seeks the favor of the spirits of the unseen world. Thus we note that the Ba-ila people not only petition the ancestor spirits and make an offering before the hunt but also following success. The unsuccessful hunter, on the other hand, consults the diviner to learn who it is that prevented his killing ¹ game.

The Pero custom corresponds closely for they, previous to the big hunts, pay homage to the spirits, and when meeting with success will make an offering of thanksgiving. This offering which is usually the ribs of the game killed is taken to the priest. It is put on his house to dry until the rainy season feast to the ancestor cult when it is eaten.

A custom called yengo pidi is used when hunting. This practice is that upon spying some game a man will take a bunch of leaves and wave them in the direction of the game. This is supposed to make the game inattentive permitting its capture more easily. This waving of the leaves has to do with the controlling of the spirits.

Blacksmithing.

In some parts of Africa smithing carries with it a stigma, but not so among the people of this tribe with whom it is considered a respectable trade. However, even the blacksmith must have the favor of the ancestor spirits to be

1. Smith & Dale, op. cit., vol. II, p. 176.

successful in his trade. To take up this occupation the individual must have rites performed for him, and make an offering of one pot of beer and one goat. In this case the hind leg and three ribs of the goat are given to the priest. In his house each blacksmith has a special ritual pot called bin for the performing of the ritual necessary to his trade.

Now the Kikuyu and Ukamba peoples have what Hobley calls smith guilds and which seem to be well organized. To become a member of the tribal smith guild certain rites are performed. When a Kikuyu wishes to be initiated "he must bring a ram which is slaughtered just outside the smithy, the novice is then walked around the anvil. The heart and lungs of the slaughtered animal are held in the smith's tongs and roasted in the fire, which is fanned by bellows; the novice eats them and the smith sits on his anvil and anoints the forehead of the novice with a spot of white earth. --- All smiths are believed to possess magical powers which are alleged to come from the iron they use and are carried on through the spirits of their ancestors."¹

Purchasing a horse.

All the horses owned by the Peros can be counted on the fingers of two hands. Few have enough wealth to make such an investment. But in the times of the tribal wars they often succeeded in killing a horse that belonged to the enemy.

1. Hobley, C. W., Bantu Beliefs and Magic, p. 168 sq.

This was accounted to the victor the same as if he killed an enemy warrior. Surely the amount of meat gained was many times more than if he would have killed only the horse's owner. After a Pero's death the killing of the horse is counted among his deeds of greatness.

To this day when a Pero buys a horse ritual is performed for the animal. A horse's tail is prized by every follower of the ancestor cult for it is used as a body decoration when worshipping or in the sham battles which take place when the skull which was placed on the top of the hut of a man recently deceased is returned to its cave. On hunts the horse's tail hung with a string about the neck is worn by many men. It is also said that in olden times a horse's tail would buy a slave.

Peace Offering.

Such an offering is of course required when retribution is made for some transgression against the spirits. But the same spirits were the recipients of gifts when peace was made between two tribal enemies. During the days of tribal wars when one side was ready to surrender, instead of using the white flag of truce, a goat and chicken were taken to the other side with the message that hostilities should cease. Those receiving the goat and chicken would then take the same to the ancestor cult.

Ancestor Cult Determines the Moral Conduct.

To have a code of moral action that is meaningful and that can be supported it must be based upon some authority superior to anything that man encumbered with his passions is able to approach. For this authority most primitives of Africa look to the unseen world so full of spirits, and especially to the spirits of his forbears. These ancestors are thought to be much more powerful now than they were as human beings on earth and their eyes are constantly watching the people, perchance some misconduct might be detected which would bring them an offering of food. Mrs. Donohugh very ably clothes the thought in the following words. "Behavior" she says, "is under observation both of the living and the dead; thus providing a type of control from which there is no escape. Conduct must be exemplary because detection is not limited to the eyes of the living. There are auxiliary forces at work supplementing the meager abilities of those close at hand."¹

The times of special worship to the cult are occasions when the force of the cult is used to publicly rebuke social offences committed by either the women or men. With the power of the ancestor world behind them the ritual leaders tell the guilty off in such a way that a long time will elapse

1. Africa. vol. viii, 1935, p. 333.

before a similar offence is committed. There is danger of angering the spirits. Meek's comment gives us another slant on the matter. "If any man pays attention to his ancestors they are expected to protect him under all circumstances, whether his conduct from the point of view of Jukun morality, deserves it or not."¹

However, our thinking on this subject may be more easily clarified if we list those actions considered transgressions by the Pero ancestor cult. First we shall speak of the sins in connection with the performing of the ritual. The strictness in this accounts to a large degree for the awe toward the worship ceremonies. Then we shall consider the more general sins which affect the social group and for which the kinema meets out the punishment.

In the performance of the ritual it is a transgression for the one who has prepared the sacred food to lick her fingers; or for any of the men to precede the priest in partaking of the food at the place of worship. It is considered a sin to eat food in the kinema hut, that has fallen to the ground. If eaten secretly it means death, and if mentioned to others a sacrifice is needed to adjust the matter. This bit of food dropping to the ground means that the spirits are calling for a taste, and who dare take it from them. Resemblances of a similar belief among the Mwila people is noteworthy. Among

1. Meek, A Sudanese Kingdom, p. 213.

them the weary, hungry, and thirsty traveller will not quench his thirst until he has spilled a bit of the water for spirits, nor eat his food until morsels of it have been thrown on the ground.¹ Men and women of Ashanti "never partake of food or drink without putting a morsel of the one and a few drops of the other on the ground for the spirits."² It is wrong to eat from an unwashed calabash after it has returned from the place of ritual, or to touch the food offering of a betrothed woman after it has been taken to the priest and before it is divided among the people. To enter the worship hut with a white feather in the hair, or to lean against the walls of the hut while inside is strictly forbidden and considered a transgression against the cult.

For the good of the community life certain sources of food articles which are general property cannot be taken from until the particular season for such procedure has been announced. Thus to eat new beans or locust tree pods before the priest has offered to the cult, or to catch fish between the damban, cult feast in July and December is a sin for which retribution must be made. The cult priest alone is the one to release these restrictions. The matter of planting or harvesting before the proper ritual has been performed is likewise an offence.

1. Willoughby, op. cit., p. 180.

2. Rattray, Ashanti, p. 137.

Probably one of the sins of most consequence to the welfare of the community life is promiscuous living. Thus endogamous marriages are prohibited and sexual intercourse between married members of the same clan is forbidden. It should be mentioned, however, that among the Peros fornication is not looked upon with any feeling of immorality and therefore does not constitute iniquity. Indeed for these people fornication is part of the procedure of courting.

Adultery is strictly forbidden by the cult, though there are many offences, especially in the present day when the authority of the ancestor spirits is not so much being doubted as challenged. Formerly if a man committed adultery with another man's wife against her consent he would be made to pay a penalty of fifty bwanis (iron bars used for coin) to the woman's husband and a goat would have to be offered to the ancestor cult. Nowadays the offence is punished by imprisonment, unless acquitted by the husband, though still the ritual killing may be performed to ward off future disaster. A woman who is forced by a man is supposed to yell loudly for help. Seldom does she consent to illegal intercourse for fear of death which is the punishment for adultery when the woman is the guilty party. Some years ago I was called by the sudden death of a young married woman. It was at high noon and the sun seemed extremely hot that day. No doubt the death which came as the woman returned from the field was due

to over-exertion or more likely sun stroke. And I was called in the hope that I might be able to do something to revive her, though she was dead when I reached the place. Shortly after the burial it was made known that this woman's death was her punishment for having committed adultery some three months previously. Meek records that adulteresses among the Kulus were sometimes burned to death.¹

What one of the very old men told me in 1936 gives us an interesting slant on the ancestor cult in its attempt to deal with the increasing amount of promiscuous intercourse. The kinema is supposed to come out of the ground and walk through the towns once every two years. But this year, which was the time for it to appear, it would not, he explained, come from its hiding place because there was too much promiscuous sexual intercourse. By this refusal to show itself the anger of the ancestor spirits over this growing sin was publicly revealed.

A method of punishing theft, which is illuminating to our thinking at this point, was brought to my attention by the fact that the victim in the case received medicine from the mission dispensary. Lade was ill for some four months with an enlarged stomach which finally caused his death in spite of the help he received not only from the dispensary but from numerous native medicine men. As usual the case was divined and the cause of the illness was disclosed, which was

1. Africa, vol. vii, 1934, p. 263.

that Lade's wife, two years ago, stole some money, (approximately twelve cents) from her uncle who belongs to another clan. With this money she bought some casava at the market, which she prepared for the evening meal. The diviner's instruments revealed that the theft had angered the spirits who had caused the "possessions" of the clan from whom the money was taken to close up Lade's stomach. Five days after the death ten head loads of the belongings of the deceased, including beds, stools, pots, calabashes, some grass from the roof, some corn and a goat, were carried to the worship place of the other clan some five miles away. These, by right of native law, became property of the clan from whom the money was taken; furthermore, the money was restored by the relatives. In this case the woman is exiled from the clan for her punishment, otherwise a similar evil might befall some other member.

The wife, who committed the theft, left Lade a few months before his death and married a man of another clan living in another town. But while living with him, it is reported, she stole a chicken. So the new husband, knowing of Lade's death, immediately drove this woman away when he learned that she had stolen a chicken. He was not ready to be another victim of her evil ways and suffer as did her former husband.

The Pero not only looks to the spirits to curb the tendency toward social sins, but also he looks to them for

guidance and for help in dealing with those who repudiate the faith to follow another religion. Mohammedanism, for instance, has been making a weak bid for the allegiance of these people for approximately twelve years now. It so happened that the first two Pero men to follow the religion of the black prophet contracted syphilis as a result of the new liberties that were theirs as converts to Mohammedanism. This illness, which became very serious for the one man, was referred to the diviner who gave the expected verdict. This decree called for three things, the making of offerings of retribution to the family ancestors that were displeased by these men taking on the new religion, the discontinuance of saying the Mohammedan prayers, and the burning of the prayer enclosure erected by these men near their home. The single reaction from this did much to hinder this new religion from taking hold among the people of this tribe. The question may be asked now what about those who take up Christianity? How would they meet a similar calamity? The difference is that the Christian's faith in the power of these ancestor spirits gradually dies away, while the Mohammedan convert still fears these unseen powers even though outwardly he has a new religion.

The Second Death.

Beyond the kinema lam there is an abode that the Peros call kinema bai meaning the ancestor abode of a dog or dogs.

To notice their thought when using the word bai or dog may aid our discussion. Even though the dog, bai, is man's partner on hunts and one accompanies every important man to the next world it is not counted as an animal of much credit. Judging from the occasions when the name is used it seems that the attitude toward this animal is rather derogatory. For instance, children often are called dogs for it is believed that they do not know much. Anyone dying without friends, comfort, or any kind of care, in a rather wanton condition would be spoken of ta mureni f&k bai meaning dying like a dog. Thus these distant quarters must be a rather forsaken place.

The spirits of all the departed go to kinema, but those belonging to evil people are chased out of this abode and into kinema bai. This is designated as the second death, and from this place no soul is permitted to escape. Those burying the evil person determine in which place the spirit is to reside. It seems, however, that only few ever die the second death.

The Boloki on the northern end of the Congo, believe that the punishment which is meted out to the spirits of the departed evil people is that they are expelled from the ancestor abode.¹ The Konde of North Nyassa have a belief that also has close similarities to that held by the Peros. They believe

1. Willoughby, op. cit., p. 57.

that "the halo round the sun is an indication to them that the Supreme Being (Nzambi) is there confirming the punishment that has consigned the late departed to the hot place - hence there is a state of unhappiness." Claridge who reports this about the Konde adds "a proverb that shows the lastingness of this punishment: 'The bad people are tortured like a locust on the burning grass; it wants to die, but is kept alive'."¹

Going to another part of Africa we have a like belief among the Jukun people of whom Meek says "A man who works evil in this life may or may not be punished during lifetime, but he will certainly receive punishment in the underworld. Indeed, it is said that a very evil man may undergo a second death in kindo, being dispatched by Ama to the land of Red Earth, 'a borne from which no traveller returns'. Men may be reborn into the world from kindo, but one who has been doomed to jebo is lost forevermore. The kinds of offenses which lead to this annihilation are murder and witchcraft, the killing of men by poison or spell, especially if the means used had been a protracted process."²

To continue with the Pero concept we note that the ghosts that must die this second death belong to people who were very selfish and lacked hospitality towards strangers; or the

1. Willoughby, op. cit., p. 62.

2. Meek, op. cit., p. 198.

spirits of women, who committed adultery and who died shortly afterwards, are sure to land in the abode from which no one returns. Surely the fear of such a possible reward for misconduct plays a part in directing the lives of the people.

Summary.

From our study of the worship of the dead there are several things that stand out. First we note that the spirits are both friendly and unfriendly, sometimes helpful and sometimes destructive. To be sure, there is great variation among African tribes as to whether the spirits are predominantly benevolent or malevolent. If the latter is preeminent then those who believe that religion is born of fear find support for their theory in this worship of the dead. W. R. Smith, however, rejects this supposition because, he says, "primitive sacrifice is an act of communion, the totem animal or beast sacred to the god being slain in order to renew or re-establish the bond of connexion between the clan and its supernatural ally. The attempt to appease these powers is not the foundation of religion."¹ This attitude is supported by Tylor who believes the ancestor spirits to be as "helping friends".²

But one is curious to know what evidences there are of the ancestors "helping friends" other than by merely letting

1. Hastings, op. cit., p. 425.

2. Ibid.

the friends alone. If Tylor means that when due homage is paid to these spirits then no harm will be projected then he is right. To live a peaceable life is the aim of the primitive but in a spirit filled world that is next to impossible. And the first thing the primitive does is to placate these disturbing creatures in various ways. Or again if the native's predominant attitude toward these spirits was one that signified that they were kindly and well disposed one wonders why the Peros sometimes refer to them as 'death'. To be sure there is much of both fear and affection in the usual attitude toward the unseen world. Frazer, however, believes that the whole is dominated by fear rather than affection. "So far as I have been able to gather," he says "it is never love, never thanksgiving, never desire for communion with the deceased, never even a longing for a renewal of fellowship, that calls forth their offerings and sacrifice, but always the fear that kinship with all it connotes has been severed and must be recovered".¹

If the spirits were preeminently friendly then their abode would also be considered such. For in many respects the future world is patterned after this life. Though in this it differs, that it is a less friendly and peaceable abode than life here on earth. It remains then that none look forward to dying, with their hopes set upon reaching a 'happy

1. Frazer, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 55.

hunting ground'. Rather the opposite is true in spite of the element of fatalism which exists in their beliefs. One fails to find in the folklore, proverbs, or songs any signs of aspiring for that future life such as one finds in the thinking of those who look upon the future life as surpassing this in goodness.

