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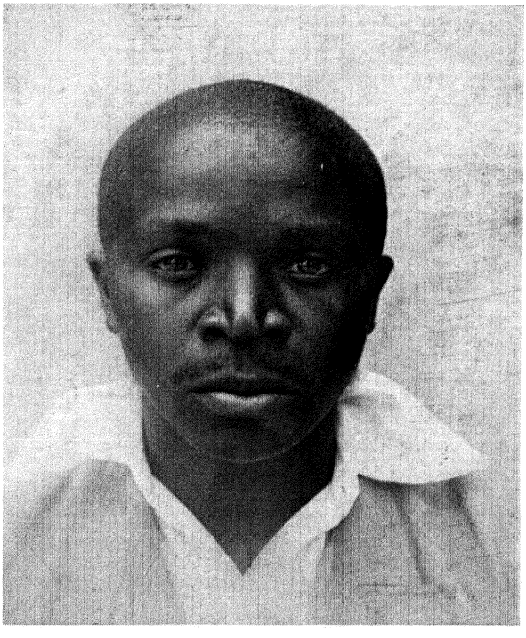
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UBENA OF THE RIVERS



THE LATE CHIEF KIWANGA I

From a photograph by v. Fulleborn in "Deutsches Kolonial-Lexikon" (*see* Caps. II–IV)



CHIEF TOWEGALE KIWANGA

Author of Chapter II

UBENA OF THE RIVERS

by

A. T. & G. M. CULWICK

with a Chapter by

MTEMA TOWEGALE KIWANGA

and an Introduction by

DR. L. H. DUDLEY BUXTON

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PREFACE

In 1930 Towegale Kiwanga's canoe was attacked by a hippo in the Ulanga River, and he lost all his belongings, amongst them a history of his tribe and a record of certain Bena customs written in Kiswahili, which he had spent many years compiling. He was greatly disappointed, but, nothing daunted, decided to undertake the task again, though his official duties in the tribe left him little leisure for the work, and it seemed that many years would elapse before the story would be set forth in his slow, laborious handwriting. By August 1931, when we first met him, half of what now forms the second chapter of this book had been finished.

There had been for several years a strong desire amongst the Bena elders for a permanent record of their tribal history and customs, to preserve the memory of what must soon be forgotten if not committed to writing. Their eagerness first prompted us to undertake this book, which is not the fruit of our labours only, but also of much work on the part of numerous Wabena whose co-operation and friendly interest greatly facilitated the collection of data. Our principal informants have been men of the royal clan, other men of rank, and the ladies of the royal household, though many people of lower degree have also contributed.

We have attempted to put before the reader not necessarily an exhaustive study but a balanced picture of the life and outlook of a typical Bantu tribe. We make no apology for the contradictions which the critic will no doubt have little difficulty in discovering, for we feel that this book is no more self-contradictory than real life in Africa, and it is real life and living people we have striven to portray.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

WE have to acknowledge encouragement and helpful suggestions from a large number of people, but especially are we indebted to Mr. T. K. Penniman, not only for reading proofs and indexing, but also for all the time and trouble he has taken in discovering answers to the questions with which we have bombarded him while writing this book in the field.

A. T. AND G. M. CULWICK

INTRODUCTION

By Dr. L. H. DUDLEY BUXTON

Accounts of the doings of strange folk and of the marvels of distant lands vary from generation to generation. We can no longer recapture the first thrill of the early explorers, nor the wonder of the people of Venice when the Polos returned home with "the smell of the Tatar about them." On the other hand, though the general canvas of distant lands and their peoples has been filled in, the details are still lacking, and indeed always must be, for cities and people, even the most familiar, change from generation to generation. The modern book has, then, certain disadvantages when compared with the older works, for it can hardly open up a new world; on the other hand, increasing knowledge and facilities for study have given the modern worker better opportunities for detailed examination and comparison. He is no longer a wandering beachcomber or pirate, nor an explorer who does not quite know from week to week what he may have to contend with; to-day he is more or less settled in the country, he speaks the language, and has won the confidence of the natives, and modern transport facilities enable him to live as comfortably as is possible in a tropical climate—an important point, since greater comfort means better opportunities for serious intellectual work in the field.

The authors of the present book have worked under modern conditions, and the fact that a husband and wife have collaborated has the great advantage that it is possible for both sides of the social life of the tribe to be considered; for it is clear that a man can get little idea of the feminine side nor a woman of the masculine side, whether it be in an African village or anywhere else.

They have also made considerable use of work actually done

by Africans themselves, and there can be small doubt that this book owes a great deal to the conscious collaboration of the Bena people. We are at times interested, and sometimes not a little diverted, by accounts written of ourselves by foreigners. It has in the past for the most part been the fate of the African to be seen, and sometimes to be seen very superficially, through foreign spectacles. No doubt for many years to come this difficulty will not be entirely removed. A form of collaboration, however, between the White and the African gets over the difficulty, at least in part.

It is also important when things are changing so rapidly to obtain a picture of African tribes as they are to-day. I confess that I have little sympathy for those who demand that "a trained anthropologist"—quite apart from apparently any true linguistic knowledge—should be hurried off to remote parts immediately he has taken his degree in order that he may study a particular people "before it is too late." It is certainly true that certain peoples are now, alas! so reduced in numbers that they will shortly cease to exist, and that with them certain customs may die out altogether. On the other hand, apart from such comparatively rare cases the life of a tribe is a thing which always goes on growing, in spite of the fact that the savage is the slave of convention. It is therefore always too late or never too late to study such a thing. At present in Africa considerable readjustment is going on, perhaps a greater readjustment than has ever taken place in the past in so short a time. It is therefore of great value to study peoples who are faced with the problems of making such readjustments; but my anthropological friends will not persuade me that the immediate and hurried study of such readjustments is either more or less urgent than similar studies in, say, the valleys of South Wales, where the people have also got to pass through the painful process of reorienting themselves to changed conditions. It is, further, a characteristic of the now-or-never school to produce hurried work as their

stay in distant lands is usually and necessarily short, though they have the great advantage over the more leisured student that being more fresh to the subject they are in a better position to select the real characteristics of a people, while to the more leisured observer there is the danger that a multitude of details may obscure his vision.

Though the present book is of the leisured class, it is not of an academic nature, but rather the result of prolonged experience of a particular tribe, and the authors have taken pains to avoid being overwhelmed with too many details.

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NOTES ON PRONUNCIATION IN KIBENA

Vowels are pronounced approximately as in Italian.

a as *chat* in French.

e midway between sit and set, or French *thé* and *tête*.

i as in English see.

o midway between lo and lot, or French *nos* and *notre*.

u midway between pool and put. French *poule*.

Each vowel has its full value, there being no diphthongs, e.g. *li-nya-u-twa* has four syllables.

G is always pronounced hard.

ŋ represents ng when pronounced as in sing, e.g. *ŋinesu*.

w, when not combined with another consonant (as mw- or tw-), is often pronounced in a peculiar way so that in quick speech it is extremely difficult to distinguish it from v, e.g. *wanu* sounds very like *vanu*, or *wawanda* like *vavanda*.

The stress is on the penultimate syllable except when shown otherwise.

UBENA OF THE RIVERS

CHAPTER I

UBENA OF THE RIVERS

UBENA proper, whence the tribe about which this book is written derives its name, lies to the south of Uhehe in the highlands round Mufindi, Lupembe, and Njombe. It is west of the broad Ulanga Valley, whose upper (south-western) end has also been known by the name of Ubena since the migration thither, some sixty to seventy years ago, of certain Bena clans under the leadership of the Wakinimanga.* They brought with them not only the name of their country, but the names of the hills and streams and villages of their old home, to be given to the places where they settled anew. In order to avoid confusion between one Ubena and the other, that of the highlands will be called Ubena of the Hills and that of the Ulanga Valley, Ubena of the Rivers. The latter has, indeed, innumerable hills, too, hills that break the hearts and backs of the traveller and his porters; but the life of the people at the present time centres round the rivers Mnyera and Ruhuji and their tributaries, and the hill-country behind is but thinly populated.

