



---

Ju-Ju Laws and Customs in the Niger Delta

Author(s): C. N. de Cardi

Source: *The Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*, Vol. 29, No. 1/2 (1899), pp. 51-64

Published by: [Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2842576>

Accessed: 16/06/2014 18:50

---

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.



Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *The Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*.

<http://www.jstor.org>

## JU-JU LAWS AND CUSTOMS IN THE NIGER DELTA.

BY LE COMTE C. N. DE CARDL<sup>1</sup>

[WITH PLATES VIII AND IX.]

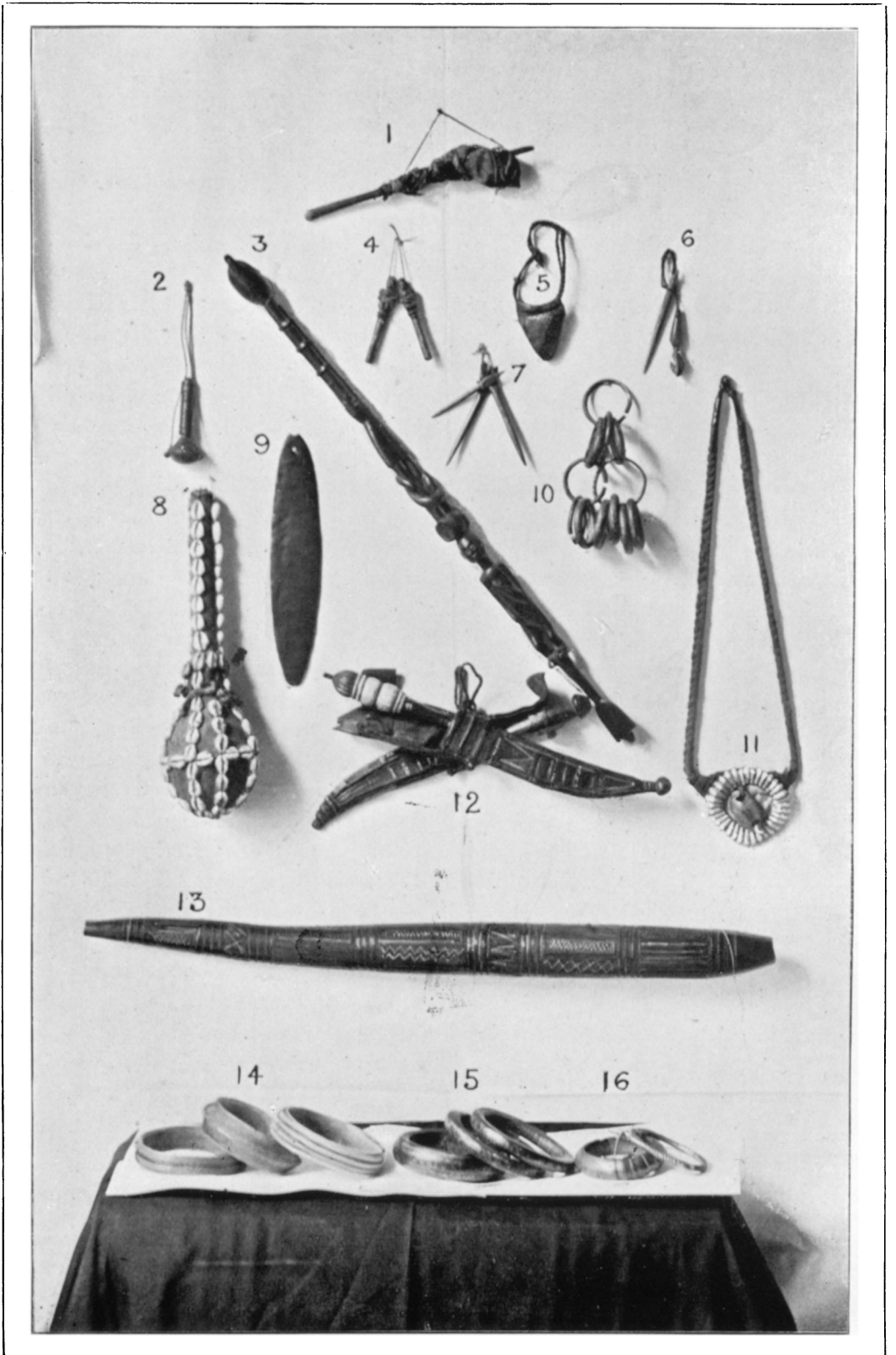
BEFORE I commence my paper I would like to impress upon my audience that I am neither an anthropologist nor an ethnologist in the scientific meaning of those terms. I am simply a man who has visited Western Africa on many occasions and resided there a considerable length of time. During my visits I have collected a number of facts about the negro people of Western Africa, and I willingly describe them to the best of my ability, so that real anthropologists and ethnologists can make use of my notes for the better understanding of the human race in general, and the negro race in particular.