Another thing that stands out as a result of our study is that the most important thing is to perform the proper ritual and otherwise to get as little mixed up with the spirits as possible. One who has constantly to do with the spirits of his ancestors is not necessarily considered religious. Rather the opposite is the case, no matter what his inward beliefs may be. Wach very ably sums it up in the following words, "It still remains true that the performance of the same rites, however simple, is more efficacious and significant than common convictions and beliefs."¹ The fact that the primitive's notions about the future existence are so very vague and that the performing of the ritual is known to all in detail illustrates the assertion that the performance of rites carries with it more virtue than the upholding of a creed. While the religion of primitives is rich in ritual it is poverty-stricken in creed.

From a subjective standpoint the worship of the dead is held to with tenacity not only because it provides a means by

1. Wach, J., Sociology of Religion, p. 61.

which they may live peaceably and have an outlet for religious devotion, it also furnishes the opportunity to obtain the authority to control society; and that more often for the good than otherwise. Furthermore, it supplies the means of controlling the women and for procuring desired advantages, especially the partaking of the ritual offerings. One day an African chief pointed out to me that the man who goes often and spends much time at the cult worship place is not considered a man of devotion. For his frequent attendance is to eat of the offerings. Fälä yagä, or greediness of the stomach, is the label this chief attached to the worship of the dead.

Finally, and as has already been suggested, this religion does place a check upon some of the evil passions. It provides the African with a moral rule. And it is better, by far, for him to have a rudimentary form of religion which gives him an attitude of reverence for the ground upon which he walks, than to be an agnostic. But this very system will not lessen the distance between the individual and the Source of his desire to worship. Rather the Source becomes more obscure as the attention to the spirits of the departed increase. Nor can it hope to spell improvement, for by it "progress is inevitably chained to the distant past, with a religious vision which does not extend beyond the confines of the ancestral horizon."¹

1. Hastings, D. A., Ovimbudu, p. 313.

CHAPTER VIII

MINOR SPIRIT CULTS

The great amount of attention paid by the Peros to the cult of the ancestor spirits appears to have left little room for the development of a number of minor deities. There are, however, three, damban, tunjo, and teba, which are important in the events of the ordinary life of the people and thus receive their homage.

Damban

Next in importance to the worship of the kinema comes that to the damban spirit. In the study of the former it was pointed out that the attitude more often appeared to be unfriendly than otherwise. But the damban is entirely altruistic having only the welfare of its devotees in mind. While the worship of the ancestor cult is a serious affair that of this cult takes on a lighter nature. It is always referred to as a female which is another opposite from kinema. This, however, may be partly due to the fact that its symbol is a tree which also is spoken of in the feminine gender. Trees because of their fruit-bearing ability, generally are referred to by this gender. The kinema has no symbol. Moreover this guardian cult has no connection with the spirits of the forefathers.

It is said that the damban reached the Peros, prior to the kinema, from the Lo people who are neighbors to the south-east. Among the Lo and the Bambuka tribes a cult by this name receives the principal worship. Tradition says that a Pero woman, Luanshebe by name, visited and became a close friend of Mundigila, a woman of the Lo tribe. As Luanshebe bade farewell to her friend she was given the damban (tree, ritual, and pot). Upon reaching home the tree, as the symbol, was planted and soon put forth evidence of having taken root.

As was mentioned above this cult is known by the same name among the Lo and Bambuka tribes. Thus it is also referred to by a tribe west of the Pero, but in none of these three places does the particular tree, which is the banyam, have any connection with the worship nor is the tree revered by any of these people as it is by the Peros. Again only the people of our study call the tree by the same name as the cult. Thus it seems that the Peros re-named the tree when it came to them referring to it only as damban. Only in villages or vacated living sites is it to be found. None other than the chief of the clan damban is allowed to cut branches from it, which he does only when other clan cults are to be established. Other such trees found growing in the district have their origin in cuttings made from branches broken from the sacred trees by the elements of nature.

The damban is worshipped as a communal deity, practically each large clan having its own cult and likewise its own chief who goes by the name of an-kwo, meaning 'the one at the head'. Among the twenty-one Pero clans there are only six separate cults, consequently it is the custom of several clans to join in their damban celebrations. The head is not an intermediary in the sense of the priest of the ancestor worship, but serves merely as leader of the ritual. Successorship in his office is matrilineal, a present damban head having power to plant a cutting of the cult symbol by a married daughter's home whence her husband may become the leader of the ritual in that particular group.

Some claim the damban has power to keep them well and that she works for the welfare of the whole community, although sacrifices are not made to it to maintain or regain health. This spirit is thought to aid in the capturing of game on the one annual hunt in its honor. The causes of drought are known to the spirits of the kinema, but it is believed that the observing of the damban festival in the midst of the rainy season will shorten the usual dry spell which at times is very injurious to the crops.

The devotion to this spirit which is always a communal affair consists mainly of two annual feasts and the one big game hunt. For the success of the chase the damban spirit is invoked and this is entitled to a portion of every animal

killed. The semi-annual feasts last for three days, the activities of the usual African celebration, beer drinking, gorging with food, dancing and singing, occupying the time. The paraphernalia of the men dancers is made up of heavy iron ankle rings, a feathered head gear, and the freshly oiled body is plastered with beniseed.

On the day of the large feast all the members of the cult have food prepared in abundance. Each one brings a pot of beer to the cult hut where part of it is poured into the open pot inside the hut. The head of the cult will then arise, take some of the beer and call an important elder who will distribute the beer saying, "This is truly, truly! The children (that is all the people) shall remain strong." Then he will pour some beer on the ground three times. Following this the head of the cult says, "Let all be quiet" and continues with a prayer. "Oh the damban, if it is really of the grandfathers, may she bring a good breath and breathe upon the bodies of the children. If the children (boys and young men) meet up with small girls in between the granaries, may there be fornication." Then all the people yell.

The only transgressions possible are in connection with the worship and the symbol. They are:

1. Starting to drink the ritual beer before the damban head has partaken.
2. Breaking branches from the symbolic tree or touching the cult hut.

3. Entering the ritual hut, which privilege is permitted the leader only.

For each of these offenses a sheep must be paid to the ritual head. A sheep is the usual ritual killing to the damban while goats are used for rites in connection with kinema. Another difference which might be noted is that the beer of the former is drunk openly but not so with that supposedly consumed by the ancestor spirits.

Tunjo

While the damban is a communal cult the tunjo is a personal life-giving and guardian divinity, being primarily appropriated by the women.

It seems quite likely that the tunjo originated with the important Jukun cult kenjo, though its characteristics are much changed. First we note that with the Jukuns it is "the god of land and hunting and of war"¹ but not so with the Peros. Secondly Meek states that the kenjo "may be either a public cult for the maintenance of which the local chief is responsible ----; or it may be a purely private cult served by the senior member of the family."² With the Peros the tunjo is never a public cult. Again we note that rites for the dead are performed not merely at the special shrine of

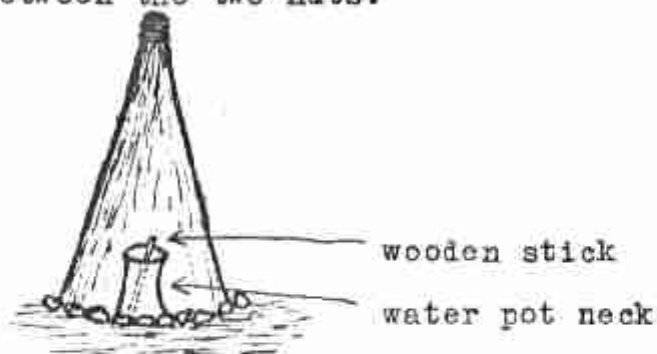
1. Meek, A Sudanese Kingdom, p. 201.

2. Ibid., p. 265.

the dead but also at that of the kenjo deity.¹ And in this once more the tunjo differs from the Jukun cult.

Mr. Meek informs us that Kenjo was the king of Kororofa, the center of the strong Jukun kingdom, towards the end of the eighteenth century.² The site of Kororofa is approximately one hundred miles to the southwest of Pero land.

The symbols of the kenjo and tunjo differ; the former being "usually a cone-shaped pillar of baked mud surrounded by a piece of iron, which may be an old arrow head, a piece of an axe, hoe, or even the blade of a knife."³ The symbol of the latter spirit is a cone-shaped grass hut about twelve inches in diameter and about two feet tall. A row of stones surround the grass hut at the base. Inside there is placed a neck from a water pot (approximately seven inches long) in which is set a stick that is an inch in diameter and just a trifle longer than the water pot neck. Sometimes this symbol is placed out in the open while others have it in the connecting veranda between the two huts.



Tunjo shrine

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1. Ibid., p. 217.
 2. Ibid., p. 45.
 3. Meek, op. cit., p. 267.

While the kenjo god is helpful in farming and in hunting and in warring expeditions, the Pero tunjo has to do mainly with the health of the members of the family, especially the infants. The mother whose first baby has died can save her succeeding offspring by establishing a tunjo and by giving obeisance to the same. Upon the birth of the second child a goat is killed to the spirit and eaten on the spot by the old men. This ceremony is to inform the spirit that a second child has been born. During the big feast to the kinema oblations of beer are set beside the tunjo hut for three days after which it is drunk.

It is said that if one has a tunjo everything is all right. But the tunjo of a woman who is barren is of no value nor is that of a sick man of any help. Thus the deduction should be that if everything is well then the tunjo is good.

This Pero cult also has a similarity in the ombwiri spirit of Equatorial Africa.¹ The Ibo omunu which is for the protection of girls and mothers evidences a likeness.² Talbot states that among the Ibibio there "is a female spirit called Esuk Orraw represented by an Akwa post in the town playground. ----- A great play is given, during which the parents of the girls who have reached marriageable age offer eggs and phallic chalk cones to the Jiyu, praying her to prepare babes ready

1. Nassau, Fetichism in West Africa, p. 65-68.

2. Easden, Niger Ibos, p. 167.

for birth. Three months later the girls are handed over to their various husbands.¹

This personal tunjo, which also is referred to as a female, serves the community life in that it acts as a brake upon loose living. For it is this spirit supported by those of the ancestors which is believed to have power to punish with death those who commit adultery. Among the Peros only women are guilty of this offense, for promiscuity by the other sex is not considered a sin.

A peculiar purpose of this spirit is in connection with ownership of a horse, of which there generally are only three, each chief having one. In the days of tribal warfare to kill or capture a horse of the enemy was considered of equal honor to that of killing or taking a human prisoner. Consequently, even today rites to the tunjo are performed when purchasing a horse. And to buy and own a horse successfully it is thought that one must have the cult shrine. In this, we admit, there is an indication of the spirit probably once assisting in warfare as the Jukuns believe the kenjo does today. The present chief of Gbwandum, who lost three horses during two years' time, believed that this loss was because he did not have a tunjo. And, as many Africans are able to do, the chief, who was very desirous of keeping a horse, discovered another way in which this could be done. He employed an

1. Talbot, Life in Southern Nigeria, p. 36.

outsider, a Hausa man, to care for the steed.

Teba

The two spirit cults that have thus far been observed are both altruistic in nature. But the private deity called teba is not so friendly. In fact it appears to be actively hostile. There are, it seems, no particular laws the transgression of which anger the spirit, but certain ill fortune is attributed to it. Though it be true that among these people generally, sickness and ill-fortune are believed to be the direct consequences of wrong-doing, the teba in its functioning seems to be an exception to the rule. Rather than worship this spirit it is only appeased after the disaster has taken place.

It is said that teba originated with Pibago who was God's agent in the Creation. When his wife gave birth to twins Pibago ordered that a teba be established. Later the wife gave birth again and a son was born feet first.

The name teba may come from or actually be the word used for the act of putting in an earthen floor in a hut, that is the pounding of the wet clay with the hands. Thus when erecting the symbol wet clay is plastered around the pot, which is a main part of the symbol and in which the oblations of beer are poured. The pot is buried in the ground, about half its depth. Next to it is the neck of a water pot with

the stick, similar to that placed in the tunjo symbol.

The teba is appeased with ritual meat offerings and oblations of beer whenever certain ill-fortunes come to the home. The first of these and probably the most usual is when a child is born feet first. Such ill luck means that the symbol must be established in the veranda of the home of the 'unfortunate' child. One goat and three chickens are sacrificed at the dedication of the teba. The blood is dropped over the symbol and the cooked liver is broken into three pieces each of which is thrown in a different direction. Before such a child may be carried in the usual goat skin satchel another offering must be made to the malevolent spirit. The placenta of the child if born in a plains village must be taken to the hill town to be buried for that is where its ancestors lived.

The birth of twins, which also is considered ill-fortune, necessitates an offering of four chickens, two goats and two pots of beer to the teba. Twins are not destroyed as they are in the neighboring Tangale tribe and in some other African tribes but are cared for by the Peros as well as possible, nevertheless, their arrival is looked upon with distrust.

Again the goodwill of this spirit is sought when such children, twins, and those born feet first, become ill.

The Jukun abi and the Pero teba were, no doubt, originally one and the same cult. For both, the use of the pot in

the symbol remains the same. Following every Jukun birth an abi is set up to the new babe, but the people of this study erect the teba only when ill-fortune has occurred. The former group attribute much crying on the part of the child to this spirit, for which reason the father consults the divin-¹ing apparatus.

Thus we note that infants and children are the target for the teba spirit. One day while visiting in a village my attention was drawn to some children one of whom had an eye that protruded greatly, no doubt, as a result of earlier eye trouble. To my question as to how his eye was 'spoiled' he replied at once "teba". Of its influence he will not forget.

1. Meek, op. cit., p. 206.

CHAPTER IX

MEDICINE, WITCHCRAFT, AND MAGIC.

The use of the English word "medicine" is much less inclusive than is the Peric term wulin, which includes not only "medicine" good and bad, but drugs, poisons, charms, and artifices employed by the sorcerer. Wulin is used both by the leech and the magician. When used by the former it is always good wulin and used for good purposes, while the latter may use it for evil objectives as well. Witchcraft, as we shall note later, has nothing to do with either leechcraft or magic. It is separate, and in the minds of the Peros the three spheres are distinct as are also their names and the practitioners. With the one established for the welfare of the community we shall deal first.

Leechcraft.

One of the most respectable professions among the Peros is to be a leech, one who practices wulin with only one purpose, namely, for the health of the people. On him the people as they bring their patients to him can depend. He is not only one who is acquainted with the numerous kinds of wulin made mostly from the roots and the bark of plants and trees, but usually also is a man of reputable character, more often of the older generation. Because of his practice he

has gained wealth and power which also adds to his distinction.

Pero women, however, do not perform with wulin of any kind and consequently they have no knowledge of the same. In contrast we note that the Mano women of Liberia know all the common remedies and are the first to be consulted in time of sickness.¹

Sometimes the leech is also the diviner or soothsayer, described in the previous chapter (cf. p. 219). As such his services are much in demand. For every illness before it can be treated must be divined to discover the cause. It is not thought that illness is due to physiological disturbance but to some external influence which has acted upon the patient resulting from various causes such as absence of the chilim, broken taboo, poisoning, witchcraft, fetish power, or the revenge of an ancestor spirit.