The Ulanga Valley, broad and flat, runs roughly from south-east to north-west between the Iringa highlands and the Mahenge *massif*, and from the wooded hills on either side come many streams to swell the main river system of the Valley. The two principal rivers of the upper Valley—the Mnyera and the Ruhuji—unite near the eastern border of Ubena, and their combined waters, after passing through

* I.e. descendants of Manga. *Wa* = personal prefix (plural), *-kini-* = of the line of.

swamps where the main stream divides and subdivides in numerous ever-shifting channels, eventually reunite as the Ulanga River which presently becomes the Kilombero. Many miles further east, the Kilombero and the Luwego, which flows round the south of the Mahenge *massif*, meet at the Shughuli Falls and become the Rufiji River, which is later joined by the Great Ruaha and eventually empties itself into the Indian Ocean.

On the western side of Ubena of the Rivers a large area of indescribably broken, faulted country divides the flat riverlands from the highlands of Lupembe and Mufindi, the country rising in a series of "steps," each one of which is itself cut into scores of hills and winding valleys. The north-west border of Ubena of the Rivers stretches far into these hills, right up to the foot of the steep Mufindi scarp, and once the traveller from the plains has toiled up three "steps," he finds the vegetation changing and enters the fine rolling hill-country of Utemekwira, which the Wabena-Wakinimanga first occupied when they started moving eastwards. There their herds throve and they lived the life they had always lived in the highlands; but now they have turned rice-eaters, Utemekwira is all but empty, and the people live where they cannot keep cattle but where they can grow their beloved rice.

To the south, in Ifinga and the more remote parts of Boma ya Lindi, Ubena of the Rivers is wild, mountainous, and practically uninhabited. From the top of the escarpment overlooking the Ruhuji just south of Linyautwa (Madenge), the traveller looks across the winding Ruhuji River some 2,000 feet below him, and sees the tree-covered Ifinga hills rising peak behind peak in glorious confusion, and he is told that after five days' journeying through them he will come to comparatively level country, and there he will find the Bena-Angoni border.

On the eastern side of the upper Valley the land rises gradually from the river-country, in the south into the Undwewe

Mountains, and further north into the Mahenge hills. Perhaps thirty miles separate the hills on either side at the northern boundary of Ubena of the Rivers, while lower down, in Undamba and Umbunga, the Valley widens considerably and the foothills on the western side give place to the precipitous Uzungwa escarpment. Further down still, near Ifakara, the Valley turns eastwards and the high hills on either side come to an end.

The tree-covered hills bordering the Valley are in sharp contrast with most of the plains below, where in many places a man may journey for miles without seeing a tree save an occasional borassus palm, the vegetation consisting of reeds and tall grass well above his head. These press closely round his path and shut out completely what breeze there may be, while affording no protection from the scorching sun. The heavy annual floods account for the absence of timber in these areas, where for several months of the year the swollen rivers inundate huge tracts of country, driving man and game to the higher ground before the rising tide. The submerged portions are left to schools of hippo, who wallow in the mud which a short time before had been grassland, dry as tinder, through which the all-consuming fire had passed, a moving furnace that yearly scatters every living thing panic-stricken, and leaves in its wake a blackened land.

Such conditions make permanent habitation by the main rivers almost impossible, and the chief centres of population are found on the alluvial fans round the edges of the Valley or among the foothills. Nevertheless, there are a few intrepid fishermen living permanently near the rivers on small, slightly raised ridges, risking the loss of their homes and prepared to take to the water at any time. Asked how he fared during the rains, one of these replied, "Oh, but this is a *good* place. The water never rises more than a foot or eighteen inches inside the house. We live on the beds, and cook on a platform of poles which we stretch from bed to bed and cover with earth.

The canoe is tied to the doorpost, so we can easily get away if the flood rises too high. Our chief care is for the baby, in case she falls off the bed and gets drowned."

Something over a hundred years ago Ubena of the Hills, which is a fine country for the flocks and herds of a pastoral people, was the home of a number of small, independent, and quarrelsome kingdoms, the ambitions of whose rulers seemed unlikely ever to extend beyond the raiding of each other's cattle, and whose history could be resolved into a profit-and-loss account of stock and grazing-grounds captured and lost, in endless internecine wars. Probably in the majority of cases there would not be much to choose between the two sides of the account over a reasonable period of time. The people were known collectively as the Wabena, a name which must not be understood to imply any cohesion between one small community and another. It had a purely territorial and linguistic significance, viz. the people who live in the country called Ubena and who all speak Kibena.* Besides being Wabena, the people of each small kingdom were known by the name of the area in which they lived—the Wakombwe lived in Mkombwe, the Wafwagi in Fwagi, the Wasovi in Sovi, the Waikondo in Ikondo. Such names did not denote a group tracing descent from a common ancestor or acknowledging any bond of kinship. It meant people who lived in a certain area, acknowledging the authority of one particular clan and all following the same customs.

Among these small kingdoms the most important was that ruled by the Manga clan, of the same blood (if there be any truth in the old tradition) as the Wayinga, a clan which later produced the great Hehe Chiefs Muyugumba and Mkwawa, though at the period in question the Wayinga in their country to the north of Ubena were, like the Wakinimanga, merely

* There are now considerable differences between Kibena as spoken in the hills and as spoken in the Valley, but speakers of the two dialects understand one another perfectly.

rulers of one amongst many petty kingdoms. The two clans trace their descent from two brothers, mighty hunters who climbed westwards into the hills from Kidodi and married daughters of local chiefs. Their offspring, being great men and of outstanding valour, eventually ruled over the kingdoms of their respective maternal grandfathers and founded clans destined to build up two highly organised kingdoms. At a later stage, when territorial expansion on both sides made their descendants jealous neighbours, their ever-present cattle-hunger and their increasing land-hunger brought them into conflict, but they still remembered their common origin and played the great game of war with specially modified rules, as was fitting between "brothers."

By about the 1840's the Wakinimanga had dominated a certain number of the neighbouring kingdoms and united them into a single fighting tribe. The actual extent of their kingdom in the hills is uncertain; but undoubtedly they held sway over a large area of Ubena of the Hills. There came a time, however, in Ndaliwali's reign (?—*c.* 1860) when further expansion in the high country—south, west, and north—was blocked by people against whom they could not prevail, and they began to explore the only remaining outlet, spreading eastwards towards the low-lying country of the Ulanga Valley. The graves of the old Chiefs are far away in the hills: Ndaliwali's (33),* however, is at the site of his village of Uchindile, in the tumbled country of Utemekwira, below the Mufindi escarpment. The Wabena of the Valley to-day, though remembering the earlier Chiefs and calling on their spirits, often refer to Ndaliwali as their first Chief. He did not, in fact, found their kingdom of Ubena of the Rivers, but he first turned the faces of his people eastwards and started the movement which was carried on by his son Mtengera I (56) (*c.* 1863–84), and which led eventually to the establishment

* A number after a person's name indicates his or her number on the genealogical chart given in Appendix III.

of the new kingdom in surroundings strange indeed to those who had been brought up in Ubena of the Hills.

Ndaliwali left the plateau and made his home in Utemekwira: his son looked beyond, into the Valley itself, across to the eastern hills and even further than that. It is said that his ambition was to fight his way through to Kilwa! He began by extending the Bena sphere of influence into the river country, under the guise of protector of some of the unwarlike people living there. The position was as follows:

The small scattered communities of the Valley swamps were known by the collective name Wandamba, which means "Those who dwell in the low country," but the use of a collective name does not imply any greater degree of cohesion among the groups or any more advanced tribal organisation than had formerly existed among the small Bena kingdoms. There were the Wamwera, who claimed to be the original people of the right bank of the main river, and the Wambowa, making a similar claim regarding the left bank. Besides these, there were colonies of Wachanya, Watemangande, Wahanila, Wapindi, Wahungu, and others, fugitives from the higher country all round, who had sought the inaccessible swamps as a hiding-place from the warrior tribes by whom they were surrounded. Each community was a law unto itself, living in watery isolation and taking to the densest parts of the swamps when danger threatened.