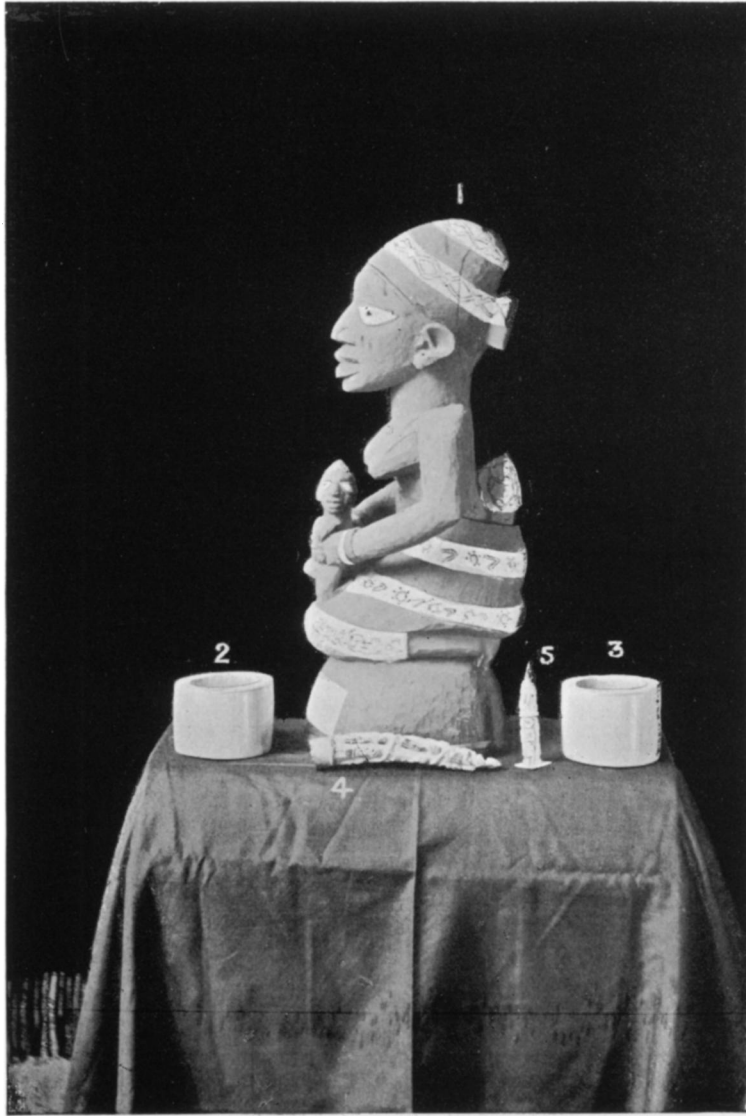
*Ju-Juism.*—I use this term in preference to Fetishism when speaking of the religion of the inhabitants of the Niger Delta, because the word *Ju-Ju* is usually made use of by the people of the Delta who are most in touch with Europeans.

During my many years' residence in Western Africa, principally in the Niger Delta, I have had many long and to me very interesting conversations with the Ju-Ju priests, many of whom I have found to be most intelligent men, though other travellers and writers have generally described these men in a very different manner; in most cases describing them as hideous looking and degraded monsters in human form.

One of the most intelligent Ju-Ju men I ever met with was a very old man named *Quākery* the Ju-Ju King of New Calabar, who ranked above the King in all purely native palavers, religious or civil, his opinion always carrying great weight. This man went farther in his explanations of native customs to me than any others with whom I came in contact, pointing out to me the great assistance Ju-Ju was in ruling the country. "For example," said he, "suppose your house was broken into and robbed, and you went to the King of my country and complained, he could not find out who had robbed you if the thieves had not been seen by some of the townspeople who were willing to give information to him. The King would do his best to find them out by sending messengers round to all his chiefs that you had been robbed, and that they must see if any of their people were the culprits; but that order would have little effect with the bad characters of the town, because it emanated from the King, who is a man like themselves, and from whom they would steal if they got the chance. But if I sent round a notice that, if the thieves did not immediately bring me the stolen articles my Ju-Ju

<sup>1</sup> Some portions of this paper were read before the British Association for the Advancement of Science at Bristol, September 7-14th, 1898.





would cause them (the thieves) to swell up and burst, you would see how quickly they would come to me and deliver up the stolen goods."

To further illustrate the good uses of Ju-Ju, my friend Quākery continued by saying, "During the many years you have been in my country have you ever seen a native woman put her foot on board a white man's ship?" I replied that as a matter of fact I never had. He then went on to tell me that "many, many years ago when the white men first came to his country native women had been allowed to go on board the white traders' ships, but that this custom had led to many serious troubles, and it had been decided by the former kings and chiefs that the Ju-Ju should make a solemn law to the effect that in future no native woman should be allowed to go on board a white trader's ship," and this law was never broken up to my last visit to New Calabar so far as I know, though advanced ideas were beginning to undermine the power of the Ju-Ju King. The above law concerning women I only met with in New Calabar.

Having described some of the uses of ju-juism I will now describe some of the abuses. In the hinterland of the Niger Delta is to be found the Ibo or Eboe tribe, whose country extends from the Yoruba borderland on the west, to the Ibibio country on the east. The Ibo or Eboe people have almost identical forms and customs of ju-juism with the coast tribes; this is not to be wondered at as the latter are mostly offshoots from the great Ibo or Eboe family.

In the Ibo country is found Long Ju-Ju, the abode of the most powerful Ju-Ju in this part of the country. In 1896 Major A. C. Leonard of the Niger Coast Protectorate Service, succeeded in getting to the town of Bendé, a town supposed to be situated within about thirty miles of the Great Fetish or the Long Ju-Ju of the coast tribes. I mention this fact as I consider Major Leonard's journey to be a great achievement, and that it will eventually lead to immense results commercially; also it will be the means at no distant date of giving to the world some very interesting and curious information about the practices of the Ju-Ju priests of this mysterious stronghold of native religion.