The Pero name for a leech helps us to understand where they believe the source of power for this profession lies. His name an-kondul means "one working with images." These images, and not fetishes (which work for the individual only) work for the community at large, and endow the owner with a "spirit-like power of a supernatural nature" for divining and enable the wulin used to transmit that "mythic potentiality" in which are contained the healing qualities desired.

1. HARLEY, G. W., Native African Medicine, p. 16.

This "mystic potentiality", which Marett describes as mana, is alike for good and evil.¹ But the leech considered here uses it only to distribute life.

Every medicine-man has two wooden images in his possession, one carved to represent a male and the other a female. They are about fifteen inches tall and are protected from the ground by an iron spike placed in the bottom of each. In these human representations, which themselves must be revived at times with some medicine, lies the secret of the an-kondul's skill in administering medicine.

It should be pointed out that it is the images and their power that count with the Pero, and not so much the medicine that is important for healing, as Harley states is the case in Liberia.² Thus our reputation in good and useful medicine administered to the Peros has resulted in the natives saying that our "images" are powerful. The credit for healing is not given to the wulin used nor to the practitioner but to the images. The wulin appears to serve only as the medium through which that "mystic potentiality" is brought into contact with the individual so as to perform its curing power. Should perchance the leech not be successful he will throw away his images in favor of others.

It is only the an-kondul men who are able to convey the

1. Marett, R. H., The Threshold of Religion, p. 113.

2. Harley, op. cit., p. 13.

"spirit-like power of a supernatural nature" to others who would become medicine-men. And it is interesting to note that this same power can be withdrawn or cancelled by the one giving it by merely taking away the images. Such is the procedure when the novice fails to comply with the conditions accepted when he began the profession.

For the knowledge of the various herbs used a heavy fee is demanded. No leech will reveal his understanding of diseases and their treatment to another, except as it might be to an interested son in case the father has become too old to carry on with the practice. To give the knowledge away wholesale or to discuss it with other leeches would not only cut into his own trade but as Harley suggests would "insult the medicine, which would then refuse to do its work, if not actually work vengeance on him who gave it away."¹ Each medicine-man is independent of any other.

One of the first steps in case of serious illness is to seek out the leech who by his instruments will determine the cause of the sickness. During the process the diviner says nothing and will give affirmation by his instrument to one of the many suggestions made by the patient who suggests this and that as the possible reason for the illness. Thus the patient, in the interest of having the diviner designate the cause of the trouble, will confess any transgressions of na-

1. Ibid., p. 32.

tive laws or customs of which he is guilty. In very severe cases the diviner will be called to the patient's hut, or the case may be taken to him by proxy.

Agudu upon complaining of a swollen arm and leg made his way to the leech who lanced the enlarged limbs in several places after which he inserted his medicine. Then by divination he revealed that the swelling was merely the result of Agudu's breaking a taboo by killing and eating a lizard, some months previously. They believed the dead lizard's spirit responsible for the ailment. Accordingly, a peace offering of a chicken and some beer was made, and the following prayer was spoken: "Now if you (lizard's spirit) are the cause of this sickness may you be satisfied with this offering and may the sickness be relieved."

Should it be determined that the patient must remain with the medicine-man he is given a special hut in which to stay. At once special protective measures are taken. A fetish will be placed at the opening of the hut, others, which are usually only of twisted string are tied about the neck or around one leg of the patient. These are to protect him from the influences of evil spirits that may be about. Reference was made in chapter five to the use of smoke about the head as a protective measure with a patient suffering from snake poisoning. Anyone who it is thought might have on his person some wulin for evil purposes is not permitted to see the

patient lest the power of the good medicines be counteracted.

The idea of washing away the sickness with water which has been medicated by the soaking of tree bark is used with most patients.¹ Bunches of fresh leaves are dipped in the liquid and the patient is thoroughly swabbed from the head downwards attempting to drive the pain towards the feet from which it is hoped it will make its exit.

It is at times of such bathing that the leech is thought to be able to extract from the body such things as needles, sweet potato roots, pikā (a parasitic growth on trees), pieces of glass, etc. One woman who is supposed to have stepped on a rifle shell over thirty years ago at the time that her town was subjected to European power still complains of the pain though numerous shells are supposed to have been extracted by the leech from time to time. The shell which was used to kill cannot do otherwise but cause her constant suffering. It should be noticed that all the articles extracted, except pikā, are foreign and have been known only for a short time.

Following the bathing of the patient an offering is made to the kondul and a prayer said for the health of the patient. Throughout the course of treatment various ritual offerings are given. But the main fee is not paid until after the patient is well and has been released by the leech.

1. Cf. Field, M. J., Religion and Medicine, p. 122.

For a patient to leave before the an-kondul has taken his pot of medicines off the hearth stones spells future misfortune. Thus to move a patient to another leech is done only with the permission of the medicine-man in charge, though such a request is not refused. As the illness becomes more stubborn the number of places to which the patient is taken increases, sometimes spending only a single day with a certain leech. One woman during the course of about five weeks was cared for by fifteen different medicine-men, after which she finally died. This custom of carrying the patient to another leech as soon as an adverse condition shows up makes scientific treatment most difficult.

Pero medicine-men generally are hasty with the knife. Any swelling they think calls for lancing, some of which is skillfully done, though the healing of the wound takes months. Such cases demand an enormous amount of time and energy on the part of the leech who does his best with his charge. Not only does his fee depend upon his success, but his reputation which is more important.

The wulin is prepared and administered in various ways. Practically all of it is ground into powder or small granular particles. Some is permitted to soak in water, while other kinds are cooked. The majority are taken internally with either water or food. Some of the herbs are chewed while those powders mixed with oils are rubbed on the forehead

and the back of the neck. One man, not an an-kondul, but who was acquainted with the herbs used to prepare the powder needed for a certain kind of running sore, readily complied with our request when more was needed at the mission dispensary. However, when I asked him about the ingredients he hesitated, merely confiding that part of the roots of at least ten different trees were used in making the powder. Whatever its origin was, this powder served better for this ailment than anything the mission dispensary could offer.

The ceremony performed by the Pero medicine-men when the treatment is finished and the patient has recovered is similar to that followed by the Ga people of the Gold Coast in which the medicine-man invokes a blessing upon the patient.¹ The Pero ceremony is called fwiyo siki, meaning to breathe coolness upon the body. Following this ceremony and that of removing the medicine pot from the hearth stones the patient is dismissed.

More and more ordinary people are buying a knowledge of the use of herbs for medicinal purposes from the incoming Hausa traders, and only in obstinate cases resort to the an-kondul. This is not only another evidence of the tribal unity disintegrating, but is one of the responsible factors.

1. Field, op. cit., p. 126.

Witchcraft

In the English word 'witchcraft' there is included, not infrequently, a great variety of phenomena. Some believe certain phases of primitive medical art to come under this category of witchcraft while others would not exclude magic. However, in the minds of the Pero people the term shwogã, translated as witchcraft, carries with it no vagueness as to its implications.

Harley, in his study of Native African Medicine, includes much more under the heading of witchcraft than would be permitted by Evans-Pritchard, or Field, or the people of our study. He points out¹ that "witchcraft is perverted medicine", and as such often uses fetishes and poisons to gain its objective. An American physician, he says, is considered by the Mano people to be a witch because he knows how to use certain drugs that are poisonous in overdose. Again he states that "a witch is one who has some control over the crisis of life and death, ---- capable of producing an unusual effect, either good or evil."² On the contrary, both Evans-Pritchard³ and Field⁴ maintain that a witch performs no rite, utters no spell, and possesses no medicine. This conception comes nearer to the Pero belief. Moreover the Peros would never credit

1. Harley, op. cit., pp. 21-33.

2. Ibid., p. 29.

3. Evans-Pritchard, E.E., Witchcraft Among the Azande, p. 21.

4. Field, op. cit., p. 135.

a witch with a good deed. All of the works of witchcraft are bad and indeed terrifying.

The opinions of Africans themselves should aid our thinking on the subject. Such we are fortunate to have compiled for us in the last quarterly Africa magazine of 1935. The entire number is devoted to a study of witchcraft. After presenting articles on the subject by European observers the opinions of twenty-one natives are given, sixteen of which have been translated into either German or English. Fifteen natives of this latter group maintain that witchery is bad, kills people, and is greatly to be feared. Only one permits the idea that witchcraft includes beneficial medicine. We must also add that Miss Field, who has made a detailed study of the subject, and who, among the many cases of harmful witchcraft that she cites, gives only two records of witches who state that their craft was also used to beneficial ends.¹

Witchcraft, then, according to the mentality of the Peros is "some specific supernatural power which man can become possessed of, and which is used exclusively for evil and anti-social purposes."² It uses no fetishes or poisons to gain its objectives, but "is simply projected at will from the mind of the witch."³ Again witchcraft is not influenced by, nor does it influence spirits. "Witches are people

1. Ibid., p. 149.

2. Africa, vol. viii, 1935, p. 424.

3. Field, op. cit., p. 135.

mentally afflicted with the obsession that they have the power to harm others by thinking them harm."¹

The attitude of the Peros towards shwogé is different from that of the Azande toward this phenomenon, whose ideas and actions on the matter, says Evans-Pritchard, are easy to observe for they are on the surface of their daily life.² The people of our study are hesitant to discuss witchcraft or a witch an-shwogé, sometimes also called an-kabat, for fear that they lay themselves open to the suspicion of being one. Among the Ewe of the Gold Coast the very name 'witch' causes the greatest fright so that in many families it is forbidden to pronounce the word after sunset.³ To be recognized as such a worker of iniquity in the community is indeed bad.

The principal charges against witches are illness and death. The former charge is more apt to be made when the illness fails to respond to treatment, though there are cases when a sudden calamity is said to have its origin in the deeds of a witch. Thus one evening a mother brought her four year old boy to us after he had been crying hard and continually for several hours, never ceasing long enough to be asked the location of the pain. Though since he could not close his mouth it was thought that the pain must be in

1. Ibid., p. 136.

2. Evans-Pritchard, op. cit., p. 21.

3. Africa, op. cit., p. 549.

the throat. The mother realizing that the spell came upon the boy suddenly was convinced that someone had bewitched the child by touching him during the day while she was away in the field. She believed the boy's chilim to have been taken and the only way for him to recover would be to search out the witch and have her touch the boy again thus restoring his chilim. Nevertheless she soon yielded to our suggestion, and the boy was treated for a chest cold, wrapped in a blanket, and put beside a fire where he fell asleep.

Bipang was one of a group of school boys who usually slept in the same hut. The palm-pole bed was narrow, as are most Pero beds. Thus the boy sleeping at the rear fell off striking his head against the clay wall. The next morning he returned to his home, and complaining of his headache related to his mother the incident of the night, stating that Bipang who was sleeping on the other side had pushed him off the bed. That very day the lad became ill with spinal-meningitis and the quick verdict from the lad's mother was that Bipang had bewitched her son. Thus involuntarily some are classed as evildoers. But fortunately the lad recovered and the matter was dropped.

Deaths that are supposed to have their origin in witchcraft usually take place after a period of illness. It is thought that the witch preys upon people slowly and continuously until death takes place.

It is interesting to note that the belief that witches destroy people by eating them or sucking out their blood is quite common in West Africa. The Peros refer to it as "eating the person's soul." Among the deeds of witches among the Ga people, eating their victims is said to be prevalent.¹ The same practice is followed by witches among the Azande of eastern Africa,² in the Cameroons, and in the Mende country.³ Five natives representing the Yoruba, Ewe, and other tribes of Togoland speak of witches slowly sucking the blood of their prey until the life is extinct.⁴

Among tribes where witchcraft is practiced extensively there is the profession of the witchdoctor whose task it is to smell out the worker of iniquity. But the Peros depend mainly upon the revelation of some person's name in a dream which is then divined as a method to designate the witch. When the witch has been indicated she must accompany the one who had the dream in the search for the soul which may be found in some cave or the cleft of a rock. No other punishment will be inflicted. But to be exposed as a witch is a thing not to be desired.

When death ensues the matter is settled by the poison ordeal. In the presence of many the witch drinks the poison

1. Field, op. cit., p. 148.
 2. Evans-Fritchard, op. cit., p. 38.
 3. Africa, op. cit., pp. 543-559.
 4. Ibid.

mixture which has been prepared from a bush fruit which has been crushed and allowed to soak in water. Over a gallon of liquid must be drunk. If it is vomited the witch's plea of innocence is upheld, if retained it is supposed to cause immediate death. For the Peros this was more often achieved by the guilty witch being tied to large logs on a flat rock, covered with firewood, and burned alive.

The destruction of the bodies of witches guilty of causing death also appears to be a common practice among Africans. Thus we note that in the Katanga district of the Congo that punishment for witchcraft "is not only invariably death, but the body is afterwards burned to ashes and the ashes scattered"¹ to make certain that the spirit is annihilated. The Ijaw of Southern Nigeria follow the same practice as that of the Pero and the Kulu people, which is burning the corpse.² Among the Ibo the corpse of a witch is not buried but thrown into the bush.³ Also efforts to make certain that the spirit of a witch will not return is evidenced in the detailed report from the people of southern Cameroons who pierce the eyes of the witch with thorns, break her back, cut the limbs, break open the toes and fingers, cover the head with an earthen pot, place the face downwards and cover the grave with thorns. Should, however, the witch return in spite of all of

1. Willoughby, *The Soul of the Bantu*, p. 24.

2. Talbot, *Southern Nigeria*, vol. iii, p. 211.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 208.

this, then the corpse is exhumed and burned and the ashes scattered in the stream.¹

Thus whether alive or dead the witch is a menace to society. No wonder that there is such fear of this phenomenon which is expressed most often in the groups with greater tribal admixtures. Such mixed groups lend themselves to fear of one another, jealousy, envy, greed and hatred. Consequently in a united group of one stock, such as were the Peros, it is to be expected that witchcraft would not have been so prevalent.

Magic.

In opposition to witchcraft we have magic which differs greatly in its method of procedure. First we note that the activities of a magician are not performed secretly, but out in the open. A magician loves to display the numerous varieties of charms that he carries about his belt, arms and neck. Second, a magician makes special efforts in obtaining his skill, more often paying dearly for it. To perform his magic he must prepare his wulin, which as previously stated may be medicine good or bad, drugs, poisons, charms and other artifices. It will be remembered that witchcraft uses no sort of wulin. Third, while the power of a witch is in herself that of the magician is in his wulin which he believes to

1. Africa, op. cit., p. 547.

contain a "mystical potentiality". Without it he is powerless. Fourth, the "good" magician uses his services for the welfare of the community.¹ Black magic, or sorcery, uses wulin to destructive ends.

Both the users of good magic and of sorcery follow their trade for what they can gain from it. It was for this reason that they began the profession, and when once it is no longer profitable will be discontinued.

Good Magic

The ordinary Pero is distinct from his neighboring Pias or the Hausa trader in the few charms that are to be found on his person. The lack of these evidences a society in which there is mutual trust. Those few that are worn upon occasion are mainly amulets. This is not to say, however, that that group who have been influenced more readily by the current external forces have not also yielded to the use of numerous talismans and amulets as well. With every purchase of such fetishes a blow was struck at the once complete dependence upon the spirits of the ancestors. The new individualism allows for individual initiative and advance or gain. And it is thought by some that such favor can be obtained by certain charms.