Some time before Mtengera began to rule over the Wabena, Angoni warriors started to migrate through the Valley from the south. They were the followers of certain Manduna ("captains") who had been living near the hill Mbunga in Ungoni and who for some reason or another were dissatisfied. Consequently, after the manner of Wangoni, they began to break away from their Chief, Kipeta, pushing northwards, robbing and pillaging as they went. Mtengera sent help to certain of the harassed Wandamba, and despatched the leaders of the important Uhenge clan to live in Utengule, so that they

might keep watch for the Angoni raiders in the Valley and also for opportunities to push forward the Bena border into Undamba. He cleared observation posts whence he could watch the river country, and in due course he drove a bar right across the Valley and right across the path of the Wangoni coming from the south. He built one fort at Kidenge on the plains and another at Hanga (now Sofi) in the foothills of the Mahenge *massif*, while some of his men pushed his boundary through Undwewe in the eastern hills till they came up against the Wapogoro among the tributaries of the Luwego River. He took possession of all the upper end of the Ulanga Valley and a large area of the hills on its eastern side, absorbing the inhabitants into the Bena tribal organisation.

His new kingdom cut off the Wangoni who had already moved north from their brethren in the south, preventing both their return and the passage of any more marauding bands to join them. The northern section are now established as the Wambunga lower down the Valley, on both sides of the Kilombero River near Ifakara, but prior to settling down there they fought all over the Kisaki–Morogoro country and even as far as Bagamoyo, raiding and plundering far and wide. Known as Mafiti in histories of the early years of the German occupation, they had a bad reputation as "dirty fighters," with a predilection for torture and mutilation.

At first, while his warriors were acquiring new territory in the east, Mtengera maintained his hold in Ubena of the Hills, and, since his people were cattle-owners and hill-bred, he presumably had no intention of shifting the main centres of tribal life to the lower country. The Wahehe, however, had observed his activities in the Valley and seized the opportunity to press harder than ever against his western provinces. The long series of Hehe wars culminated in 1874–5 in the Battle of Mgodamtitu* which Nigmann† describes as a

* = Black Tree *or* Black Medicine.

† E. Nigmann, *Die Wahehe*, Berlin, 1908.

crushing defeat for the clans led by the Wakinimanga, as a result of which they were finally driven out of Mgololo, the centre of their kingdom on the plateau, and forced to retire altogether to the low country. The Wakinimanga, not unnaturally, stoutly deny this and declare that they were never defeated by the Wahehe. The Battle of Mgodamtitu, they frankly admit, was a bloody business and they suffered heavy losses, but they drove the Wahehe off in the end, and their subsequent desertion of the higher country was entirely their own idea! They assert that after the battle Mkwawa was about to flee to Ikonongo in Tabora district, but an Mbena called Muopi went to him and told him that the Manga Chief, Mtengera, had decided to migrate to the Ulanga Valley, so there was no need for him to leave Uhehe. One old man, however, whose father was Mtengera's chief counsellor,* says that both sides were so shaken by the ferocity of the struggle that *both* ended by running away! In truth, the battle ended in stalemate, both sides equally sick of it, for these enthusiastic exponents of the sport of war were not so inordinately fond of that sport as to have any taste for a battle that became too serious or dangerous, or lasted too long.

The following year Mtengera retired eastwards and abandoned the highlands, though he clung to all the hill-country up to the Mufindi escarpment itself, that is, to Utemekwira, which contained the grave of his father, Ndaliwali. He was tired of the fruitless wars in the west and more interested in the new fields for conquest opening before him in the east. With him went many of the Bena clans, from the various small kingdoms the Wakinimanga had subdued. Others remained behind in the hills and came under the power of the Wahehe. In spite of dangers and difficulties, considerable intercourse went on secretly between some of the latter and their fellows who had migrated, especially in the matter of trading iron from the hills for cloth and muskets

* Ngongomi, see pp. 75 and 113

from the Valley (see Chap. XIV). On the whole the people who migrated soon forgot the names by which they had been known in the hills—Wakombwe, Wafwagi, etc.—and called themselves simply Wabena, but in a few cases the particular small kingdom from which a man's ancestors came is still remembered.

From all accounts the Wahehe were also ready to make an end of the fighting, and a policy of mutual avoidance became the order of the day. With the exception of one further raid by Mtengera into Ubena of the Hills, when his men were overwhelmed by a smallpox epidemic, we hear no more of Hehe wars after the Battle of Mgodamtitu, though doubtless minor hostilities occurred along the border.

Mtengera himself made his headquarters in a big fort he built at Ligamba, whence he could observe the Valley, and the greater part of his people followed him east of the big rivers. Only a few settlements remained in the western foothills, and Utemekwira was left almost empty save for the warrior bands to whom was entrusted the task of guarding that side of the kingdom.

Mtengera appears to have spent some years in reorganising the tribe in its new surroundings. There was a certain amount of fighting with Wapogoro and Wandwewe, and also in the Valley as he tried to push his border further north in the lowlands, but nothing particular is recorded of the period. When his heir, Kiwanga I, reached adolescence (1882–3), Mtengera himself no longer himself led his men to war, but sent them out under his popular young son, so that the boy might make his name as a leader of men. After his short illness and death in 1884 and the accession of Kiwanga (94), all thoughts of territorial expansion had to be abandoned owing to internal troubles, and the attention of the tribe was focussed on a long and bitter civil war which lasted till the German occupation brought it to an end. Thus Ubena of the Rivers, instead of being a temporary halting-place on the road to

greater things, became the permanent home of the Wakinimanga and those Bena clans who had followed them eastwards.

Their migration from the mountains to the plains, from the streams of the hills to the broad, crocodile-infested rivers below, from the dry, cool grasslands to the enervating swamps, from a country of cattle and maize and millets to one where cattle died and rice was the staple food, of necessity wrought fundamental changes in the economic life of the people. The primitive African does not take kindly to sudden and wholesale change; he likes the ways of his father. Yet those cattle-loving hill people, who were thus violently uprooted from their familiar surroundings—required to change their diet, to give up most of their cattle, to learn river lore and the skilful use of canoes—were only the grandfathers of the men who to-day cling to the lowest, swampiest parts of Ubena of the Rivers for the sake of their favourite food, rice. The "fly"-free hills of Utemekwira on the west and Undwewe on the east, both within the Bena borders, are practically empty, and even where the people live in hilly country, as in Masagati, which contains about 29 per cent of the population, they cultivate little save the land which is suitable for rice. Mtengera I looked down on rice-* and fish-eaters, and when he migrated, made his headquarters in the hills at Ligamba where his men grew maize and *ulezi* (finger-millet, Eleusine coracana *Gaertn.*) to which he was accustomed, and where he could keep cattle as became a great Chief. His grandson, Towegale, the present ruler (128), thinks there is but one food crop really worth growing, and that is rice, and that, next to meat, a tasty piece of smoked fish is the choicest possible relish for his dish of boiled rice; whereas no man can ever feel really full on a diet of maize and *ulezi!* True, he would like to keep many cattle, but when it comes to a choice between a home in the

* Though his father Ndaliwali, living at Uchindile, is said to have acquired a taste for rice and to have obtained what he needed from Masagati, as a great luxury!

hills of Utemekwira with large herds and little or no rice and a home in the low country with plenty of rice but only a few head of cattle confined to one or two scattered localities where they do not die, the balance comes down with a bump in favour of rice! At the same time, among the more elderly the old ideas of wealth linger on, and a man will say wistfully, "We who were rich are the poorest among the tribes now. See, our cattle have all gone." But a little inquiry will usually reveal that he, too, has chosen the site of his home with an eye to rice rather than cattle.