This is the great oracle of all the tribes dwelling in the Niger Delta; to it all family disputes are referred, and its decision is recognised as final; it is also appealed to, to decide the guilt or innocence in cases where a man of position has been accused of murder, witchcraft or poisoning.

The Long Ju-Ju was appealed to in olden days by tribes dwelling as far away as Lagos, and even some distance to the westward of that place; at the present day natives dwelling in the neighbourhood of Lagos still consult this oracle.

Human sacrifices are not made to this Ju-Ju after the manner of the sacrificial rights practised in Ashanti, Dahomey, and Benin. Still a certain amount of slaughtering of human beings goes on at the Long Ju-Ju to this day, for when two men go to Long Ju-Ju for the settlement of any dispute between them, it is customary for the losing party to be destroyed by its power; but in many cases to my certain knowledge the priests have found it much more remunerative to sell the losing litigant into slavery, for I have met with

and conversed with men whom I have known to have visited the Long Ju Ju, and who were supposed to have been killed by it. Whenever I have spoken to these men they never expressed a desire to return to their own country, with one exception; all the others being satisfied that their own people would never acknowledge they were anything else but spirits. The one exception was a man that I picked up in Old Calabar, having known him well in his own country before he went to Long Ju-Ju. I tried all I could to get his people to receive him back amongst them, but when I told them that I had actually got him on board my ship, then lying a few miles from their town, the whole populace seemed to rise as one man, and I was soon surrounded by a howling mob of infuriated savages, who were only appeased by my promising to take the man away from their river the next morning. On my return I found that none of the natives would come on board my ship, and on inquiry from the head Ju-Ju man of the town, I found that they considered the ship defiled by my having had the spirit of a man from Long Ju-Ju on board. As this took place long before the advent of the British Protectorate there was only one thing to be done, and that was to make a suitable present to the Ju-Ju King and get him to come on board my ship and make ju-ju: this he did, and then declared my ship free from all the evil effects of the malignant spirit I had had on board. But the King of the country was not going without his share of the plunder, so I had to make him a suitable present also, and invite him to breakfast on board, so that by his presence his people might see that all fear of evil consequences was at an end, as both the spiritual and temporal rulers of the country had visited my vessel.

This case of defilement reminds me that amongst these people, and especially amongst the *Ibos* and the *Ibibios*, anyone touching a corpse is defiled, and must go through a purification. The earth from a grave also defiles.

Many of the funeral customs of the Delta natives are curious and interesting; for instance, the wives and female mourners for a person of distinction must sit on the floor of the room where the person died, no seat being allowed them. They are not permitted to wash until the allotted time of mourning is over, which in some tribes continues for upwards of two weeks, nor are they allowed to change their apparel during this time. They must also, especially the wives, shave their heads.

Another curious custom observed by many of the Delta tribes is that of preparing a monster feast to be eaten after the interment of a chief or man of any distinction. To this feast are invited all the principal men of the town, and in the case of a coast town any white traders who may be in the country. At these feasts all the best crockery and glassware of the defunct is ostentatiously displayed and crowded on to the dinner table at the commencement of the repast; but an observant guest would notice that the attendants, once the guests are seated, commence as opportunity offers to replace every plate, dish, and glass, by the most common article of the same kind they can find in the house. The reason for this is that custom decrees that every article used at one of these dinners must be broken up and destroyed.



The yearly festival of father-making, practised more or less by all the pagan tribes of Western Africa, is very strictly observed by the natives of the Niger Delta. It is to this worship of ancestors that the West African mostly owes his bad character for human sacrifices, for this custom and the funeral custom of despatching a number of dead chief's wives and slaves with the defunct to wait upon him in the next world are the chief occasions when human sacrifices are made.

The custom of annually sacrificing a number of slaves at a chief's father-making to take messages from the living to the dead would mean in a town of 5,000 to 6,000 inhabitants a yearly sacrifice of at least sixty souls, but this estimate would be largely exceeded in a city like Benin. Incorrigible thieves, murderers, and other malefactors were generally reserved for this purpose, but when the supply of these ran short, slaves would be purchased for the occasion, or a special raid on some neighbouring people would be organised.

There are certain other sacrifices such as the Bonnymen's sacrifice to the protecting spirit of the river, to whom a sacrifice was at one time annually made of a very light copper-coloured slave girl. These girls were always procured from a tribe of Ibos or Eboes inhabiting a country away in the hinterland of New Calabar. Some writers have reported these as Albinos; this is not the case. This custom of propitiating the river deity by the sacrifice of a copper-coloured girl, in some rivers an Albino, was common to all the river-side tribes of the Niger Delta, and I am afraid is still practised in the British Protectorate. Also from what I was able to learn, all of the different river gods in the Delta could only be appealed to through the medium of one of these tawny coloured Ibo girls (from this one tribe), or as I have before stated in some cases by an Albino girl, but these latter were never sacrificed by the Bonnymen to my knowledge.

I have seen it stated that a slave bought for sacrificial purposes by the Bonnymen would not be sacrificed if he or she managed to eat any food, even so little as a few grains of corn belonging to the Bonnymen, in the interval between purchase and sacrifice. I am afraid this statement is not true, or the inquirer did not get a very lucid explanation of the rule which governs this native custom, or it may be right in so far that when the victim is bought the seller is bound to supply a week's provisions, for I have known one of these unfortunate girls to be kept in a native town a full week before being sacrificed.