1. The author is indebted to Junod for much of the above outline.

Two words are used by the Peros for fetishes,¹ the one we sik, meaning 'thing of the body', refers to those worn on the person upon occasion, the other shetan we means a 'standing thing'. The latter which are of two kinds are generally placed near the head of the bed. They are both made of wood taken from some place which is controlled by the limbi spirit. One is about six inches by three inches in diameter, while the other having the same height is only one inch thick. On this one in case of illness blood from a chicken strangled to death is sprinkled, three feathers are pasted to the fetish with the blood, and the liver after being cooked is broken and scattered in three directions.

The principal purpose of both these shetan we is to ward off illness. When the owner dies they are disposed of by throwing them into crevices in the rocks. Skulls of game killed, which likewise possessed potency, are gotten rid of in similar fashion at this time. Since the fetish is for the individual only it cannot be appropriated by another.

It will be of interest here to note the method used in a community effort to free itself of the evil spirit thought.

1. The term 'fetish' comes from the Portuguese feticão, Lat. facticus, and is defined to mean ---- magic or an amulet. It was used by the Portuguese in their dealings with the negroes of West Africa to denote certain inanimate objects, as teeth, claws, tails, feathers, horns, shells, sticks, pieces of iron, rags of clothing, heaps of clay stuck with nails, and many other such, to which the negroes addressed themselves with prayers and sacrifices, or with a certain reverence, to obtain help of some kind." Schmidt, Origin and Growth of Religion, p. 59.

to be responsible for an epidemic of cerebro-spinal meningitis which caused numerous deaths in the Pero towns during the dry season of 1941. The spirit causing this epidemic was not necessarily differentiated from that responsible for a like epidemic of small-pox. But the method of driving away the evil intruder, it was said, was exactly the same.

In this particular case the priests of the town ordered two women and one man, supposedly filled with the spirit pera we, to take five white chickens to a place about one half mile west of the town of Gbwandum. Following these three 'possessed' people there came down from their hill dwellings approximately one hundred people beating, as they went, the compound mats, the stones, and the branches of trees, with cornstalks and their walking sticks. They aimed to make sure that the spirit was driven out ahead of them. At the place designated the chickens were released to go away into the bush supposedly to appease the spirit which was driven westward and which was thought to be white - therefore the need of white fowls. The ceremony also included the following prayer said by the official, "May you go, you evil spirit (female), take your fowls, the walking sticks and cornstalks".

After this ritual in which the fowls served as the "scapegoats", a proclamation was made by the official that no one was to draw water that evening or during the night

(water in the house could be used), or to put on any clothes save animal skins. All hilarity was forbidden - it was a time of "sitting in sackcloth". To release the taboo the an-pebe or land chief on the following morning performed ritual at the principal water hole. Here he said a prayer, took water in his hands and threw it to the east after which he drank some.

Before we proceed to cite similar practices of other people we must make one comment on the above ritual. This is regarding the direction in which the evil spirit was driven. It being believed that life had its source in the east and that the spirits of the dead first journey eastward it is to be expected that undesirable spirits would be driven in the opposite direction. During each October, when the rainy season closes, the Peros perform a ceremony of driving the mosquitoes westward. Ritual offerings, the blowing of large animal horns by all the men and the yelling by the rest of the people are the chief acts of this annual observance.¹

Frazer reports a very close similarity to the practice of ridding the town of evil spirits as cited above. "After a series of deaths", he says, "a band of the Kamilaroi tribe in New South Wales used to scour the country, dancing and beating the air with branches to drive away the dangerous spirits of the dead, while a chorus of women and girls helped

1. Compare the blowing of ram's horns and the shouting to destroy the walls of Jericho. Joshua 6:5.

them by their songs."¹ The Angas believe that some people have special vision to see the bad spirits and can beat them off with whips, sending them away squeaking like mice.²

According to the Peros the chief of all evil spirits is buyo, whose meaning comes close to our conception of 'Devil'. Sometimes illness and death are attributed to this spirit. This buyo which is a pursuing avenging spirit has a close resemblance to the Jukun bwi,³ or the mokase of the Bakwiri where it is thought to be a piece broken out from the Godhead and now independent, executing the penalizing judgments of God.⁴

Though it seems that Ittman in his article Von Der Gottesvorstellung Der Bakwiri⁵ may have introduced European conceptions, yet the people of our study think of buyo as a penalizing agent. But any connection with or likeness to God has been denied. The Peros use the buyo to enforce adherence to the laws of the community, often using the threat with the younger generation, "If you do that the buyo will get you."⁶

It must be mentioned that buyo is also the word used for a cold. If one had a severe cold a Pero would say, "His

1. Frazer, Fear of the Dead, vol. ii, p. 7.

2. Meek, Northern Nigeria, vol. ii, p. 35.

3. Meek, A Sudanese Kingdom, p. 204.

4. Africa, op. cit., p. 369.

5. Ibid., pp. 355-372.

6. The kue, among the Jen people are the policemen of the community. Meek, Tribal Studies, vol. ii, p. 524.

body is nothing but buyo."

Rites to allay the bwi are performed by the Jukuns, but I am not certain about the Peros following such ritual to appease this policeman-like spirit.

It is said, however, that formerly the community as a whole would periodically drive the buyo westward by all the people yelling together. Here Rattray's account of Bosman's description of a like ceremony on the Gold Coast conducted over two centuries ago is interesting. He mentions that following the eight days of feasting, singing and dancing, the ceremony of driving the devil out of town is performed. When he has been driven far enough the people all return ---"and to make sure that he does not return to their houses, the women wash and scour all their wooden and earthen vessels very neatly to free them from all uncleanness and the Devil."¹

Sorcery

Sorcery, or black magic, which is to use wulin for anti-social purposes, was not prevalent to any great extent among the Peros. In fact the cases of definite sorcery brought to my attention in recent years were attributed to magicians belonging to other and more disintegrated tribes. It stands to reason that in a single tribal unit the motives that give rise to this phenomenon would be lacking. Two incidents where magic was used by strangers upon Pero men will suffice to note

1. Rattray, Ashanti, p. 151.

the method used and the results attained.

Bubboli, a middle-aged man, during a conversation with a Pia man at the market one day accepted some medicine which he took home with him. A few days later he became seriously ill, breaking out in boils all over his body. At once it was "noised abroad" that the Pia had given him wulin meaning bad medicine. The magician was called to court and he admitted having given the medicine. After a few days he was released. But Bubboli's condition grew worse and worse until after two months of suffering he died. The only explanation was in the wulin that was received from the stranger.

Another case concerned the brother of a chief, Maina by name. He also was a man about forty. It so happened that Maina who had not been feeling too well for some time, one day dashed off from his field work into the tall grass. Men who were hoeing with him went after him but failed to find him before dark. The search was given up. The next morning the whole town was asked to aid in the quest. At mid-morning he was found at the base of a tree, entirely nude. On his belt was his hunting knife which he had used to make cuts on his abdomen and penis.

Having had to bring him home by force they fastened one of his feet securely in a stock which was made from a live branch of the baobab tree. Through this stock, which was about thirty inches long and eight inches in diameter, a hole

was chopped through which a foot could be forced. After the foot was inserted a dry bamboo peg was driven through the soft baobab wood next to the prisoner's leg thus making the hole smaller and preventing the foot from being pulled out.

That same day a Hausa man who had been staying in Maina's house for over two weeks revealed that he caused this unusual condition to come about by putting some wulin in Maina's food two weeks previously. But he also said that he had the necessary medicine with which to cure the illness. Almost at once, according to African fashion, the people including the literate chief, revered this Hausa magician as a man of special power. The cure was prepaid with a goat and a chicken, the latter of which was put to death in a supposedly magical way, viz., pressing the sides of the body together. Having received the fee the magician administered his medicines.

The imposter then made bold to state that it was his business to sell medicine to make people ill after which he would profit again by selling the cure. He literally was feared by the people for possibly he might have the cure which they desired, and too, if he were driven away he might inflict his evil magic in another and more serious way.

On the third day I visited Maina. His condition, they said, was not improved and so my suggestion that he be brought some wulin from the dispensary was accepted. Having known of Maina's previous ailments and the toxic effects of

hookworm the best immediate remedy for this case, which was nothing more than a strong purgative, was soon administered and the patient began to improve. "Many of these cases", says LeRoy, "are easily explained; they are cases that ordinary medicine would relieve, and the best exorcism as well as the least expensive, would be a strong purgative."¹

Oath.

A word about the use of oaths by the Peros to give proof to their statements should be included here. A strong belief in fatalism together with a "mind that demands proof rather than evidence" encourages the use of oaths to support any assertion that occurs to the mind.

The principal cases where oaths are resorted to are theft, lying, and adultery. One guilty of such immoralities will readily make denial and often take an oath to give proof to his innocency. An oath taken at planting time will be as follows, "If I am guilty may God kill me before harvest time." A pregnant woman will swear by her foetus, saying, "If I am guilty may God cause me to die when giving birth to my child." Thus the matter of right or wrong is left to the judgment of God.

If she dies at the time of child-birth the accuser stands vindicated and the woman's people must make restoration to the injured party. But if the oath failed to take effect

1. LeRoy, Religion of the Primitives, p. 228.

within the stated time the accused or a brother will set an empty calabash at the doorway of the accuser's house proving guiltlessness and thus demand the usual fee for a false accusation which is one goat.

CHAPTER X

THE SUPREME BEING

Recognition of His Existence

Thus far in our study of the Pero people we have noted their historical, economic and social background; we have seen that throughout life from the cradle to the grave they are aware of other powers which daily act upon their lives; we have discovered that that 'self', which we call soul and which to them is an important life-giving substance, continues on even after the physical being has decayed; we have followed the actions of these spirits that survive death as they become active again and definitely affect the living for good or evil; and we have observed that other lesser agencies are employed by these primitives in a partial attempt to counteract the many disturbances, failures and sorrows of life.

If this were the sum total of the religious beliefs of the Peros then Levy-Bruhl might have some justification in maintaining that what we label primitive religion is a mere response to collective needs and does not have its origin in God.¹ But what we have discussed thus far is only part of the picture. Had Levy-Bruhl gone further in digging away the immense amount of overgrown underbush there would have been discovered, at least among African primitives, a definite

1. Levy-Bruhl, How Natives Think, p. 32.

belief, though at times rather vague, in a Supreme Being. There is to be found a God whom not even the psychic activities of man need postulate as Radin¹ believes was the case. This belief in a Supreme Being is, as we shall see, an important item in the religious conceptions of primitive Africans.

Writing of the people of Whydah (Dahomey) two centuries ago Bosman, a Dutchman, states that "It is certain that ---- (they) ---- have a faint idea of a true God, and ascribe to him the Attributes of Almighty and Omnipresent; they believe he created the Universe, and therefore vastly prefer him before their Idol-gods."² Skertchly, also quoted by Herskovits, wrote very discerningly sixty years ago of the religion of Dahomey people. He said, "The Dahomian religion consists of two parts, totally distinct from each other. First, the belief in a supreme being, and, second, the belief in a whole host of minor deities."³ Though for the people of our study this order of importance is reversed, nevertheless the classification is a duplicate of their situation. The belief in numerous minor deities does not mean that the people are polytheists, nor does it mean that they conceive of God as the chief of the lesser gods. He is separate, outside of all that. That able scholar of African life and thought, Edwin W.

1. Radin, Primitive Religion, pp. 156-157.

2. Herskovits, Dahomey, vol. ii, p. 289.

3. Ibid.

Smith, states in this connection that the Africans "may be quite certain that there is one High God only, though giving Him different names, but they give deep respect and worship to numbers of other beings in addition, of a lower sort. In fact, they may give all worship to these and not any to the High God, though conscious of His existence."¹

Of God's existence the Bakwiri of the Cameroons seem to be directly aware, even though God is not feared by them or seldom prayed to. If a member of the Bakwiri tribe is asked about how the people know there is a God, they will answer with a proverb. "Should one have married a wife, thus soon she becomes expectant. Yet that can only come from God the Creator. Every person, every expectant wife is an evidence of His existence."² "The Jukun", says Meek, "for all their devotion to the cults of royal and family ancestors, have a fundamental belief in the Supreme control of the Universe by an inscrutable Being who is known as the Sky-god."³

To argue with the Peros that there is not a Supreme Being, - whom they call Yamba, - would seem to them absurd. He would be a fool who did not believe in God. Moreover such an argument would be considered irreverent. Every other happening in life, even the most unexpected incidents, are believed to have a definite cause. The sun and moon move at

1. Smith, The Secret of the African, p. 46.

2. Africa, vol. viii, 1935, p. 356.

3. Meek, A Sudanese Kingdom, p. 178.

the direction of someone. Likewise the creation of man and the world did not just happen. There was a Creator, they say. It is in this process of reasoning which LeRoy states "is to be found the primary and veritable basis on which the Bantus rest the idea of God."¹

But as Schmidt points out, purely casual thinking is not the key to the explanation of the primitives' beliefs in the Supreme Being. "Nay", he says, "there must have been something quite impressively powerful which was met by primitive man not all too long after the beginning of his natural thinking and searching, and which became to him an innermost "experience", penetrating and exciting his whole soul, and generating in him overwhelming power in that unity which we see in that oldest religion. This cannot have been a purely subjective event in the soul of man ----."²

If one seeks an answer from the people regarding this metaphysical problem the reply generally is in the form of a question "Are there people who know about God?" It is enough for them to believe that "God is", that He preceded even the beginning; in fact, they never think of Him as having an origin.

God, however, is believed to be very remote, too distant to be concerned very deeply with the daily affairs of the people. This being the case it is only natural that numerous

1. LeRoy, The Religion of the Primitives, p. 127.

2. Schmidt, Message for Princeton Seminary, 1935, p. 5.

other gods should be established. Rattray states that the Ashanti believe that because of this remoteness of God He "delegated His powers to His lieutenants or lesser gods---"¹ and that these receive their power from the great spirit of the one God. But with the Peros it appears, that though Yamba is often confused with the lesser gods, He is thought of as distinct from them and not necessarily to have appointed them as His assistants. His realm is outside and beyond these weaker deities, but who, it is believed, receive their power from Him.

Rather than state that the lesser gods were delegated by the Supreme Being it would be more correct to say that the people's knowledge of Him was too vague to meet the needs of their daily life so that they had recourse to other gods. The actions of the elements of nature began to speak to the people. The community life was more easily directed by the laws of the forefathers. God had no laws for them to follow. Special powers were needed and these were thought to be had in inanimate objects. Thus more and more these tangible things became important and God was pushed into the background. His position was usurped by the constantly growing lesser deities, until in the situation at present we find that God still exists but the worship due Him has been transferred to a multitude of other spiritual agencies.

1. Rattray, Ashanti, pp. 141-143.

Names Used as Proof of His Being.