As with their cousins the Wahehe, fighting was until recent times the principal occupation of the Wabena, and their history is consequently mainly one of wars with the surrounding tribes. War, if not the whole duty of man, was at least by far the most prominent part of that duty. And it was more than a mere duty: it was the king of sports and the road to wealth and honour. As a sport it may appear to us savage and bloodthirsty: viewing it as a serious business, however, we, with our "civilised" methods of wholesale slaughter, are hardly in a position to point the finger at those who speak with bated breath of bloody battles in which perhaps ten men lost their lives. There is no doubt that they played their great game with immense seriousness, but in trying to understand their point of view we must not lose sight of the fact that, when all is said and done, war was a sport and not the shattering, terrifying thing it has become for us. In many respects it might be said that they were animated by something akin to the spirit of the mediaeval tourney. There was, of course, the lure of booty too, but in all they say of war and of their warrior heroes, the impression made on the listener is that war was primarily regarded as a game, a test of worth, and, withal, a glorious adventure, and its highest and most valued prizes were great honour and high position, even maybe the hand of a daughter of the Chief in marriage.

Their whole life, from early childhood, centred round this sport; the training to which they were submitted was all directed to one end—the production of keen and able warriors. Small wonder, then, that a Chief who was tardy in going to war was of no repute. Though his position as head of the tribe and more particularly as its religious leader in itself demanded respect, yet by his lack of keenness in providing his warriors with suitable opportunities for displaying their prowess he rendered himself liable to public insult. The great Mtengera's brother, Mzawira (55), is a case in point. He earned the disapproval of his subjects in this way, and though he retained his position as the religious head of the tribe, the high priest of the sacrifices, and still kept the Stool of the Mtema,* the temporal power passed to his more warlike and adventurous brother Mtengera. As Towegale expresses it in the next chapter, Mzawira "got down from his Stool."

In spite, however, of their keenness to fight, the Wabena exercised discretion in declaring war. As a game it lost its attraction when it was played against hopeless odds. They never fought the Germans, their Chief realising from the start the futility of opposing the white men with their new and deadly weapons. Fortunately for the tribe, Kiwanga I (94) (1884–1905) came into contact with the white men at the coast, whither he went to seek medical aid, and he learned to appreciate their power and efficiency before they began to advance inland. His consequent discretion saved his people from disasters such as overtook their neighbours who resisted the Europeans.

When the first German officer arrived in Ubena in 1890, Kiwanga's subjects included, besides Wabena, some of the Wandwewe, most of the Wandamba, a section of the Wapogoro, a number of Wangindo, a few Mbunga settlers in his country, and others. His territory comprised the Ulanga Valley from the western escarpment to somewhere up in the

* = Chief. The full title is Mtwa Mtema.

foothills of the Mahenge *massif* in the east, and from the mountains of Ifinga in the south (though he had really no control over the rebellious south) to the Kihanzi River in the north, excluding only two areas on the eastern side which he had alienated to his Angoni ally Mpepo, brother of Chabruma.

Since 1890 there have been numerous changes in the Bena border, and the map facing this page shows its approximate position to-day. At the 1931 Census, the population within the present boundaries of Ubena of the Rivers numbered about 16,100, comprising clans who came from Ubena of the Hills together with a motley collection of people absorbed into the tribal organisation since the migration. Although much of Kiwanga I's territory and many of his subjects no longer come under the sway of the Manga Chief, that Chief is still a power to be reckoned with in the Ulanga Valley, and his personal influence extends far beyond the actual borders of his kingdom. Although, too, that kingdom now contains only 16,000 subjects (their number is increasing rapidly), its history and culture are in many ways well worthy of study.

The sketch of tribal history in the following chapter, written by the present Mtema, Towegale, and translated as closely as may be from Kiswahili, represents all that has been re-written of a laboriously compiled record which he had the misfortune to lose in a canoe accident in 1930.

CHAPTER II

THE KINGDOM OF THE WAKINIMANGA

By MTEMA TOWEGALE KIWANGA

MTENGERA's rule dates from the death of his father, Ndaliwali, who died in 1775.* After the latter's death two years passed before it was known, either to those who lived near or to those who lived afar, that the Mtema was dead. Only the family and the elders of the tribe knew; that is, the Wanzagira and the Wanyangutwa. Mnyangutwa means a "brother" of the Mtema, who himself is Mtwa: an Mzagira is either a commoner who has been elevated in rank on account of his good work or the son of one of the Mtema's "daughters."†

After Ndaliwali's death, the work of the court and the deciding of disputes was done by the royal family, and the litigants who brought cases were left ignorant of the fact that the Mtema was dead. The Mtema's relatives would question the disputants, saying, "What is your business?" And they would reply, "We have here our disputes." The royal relatives then said, "Our master is there in his house, but he has fever and cannot see you. If you have disputes to be heard, you can tell us, and when we have heard your words we will lay the matter before the Mtema. Then he will consider it and give his decision." So the royal elders heard the arguments of the litigants and went into the Mtema's hut where they sat for a little. Afterwards they came out to say that the Mtema had weighed up the matter "and he says that you, So-and-so, have lost your case."

Now Ndaliwali wanted his son Mzawira (55) to succeed him, and so while he was yet alive he told all the people,

* Towegale's dates must not be taken too seriously. See pp. 68–70.

† For the meaning of all titles, see Chap. VI, "Tribal Organisation."

saying, "When I die, Mzawira will follow me and be your Mtema, for he is the son of Binti Kipolero"* (32). And so when Ndaliwali died, Mzawira followed custom and buried his father in his hut, planting a tree on his grave. Not until that tree had grown so that it forced its way through the roof of the hut were the people and the other relatives informed that Mtema Ndaliwali was no longer in the world.

Then all the people were assembled and divided into four ranks. The first was composed of the brethren of the Mtema and their fathers, the second of the Wanzagira, the third of the Watambule, and the fourth of the common people. After being drawn up in their ranks they were informed that Mtema Ndaliwali had departed this world in the year 1775, that he had been buried in his hut, that his mark was there for them to see—the tree which had appeared above the roof of the hut—and that Mzawira was now their Mtema. Thus Mzawira began his reign in the year 1777 (though he was actually ruling already), when the chiefs of the other tribes first learned that Ndaliwali had died.

Then all the people and the Mtema's relatives went to Mzawira and found him already in possession of the kingdom. And there was a great gathering for the mourning feast of the Mtema, of all those who had received the news as we have described above. All who had brought cattle or goats handed them over to the elders who had been appointed to look after the grave of the departed Mtema, as has already been explained. The elders took these to the Mtema Mzawira and, in accordance with custom, some were killed every day to supply food for the assembled people. This happened for many days until the people returned to their homes.

When all these ceremonies were ended, the chiefs of the surrounding tribes got word that Ndaliwali was dead and that Mzawira bin Ndaliwali ruled in his stead over the tribe of the Wakinimanga.

* His senior wife.

Now the Chiefs of the Hehe tribe are blood relatives of the Manga Chiefs because they are all descended from the same father and mother. The Chief of that tribe, he who was called Muyugumba and who begat Chief Mkwawa of Iringa, when he heard that Ndaliwali had died, made war on Mzawira with the purpose of wresting the whole of his kingdom from him. And he began to fight along the border only, for he said to himself, "If I fight thus, the enemy will think I have only a small army." Mzawira's people were deceived as he had intended, and when these enemies appeared among them they sent tidings to Mzawira, who called together the elders of the tribe to explain the position to them. When they heard the words of the Mtema, they answered, "Good! Now we await your command to go to war." But Mzawira replied, "We cannot pursue these enemies there on the border. It is better for us to wait until they come nearer, then we will fight them. If they keep to the border, let us not follow them."