Knowing a little of her language, and assisted by a native boy who spoke both her language and English fluently, I interrogated this girl, and found she knew perfectly well what was going to be done with her, and she displayed no fear of her fate but rather seemed to glory in it. A peculiar custom in connection with this rite was that this girl was allowed to claim any piece of cloth or any ornament she set her eyes upon, and the native to whom it belonged was obliged to present it to her. At the time I saw her and conversed with her, she must have had at least £200 worth of coral beads hung round her neck, besides which she was clothed, or rather, I should say, nearly smothered, in many yards of costly silk damask. I cannot say whether all this finery and the coral beads are still on

her when she is plunged into the sea at the mouth of the river, or whether the Ju-Ju man has at least the coral beads so arranged around her neck, that at the supreme moment he can surreptitiously convey them to some secret wallet concealed about his person; I have a very strong opinion that the Ju-Ju man sees that so much good coral is not wasted. I have mentioned my suspicions to some of the most intelligent natives who have invariably answered me in the following words: "No, no, I beg you don't say that, our Ju-Ju priest no fit to do all same you say."

I did my utmost to save this girl from her cruel fate, but to no avail, though I offered to ransom her at five times the price that had been paid for her, the Ju-Ju man would not agree to part with her, cynically observing that there was not time to get another as the sacrifice must be made at the big water then due, *id est*, the equinoctial (September) tide.

This complete disregard for death I have frequently noticed in natives who knew they were to be sacrificed, in fact, they seemed anxious for the event. I have closely questioned many of these poor victims to see if there was any religious idea in their minds of a future state more happy than their lot on this earth, or if they expected some great reward in their future state by the mere fact of their being sacrificed to the gods; but I was never able to get any reply to my questions to indicate that their state of indifference was brought about by any religious sentiment. I therefore put it down to some kind of frenzy that takes possession of them, and renders them almost if not quite oblivious to all passing events, once they know they are to be sacrificed.

This state of frenzy and total disregard of life I have noticed to often take possession of both male and female natives of Western Africa; on many occasions I have especially noticed it amongst the women. On the deportation of a king or a chief by the British or other European government for some offence I have seen the wives of the deported man throw themselves into the river and fight like mad women with the people who went to their rescue; I have also seen some of the male retainers both free and slaves of a deported king or chief attempt their own lives at the moment when the vessel carrying away their chief disappeared from their sight. Another instance I remember was during the war between the Bonnymen and Öpöbömen in 1870. A Bonny youth was brought a prisoner to Opobo by some of King Ja Ja's people. Recognising the youth as one who had been my servant in Bonny, I went to Ja Ja, the then King of Opobo, and asked him to give me the boy. Upon my explaining my reasons, he very kindly said I could take him and do what I liked with him, sending one of his chiefs with me to order his people to give up the prisoner to me. When the boy heard what I had done for him, instead of being grateful, he went off into a paroxysm of abuse against me, acted like one demented, and finally began to curse King Ja Ja, saying all kinds of abusive things about the King's wives, and finishing up by accusing himself of being the murderer of one of them after having outraged her.

This was more than the crowd of Ja Ja's people could stand, and before



I knew what was happening this youth was knocked senseless and his head severed from his body.

As a further example of the callous condition of natives intended for sacrificial purposes, I must here cite another case. In all native communities of the Niger Delta a man cannot be a full chief and entitled to all the prerogatives of chieftainship without having taken off the head of at least one enemy in war, or decapitated a prisoner in cold blood. Failing either of these actions, he must on the occasion of his being made a chief, purchase a slave for the express purpose, and woe betide him if by any chance he should bungle in his task and not take the victim's head off in a workmanlike manner; for cases have come to my knowledge where the aspirant chief has failed to take the victim's head off at one stroke, so that the half decapitated wretch has had strength enough to turn his head round and curse his executioner. This unfortunate clumsiness on the part of the chief is noted by his fellow-chiefs, his wives, though not present, hear of it, and henceforth when his wives or fellow-chiefs desire to annoy him they remind him of this episode. Cases have occurred in the Niger Delta of powerful chiefs making their young sons perform this horrible head-cutting rite before they were in their teens. These children can always be recognised by their being allowed to wear a large feather in their hats, this mark of distinction being strictly the sole right of a chief. Of course all these horrible practices are now being put down by the officials of the Niger Coast Protectorate, and in Nigeria by the Royal Niger Company's officials, who are constantly engaged in stamping out these inhuman practices. In fairness to many chiefs that I have met with in the Niger Delta, I must bear witness to their wish not to carry out this disgusting and cruel ceremony; but as these practices have been handed down from time immemorial and carry with them certain emoluments for the Ju-Ju priests, as well as the occasion being seized upon by the lower orders as an excuse for feasting and dancing at the expense of the newly initiated chief, the more enlightened natives have hitherto been unable to do much towards the abolition of these horrible rites.

Circumcision is practised by many of the inhabitants of the Niger Delta, but not with any idea of its being a religious ceremony as some travellers in this part of Western Africa have reported. Amongst some of the tribes it is the sign of freedom, so that a slave who becomes a rich and influential man in a tribe where this rite is thus looked upon, must undergo the operation or stand the taunts and reproaches hurled at him by the female portion of his establishment on any slight provocation. When a freeborn chief of the same tribe wishes to be particularly severe on his parvenu fellow-chief, he hurls the word "*pellégá*" at him, with a strong emphasis on the last syllable, as being his final swear-word and the expression of his utter contempt for him.