"What a race takes God to be, or believes he ought to be, hangs" says Danquah, a native of the Gold Coast in his recent study of The Akan Doctrines of God, "upon the meaning of the name."¹ Thus a comparison of names used by various African tribes in referring to the Supreme Being will not only be interesting but indeed helpful in grasping the thought thus given expression. Such names LeRoy has classified for us in a very interesting and suggestive manner.² To this classification, which we shall use only in part, we shall add the name Yamba used by the Peros, as well as those used by some other tribes.

1. The first group of these expressions of quality intended to signify God, he says, "turns about the word amba (to say, do, arrange, fashion). Vestiges of it are to be found everywhere; the most important in the linguistic family, is the word m-ambo (words, deeds, actions). From this verb -ambo, prefixed by the element Nya- or Nyi- (the having, he who), the Bantus from the Kamerun to the Herero country---", have derived the list of expressions given below. The Pero word for 'to do, arrange, fashion' is limbo which is almost identical with ambo. The derivation of the Y in the Pero

1. Danquah, J. B., Quoted in International Review of Missions, January, 1945, p. 100.
2. LeRoy, op. cit., pp. 115-118.

name for God is undoubtedly from the Nyi referred to above.

Ny-ambe (Luyi or Rotse, upper Zambezi).

Any-ambye (Mpongwe of Gabon and neighboring languages).

Nz-ambi (Vili of Loango, etc).

Nz-ame (Fan of the Gabon forest).

To these we add:

Y-amba (Pero, Kulu, Tangale, Bolewa).

N-ambi (The priestly official among Kanakuru)¹

Ny-ame (Ashanti)

Nj-ambe (Barotse of South Africa).

Various other forms of the above names for God as Nyam,
Nzam, Anzam, are also used in Gabon.²

Thus not only from the Kamerun but from Ashanti and parts of Northern Nigeria south to the Herero country the verb amba prefixed by a form of Nyi meaning "he who speaks, he who does, the organizer, the creator" is the expression given by certain tribes to the Supreme Being.

To this first group, says LeRoy, also belong the expressions using the roots -umba, -vanga, -tunga, -ilola, "all having the identical signification of to make (for example, of pottery), to give the form, to fashion, to arrange." Whence, he says, we have the following names consecrated to the Divinity: Ma-umba, Ma-vangi, Ka-lunga, Ka-tonda, etc.

1. Leek, Tribal Studies, vol. ii, p. 313.

2. Nassau, Fetichism in West Africa, p. 36.

From the list given it appears that names of this group are found mainly south of the equator. But we would add Edg-unda, used by the Yungur of Nigeria, carrying the above conception and same root.¹

2. A second group of names employed to designate God mark "his power, strength, greatness, ownership, supreme mastership." The root word for these names and which expresses this quality is -eza. Thus we have L-eza, R-edja, Ka-bedja, Ma-weza and others.

3. In the third group, he says, we have names that seek to translate the essential nature of God, using the root -ima, which among the Bantu "means to live: it is the principle of life within us. But, if a soul lives in us and animates us another Soul animates the universe." The Pero word for soul chilim includes, undoubtedly, the root -ima. He states that Mo-limo is used for God by the Tebele people.

4. The last group of names "designate God by His supposed dwelling place, or His likeness or identification with the light, the sky, or the sun." Thus forms of Mu-ngu, Mu-ungu, Mu-lungu express the thought of "the One from on high, the One of the sky" for about forty tongues of eastern Africa.

To this group he adds Mu-anga, literally "the One of the

1. Meek, op. cit., p. 455.

light" or "the One of the bright heaven" used for the idea of God by the Swahili and other neighboring language groups.

He states that from the root for sun, -ua, -uwa, -uba, the Nyambu south-west of Victoria Nyanza have i-zuwa meaning sun and Ka-zowa meaning God; the Sukuma and neighboring dialects (south of the Nyanza) use li-uwa for sun and Di-kuwe for the Supreme Being.

To these we would add that the Bambuka people some thirty miles south-east from Pero use identical words for sun and God, viz, Fu; south of them the Jen people use Fi; to the east about one hundred miles are the Kanakuru, whose language is akin to Pero and who use Piroguru for God while their word for sun is pwari.¹ Among the tribes of the Ashanti Hinterland Rattray says that we is used as the root word for Supreme Being, and undoubtedly means simply 'the sun'. In use it is suffixed as Wene which means Sky-God not the Sun-God. "It would be quite misleading and erroneous", he says, "to state that they are sun-worshippers."²

These testimonies from numerous African tribes give us not only a conception of how these people think about God, but are proof that such a Being exists in their thought life. Furthermore, contrary to Tylor, in none of these conceptions do we note a trace of deified ancestors, nor is there a con-

1. Meek, op. cit., p. 326.

2. Rattray, Tribes of Ashanti Hinterland, p. 42.

nection with ancestor worship expressed. Those who think of the religion of Africans as a mere system of 'fetishism' (using the word erroneously) will have noted from these names and their connotations that the aim of the religious urge is lofty, far above the use of fetishes and belief in ancestors. But alas, it is just these mundane elements that have bogged down the Africans' aspiration towards God until today there is little seeking after Him, for while He is believed to exist and sometimes manifests His power, He is not interested in men individually.

The Qualities of God.

Foremost among the Pero beliefs about Yamba is that He is a spirit, always referred to in the masculine and never as man. "Yamba kiji chilim" meaning God is like a spirit, without a body of flesh and bones. He is a spirit who alone is all powerful. It has been said that "He is powerful like the wind,"¹ also implying, it appears, that He is invisible like the wind. Often in the course of their work, someone who, when asked to do a task demanding unusual physical strength, will reply with the query, "Am I God?" Yamba is thought of as all powerful.

To the Peros the Supreme Being is the force behind all

1. Cf. when the Ashantis wish to tell anything to Onyame (Supreme Being) they say "tell it to the winds." Rattray, Ashanti, p. 142.

creation, past and present, both of animate and inanimate beings, He Himself, it is thought, was not created. Yamba, through the help of His agent as it were, made the earth, the hills and the valleys. For a time He was the only inhabitant on this earth. This did not please Him so He created human beings and the animals of the field and placed them upon earth after which He went westward, climbed the Gwana hills, and went up into the sun. The Rotse of Northern Rhodesia believe that after the creation God had a spider make a very long thread and He went up to the sky by it.¹

God's helper, Pibago by name, is often referred to as the an-kwia, the creator, but only in the formation of the world at the beginning. For other acts of creation Yamba is the One responsible. Pibago, after completing his creation at Pero, proceeded westward and southward, continuing his work as ordained of Yamba.

As definite evidence of Pibago, of his presence and direction of his journey, the Peros claim to have his footprints imbedded in a large flat rock just one-half mile from the town of Gbwandum. These footprints which I have photographed are approximately one-half inch deep in the flat rock which is several rods long and half as wide. Since according to native tradition the Creator in the person of Pibago worked from the east to the west in the work of creating human kind

1. Smith, African Beliefs and Christian Faith, p. 57.

and the animal kingdom, it is to be expected that the footprints would face westward. Such is the case. There are two tracks each the size of an ordinary man's footprint, the right one coming first and then the left one - just two large steps, or about two yards apart. From the space between the tracks it appears that the Peros conceive of Pibago either as having been a superman or to have been running or jumping as he went along. The outline of each print is exact in every detail - each foot having five toes in correct order and spread out like the African foot, the heel being narrower than the front of the foot, and the indentation being less at the place where the toes meet the foot. On this same stone and about three feet to the right is a small round hole in which Pibago set his round bottomed juli or small water pot to keep it from falling over. About five feet from this small hole is one track of Pibago's dog. This footprint, though it is the shape of a dog's track, is, however, much larger, being the size of the palm of a man's hand.

The Peros are certain that these tracks are those of Pibago when he was on Yamba's mission. It is said there is another set of similar footprints in the stone at the bottom of a stream a short distance west of Gbwandum. These I have not seen. Rev. B. Cofield of Liberia informed me that the Kpelle tribe have related to him that on a high mountain in their area there is a large footprint, supposedly of God.

Some African peoples have a tradition regarding the method of creation, but none such has been forthcoming from the Peros. The Fioti, for instance, says Smith, believe "that men were formed by Nzambi out of earth mixed with the blood of animals. The Shilluk, whose country is on the Nile, say the Juok came across some clean white earth in the land of the Whites and out of it made white men. Then he came to Egypt and of the wet Nile earth he made brown men. Last of all, in the land of Shilluk, he took black earth and made black men of it."¹

In the thought of many Africans the idea of the Supreme Being is associated in more or less degree with the celestial phenomena, whether the sky, or the rain, or the sun. From our examination of the names used for God it appears that the connection is predominantly with the sun. Thus we note that though the Pero word for sun fori shows no affinity to their name for God, yet it is believed that Yamba abides in the sun during the day time and from this position is able to see everything that goes on among the people below. It is said that when it is exceptionally hot and the sun on the sandy road burns the feet of the traveller that God is angry. Though there is this connection with the sun there is no worship whatsoever given to it. "The Luyi of Northern Rhodesia," however, "take the sun to be the same as Nyambe.

1. Smith, op. cit., p. 32.

When it comes up they make a loud cry: 'See our king!' and they give worship."¹

The eclipse of the sun or moon is a matter of real concern for it is believed that something has obtained hold of it and is drawing it away. At such a time the Ashanti people, who believe that the moon having lost her road gets in the way of the sun, who begins to eat her, come out of their compounds and "beg" the sun to let her go. The begging is done by slowly clapping their hands.² While camping in a village some distance east of Pero one night there was an eclipse of the moon which caused a great deal of excitement for the entire time that the moon remained hidden. As soon as the eclipse commenced the elders of the town came to our tent and asked permission to "drive the darkness from the moon." Having been permitted their desire the whole town at once began crying and yelling at the top of their voices, many were clapping their hands, others were beating drums, while still others were engaged in performing rites. There was intense fear that the moon was being drawn away thus every effort they knew of was exerted to drive away the enemy. After two hours of shouting the moon appeared again and the people felt that their efforts had been rewarded.

Whilst it is thought that the workings of the ancestor

1. Ibid., p. 42.

2. Cardinall, Natives of Northern Territories of the Gold Coast, p. 24.

world are able to stop up the openings of heaven so that a drought will be the result, yet it is to God that the people look for rain to refresh the fields. And in this connection it will be helpful to note that the rainbow is also associated with Him. The Ba-ila, for instance, call the rainbow "Leza's bow", and the Ashanti refer to it as the "bow of Onyame".¹ The Peros likewise associate the rainbow with God and refer to it as yamyam, which term undoubtedly is a duplication of the first syllable of the name Yamba.

Though the Peros believe Yamba to abide in the sun during the day they also say that he is ya pidi dui, meaning that He is everywhere. They have difficulty in really localizing Him. The idea that God is everywhere is of course confined to their own group or tribe. And as to His presence with neighboring tribes, that is none of their concern. In what LeRoy quotes from the early missionaries, Krapf and Rebmann, we have an exact duplication in the Peros.

"Everywhere that you go, God is there."

"Take care. When you merely quarrel, he hears you."

"Even if you enter a ditch to hide, God sees you."²

Again one day one of the elders of the tribe informed me that Yamba is everywhere, in the day time in the sun, but at night He shows His concern by sitting on the threshold of each occupied hut watchfully guarding those who slumber. This latter conception of God may not be so much that of the watchful guardian as that of a policeman, as He seems to be thought of

1. Smith, The Secret of the African, p. 120.

2. LeRoy, op. cit., p. 123.

during the day time.

From Ithmann, writing of the Bakwiri, comes an unusual word about the kind of heaven God inhabits and also about the color of the spirits that reach it. He says, as Heaven is light and clean so is God. The departed human spirits are black until they have entered God's kingdom. In His domain God desires only "white" clean people.¹ Such a concept of the abode is singular among African beliefs as far as my knowledge goes and I suspect it is highly colored with European ideas. The account does not appear to fit into the picture of the primitives' beliefs.

Praise-names used in connection with Yamba are descriptive of this character as it is conceived by the people.

Thus we have:

An-kwia; creator, to make something from nothing.

An-k#l#; a friend.

Mu kan f#k kwo; he who has authority.

Map wala; the good one.

Mai; king.

In the chapter on Ancestor Worship we pointed out how God was referred to as An-k#l# (friend) in opposition to the spirits of the forefathers which are thought as mur# (death). Yamba is a friend. This friendly relationship is evidenced again in the fact that in all the stories of the origin of death

1. Africa, vol. viii, p. 256.

noted in chapter four the Africans have exonerated God from the blame of sending death into the world.

It will have been observed by this time that no mention has been made of God as being referred to as father. Such an idea is absent from the Pero conception and appears to be lacking in the beliefs of other tribes. Nassau, however, records that the Gabon people call on God as "All-Father".¹

Good fortune, whether it is to be saved from disaster or to have had good luck, are both attributed to God. Men coming in from the hunt with game will exclaim in satisfaction "Yamba!" Those who were unsuccessful in the chase will say as well, "Yamba". While working in the garden one day I removed my hand from some leaves just a few seconds before a hidden viper could have injected his poison. The gardener remarked at once "Yamba". To have been bitten by the snake would have called forth the same ejaculation. Misfortunes which do not have their explanation in any known cause are attributed to God with an attitude of resignation, and not with the thought of revenge in their heart, as is the case when ancestor spirits are the causative force. In case of such deaths the Peros express their resignation to His working by saying, "Yamba munğä, Chaka satugä." "God gave, He has taken." Yamba's way is best; not only who can resist His will and way, but who would desire to do so. With such

1. Nassau, op. cit., p. 35.

nearness is God to the African, yet He is so far away that from their side they are at a loss how to approach Him.

A belief by the Bakwiri is indeed interesting as well as illuminating and presents another evidence of God's benevolent concern. As most primitives, they say that children are a gift from God. If children are to be born God (Owase) calls a gathering of the ancestor spirits and distributes "blood packets". The ancestor spirits deliver the packages to the women. They believe that the barking of the "flying dogs" and that of the large bats, which resemble the ringing of a blacksmith's anvil is merely God working in heaven forging children out of the "blood packets". The barking is an indication that someone in that home or in that relation will ¹ conceive.

Though God is thought of by the Peros as a friend yet there is an attitude of fear and respect towards Him. Thus when someone starts on an iniquitous errand he will be rebuked by a friend earnestly saying "Yamba!" meaning "But what about God?" Or again the reprimand may be in the words "Don't you fear God?"

Using the name for Supreme Being is not taboo, however, as it is among the people of Bechuana land, of whom Brown says, "If the name Modimo is mentioned in ordinary conversation when reference is made to this being, the people will

I. Africa, vol. viii, p. 359.

gaze at the profaner of the name, struck dumb with dread, expecting speedy death as the punishment for such profanity."¹ Yet the Peros do not use the name indiscriminately and it is seldom heard from the lips of children. Nevertheless the influence of the incoming Hausa traders who speak the name "Allah" promiscuously in almost every conversation has within the past decade lessened the regard for Yamba.