Now Mtema Mzawira had a brother whose name was Mtengera bin Ndaliwali. His mother was Semukomi* (34), the daughter of Uhenge, a man of very high repute. Mtengera was given the task of fighting with the border raiders and of driving out the enemies who invaded the country of the Wabena-Wakinimanga. From time to time they were chased out of the country by him. Whenever he beat them off and captured slaves and cattle and goats he sent all the spoils of war to Mzawira. Everything that he took in war he sent to the Mtema, who gave him whatever reward he desired.

As the result of these wars there was famine in the land; nevertheless, Mtengera excelled in guarding the country of his elder brother, and eventually the people recovered from the famine and the effects of the wars. And the wars continued

* *Se* = daughter of. *M(u)komi* = great (man). *Se* has been replaced by *binti* and is only retained in one or two special cases, e.g. Senjenge (87). We have followed the ordinary modern usage of the tribe and only use *se* where the Wabena themselves do so. Similarly, in the case of men, we have used *bin* for "son of" as this is now universally done by the Wabena themselves.

against many enemies besides the Wahehe. There were also the Wangoni, who are brave people.

And Mtengera carried on his work of fighting against any enemies who tried to invade the country of the Wabena-Wakinimanga. Then the elders of the Wabena-Wakinimanga made a plan to consult Mtema Mzawira and to advise him that it would be a good thing if he gave his Stool of the kingdom to his brother Mtengera. They said, "You will be the Mtema of the Sacrifices* of the Wabena." And Mzawira agreed at once to hand over the secular power to his brother, Mtengera. So Mtengera ruled, and he lived in the principal village where the grave of his father was. The village is called Uchindile. Thus he followed custom as it had been since ancient times, and custom and honour prevailed as they had done in the days of Mtema Kihugura (8) and Mtema Ndaliwali.

And Mtengera took many wives, and when each wife bore a child (that was her duty) she was allotted a place to live until the child grew up. That place which he himself took was to be his principal village where he would be held in honour by the people who followed him according to custom, while he obeyed the orders of the Greater Chief (i.e. Mzawira).

This elder of ours divided up the country into districts as he expanded his dominions, as the walls and screens of a house divide up that house. A few of the divisions which he made were: Ruaha, Mgololo, Malinyi, Role, Isohiwaya, Usangilindege, Ihowanja, Mkombwe, Rukungu, Ihaki, Ikitira, Mulindizi, Mugalagachi, Kitivele, Kivigili, Mgodamtitu.

Thus Ndaliwali died in 1775 and Mzawira reigned until 1778, when he got down from his Stool and Mtengera sat upon it in his stead. There was never a Chief like Mtengera amongst the Wakinimanga of Ubena.

Mtema Mtengera made war on a chief called Mtiganjola bin

* Mtema wa Tambiko, see pp. 103–108. *Tambiko* means both the ceremonies themselves and the power inherent in them, and also the right to sacrifice.

Mdemu, who had a brother called Kiduligo bin Mdemu. Kiduligo came to Mtema Mtengera to complain about his elder brother, Mtiganjola, so Mtengera went into the country of the Wabena of Malangali, Iringa, and in that war many cattle were captured.

Mtengera also fought against Yonga, from whom he took many cattle, so that the land was filled with herds, and when he returned from Yonga's country he went again into Ubena (of the Hills) and fought there, taking still more cattle. This was in that part of Ubena which is called Kidunda, the country of Mhovelwa Mwanjale.

And he returned again to the country of the Wasovi, who were under Chief Gadawu. The Wasovi were killed right and left and a very great number of them became slaves, including women and children. Many bill-hooks, too, fell into Mtengera's hands.

And he made war on Mulimbwi I of ?, and captured so many head of cattle that when he returned and distributed the spoils even small children were given presents of ten head of cattle.

And once more Mtengera went to war, this time against Mbeyera Mkongwe, but on his return an epidemic of smallpox broke out and he lost many of his followers, 985 men and 306 youths. When Mtengera saw that many of his brave warriors had died, he was too impatient to abandon his military projects even for a time. So he thought of a plan, and gathered together many women and clothed them in men's attire. When they went into battle, these women assembled in a great company round the Mtema where they were told to make a noise like that of 4,000 men, many more than had died of smallpox. But after these heavy losses they were only able to capture small numbers of cattle, and Mtengera returned to Ihowanja (in the hills).

After these things a man came to him. He was a great man with more than 600 warriors and 9,000 cattle, and his name

was Sakara. He came to see if he was strong enough to vanquish Mtengera, but he discovered he was not. But Mtengera went into Sakara's country and captured a lot of his cattle, and they were very fine beasts.

Then he fought at Kunaútwa Kungombali in Kapunga's country and there he took a great number of cattle. From there he went to Lutambi's (in Usangu) and then returned home. After that he went to fight in Ligawa and then against the Hehe Chief, Muyugumba, who had invaded the country of one Mbeyera (towards Tukuyu). Mbeyera fled to Mtengera and made complaint about Chief Muyugumba, saying, "He has attacked my country and seized my cattle and all my possessions, wherefore I pray that you will fight Muyugumba on my behalf and return to me my people and my cattle." And Mtema Mtengera agreed.

First he commanded Muyugumba to return Mbeyera's country and his people and his cattle, but Muyugumba refused. Then Mtengera attacked him and defeated him and returned to Mbeyera all that he had lost. And Muyugumba fled with only three head of cattle, no more than three, and went to seek the aid of Chief Merere Musukulu of Usangu. These two together made war on Mtengera, but were severely defeated and driven off.

The next enemy was the Mgoni, Chief Chabruma,* who passed through the country to the south and then appeared from the direction of Malangali. The Wabena met him at a convenient place and fought there, and he fled with heavy losses of Mandoda and Manduna,† losing, too, all the cattle which he had captured on the raid from which he was returning. Many of his followers were enslaved, and only about half his force escaped. Mtengera set out to follow him, but when he saw that there were no more cattle to be had he returned, while Chabruma went off and attacked the Wahehe again.

* It must have been Chabruma's father, Kipeta.

† Titles of Angoni warriors.

There were other Wangoni in the country of Ulanga, round Tambalale. And an Mgoni called Suli came from the direction of Mbunga in Songea district and tried to kill the people working among the sugar-cane. He and his men hid themselves and lay in wait for the people who worked there. The latter sent these tidings at once to Mtengera, and he commissioned one of his elders, called Mhako (64), to go down to the aid of these Wandamba with only a few men, about twenty warriors. Mhako was joined by an Mgoni called Ngelangela, grandfather of the present Jumbe Lambalamba, who helped him in his work.

Mhako thought out a plan of campaign, and sent some people down among the sugar-cane to start cutting it, in order to entice Suli to attack, while he himself approached and surrounded the place. He had arranged that when those in amongst the canes shook them, he would strike at the invaders. Suli was too impatient to notice that the cane was being entered by people in a great hurry and he drew near and was killed. The Wangoni who were left were known as the Wambunga and lived at Tambalale in Lower Ulanga.

Mtengera sent Mhako to guard against these enemies in the year 1808.*

It had always been Mtengera's policy to clear observation posts on the tops of hills, so that he could see what was happening down below in Ulanga, and could watch all the rivers of the Valley. He built one camp called Mohogope, whence the enemy could be watched and whence he could see whether the Wandamba were being attacked or were living in peace, and he himself returned to his headquarters at Uchindile.

Among Mtengera's brethren were two outstanding warriors, Kihogoza (48) and Towegale (59). The latter was a full brother of Mtengera; they were the children of the same father and the same mother.

* 1868 would be nearer the mark. See pp. 68–70.