The peculiar fact that the rite means one thing in one tribe and just the opposite in another is singularly well demonstrated by the case of the New Calabar and Bonny men, the distance between the chief towns of these two tribes not exceeding fifteen miles as the crow flies; yet in the former not to be circumcised is

the sign of slavery, whilst in the latter the opposite rule holds good and the word of reproach is *pellum*. These two words *pellégá* (uncircumcised) and *pellum* (circumcised) being the same in both the Bonny and New Calabar dialects are very favourite curse-words of all classes and ages of both tribes.

#### NATIVE CURSE-WORDS AND STICKS.

Whilst speaking of native curse-words, of which the Niger Delta natives possess a very large and diabolical assortment, I think it will not be uninteresting to give you one more example of native vituperation. This example one might call silent abuse, for it is not at all necessary to open your mouth in order to give due effect to this most terrible curse to a native woman. You have only to raise your right arm, and closing your fist allow your index and middle finger to spring up and form a V, and the thing is done. I have very often seen two women quarrelling in a very mild "go as you please" kind of way, but still showing signs of an increased pressure of steam accumulating, when suddenly one would put on a very disdainful look, and raising her right arm, would make the sign as described. Sometimes the other would simply make a motion with her right hand as if drawing a circle round her head, and with a snap of her fingers intimate that she casts the vile curse back on her opponent; or, if she was of a very susceptible nature, she would run away as fast as her legs would carry her, crying out at the top of her voice the curse that had been cast upon her. In some cases I have known this curse to have such an effect on a woman that she would lose her reason completely for some hours after. This curse of holding up the two fingers as described means "May you become the mother of twins," a truly frightful curse when one remembers that the almost general rule in the Niger Delta is that the mother of twins must be put to death and her children also. I say almost general, because in some places the mother is allowed to live; but her life is little better than a living death, for she becomes an outcast and must live the remainder of her days in the forest. If she by force of hunger ventures near a village or town she must do so only at night time, and must be very careful to guard against being seen by any other natives, for the Ju-Ju laws lay it down that if such a woman passes along any of the paths leading to the town or village, those paths would be defiled and unfit for the rest of the inhabitants to use. She must not drink from the same spring or water supply of her own people; she must not touch anything belonging to them. The consequence is that the mothers of twins simply die from hunger and exposure, or they take their own lives.

In all towns and villages of the Niger Delta there is always some old hag of a slave woman whose prerogative it is to kill the twin children; in the larger towns there are several of these killers of twin children; immediately on the birth of twins one of these old women are sent for and upon her arrival she takes each child by the feet and the back of the neck and breaks its back across her knees. The bodies are then placed in an earthen pot and taken into a dense part of the

bush and then left to be devoured by wild animals and insects. In some parts of this district the children are not killed but simply thrown into the bush to be devoured. In the few cases where missionaries have been successful in getting these children delivered up to them, their lives have been saved; but so far I have never known of any of these children so saved being allowed to take his or her place amongst the rest of the community. As a matter of fact, up to now I doubt whether one of them would be safe if it strayed outside the mission compound, and cases have occurred where twin children have been stolen from the missionaries and murdered by their relatives.

Another cruel custom in this part of the world is that of killing the child of a woman who dies in giving it birth, and burying it with its mother; this is not done absolutely from any superstition, but simply because the mother being dead there is no milk for the child, and these people do not yet know the uses of a feeding bottle or condensed milk. A foster mother is almost unknown in the country. I say almost unknown because cases have occurred where a foster mother has been found; but the child must be an exceptionally strong and healthy one, besides which the position or power of the father of the child, or relatives of the mother, would have to be such as would enable him or them to compel some woman to become the foster mother.

The cases when this is done are so very rare that I do not remember any successful one; but Miss Kingsley assures me she has known of such, and her opportunities of getting correct information on this subject were greater than mine. There is a ceremony, however, to be performed to insure the dead mother's spirit from returning to claim the child, which I think should be recorded.

A suitable sized piece of plaintain stem (that portion which has the fruit clustered round it) is procured and forced into the womb of the dead mother. This according to native ideas prevents her spirit coming back to fetch the child, and the mother thinks she has the child with her. This account has been confirmed by an English lady who was present on two occasions when this ceremony was being performed and succeeded in restoring, in one case, the mother to life, as she found the mother was not really dead but only in a state of coma from excessive loss of blood.

Another form of dumb cursing is that of which the cursing stick is the example. In some parts of the Delta close to Lagos and the Yoruba country the thumb held in this particular manner is a curse of awful import to a native. This curse may be surreptitiously made use of, by a prisoner on trial, before a British Court of Justice; in this manner (showing how it is done), by hiding it up his sleeve and pointing at the witness, who seeing the head of the curse stick in the hand of the prisoner, stops as if shot. As a matter of fact this stick was taken in open Court from a prisoner by the orders of Sir John Smalman-Smith, late Chief Justice of the Colony of Lagos.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> My authority for the above is Sir John Smalman-Smith, late Chief Justice of the Colony of Lagos. Miss Kingsley is however inclined not to agree with him.