Worship of the Supreme Being.

Among African tribes the Peros are not alone in their lack of images to represent the Supreme Being. "Images of the Highest Being", says Dr. Smith, "are not common in Africa. In fact there are almost no images of him."² LeRoy's findings³ likewise give evidence to the absence of material representations of God. Nor is magic art, which has to do with earthly spirits, used to reach Him or influence Him. He is too far away, inaccessible to man.

As to whether God is actually worshipped there are various opinions held by those who have studied African religion. Of the Ashanti Rattray says, "it is hardly an exaggeration to say that every compound ---- contains an altar to the Sky God, in the shape of a forked branch out from a certain tree which the Ashanti call --- God's tree".⁴ On

1. Quoted by Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 84.
 2. Smith, *African Beliefs*, p. 41.
 3. LeRoy, *op. cit.*, p. 128.
 4. Rattray, *Ashanti*, p. 142.

this forked post a pot or bowl with offerings to the Sky God are placed. It is recorded that the Bakwiri of the Cameroon definitely have communion with God and upon special festival occasions the women bring to Him an offering which is placed on a stand separate from the offerings to the ancestors which are poured on the ground. The Bakwiri also call on God with short prayers in the words of which they place much faith, believing that even while the word is being spoken it is working.¹

The Peros, however, do not appear to have such close communion with God as do the Bakwiri, nor do they make offerings to Him as do the Ashanti. Nevertheless they do look to Him in prayer upon occasion, and at times of making offerings to the ancestor spirits His name is sometimes invoked or the offerings are made in the name of God. A man in the process of purchasing an animal for a ritual killing will speak of his task as "Shuran Yamba" (work of God). But it is doubtful that the offerings are conceived of as being conveyed to God rather than the spirits of the dead.

Bosman states that the Whydah people of Dahomey "do not pray to God, or offer any Sacrifice to him"². A like report comes from Willoughby concerning the Bantu. He says that though they believed in a Great Spirit they never worshipped Him.³ Smith states that if offerings are ever made to the

1. Africa, vol. viii, pp. 360-362.

2. HERSKOVITS, *op. cit.*, vol. ii, p. 289.

3. Willoughby, Race Problems in the New Africa, p. 78.

Supreme Being, it is done rarely.¹

Thus we note that for the most part God is not directly worshipped, if at all, and that communion is had with Him on even fewer occasions. Worship with the primitive is largely propitiation, placating the enemy spirits. But the qualities of God, which are believed to be benevolent, have not provoked the need of His being appeased. Furthermore, the vagueness of the God-concept has made direct devotion to Him seem impossible. Yet of His existence and concern for the people they are certain.

1. Smith, The Religion of Lower Races, p. 55.

CHAPTER XI

SUMMARY OF THE RELIGIOUS CONCEPTIONS

The same characterization that Paul of Tarsus made of the religious beliefs of the Athenians as he addressed them on Mars Hill can be applied to the religion of the people of the Pero tribe. True it is, that "in all things they are religious." To them religion is not merely a separate department of life, but is a vital part of the whole. Through it the values of life are maintained.

The functioning of this religion in the human being resides in the soul, which, it is believed, is the life-giving substance of all the various faculties of the being. With death these faculties disappear while the chilim (soul) survives, and in many cases becomes even more active and powerful in the life of the descendants of its former owner, for not only does it require to be appeased but may even be re-incarnated.

Thus foremost in the realm of their religious beliefs is the veneration of the ancestor spirits, which, however, was not the beginning of religion with the primitive. By these spirits the life of the individual is directed so as to serve the welfare of the community at large. This is its principal contribution. In the worship of them there are absorbed for the most part those religious feelings that are

common to man. And as the ancestor worship increases that towards the first Object of worship decreases. This is its principal evil. Thus to label ancestor worship in the words of Schmidt "the first heresy" is not incorrect.

Even as the human spirits of the ancestor world have detoured the devotion of the Peros, so the inhuman spirits of the many minor deities have absorbed their aspirations. It is believed that if one god is not able to provide the assistance needed others must be resorted to, consequently the existence of a whole pantheon of deities, separate, yet such as may be used interchangeably upon occasion.

A decline in the worship of the ancestor gods and minor deities took place with the introduction of fetishes, in which, it is believed, reside magical power. If spirits could dwell in human beings, trees and the elements of nature, then particles belonging to these would likewise be possessed of spirit power. At first these were used to good purposes only, but as their power was realized they became a weapon in the hands of anti-social agents. As the worship of ancestors is a deterrent to the worship of the Supreme Being, so the veneration of fetishes is disintegrating to the ancestor cult. "Fetishes spoil the gods" was the complaint of some pagan priests. Again fetishes create individuals who soon have regard for no authority but that which is contained in their own charms.

The religious conceptions expressed in the foregoing paragraphs are the sum total of what the hasty observer sees. These beliefs are in such abundance that they are constantly on the surface. In fact it is with these that the primitive appears mainly to be concerned. He is interested in ritual, and not creed.

But the religious thinking of African primitives, and of the Peros in particular, includes not only an idea of a Supreme Being but has as its origin and constant animating force a definite belief in this Supreme Being. This belief is at the very center of their thinking, yet according to their actions it has been pushed to the very periphery of the religious life.

For God every tribe has a name, and in most cases this name is definitely expressive of the longings of the soul of the people towards the Divine. The universality among Africans of this belief in the Supreme Being and the similarity of the expressions used in referring to Him is a matter that cannot be easily pushed aside.

God is conceived of by the Peros as "Spirit", and on the whole He is benevolent, having a concern for human kind whom He created. Because He is all powerful His approach to man is possible, but that of man to Him is shrouded in magic, distance and ignorance. These like ivy round the stem and branches of the tree have not only made the true religious aspirations invisible but have sapped it of its very life.

CHAPTER XII

THE CHRISTIAN APPROACH THROUGH NATIVE BELIEFS

Having noted that the Peros have certain beliefs which direct the life of the community and the individual, and that these beliefs are religious in the very sense of the word; we can now direct our attention to indicating those conceptions which have value as foundation-stones for the teaching of Christianity. If the indigenous beliefs were simply a human code to be adhered to, a mere response to the collective needs of the community, then a theistic religion as is Christianity would fail to have any points of contact, or basis of appeal in the thought life of the people. Then, indeed, it would be a foreign religion brought to a people who had none. But such is not the case.

There are values and truths in the pagan religion, and our concern here is to note such as may be utilized in building up the fabric of truth as it is in the Christian religion. "All the truth that is in heathenism", says Hetherwick, "is to be found in Christianity, and all the goodness that is in heathenism is to be found in its completeness in the religion of Jesus Christ."¹

1. Hetherwick, The Gospel and the African, p. 191.

The Prevailing Uncertainty

The first characteristic feature of the religion of the Peros is the prevailing uncertainty. Contrary to the opinion of some the primitive's religion, at least in outward form, is not a stabilized one but changing from time to time. Witness the change from a complete faith in the spirits of the ancestors to a belief in magical mechanisms, or the change over to Mohammedanism. Note the rise and decline of cults, which for the time being consume all the religious zeal of the devotees. The arm-slashing cult gabra, for instance, was introduced into the Kulu and neighboring tribes within the last half century and every 'full-blooded' young man became a follower. Among the various cults it became important indeed. But through one act of the government, provoked by the desires of the elders of the people, the cult five years ago was given the fatal blow. The devotion it formerly absorbed is now extended in honor of some other deity with as good results. Thus throughout life the people have resorted to various deities; and more than that they must have faith in and pay obeisance to numerous spirits at the same time, perchance the one fails to gratify their longings they can turn to another.

Paganism is not merely one power but a complex of forces. And if one were to ask the devotee which of the powers are most beneficial his answer would be "Do we know?" or "Shinu n ti nabun we" meaning that they try this or that hoping that

success will come. Not only are they indefinite in the method of approach to the supernatural powers but also of the exact direction of their spiritual aspirations they are not certain.

In such a world of perplexity the human soul craves for certitude. Hence, the implicit trust in the authority of the elders and in the word of the ritual priest. The words of the inspired mediums are listened to and obeyed for they are believed to be reports from another world of which the people know nothing. In the chapter on Magic we noted how even the anti-social agent, the sorcerer, was regarded as having special power and thus his advice was not only sought but regarded highly. Indeed, the pagan African seeks for a voice that speaks with authority, and such will not fail to have a following.

Christianity comes to him as a definite announcement, some sure information about the Supreme Being. And to the extent that it is authoritative will the African have an answer to the cry of his heart for truth and light which his old faith is unable to meet. No longer will he need to arm himself with amulets and beliefs in several deities and turn from one to the other in hopes of receiving help. His divided devotion to the various cults will be focalized in one loyalty to the source of that inner urge which causes him to search for truth and light. If Christianity will be able

to help the African solve those problems of life's mystery and unify his religious aspirations, then, indeed it will take root and find fertile soil in his thought life.

When thinking of Mohammedanism and its rapid expansion over north and west Africa we are reminded that it spread by the power of an over-mastering conviction, noted principally in their call to prayer, "There is no God but Allah, and Mohammed is his prophet." "Islam neither proves, nor persuades, nor disputes; it simply asserts", comments Warneck.¹ Against such the pagan religion, with its divided devotion, is unable to stand.

Thus in this characteristic uncertainty of the pagan religion Christianity, which brings an authoritative message, not only finds a valuable approach but satisfies a longing without which there cannot be "health" of life.

The Mystical Conception of the World.

"Where we have the place and property and influence of spirit - that mystical essence of the universe - so fully recognized as the basic element in every phenomenon of life, we have there a soil ready prepared to receive the seed of a Gospel which is above all things spiritual. We have no need, therefore," says Hetherwick, "to prove to the African the existence of the supernatural forces and energies in human

1. Warneck, John, The Living Forces of the Gospel, p. 192.

life."¹ A belief in these things is everywhere present and spirits abound on every hand in the African's world. There are those indwelling inanimate objects, and those of his forefathers. There are those that make him ill, and still others that can keep him well. But the highest that is to be found in these mystical powers and activities is not lacking in the truths that Christianity has to reveal to the minds of men.

Christianity is in essence spiritual and has to do primarily with the soul of man. Herein alone does it find a response. The Pero's thought of the chilim as being "soul power" pervading and energizing every faculty of the human body (cf. p. 154) provides excellent soil for the seed of the Gospel. To the extent that the seed germinates and grows will every faculty of the body be influenced and the whole man be changed in accordance with the energizing force, the chilim.

It is this soul that is of most importance to the individual. Without it, it is believed, the physical being would soon wither and die. During illness the very thought of being without the soul produces collapse and the patient seems to lose all interest in life. Resigning himself to his fate he makes no effort to recover. A religion which embodies hope as does Christianity alone can meet the need

1. Hetherwick, op. cit., p. 103.

of such an hour.

The importance attached to the soul while indwelling its owner is carried over into life after death. Survival after death is taken for granted by the African. Though this belief in the survival of the spirits of the departed does not imply a belief in immortality, neither does it deny such a thought, yet it does furnish a foundation stone for the teaching of immortality, which might well be appropriated by the Christian messenger.

The soul, which is the center of the pagan man's religion, is likewise, as noted above, the animating power of his entire life. Thus it follows naturally that his religion should have to do with all of life. The idea of keeping it boxed up as one department is quite alien to him. Therefore the Christian approach will do wisely to recognize the fact that religion with the African is concerned with the whole of life, and use as many of the aspects of the people's life for the inculcation of the truths as possible.

It was observed that when the images and fetishes no longer seemed good or appeared to contain power usable by the owner, that they were thrown away to break off any intercourse with them and new ones were secured. Hence it follows that the severing of intercourse with such artifices by destroying them when the individual becomes a Christian, having

placed his faith in Christ, is merely the normal procedure. Not only in his old beliefs is the physical act of separation valuable in stabilizing the faith in the new power.

The Supreme Being.

We cannot commence the discussion of this basic point of contact in a better way than to quote an observation made by Andrew Lang which is similar to our experience of the early efforts of presenting the Christian idea of God to the Pero people. "We cannot" he says, "but observe this reciprocal phenomenon: missionaries often find a native name and idea which answer so nearly to their conception of God that they adopt the idea and the name, in teaching. Again, on the other side, the savages, when first they hear the missionaries' account of God, recognize it, ---- for what has always been familiar to them."¹

The belief then, in a High God serves as a very important foundation stone for the Christian truth. It is not necessary to prove His existence, for all the elders of the tribe readily assent to the declaration that "God is". Atheism is unknown among primitive Africans.

True it is, as we have pointed out before, the God-concept is vague with some tribes, so much so that at times it escapes observation. But the fact of its presence is of great impor-

1. Lang, Andrew, The Making of Religion, p. 250.

tance. "It is a vein, a reef of gold, which must be worked with great care."¹ The approach then, as Warneck points out, is to aid in liberating the dim remnant of God-consciousness that exists and thereby win a position from which the teaching of the new faith may begin to be understood.²

The fact that the Peros turn to Yamba whenever the explanations for the incidents of daily life cannot be found in the affairs of the ancestor cult or the realm of inanimate spirits is significant for the Christian appeal. Yamba ultimately is the Force that has to be recognized. Likewise the use of His name in daily speech has value as a point of contact. He is, so it is believed, not responsible for only one department of life but is at the root of all of it.

The various epithets ascribed to God are very suggestive. To speak of Him as the Creator, even to people who have never heard of the Gospel, will not fail to receive a favorable response, for thus He is thought of by the people. The terms an-kwia, meaning creator; an-käl#, meaning friend; mu kan f#k kwo, meaning he who has authority; mun wala, meaning the good one; mai, meaning king; Yamba chilim, meaning God is a spirit; all of which the Peros apply to Yamba, can all be used to great advantage by the missionary in the teaching of the Christian truth.

1. Shropshire, The Church and Primitive People, p. 340.

2. Warneck, op. cit., p. 208.

Although the above characteristic names are given to the Supreme Being yet the people's knowledge about Him is only in embryonic state, it is greatly limited. First of all, it appears, that they are at a loss as to a knowledge of the personality of God. True it is, some believe Him to be in the sun during the day, watching the people, yet this conception may be a personification of the sun, which in the tropics seems kind in the morning but cruel at noon-day. It is doubtful if their thought goes beyond the sun, to a conception of a God that is personal. When speaking of the sun they refer to it in the masculine, just as they refer to God as "he" and never "it". A personal God, however, would mean that He was accessible to the people as well as His making contact with them. But the former, that of the people approaching God, is conceived of by the Peros as most difficult if not impossible.

The Christian truth in making the impersonal Yamba an active personal Being makes indeed an important contribution to the religious life of the people. For it follows that such a personal Yamba has a definite concern for each individual. The step, then, from this point to that of the new truth of a Heavenly Father is not difficult.

The God-concept of the Peros has no idea of morality attached to it. Many times has the answer to my question on this matter been merely, "Do we know?". It is an alien

thought to them that God is "moral and spiritual perfection" - our conception of holiness. In this lack of their attributing holiness to God Christianity is offered another point of contact for the teaching of one of its main truths.