Now Ndaliwali had eleven children (whose names are remembered):

1. Mzawira (55).
2. Mtengera (56).
3. Towegale (59)—same mother as Mtengera.
4. Semudodera (57)—same mother as Mtengera.
5. Mpangachuma (61)—his mother was the niece of Mtengera's mother, for when Ndaliwali married Semukomi binti Uhenge he also took the daughter of her brother Uhenge (35).
6. Faliganga.
7. Nyawigu.
8. Matikila.
9. Mwalivalila.
10. Mfunga (60)—same mother as Mtengera.
11. Muvinji.

Mtengera began to make a road from Utemekwira and Uchindile to the Ulanga River. He also sent his Mzagira Kigwamembe to live near the Ruaha* and Luhembero Rivers to guard that part of the kingdom where the Wapogoro lived. He stopped his country as one stops a bottle with a cork, to prevent the passage of those who were called Mafiti-Wangoni—people who wore little and left their hair long so that they could carry food and simsim tied up in it. The idea of this was to keep their food safe till the fighting was over, unless of course they died with it. They wore no clothes save a kind of guard which encased their genitalia.

When Mtengera saw that the Wangoni were tired of raiding him and had gone down to the lower part of the Valley, he began to measure out his fort at Ligamba, which was above the present site of Sofi Mission. Its walls were built of earth and wood, as was the roof.† Before he went to Ligamba he made a camp at Rupunga, and his brother

* One of the many Ruaha Rivers. This one flows round the south of Mahenge into the Luhembero River.

† Reminiscent of the *tembe* of their old home in the hills. All houses are thatched now, like those of other people in the Valley.

Towegale also camped at Kidenge Nyambila. Mtengera came from the hills to Rupunga by the road which he had ordered to be made and which at that time was called Ikwete.

When the Wahehe heard that Mtengera had made a road and gone down into the Valley, they made war on him along the border, so Mtengera sent word to his brethren, Towegale and Kihogoza, that the Wahehe had invaded the borders of his country. Towegale, who was at his camp at Kidenge Nyambila when he received these tidings, rose up and went off in haste to Uchindile. He covered the five days' journey in one day. He sought his brother, but first he talked with Kihogoza to learn the news of war. Then he went in front of Mtengera and asked leave to fight the Wahehe with his "brother" Kihogoza. With Towegale and Kihogoza, the words of the one were as the words of the other: their words were always in agreement. But Mtengera replied, "Hearken, Towegale and Kihogoza. To-day you have not permission to fight these Hehe enemies, for I see this is a bad place for a battle." But Towegale and Kihogoza did not agree with this and persuaded Mtengera to let them go.

So they went out, and passing through Ikitira crossed the Ruaha River and came to a big village called Role. After that they came to Malinyi (in the hills) and eventually arrived at Mgodamtitu. The Wahehe advanced on Mgodamtitu during the night, and at 5 a.m. they entered the village and began to fight there. Towegale came out of the houses to find the Wahehe a hundred paces off. And they fought from about five in the morning until noon. Mtengera came up behind them.

The fighting increased in fury and Kihogoza was killed near the palisade of the village. He was first hit in the leg with a spear. He knelt down and broke the shafts of his spears so that he could still use them, thus shortened, against the enemy, even if he should die in the attempt. But the place where he was defending himself was a very unfavourable one,

and many were killed there. Kihogoza himself died there without Towegale knowing.

Towegale, too, was wounded by a spear thrust and his followers said to him, "Return, Towegale." And he asked them, "Where is Kihogoza?" And they replied, "We think he is dead." Then Towegale refused, saying, "I shall not stop fighting till the Mtema arrives." Little did he know that his Mtema Mtengera was there at that moment, fighting a bloody battle with the Wahehe, killing them right and left, taking on two men at time in a hand-to-hand struggle. With his right hand he wielded his spear, with his left he warded off the blows of three men, and at that part of the battle where he was fighting the enemy were routed.

Then Mtengera stood upon the hill near the village of Mgodamtitu, and in front he could see the fleeing enemy and his brother's followers a little way off. Mtengera had only a few men with him at the time, just his personal servants, and he was resting after the struggle. He said, "That man over there is Towegale, but I see he has met his fate. He is a doomed man and he will never leave that place. Moreover, he will die alone there with none to see him, as many have died before." And Towegale died.

Towegale and Kihogoza, who died in the Battle of Mgodamtitu, were brave warriors, and Mtengera was overcome with grief and did not recover for many days. He told his people, "Towegale is dead. He was my brother from the same father and mother, and for this reason I cannot bring myself to break the news to my mother at present." So his mother, Semukomi binti Uhenge, did not hear the news in her village of Kitivele.

And Mtengera said to his mother, "You will go to live at Iloma ya Mamba," which is now called Mkasu, and when she had moved to Iloma ya Mamba he told her, "Your son Towegale is no longer in the world."

When Mtengera had returned from the Battle of Mgo-

damtitu and had made arrangements for his mother to live at Iloma ya Mamba, he said, "I shall put military posts at all the important places." He placed his elder brother, Mzawira, who had been Mtema before him, at Ifema Ilila Kisiwani,* which is between the Mnyera and the Ruhuji Rivers, and which is his village until this day where his spirit lives. When Mtengera had been there he went on to visit Rupunga and Itililo, Kilolero and Malinyi, Hanga, which is now called Sofi, and Ligamba.

Before the people started cultivating, Mtengera went to fight in the hills against Chief Merere Musukulu, but the war did not go well, for there was an outbreak of smallpox. Now Mtengera was a man of war and was very displeased because this sickness amongst his men made it impossible for him to fight big battles, and he saw that he would have to content himself with merely defending his kingdom. He was compelled to turn back, and then he himself contracted the disease.

He returned by the road through Lwanjali, passing Linyaútwa. And there his sick followers were seen by Njavík (20), who was the important man at that place, and he began to kill the sick warriors. Now it was the custom in war for the Mtema to go ahead and his men to follow behind, and the Mtema had already reached Rupunga. Word was sent to him of the fate of those who came behind. A man called Mhoma, who was the head of another village quite near Njavík's, brought him the news. Those who had passed through Mhoma's village returned home safely, but those who had gone by way of Njavík's only escaped if they happened to pass there unseen by him or to be well enough to help themselves escape. And those who went by Mhoma's came before the Mtema to tell him all this news.

When Mzawira got word that his brother Mtengera had

* Ifema is the village's real name. Ilila means "the place where a great man has died": Mzawira died there. Kisiwani was the name given to it in German times when the country round was made into a game reserve.

returned and was very ill with smallpox, his heart was moved to go and see him at Rupunga, which was only one day's journey away. So he came to discuss the war and the epidemic. He returned home to Ifema, and when he got there he too was smitten with smallpox. And the elders of the place sent word to Mtengera and sent out for doctors. They procured one who gathered herbs which he pounded up in a mortar, at the same time singing, "*Wayangu wetwanga nyungu, nene nditwanga ngonda.*" ("My friends grind up pumpkin seeds, I grind up the enemy.") The sick man took the medicine, but he had not the good fortune to recover. His sickness increased and he died. And the doctor was seized at once because of the song which he had sung, "*Wayangu wetwanga nyungu, nene nditwanga ngonda.*" And they said, "When you sang 'I grind up the enemy,' we believed you were grinding up the sickness, but now we know that you meant 'I grind up the Mtema.' " So they took the case before Mtengera. But Mtengera said, "It is not the fault of this doctor and his words; doubtless it is his custom to sing that song." Therefore Mtengera said, "No, he did not kill the Mtema."