*Clitoridectomy.*

The custom of excision of the clitoris is very much practised amongst the tribes dwelling on the banks of the Cross River and in the Old Calabar district as also in many other parts of Western Africa. I have questioned both native men and women to try and get the native's reason for this rite, but the almost universal answer to my queries was "it is our country fashion," a most exasperating answer, but the only one returned to a very large percentage of questions, in all parts of Africa. In some few instances I was fortunate enough to get more definite answers to my queries. One old man explained to me that the rite was practised amongst his people because it was found favourable to continence. Several old women told me that in days gone by, long, long ago (these people have no idea of dates) many women suffered from a peculiar form of madness, and it was found that this rite had the effect of reducing this in a marked degree, so ever since that time it has been the custom of their country.

The mode in which the operation is performed varies in different tribes; in the Old Calabar district it is done in the following manner: that part of the top of a cocoonut shell, which has the three eyes in it is carefully cut off and scraped quite smooth and thin; then the eye that lets out the milk is carefully bored and the edges scraped quite smooth; the *glans clitoridis* is then drawn through this hole and cut off with a razor, knife, or in some places by a piece of bottle-glass which does duty for a razor or knife. This manner of performing this operation was confirmed by Thomas Forshaw, Esq., of Liverpool, whose connection with the West Coast of Africa dates from some time in the fifties.

There seems to be no particular age at which the native law enjoins the performance of this rite, though it is generally carried out when the girls are young, except in the case of a woman bought or raided from some tribe which does not practise clitoridectomy.

Some of the customs the people of Western Africa have for securing the chastity of their young girls are worthy of being mentioned. Previous to 1860 it was the custom in Lagos for young girls to wear only a loin cloth of a hand's breadth, which they had to take off on meeting a Ju-Ju man to intimate to him that they were chaste; the law being that if the Ju-Ju man caught a young girl parading the streets with the outward signs of virginity on her, which she had lost the right to wear, she became his property until she was redeemed by her friends paying a fine varying in amount according to the status of her family. In the case of a free girl the fine would be much greater than for a slave girl. This practice of exposure was also customary on meeting a white man, as in those days a white man was looked upon as Ju-Ju. This custom I saw carried out myself as late as 1864 in the native parts of the Island of Lagos, though at this time Lagos was already a British colony.

The people dwelling in the immediate hinterland of the *Ekrika* country have also a very curious and somewhat cruel custom for the safeguarding of the chastity

of their young girls. The particulars of this custom were given to me by a chief of Opobo on the occasion of his having received in payment of a debt a young girl belonging to these people. The custom consists of scraping the *labia pudendi externa* until a raw surface is formed; then the two parts are brought together and kept in that position until the *labia* grow together, thus completely closing up the opening into the vagina. When the female thus operated upon draws near the age of puberty, she is taken into a part of the forest sacred to the female portion of the tribe, and there undergoes a second operation which consists of this false hymen being perforated by one of the old women of the tribe by the insertion of an ivory probe about the thickness of a lead pencil, this being done to allow of the free passage of the menses. This curious custom was brought under my notice, as I have already stated, by a native chief who had received a young female slave in payment of a debt. In this case the false hymen had not been punctured previous to the girl's leaving her own people; the consequence was that on her arrival at puberty her sufferings were very severe, and her new owner applied to me to get an English medical man to see her. Luckily the chief had already related to me the curious custom of this girl's tribe so I was able to explain matters to the doctor, who successfully operated and informed me afterwards that from the appearance of the parts he was inclined to think the chief's information was quite correct, though if it had not been explained to him he most certainly would not have thought the growing together of the labia was anything other than an ordinary freak of nature.

Since writing the above I have learnt that this custom prevails amongst the Arabs, and is not unknown to anthropologists.

With regard to the photographs illustrating this paper, I think it would not be out of place to mention a curious fact about the ways of an uneducated native when he is shown a photograph or picture of anything for the first time. He generally turns it upside down or endways to look at it; even after having been shown a picture several times and having had it explained, a fairly intelligent native would be almost sure to get hold of it the wrong way up if he wished to explain it to his friends afterwards.

But if he could not find the original picture shown him and attempted to describe one that had not been explained to him he would be certain to hold the picture any way but the right way.

Photographs of single figures of people they knew they could generally see the likeness and recognise the person; but not always from the face, oftener than not it was some peculiarity of dress, the hat, the man's stick, his bandy legs, or some peculiarity in the cut of his clothes, that they recognised.

### *Description of Plates VIII and IX.*

#### *Plate VIII.*

No. 1.—Viper's tooth, Fetish.

„ 2.—Native made toilette bottle for holding antimony, used by the native women to darken the skin under their eyes.

„ 3.—Yoruba cursing stick.

- No. 4.—Symbols of Yoruba Secret Society.  
 „ 5.—Fetish neck charm.  
 „ 6. } Native symbols connected with Fetish worship.  
 „ 7. }  
 „ 8.—Musical instrument (made from a gourd) used at Fetish ceremonies.  
 „ 9.—The voice of Oro (a Yoruba god), exactly similar to the Bull Roarer of the Australian natives and used in almost identical ceremonies.  
 „ 10.—A number of brass ankle rings.  
 „ 11.—A curious article worn by the women in the sacred bush after undergoing certain native rights.  
 „ 12.—Two native made knives used by the celebrated native conjurer and witch doctor Adeosun in murdering women. This man was executed at Lagos on the 9th August, 1884.  
 „ 13.—Native war horn, made from a gourd.  
 „ 14.—Three glass ankle rings worn by the Niger women. Native made from soda-water bottles.  
 „ 15.—Three anklets (wood), fine specimens of native cloisonné work.  
 „ 16.—Two brass anklets.