Finally, the thought of one God, Creator of heaven and earth and of all tribes; One who is not only all powerful, but also concerned for each individual; One alone who need be regarded and worshipped, has a mighty emancipating effect on the worshipper of many deities, on the one who has been forced to regard numerous gods, going from one to the other. "One God; not many" - is the glad message for such a person.

Through Beliefs about the Ancestor Cult.

When speaking of the religious value in the African's concept of soul we mentioned the use that Christianity should make of the belief in the survival after death in its teaching of immortality, notwithstanding the fact that few of the spirits are recalled after several generations. They are forgotten and others take their place in the devotion of the living. Just how long the spirits continue or if they are immortal, has never bothered the mind of the primitive. Those that he remembers are sufficient for the homage he is able to give.

Our study of the ancestor cult revealed that punishment was measured out to transgressors not only in this life in

the form of sickness, sterility, and scanty crops, but also, though in a far less degree, in a future punishment which the Peros call the "second death". Whether this dread of punishment imparts any real moral fabric to the character is doubtful. But in the concept of transgression receiving its due reward there is a point of contact. The counterpart, however, of belief in rewards for good deeds according to their degree of virtue is entirely lacking in their religious thinking.

One of the most important elements of the ancestor cult that serves well as a foundation stone for the Christian approach is the communal bond of all the members. All those who have the same ancestor cult are one. With the Peros the symbol of this unity is in the shield. K#t#n dok, which means one shield, includes all those who were allies in the days of tribal warfare. All such are one in the worship of kinema. As the shield was their common protector from the human enemy so the kinema is their method of doing homage to and placating the spirits of the departed.

Communal participation in the religious festivals is the general practice. This as well as the clan-organization shows clearly that a union of brotherhood, within which no member lives for himself alone, is a reality to the African; and provides a helpful basis on which the Christian truth of a wider fellowship can be taught. Indeed, to have this

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community consciousness is a first essential in the approach to the thought life of the people for the social unit is not the individual but the group.

A great defect in this bond of unity as it exists lies, however, in the fact that its boundaries are limited to those of the particular tribe or group. The code of laws that must be adhered to within the confines of the tribe is not operative outside. Theft or adultery, which is forbidden within the bond of unity and if committed is punished, is permissible against people of other tribes without any thought of receiving due punishment from the spirits of the ancestors. To people of other tribes, who are not considered neighbors, you can be as hateful and wicked as you feel safe. Such a belief in what is right and what is wrong lends little support to the theory that the code of action has a moral basis. Rather it is sociocentric for the particular group, and based upon the people's ideas of what is best for the welfare of the community. This being the case it follows that what is deemed legitimate in one tribe may be counted a transgression in another. It is not the individuals that vary, but the thought concepts that are different. Thus in this field of presenting a single unifying code of morals which transcends the boundaries of the tribe as well as serve the welfare of the communal life a large opportunity is given the Christian message.

The communal ownership of the land by the spirits of the forefathers and the belief by the people that the land is theirs to use and not to own and treat as property, furnishes an excellent approach to the truth of God's ownership and man's stewardship of the possessions. The very thought of his dependence upon the land keeps him in touch with God. Gutmann writing of the disintegrating effects upon the African when he is no longer dependent upon the land says, "The man who is cut from the soil loses his feeling of touch with God. When that is gone it is easy to extinguish in him the consciousness of God's existence."¹ This, of course, is not only true of the African.

The Domain of Fear.

When we come to the realm of fear, which verily is as chains about the primitive's soul, we note that this fear is the outcome of his religious beliefs. First of all the ignorance of the world about him, especially in the supernatural realm, is immense. He is not acquainted with the workings of nature, nor is he aware of the existence of rational causes for the incidents of human and animal life. This illiteracy results in the whole unknown world being populated by numerous kinds of spirits, some of which are good while others have evil as their intent.

1. Africa, vol. VIII, 1935, p. 7.

Foremost among the fears is that of offended spirits, the particular ghost displeased as well as the offense being shrouded in uncertainty. The attempt at protective charms is an evidence of the tremendous fear of the anti-social agents, black magic and witchcraft, both of which must be reckoned with by the primitive. The very precariousness of his own soul, which we noted was in the custom of leaving the body when it was unconscious, or was easily made to escape by some accident, creates a dread with which there is no equal. And the fear of death itself, which appears to be eased somewhat by being cloaked in an attitude of resignation to the powers of the supernatural world, is nevertheless recalled at every funeral.

It should be added, however, that the fear of what might follow the neglect of duty to the spirits of the dead, or the breach of some tribal or family custom, or the breaking of some taboo has done much to direct the moral life of the society. Yet the very fear of the members of the supernatural realm upon which the code of laws is based and is held intact places bands about the individual's soul and prevents the building of moral fiber into character.

In this whole realm of fear Christianity not only becomes meaningful in lifting the clouds of superstition which cause that fear, but in providing a self-control based upon the power of God. The appeal of the former, that of being

emancipated from the sway of the powers of darkness, appears to be greater than that of being redeemed from the powers of sin.

The System of Ritual.

While creed is non-existent in the religion of the Peros ritual is most important. Principal among the rites are those of propitiation and those of thanksgiving, the former being more often the case. Every transgression of native law and religion must be righted by the performance of some rite, not that there is remorse for the sin committed, but because every such act must be compensated by payment. In general it follows the law of "an eye for an eye," and "a tooth for a tooth".

The thought of sin in the religious beliefs is wanting, thus all iniquity is merely to "spoil the words" or "to tread upon the laws" which literally is transgression. Likewise a word for forgiveness is lacking, the usual term used by the people is to "finish the words", meaning that the "words of anger" of the spirits must be placated. Upon occasion the term "my head is cooled" is used to express the thought, again implying the idea of placation. To remain on good terms with the spirit world is of most importance. Thus "the emphasis", says Shropshire, "in the sacrifice is less on the thought of sin or the sense of sin than on the

restoration of sacramental communion to a filial and loving relationship with the ancestors and this is the essence of the meaning of all such sacrifices".¹ The consciousness of sin as well as the thought of atonement appear not to be evident in the religious conceptions. But in the strong belief that every transgression must be righted by some ritual offering there is laid the foundation-stone for the teaching of the truth about the sacrifice at Calvary.

The task of the medicine-man is in essence spiritual. And as it relates to the revealing of hidden sins it provides an approach for the value of the confession of guilt in the growth of the Christian. Without a full confession and the proper sacrifice which the medicine man demands of the patient the medicine would be useless and the thought of recovery hopeless. The spiritual insight of this practitioner reaches out far enough for him to know that disease cannot be healed if some unconfessed wrong is obstructing the way. Hence, in the interest of health of body, every transgression is voluntarily disclosed by the patient.

The ritual killings that are acceptable by the Pero religious leaders, whether it be for propitiation or thanksgiving, must be animals "without spot and without blemish" as referred to in Scripture.² For the slightest defect the animal

1. Shropshire, *op. cit.*, p. 343.

2. Exodus 12:5; 1 Peter 1:19.

or fowl will be rejected by the officiating priest. In this as well as in the use of the blood we have similarities to the practices of Judaism. With the Peros the blood of the ritual animals, which is permitted to escape only after the animal has been clubbed to death is sprinkled over the images, fetishes and stones. This "sprinkling" of the blood appears to be an important rite. There appears to be "life in the blood". We noted that the Ibos draw a line of blood from the ritual dog on the ground about the corpse to give protection from dangers drawing near.¹ The gabra cult of the Kulu tribe has as one of its principal initiation rites the slashing of the arm. The blood thus released is partaken of by the novice. And among the Gabon, Nassau tells that "in an expected great evil the gateway is sometimes sprinkled with blood of the sacrificed goat or sheep".²

That the vital part of life is offered to the spirits is evidenced again in the fact that the liver, which is the seat of feeling, of kindness, of patience, of good or bad, in fact, the most important of the organs of the body, is always the portion which belongs to the unseen powers. After it is broken into three pieces it is thrown to the spirits.

The avenues of appeal for the truths of Christianity in all of these practices are self-evident. Likewise the ritual connected with agriculture, such as the seedtime rites

1. Cf. p. 142.

2. Nassau, Fetichism in West Africa, p. 93.

or those associated with the gathering of the harvest, serves as a valuable approach, as does also that related to the birth of a child or to the marriage ceremony.

Attempts at communion between this world and that which lies beyond are general with Africans, and the extent and success of these efforts varies with different tribes. Though the type of prayers the primitive mind offers may not be to our taste, yet in the fact that they believe in the possibility of such communion, and use it upon numerous occasions, a "bridge of prayer" has been built which can readily be utilized in the new Faith.

Upon one occasion when the pagan relatives had deposited the corpse of a Christian in the grave I requested permission to offer a prayer before the grave was filled. Everyone was quiet during the interval after which the burial was completed. The elders, seemingly grateful for the prayer, then remarked to one of the Christian men saying that the "teacher" still retained some of the principles of the early fathers. These elders saw in this "bridge of prayer" something they had forgotten.

Finally, we observe that in no instance in the Peros' religious life does the individual approach the unseen except as through another. If it is through the father of the home he then acts as the priest, but more often it is through the specially appointed priest of the entire clan or several

clans. This priest acts as the intermediary between the people and the supernatural realm. He in turn alone is able to reveal the desires of this unseen world to the people. From this excellent vantage point it is not far to the teaching of the vital truth of Christianity, that of Jesus Christ as God's appointed intermediary between mankind and Himself. Through faith in Him alone can the religious aspirations of the Peros fully realize the goal for which they were bestowed.

APPENDIX

Idiomatic Expressions.

1. Fākerāshāni bok - His liver is soft, i.e., He is soft-hearted.
2. Ne wanna kan fākeno - I have come with my mouth, i.e., I have eaten nothing.
3. Yāgāno fādōgā - My stomach came out, i.e., I was terrified.
4. Paroni warogā ya shāzhā - His words went to the grass, i.e., He was scatter-brained.
5. Ne munji shunkuli ti paroni - I give truth to his words, i.e., I believe him.
6. Paroni ti kākāi - His words are in the road, i.e., He is saying the right thing.
7. Paroni kan shizhauro - His words are with a left, i.e., His talk is incorrect.
8. Kumbili ikā ili - His bottom has caught the ground, i.e., He is able to sit up. (as a baby)
9. Sirani baq - His hands are hard, i.e., He is stingy.
10. Sikeno tomun - My body is sweet, i.e., I am happy.
11. Shinu pirugā wuzi - They have built a fire, i.e., They have started housekeeping.
12. Ka pena? - Have you come out? i.e., How are you?
13. Fori ikā ili - The sun has caught the ground, i.e., The sun is very hot. (evidently expressed in this way because of the hot sand burning the soles of the bare feet)
14. Chaka mungā fākeni - He gave his mouth, i.e., He promised.
15. Ne ta waro ya chu kasua - I am going to eat the market, i.e., I am going to the market.

16. Chaka kam kan doni - He is with his eyes, i.e., He is awake, or it may mean, he is alive.

17. Chaka kachi f#k Hausa - He speaks the mouth of the Hausawa, i.e., He speaks the Hausa language.

18. We siki shoni gbude - The result for his feet is large, i.e., His reward is large.

19. Chaka a peno fori m - He does not know the sun, i.e., He is not accustomed to the sun.

20. A kam sirano m - I have no hands, i.e., My hands have no strength.

Folk-lore.

The Leopard Story.

There lived on Mt. Yoro a leopard which became very hungry for a goat. His mother told him that there were many goats at Kushi. But he did not know the road. His mother said, "the road to Kushi is a long road. I have much work to do or else I would go with you. I am afraid for you to go alone. But if you go be very, very careful. There are many men on the road. If you see a man coming climb into a tree and hide among the branches. Stay there until the man is gone."

The little leopard started on the road. He walked and walked and finally he saw a man coming. He remembered his mother's words and climbed the tree. He hid himself among the branches. He watched the man pass and he said, "That is a good man. I am not afraid of men. My mother doesn't know how good the men are and how they walk so nicely on the road."

The little leopard came down from the tree and continued on the road to Kushi. Another man came down the road. The leopard said, "My mother doesn't know. This is a good man."

He climbed the tree but sat on a lower branch so that he could see the man pass. But the man saw him. The man took his spear and killed the leopard.

Reward for a Kind Deed.

Once upon a time there was a very old woman. She was very hungry and she would go from house to house begging food. But the people were very selfish and would not give her food. Then she came to a big house and she said, "I am very hungry, please give me food."

But the people were very angry and told her that she was not a good woman, that good women do not beg for food. This made her very sad. As she came to another house she was almost afraid to ask for food. But because she was very, very hungry she asked timidly for some food. Here lived a real good man and he was very sorry for her. He gave her food. The woman ate and ate until her hunger was gone. Then the old woman turned into a ghost and in her hand she had a very good spear. The ghost gave the spear to the man as his reward for being good to her. The ghost said, "This is a very good spear. When you go on a hunt you will kill much meat."

This made the man very happy.

The Story of a Fly.

Once upon a time there was a fly and a piece of food who were hoeing in the field. It rained. Then they decided it was time to go home. When they came to the stream they found that there was much water in the stream. The fly flew over the stream and sat down on the opposite bank. The piece of food saw the fly fly over the stream and it looked very easy. So the piece of food tried to fly but fell into the stream and the water carried the piece of food down, down the stream. The fly began to laugh and then laughed some more. Then his stomach bursted because he laughed so hard. Finally the fly went to the doctor to have his stomach mended. And that ends the story of the fly.

The Ghost and her Home.

There was once a ghost that had no home. She sat upon a big rock, and began thinking how nice it would be to have a home. So she decided that she would get others to help her. First she saw a jackal. She called the jackal to come and dig the clay for her home. The jackal dug the clay. Then the ghost had to find some one to carry the clay. So she called a squirrel. The squirrel was very slow but he carried the clay. Then she saw some big crickets and some little crickets. She called them to come and moisten the clay with their saliva and to build the walls of her house. A very old man passed by and asked the crickets what they were doing. They told him that they were building a house for the ghost but that there was no work for him. When the walls were completed the ghost called for the blackbirds to come with grass to roof the house. When the roof was finished the ghost moved into her new home.

Yagal and the Leopard.

Once upon a time there was a leopard. She had some children, and they were very hungry. So she left her children in her house and went out to look for some food. While she was gone Yagal and his wife Gudumama happened to find the little leopards. They took the baby leopards home with them. When they reached home Yagal and Gudumama ate the little leopards. When the mother leopard returned to her home, she found that her children were gone. She noticed the footprints of Yagal and followed them. Finally she arrived at Yagal's house.

The leopard asked, "Have you seen my children? They are not at home."

Yagal replied, "Yes, I saw them. My wife and I have

eaten them."

The mother leopard became very angry and said to Yagal, "Come out of your house and I shall eat you."

Yagal replied, "I want to eat some food."

So the mother leopard sat down and waited and waited for Yagal to eat his food. When Yagal had finished he hid in his house. Yagal was afraid of the leopard.