Mtema Mtengera built himself houses at Utiga and Mkasu Iloma ya Mamba, his mother's village, and at Kilolero, Malinyi, and Sofi, which was then called Hanga. And he built a big fort at Ligamba, which is a high hill which can be seen from afar, so that he could watch all Ulanga below. Mtema Mtengera lived there and organised his kingdom. He divided his warriors into companies, each with its own name. Those of the first were the Wenyekongo, who lived near the Mtema; of the second, the Wenyewaha; of the third, the Wanyigamba; of the fourth, the Wanyitwangilo; of the fifth, the Wanyitamba, the frontier guards; of the sixth, the Wamulaga; of the seventh, the Wabagamoyo; of the eighth, the Walambo; of the ninth, the Wanyaluwinda; of the tenth, the Wanyihaki; of the eleventh, the Isoliwaya. These last five were all of the same rank. The senior warriors were the Wanyitwangilo, and all

news of the enemy had first to be given to them. The Wenyekongo, who were the children in the Mtema's school, were used to carry his messages to distant villages and when they grew up they became Wenyewaha.

Mtengera had twenty male children whose names were:

1. Kiwanga (94).
2. Magwila.
3. Mgopolinyi
4. Sagamaganga (86).
5. Semtitu—same mother as Kiwanga.
6. Mkalilatawangu.
7. Kingulinguli.
8. Mwanamhomi.
9. Likombi.
10. Maliyaga.
11. Makinginda.
12. Mwanasekayamba.
13 Mtetereka (still living).
14. Pagungile.
15. Kasivita.
16. Filingafu (still living).
17. Kapanga.
18. Kapanga II.
19. Ligungile.
20. Muhagatila.

He also had thirty girl children, or possibly more. The eldest child of his senior wife, Binti Sangaramu (62), was a girl called Mhambulinyi. Later this wife bore him a son, Muhagatila, but this son could not inherit the kingdom from his father on account of having an elder sister.* Mtengera had to choose another successor, and his choice fell on Kiwanga, who was the son of his second wife, Binti Bilali (39). He called together all his people and said, "I, Mtema Mtengera, tell you all that Kiwanga is above his brothers, and now I shall send him to war so that all will know that he is a brave man."

* The Mtema must not be the son of a woman whose first child was a girl.

This was the custom, for the Mtema's son to be sent to war to meet the enemy and to fight with him.

And Mtengera did as he had said, sending out a great army with which he sent his children to war, to fight against one Makirika at Itete. On their return they went out again to Ukalangimbila, to attack Lingwendu, who was a Pogoro chief. Now the Wapogoro used poisoned arrows, but these availed them not at all, and they were defeated and driven up into a rocky mountain.

Then Mtengera became very ill, so they did not proceed further, and he died in the year 1884. He was a great man, there was never a Chief like him. And the people knew not of his death for two years.

The new Mtema ruled at Itwangilo, near Mtimbira Kipenyu, but his brother Sagamaganga* (86) was not pleased with his rule and sometimes he followed the Mtema's orders and sometimes he did not. The situation became acute and eventually he left and built his house in Iringa, that is, at Malinyi (in the hills). He had killed one of his father's wives because he wanted to inherit her and she refused. And Sagamaganga became very fierce with all the people, so that they gave him a new name, Mugonelamage = He who sleeps with a knife.

Then Sagamaganga plotted with his adherents to kill Kiwanga and seize the kingdom, and so many followed him that Kiwanga was left with only half his people. And Sagamaganga advanced on Itwangilo to attack Kiwanga, and he pushed right into the village, but left Kiwanga an opening so that he went to Mbenga. Sagamaganga stayed at Itwangilo, but when he had been there a little he began to boast before all the people, saying, "Listen to me. Now you see that this is no longer the country of Manga. It is Fwagi." The fool! Fwagi was the clan of his mother who was a slave concubine of Mtengera. And the brethren of the Mtema said, "This is

* *Saga* = cleave, *maganga* = pl. of *liganga* = stone.

a shameful thing that we and the aunt* of the Mtema and the people plot against Kiwanga, because of Sagamaganga's boasting." So the people lost their enthusiasm for Sagamaganga and made it their business to send messengers to Kiwanga, who returned stealthily and unknown to Sagamaganga. Sagamaganga was at Rupunga where he and his aunt, Semudodera (57), the mother of Senjenge (78), stayed till they were driven out of that village because they had plotted together.

All this trouble arose over a quarrel in which Sagamaganga barely escaped with his life. But the path he took passed through land belonging to his relatives who had pity on him and said, "Fly for your life, we cannot kill you." But his brother Kingulinguli was killed. Sagamaganga fled to Madenge, that is, to Linyaútwa near the Mkombezi River, away in the south, and so on to the Ruhuji River and into Matumbi-Ifinga.

And Kiwanga returned to Itwangilo, but Sagamaganga did not give up the struggle. He entered into an alliance with Chabruma to obtain his help in overthrowing Kiwanga.

Now Sagamaganga got his power through his aunt, Senjenge's mother, Semudodera binti Ndaliwali, who was Mtengera's sister. Semudodera wanted Kiwanga to take his cousin Senjenge as his chief wife, but he married the daughter of Binti Mlengi (49), who was indeed of the same blood as Semudodera, but a rather distant relative. She was not a member of the same inheritance circle (*lit.* she could not enter in among the heirs) and had not the same claim because she was a more distant relative. But Kiwanga would not do as Semudodera desired and he agreed to give Senjenge to his brother Magwila. After Magwila had lived with her for a little—but not very much!—she was taken by Sagamaganga, who sent her to live at her mother's village of Udenyi Membe. On Sagamaganga's death, which happened at the beginning

* Semudodera: see below, pp. 72 ff.

of the German occupation, Senjenge was taken by Kiwanga as one of his wives and was given her mother's village to live in. It was renamed Boma ya Lindi.

When Sagamaganga made an alliance with the Wangoni of Songea under Chabruma, Kiwanga made friends with Mpepo, Chabruma's elder brother, who because he had grossly offended Chabruma went off to follow Kiwanga. Kiwanga sought out a place for him to settle and he went to live at Mafingi.

Sagamaganga and Chabruma made plans to defeat Kiwanga, but they were unable to succeed. And Kiwanga planned to pursue them. He came upon them at a place called Mututuma and Chabruma was defeated in his own country, losing large numbers of cattle and many slaves. Kiwanga stayed in that country for a long time and Chabruma and Sagamaganga resented it bitterly. So they sought ways and means of greatly increasing their forces and embarking on a new plan of campaign.

Now Kiwanga had with him his own men and Mpepo, and they began to quarrel over the cattle, some of which were required for food. And his brethren were displeased so that they began to plot against him, saying, "When we see a battle is at hand, we will little by little go over to the enemy."

Well, Chabruma opened hostilities at 5.30 a.m., before Kiwanga had got his troops into formation. Chabruma and Sagamaganga with their men were already close at hand. Kiwanga had with him his Wanyitwangilo and Walambo and was taken by surprise. The Walambo carried muskets and blazed off wildly, enveloping the camp of the Wanyitwangilo in a dense cloud of smoke. These fought with spears and shields. The fighting became very fierce and Kiwanga's brethren and Mpepo crept stealthily away. These traitors had already apprised the enemy, saying, "Kiwanga is on that side, we are over here. During the battle we will slip away from him. You must fight in an open place without enclosure."

Chabruma and Sagamaganga advanced on the place where Kiwanga was, and Kiwanga saw Sagamaganga, who was searching diligently for his brother. He was carrying an axe, and Kiwanga, knowing whom he sought, called out, "Sagamaganga, if you are looking for me, here I am. Come here." But Sagamaganga did not go forward.

The battle went badly for Kiwanga, and all the cattle were recaptured by the enemy and all the Wanyitwangilo were killed and all the Walambo, because they had been surprised in a bad place where there was much mud. Kiwanga was left with his Mzagira, called Mawanja, a brother-in-law of his, and when he saw that his company had been nearly wiped out and that the other companies were not in sight he retreated in order to give his men some respite. But the fighting grew hotter and the enemy followed after him. And he came to a place where there was deep mud, and seeing that a number of his men were bogged, he jumped right over on to the other side. Mawanja tried to do the same but fell into the mud and stuck. The enemy came nearer, and Kiwanga turned back to ward them off and to prevent them from killing his brother-in-law. The enemy came up to them, and Kiwanga fought while Mawanja extricated himself from the mud and came to stand beside him. They hurled many spears at the foe.