All these were borrowed by the Comte C. de Cardi from the collection of Sir John Smalman-Smith.

*Plate IX.*

- No. 1.—The Yoruba goddess “Odudua,” the mother of the gods. From the collection of Sir John Smalman-Smith.  
 Nos. 2 and 3.—Two ivory anklets worn by Niger women. The weight of these two pieces of ivory is about five pounds. From the collection of the Comte de Cardi.  
 „ 4 and 5.—Specimens of ivory carving from the South-west coast of Africa. From the collection of the Comte de Cardi.

DISCUSSION.

Miss KINGSLEY.—There are only a few things which I should like to say regarding Count de Cardi’s paper. I need not say they are not criticisms on it, for it is not for me to criticise one who has had so unique an opportunity as Count de Cardi of knowing the natives of the Niger Delta; his experience, moreover, was not merely a long residence among them, but a long friendship with them in the bargain. Without this factor of friendship long residence can count for very little in the acquisition of knowledge regarding these crafty and nervous people.

The first point I would like to draw your attention to is the mention M. le Comte de Cardi makes of the fetish king, the Ju-Ju king, and the civil king ruling together in one district. This is a subject on which I have long been working, but have not published anything because I know my information, in many parts, is incomplete. There are, however, a few points regarding it which I think I may speak safely on; one is that in all undisturbed true Negro cultures you will find these two kings, or in some places two aristocracies, one religious, and one civil. When a true negro culture is disturbed you have a tendency to consolidate those kings in one man, as in the case of Dahomey and Ashantee, but when outside pressure is absent they are separate. The regions where external pressure is absent, the most valuable regions for a student, are the Oil river and the Kru coast. M. le Comte de Cardi I leave in possession of the Oil rivers, and retiring to the Kru coast beg to draw your attention to the very similar form of social and religious organisation to be found there. The body politic among the



Kru people and their neighbours the Qua Quas is an elaborately organised democracy divided into three classes, or rather into three ages, of free men. The most powerful class are the *Gnekbade*, or old men. The senate, the *Gnekbade*, have two presidents, the Bodio and the Worabanh. The Bodio is the thing called the fetish king. He has charge of the spiritual politics of the nation. His position is one full of honour and inconveniences. Among other inconveniences his house is a sanctuary. A sanctuary, as I have frequently stated, is a sort of rookery of bad characters. A Kru friend of mine resigned office as Bodio, because of the sort of people who quartered themselves on him and the expense of feeding them and the rows they had amongst each other. He stood it for three years and did his best, and then came a man with homicidal mania, accompanied by epileptic fits, but legally innocent, and my friend resigned Bodioship after losing an ear and receiving other bodily damage. Moreover, apart from the worry of presiding over a sanctuary, the Bodio is held responsible for the crops, for the fishing, for epidemics, such as small-pox raiding his people, things that will happen and go wrong, and so in fact it is hardly worth having to be a Bodio. There was a fetish king in Calabar up to some twenty years ago; now the office, which was very similar to the Kru Bodio, has expired on account of its responsibilities and expenses. The only advantages the office of Bodio really offers is a small toll paid to the holder and the right to wear an iron ring round your ankle and be feared and revered as long as things go well with your community in the main; when they don't you can be deposed; when you are deposed you are looked down on terribly.

The other president of the *Gnekbade* is the Worabanh. He has little influence in times of peace, but in times of war he is absolute ruler. I believe him to be the forerunner of the civil king.

Next in grade to the *Gnekbade* among the Kru comes the military, the *Sedibo* class, the middle-aged men. Seemingly they are the rulers of the Kru people, but they are under the power really of the *Gnekbade*, only the *Gnekbade* are not so showy and easily observed. The *Sedibo* also have two presidents, the *Ibadio* and the *Tibawah*. These are equivalent in function to the *Bodio* and *Worabanh*; the one sees after the spiritual side of war, the other after military organisation.

The next in grade to the *Sedibo* is the *Kedibo* class, the young men. These *Kedibo* of Kru are the men all Europeans know in their generation as the backbone of white effort in West Africa, the men who act as seamen, servants, labourers, stewards, helpers in all hard work, ways to England in West Africa. When they have made enough money, and are old enough, they go back to their country and rise to the rank of *Sedibo*, and if wise enough pass on into the senate, the *Gnekbade*; if particularly eminent they become officers in their grades. This Kru system I believe to be the typical West African form of the state. In the Oil rivers you have the additional factor imported into it by local conditions of domestic slavery, the Kru being a non-slave-holding tribe; but you will, I think, see from M. le Comte de Cardin's published description of the natives of the Niger Delta in West African studies, that the Negroes have extended this democratic system to their domestic slaves there, so that the lowest slave that paddles an Oil canoe may rise to the rank of a king.

With regard to those places where you have a fetish, a religious and a civil aristocracy ruling, you have much the same course of events and development.