Again the leopard called, "Come out of your house, and I shall eat you."

But Yagal was afraid and remained hid. The leopard became very tired of waiting and decided to enter the house. She went in and hunted and hunted but she didn't find Yagal, so she decided to go to the Chief of Kpana. The chief took the leopard into his house and hid her among the water pots.

After Yagal saw that the leopard was gone he came out of the house and ran to the Chief of Kpana. The Chief of Kpana told him that he would find his food in a calabash setting on a water pot inside of the house. When Yagal went into the house to get his food, he heard a noise behind the pots and so he ran out of the house quickly.

Night came and so the Chief of Kpana said to Yagal you may sleep in the small hut where my son sleeps. The chief covered his son with a new blanket and he threw an old blanket over Yagal. After this he went to the leopard and told her that during the night she should go in and eat Yagal. Also he said, "My son is covered with a new blanket, but you will find Yagal under the old blanket."

After the chief went to bed Yagal awakened and took the old blanket and covered the chief's son. Then he took the new blanket to cover himself.

During the night the leopard went in and ate the chief's son, thinking he was Yagal. The next morning the chief saw what had happened. He caught the leopard and put her in a basket. Then he called Yagal and told him to take the leopard and sell her at the market. So Yagal started off with the leopard in his basket.

The leopard started eating a hole through the basket as she wanted to eat Yagal. Yagal saw her and so he threw the basket on the ground and killed the leopard with his spear. He roasted the meat and sold it at the market.

Yagal became rich and with his money bought a horse. To the chief's house he rode to show the horse. Then Yagal rode home.

The Two Crickets.

The cricket made a lovely porridge drink. When it was finished her son said he was hungry. So he began to drink some of the gruel. He drank and drank, and then he spilt some on his stomach which dried very quickly. He called for his mother to come and wipe off the porridge. When the mother cleared off the dried porridge, by rubbing the stomach, it bursted. The mother hurried him to a doctor. On the way she met another cricket. The cricket asked her where she was going. The mother replied that she was going to take her son to the doctor as his stomach had bursted. This cricket told her that the road to the doctor's house was very difficult and hard as it was filled with many stones. But the mother kept on going and finally arrived at the doctor's house. The doctor sewed up the boy's stomach. Then the mother and her son returned to their home very happy.

The Story of Deru (a wren)

Once upon a time there was a daughter of the Chief of Kpana. She did not like her house. She saw Deru's house and she thought that her house was so very lovely. She wanted Deru's house. So the princess called for a frog. She told the frog that she wanted Deru's house.

The frog asked, "What will you give me, if I get Deru's house for you?"

The princess replied, "I will give you some peanuts."

But the frog said, "I have plenty of peanuts, what else will you give me?"

The princess thought and finally said, "I shall give you some beniseed."

The frog replied, "I have plenty of beniseed."

The princess tried again and this time she said, "Since you have peanuts and beniseed, I shall give you some corn."

But the frog laughed and said, "I have corn."

The princess thought and thought and finally she asked, "But what do you want?"

The frog replied, "I want a fife."

So the princess gave him a fife.

The frog went to Deru's house and played his fife. Deru made food and a drink and gave it to him. But the frog did not want the food or the porridge drink. He took her house and went up the hill.

Deru sang, "I will make you a drink. It will revive you. I will make you food. It will revive you. We have taken Deru's house. Where is Deru's house? It is at the edge of the cliff."

The frog challengingly sang, "I have so much authority that when I smoke tobacco it turns into smoke at once."

The frog took Deru's house to the princess. He threw away her old house and put the new house in its place. The frog took the fife and began to play it.

A ghost came and said, "Give me the fife."

The frog refused, but the ghost grabbed the fife and ran away with it. The ghost played the fife. The frog called the bees and the wasps. The ghost ran as fast as she could but the bees and the wasps stung her. The ghost kept running and went up high on the mountain where she played the fife. The frog had to sit at the bottom of the mountain and hear the sweet music.

The Dog and His Wives.

There was a dog that had two wives. He did not like one of his wives. The dog explained to the people that he didn't like his first wife because she didn't make good food, so he lived with the other one. One day he returned to his first wife's house and she wasn't at home. But the dog asked his son if his mother had made food. His son replied, "Yes, there is some in the house."

The son got the food for his father. The father found the food very sweet and ate it all. Then he stuck his head into the pot and licked the pot. When he tried to get his head out he found that he couldn't. It was caught. So he called for his son to come and pull the pot off of his head. The son found a stone and hit the pot against the stone. The pot broke and cut his head. Now the dog returned to the house of his wife that he liked so well. She asked, "What happened to your head?"

He answered, "I hit it on a rock."

Then his son appeared and his mother asked him, "What happened to your father's head?"

The boy explained what had happened. The father cried, "Don't believe him. It was caused by falling on a rock."

But the woman was wise and said, "You ate the food that your other wife made."

She became very angry. She left him and married another dog.

Proverbs.

1. Wuzi ma ikā mina ninya a ta waro ya mirani m? =
When a house has caught fire do not people go to help? i.e.
It is not good to leave a man in trouble to fight the battle
himself.
2. Ari kopi dok ma chuko ta am n yu kpayel dui. = When
one locust seed falls in the water all the water tastes. i.e.
One evil fellow will spoil the goodness of the whole group.
"One bad apple will spoil a barrel full."
3. Dungu ke ta kpito jim. = Some day you will lean against
a tall stump. i.e. After death you will become aware of your
sin and leaning against a tree you will have thoughts of regret.
4. Ke dakelogān sira dige. = You have broken the handles
of a pot, i.e. You have committed a sin that is beyond repair
(when the handles of a pot are broken the pot cannot be re-
paired) Like as a man who has wasted the inheritance he re-
ceived and has laid up none of his own.
5. Ma palan yandā ke n tap karu kātān? = When you hear
the war cry will you then cut out a shield? i.e. One should
be prepared as for former wars, or now for tax time, and not
wait until the last moment. Also used in case of sickness
"an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure."
6. Chaka tokena jin ka do. = He stumbled over the stump
with his eyes. i.e. A man thinks the neighbor's field or that
of another is better than his, so he leaves a good field in
his interest in another. "A bird in the hand is worth two in
the bush."
7. Wuzi ikā kāntā biya n ivu mina biran. = Fire which
caught the goat hut is sure to catch the large house. i.e.
A small quarrel will quickly become a big fight.
8. Ke wushugā kada kumbiligo. = You have burned your loin
cloth (made from animal skin). i.e. Because of your subsequent
actions I'll not give you anymore. You have burned the bridge
of generosity.
9. Chaka n ti chu we ka shara. = He eats with a wooden
spoon. (The Peros eat with their fingers.) i.e. He trespasses
the customary way of doing a thing when he can gain thereby.
10. Yagāgo ti tom, ke tibi. = Your greedy desires are in
front, you are following. i.e. Sometime you will repent of
your selfish desires.

11. F#ki ka tom, kumo tibi. = Mouth ahead, ears following. i.e. He relates something before he has heard it.

12. Ke yieg# shinna kumbam, chukena ta lundi. = Your part has been that of bread which fell out of the food rack. i.e. Your actions of their own accord revealed you as the guilty person.

13. Turum leg# lauro n fuzhun elech ta f#ki, sana kpele manto. = A lion gave birth to a cub and spit in its mouth, it took on the anger of its mother. i.e. The iniquity of the mother is bound to visit her offspring. "Whatever a man soweth, that shall he reap."

14. Shwaman bwe meg# n yipo ya mina de? = Is it possible that there is no fermented drink in the house? i.e. Certainly there is some one among you who has some "fight" in him. (a request for help in time of a crisis.)

15. Ili shin lip terige wushiji pitu de? = In poor soil is it possible that terige (a weed very destructive to corn) will not grow? i.e. Evil is bound to spring forth and be victorious in the heart full of fear.

16. Chaka ta murani f#k bai. = He will die the death of a dog. i.e. As a dog dies in solitude and is not counted much, nor has any death ceremonies performed for it so is the death of a miser.

17. Wa kpado ta kpaga tatago. = Go finish it in the horns of your father. i.e. As an animal with horns punishes its victim as it desires, so the disobedient son is sure to get his punishment when he sees his father and to the father's liking.

Riddles.

1. Patan anini toko pepe a kam pidi marani m. = A number of pennies on a platter, but not able to count them.
x x x (The answer) the sky and the stars.
2. Tui n chukena, tui n sadi. = Red fell, red picked it up.
x x x a red palm fruit and a red monkey.
3. Tata ta mina pene chäk fäki ti pira. = Father in the house but his whiskers outside. xxx fire and smoke.
4. Diko minani pene a kam fäki m. He built his house but without an opening. x x x an egg.
5. Ne warogä ya shäzhä, ya shäzhä n ti shure no. = I went to the grass (the field) and the grass laughed at me.
x x x open cotton pods.
6. Ne shurogä kori shin gbude pene chau pan dok tokwi. = I planted a big field but only one hill of corn on it. x x x the umbilicus. (protruding considerably on most Peros and considered a thing of beauty)
7. Ne pilogä toje a kam pidi shupä linzami ta fäki m. = I bought a horse but there is no way of putting a bridle in his mouth. x x x a full stream.
8. Akop dok n kerä an prisoner sik. = One pair of handcuffs held one hundred prisoners. x.x x a native broom. (stems of stiff grass tied with one string)
9. Ture kemina shaki a tokizhi ninya sai fäki shele. = A stream full in the center that will not harm anyone save for its sides. x x x a two-edged sword.
10. Rigiya a shingizhi m. = A well that never ceases. x x x a dog's nose.
11. Shinu yiegä shene sik ta mallo pandi shin gbude, shinu a kpumu m. = They spent one hundred years surrounding a big rock but never did meet. x x x one's two ears.
12. Bara ti kähä a kam pidi avu sho tokwi m. = A corn stalk in the road but no possibility of hurdling it. x x x a river.

13. Ti kākā waro kori chaka weg# cherinye ninya ta shāzhā, chaka n waro kori, chaka n miru, bampidi. = On the way to the field he saw a man standing in the grass, he went to the field and returned, the form was still there. x x x an ant-hill.

14. Ne pilog# fumbala a kam teshan fāki m. = I bought a strip of cloth which had no end. x x x a road.

15. Widi widi ti kākā, biru lau n biru mungbude. = A switch on the road, it beat the child, it beat the man. x x x hunger.

16. Tāban toje ta mina pene kiliti ti pira. = A horse tethered in the barn but his tail outside. x x x an ear of corn in its husk and the silk.

17. Mandi shele mina chiba tārema n ti azhu yiyazhu. = In some villages the children carry their mothers. x x x a spinning top. (the small point supporting the large top)

Speciman of the Pero Vocabulary.

The "a" is pronounced as the "a" in awe, the "n" is nasalized as the "ng" in sing, and the glottal sound used only with "b" and "d" is indicated with a dot below the letter as in chipsa (children).

1.	Head	kwo, kwi
2.	Hair	ch ^h k
3.	Eye	ando
	Two eyes	ando pelu
4.	Ear	kumo
5.	Mouth	f ^h k
6.	Nose	wishin
7.	One tooth	wudo dok
	Five teeth	wudo fwat
8.	Tongue	dak
9.	Neck	bon
10.	Breast	wudi
11.	Heart	shuntun
12.	Stomach	yag ^h
13.	Back	kuma
14.	Arm	sira
15.	Hand	sira
	Two hands	sira pelu
16.	Finger	ari sira
	Five fingers	ari sira fwat
17.	Finger nail	kpatak sira
18.	Leg	sho
19.	Knee	furum
20.	Foot	sho
	Two feet	sho pelu
21.	Man (person)	ninya
	Ten people	ninya gbom ^h
22.	Man (not woman)	kpatin
	Two men	kpatin pelu
23.	Woman	pa ^h un
	Two women	cherip pelu
24.	Child	lau
	Children	chipsa
25.	Father	tata
26.	Mother	yiya
27.	Girl	kunyo
	Girls	kumiya
28.	Chief	mai
29.	God	Yamba
30.	Spirit	chilim

31.	Smith	an-kopa
32.	Doctor	an-kondul
33.	The earth	pebe
34.	Sky	kerugu
35.	Cloud	yebe
36.	Rainbow	yamyam
37.	Sun	fori
38.	Moon	tere
	Full moon	tere kengã
	New moon	tere shin fwe
39.	Day	palap
	Night	yipa
	Morning	seget
40.	Rain	am kerugu
41.	Water	am
	Well	fãk am
42.	Blood	tom
43.	Fat	shidur
44.	Salt	shwan
45.	Stone	pandi
	Iron	anyim
46.	Hill	pandi
47.	River	ture
48.	Road	kãkã
49.	House	mina
	Two houses	mina pelu
	Many houses	mina shin dakam
	All the houses	mina dui
50.	Roof	kwo mina
51.	Door	kãkã fãkena
52.	Mat	tãvãk
53.	Basket	kogo
54.	Drum	gangan
55.	Pot	dige
56.	Knife	waji
57.	Spear	kach
58.	Bow	anyan
59.	Arrow	fuzhok
	Five arrows	fuzhok fwat
60.	Gun	bindiga
61.	War	kich
62.	Meat (animal)	lã
63.	Elephant	lara
64.	Buffalo	kebine
65.	Leopard	shengini
66.	Monkey	fungi
67.	Pig	anyanchari
68.	Goat	biya
69.	Dog	ba1
70.	Bird	dio

	Feather	kala
71.	Parrot	likibit
72.	Fowl	foje
73.	Eggs	izi foje
	One egg	izi foje dok
74.	Rabbit	shuntuq
75.	Snake	kurit
76.	Frog	danjok
77.	Spider	lala
78.	Fly	tio
79.	Bee	shigini
	Honey	am shigini
80.	Tree	furo
	Ten trees	furo gbomd
81.	Leaf	alau furo
82.	Banana	ayaba
83.	Maize	k#m#
84.	Peanut	jura
85.	Oil	yalam
86.	Field	kori
87.	Hoe	tumba
88.	This	teje
89.	That	tere
90.	What	niya
91.	Yes	n
	No	nn
92.	I	ne
	You	ke (mas.), shi (fem.)
	He, she	chaka, te
	We	minu
	You (pl.)	ma
	They	shinu
93.	Our	wimu
	Your	shema
	Their	wizhu
94.	The tall woman	pamun shin joli
	The tall women	cherip min jađura
95.	Large dog	bai shin gbude
	Small dog	bai shin lauwiu
96.	Large chickens	foje min gbuđina
	Small chickens	foje min yititi
97.	Name	sumbd
	My name	sumbdno
	Your name	sumbdgo (mas.) sumbdzhi (fem.)
	What is your name?	sumbdgo niya?
98.	Go	waro
	I am going	Ne ta warani
	I will go	Ne kam ta warani
	I have gone	Ne warogd

99.	Ask	telā
	Ask him	tel# f#keni
	Ask her	tel# f#kero
100.	Strong	ban
	I am well	ne'baq
	I am not well	ne a ban m
	Are you well?	Ke ban a?

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