I think we have most information from the Ga region. The neighbouring people, the Tshi, have a different form of state organisation—a military one—but among the Ga or Accras the history we have shows that the early form of government was a fetishocracy, the power being entirely in the hands of the *wourtsimi*, whom Reindorp calls the “foretelling priests or prophets.” The headman of these prophets was called Lumo, and he was supposed to be a nominee of the national fetish, Legbh, but I think we may assume he was elected by the local college of cardinals. His office did not go by hereditary succession. The government was carried on by officers of the Lumo, called Wulomo—fetish priests or servants—and the Wulomo had a headman, and that headman was rather like a civil king, but too priest-ridden to be satisfactory, being only the officer of the Lumo. Now and again it happened that the chief of the Wulomo was identical with the Lumo, both offices being held by the same man, as was the case with Osai Koi, but this proved inconvenient, and the law stands now that the acting king can never be a Lumo. Even if a prince becomes a Lumo he forfeits all right of succession to the stool or throne, for the headmanship of the Wulomo is now hereditary in a certain degree; in fact, the Accras have disestablished the Church.

I should much like to know whether the President has observed anything like a similar course of events in Benin, another fetishocracy region, one with which he is far better acquainted than I am.

I do not wish to detain you further than to say I completely endorse what M. le Comte de Cardi has said in favour of the operation of Ju-Ju. I believe more than he does that it is a power for good. It works evil, but so do some of our own Ju-Jus. With regard to the Long Ju-Ju in a pool M. le Comte de Cardi speaks of, I beg to say its local name is Abasi Inokun. It was instituted by a goddess who lived in that place, and who had some pet fish in a pond. I am not at liberty to say more. There are three other Long Ju-Jus in that same Oil river region, one of which I visited, but again I am not at liberty to say more. I merely wish to ask a question in conclusion. What is the connection between Long Ju-Ju places and sanctuaries, if there is one, for they are not identical anywhere? As to what sanctuaries are, I have had my answer, I believe a full and complete answer, from that great student thinker, Dr. Fraser, of the *Golden Bough*, in his last paper on Totemism, published this month. I beg to say if any one is interested in the Negro State-form, he will find what I have said concerning the Kru people supported, I do not say entirely, but with many further details than I can give without quoting from them, by Leighton Wilson and Labat and Barbot. I picked my information up from the many *Kedobi* Krumen I have met, and the *ex-Bodio* attached to the German Government at Victoria, Amba Bay Cameroon.

Colonel R. C. TEMPLE, C.I.E., remarked that he had been much struck with the close similarity between the character of the scenery depicted on the slides exhibited by the authors of these papers and that prevailing in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands and parts of Burma and the Indian Peninsula. The Comte de Cardi describes the difficulty that the people of Western Africa have in understanding the meaning of pictures, a difficulty experienced in those parts of the Indian Empire with which he was familiar. His account of the oil-palm is very closely applicable to the cocoanut of the Nicobar Islands and Ceylon. Every part of the tree is in daily economic use, and its milk is used as drinking water. The mode of

climbing the oil-palm is practically identical with that of climbing the coccoanut in many parts of the East.

He also noticed various analogies of custom—the habit in the Nicobars of destroying the property of the deceased, chiefly by placing it on the grave, the result of which is to render the accumulation of tribal or family property impossible; the human sacrifice at the death of a chief, which is analogous to the Hindu rite of Sati and the Meriah sacrifices of the Khândhs; the head-hunting in West Africa, which closely resembles the rule prevailing among the Nâga tribes on the Assam frontier; the gesture of the horned hand, which is found in many parts of Europe, particularly Southern Italy. In Burma the habit of women stripping themselves in the presence of those whom they wish to direly insult is a survival of some form of symbolical cursing which exists only in this attenuated form. So the difficulty which more enlightened priests and people find in getting rid of old-established customs owing to the vested interests of the priestly class prevails in many parts of the world, and particularly in India.

COUNT DE CARDI, in reply to the question, “Was there any custom called blood brotherhood on the west coast of Africa?” said that there was, but to fully describe the custom would take up too much time that evening; he hoped, however, to embody a full description in some future paper.

Replying to the question, “Were the human sacrifices placed under the influence of any drug, which would account for their apparent disregard of death?” he went on to say that, in some cases, he had seen the male victims under the influence of strong drink, but in others the victims refused to touch spirits of any kind; in the case of the girl sacrifices, he felt sure they were not.

In reply to Miss Kingsley’s question *re* the existence of sanctuaries in connection with the powerful secret societies and Ju-Ju centres, he said he had often heard of them, but had never succeeded in getting what he considered reliable information, or at any rate such facts about them as would justify him in giving them to the Anthropological Institute as being absolutely reliable. He was afraid we should have to wait until a real head priest of one of the very secret societies could be prevailed upon to enlighten us. Continuing, he would like to say that by nature the negro is secretive; but a Ju-Ju man of the higher grade or a secret society man of the upper class or degree is reticence itself on the inner secrets of his craft.

---

#### EXHIBITION OF LANTERN SLIDES.

(PLATES X TO XIII.)

MR. T. J. ALLDRIDGE, F.R.G.S., of Sherbro, West Coast of Africa, showed a large number of interesting lantern slides depicting different phases of scenery and of the natives in the Colony of Sierra Leone and the Hinterland. The value of the views was greatly enhanced from the fact of their having all been actually photographed by Mr. Alldridge personally and developed in the country, very frequently in spite of almost insuperable difficulties. Many of the pictures represented subjects which had never been previously shown in London. The native customs of Poro and Bundu and the Bundu Devil, also the Tasso men, were