And there was one Mgoni called Kupepeteka who pressed hard on Kiwanga. This Kupepeteka was a famous warrior, renowned for his ferocity. He carried spear and shield and attacked Kiwanga, but Kiwanga was too quick for him. Now when a warrior fights with spear and shield he jumps about all over the place, and as Kupepeteka did this Kiwanga stabbed him in the back with a spear and Kupepeteka was astonished, for he did not know that he was fighting with Kiwanga himself. Then he realised who his opponent was and knelt down and, putting his hands together, he begged for mercy, saying, "*Komu, komu, Ngosi!*" ("Mercy, mercy, Chief!") So Kiwanga did not strike him again but left him.

Kiwanga and his brother-in-law went off, but nearly all the men who had been bogged in the mud were killed; only one or two escaped. That night Kiwanga slept at a distance from his brethren and the men who had followed them. These had come safely out of the fight; only those under Kiwanga himself had all been killed, there remained but a very few. Then his brethren began to look for him, scattering in all directions to search for him to learn whether he were alive or dead. And they found him safe and sound, and he asked them, "Why did I not see you during the battle?" They answered, "Ah! The fighting was very fierce on our wing and the enemy broke through us."

Then Mawanja told Kiwanga that his brethren were very much annoyed with him for having lost the cattle, and were saying that he had better take the companies he had with him, the Wanyitwangilo and the Walambo, and get them back. At any rate, that is his account of the affair.

The feud did not end there, but the war slackened off a little.

Presently Sagamaganga made friends with some of his brothers who were on Kiwanga's side. And there was one brother called Mgopolinyi. He was a full brother of Sagamaganga, from one mother and one father, but only a half-brother of Kiwanga, having the same father. But nevertheless Kiwanga was deeply attached to him and loved him very dearly. Any day that Mgopolinyi chose was made their holiday and time for rejoicing. They even shared the same bed on occasions.

And Mgopolinyi entered into an agreement with Sagamaganga to kill Kiwanga. Sagamaganga chose him out and negotiated with him because he would have opportunities for doing this. They set about their plans and sharpened their swords till they thought they could cut through a banana tree with one blow. And they cut it, even with one blow, and Mgopolinyi did this to practise for cutting through

Kiwanga's neck with one stroke. Then they felt that one banana tree was not a sufficiently hard test. So they said, "It would be better to try on a couple of goats." They got hold of two goats to represent Kiwanga's neck and with one blow the goats were cut in half.

When all had been prepared, Mgopolinyi went to Kiwanga, who had no knowledge of his brother's intentions, but thought their relations were as they had always been. He came to Kiwanga's camp at Utiga near Mkasu and said to him, "My brother, come with me a little way, I want to talk to you alone." Now Kiwanga's messenger called Mbilango and Mgopolinyi's messenger called Mtutumila went with them. When they had gone a little way, Kiwanga sat down and Mgopolinyi stood and began to abuse him. Kiwanga replied, "Why are you abusing me?" And Mgopolinyi said, "To-day you will see why." Kiwanga remained motionless and said, "Mgopolinyi, if you want to hit me, you are at liberty to cut my neck in two with your sword." Kiwanga presented his neck to him and Mgopolinyi slashed at it with the sword, but Kiwanga dodged and received the blow on the side of his head. Severely wounded, Kiwanga ran to the camp and seized a small shield such as children play with and a spear. And all the people were astounded to see him return bleeding from such a wound.

When Kiwanga ran away, his messenger seized Mgopolinyi so as to give his master a chance of escape. Mgopolinyi felt himself seized round the waist and he plunged his sword into the messenger's stomach. The latter quickly turned and fled, but just before he reached the camp he fell down and died. Mgopolinyi followed after Kiwanga, and when he approached Kiwanga said to him, "Tell me who sent you, Mgopolinyi. I must hear the truth about this thing, for I do not want to have to kill you." But Mgopolinyi did not hear and struck Kiwanga again, hitting him on the shield he carried. The blow wounded Kiwanga a second time. Then Kiwanga kicked Mgopolinyi and knocked him down and stuck him

in the stomach with his spear. He told the men who had followed him to seize Mgopolinyi, and said, "Ask him who it was that sent him here." But they did not hear, and they speared him so that he died. Then Kiwanga wept bitterly because of the fate of his brother.

And they threw Mgopolinyi into the swamp which is near Utiga.

One of Mgopolinyi's brethren, Mpongo, who was at hand, heard what had happened and set out to carry the tidings to Sagamaganga, but on the way he was attacked and killed by a buffalo. And Sagamaganga stayed at Ifinga and said nothing.

Now the wound on Kiwanga's skull did not heal, so he set out on a very long journey to Kilwa to look for a doctor who would be able to cure him. He went with a large retinue of many porters, who carried ivory which he used for buying food.

By this time* the Germans had already occupied the coastal belt and the people sent word to them at Lungélengéle that an important chief from the interior had arrived, whose name was Kiwanga, and that he was ill. The Germans said, "Tell him he is wanted by the Europeans." And Kiwanga marvelled and said, "What kind of people are they?" And they answered, "White." Then he said, "What do they want me for?" And they replied, "They want to see you." But he said, "I cannot go." The people said, "The Europeans are all right. Do not refuse to go for they also are chiefs." So Kiwanga took off his clothes and gave them to another man to wear. This man was called Sadindula.

There was a cleared space where he was to meet the Germans, and he approached with his people but wearing the clothes of a common man. Then they stood in a row with the commoner Sadindula in front. The Europeans, who were a little way off, observed them through a telescope and

* The latter half of 1890; v. Wissmann took Kilwa in May 1890. Kiwanga returned to his people before the end of the year.

saw that Kiwanga was among the common people. And they took him by the hand, saying, "This is Kiwanga, not that man there." And then he had to admit that it was so.

They took him to their camp at Lungélengéle, where they treated his wound and he recovered. And every time his followers came to the camp of the Europeans they were given food, sacks of rice, and oxen. And one Mohamadi Mitole, a native of Kilwa, acted as interpreter for them. Whenever the Germans met Kiwanga's men they greeted them in Swahili, saying, "*Jambo!*" But Kiwanga's men bowed their heads, not knowing that "*Jambo!*" was a greeting and thinking that the Germans were being very fierce. They also wondered where their Mtema was and thought the Germans might have killed him.

Eventually the wound healed up, and the Europeans then gave Kiwanga some European clothes. He put on trousers and a coat and shoes and a big hat. Then they said to him, "Go out and see your followers, because it may be that they are looking for you; moreover, they are very frightened. It would be a good thing to see them." So Kiwanga went to his men who were astonished to see that he had no toes, and thought they had been cut off. Kiwanga assured them and said, "The toes are there inside my shoes, which are only made of hide." But they would not believe him till he took off his shoes, and then they believed him. After this Kiwanga returned to the Boma.

Finally the Germans planned to send him to Germany, and they set forth and went to the camp at Kisima Juu. But just afterwards a messenger arrived with news from Itwangilo that Sagamaganga had killed Kiwanga's brother Semtitu Mtengera in a battle at Iyembera in Matumbi. Before going to the coast for medical treatment Kiwanga had charged Semtitu with the care of his country and his children. Semtitu had decided to make war on Sagamaganga and to follow him to his village of Ifinga. But Sagamaganga got word that the enemy was

approaching and had prepared an ambush in the hills, where Semtitu was surprised before he could arrange his men for a battle. Things had gone badly for him and he himself had been hit with a spear and killed, but his men got off lightly. And they sent a messenger with these tidings from Itwangilo to Dar es Salaam. The messenger could not find Kiwanga, but he saw some Europeans who listened to his news and then telegraphed (*sic*) to the camp at Kisima Juu.

Kiwanga was sent back to Dar es Salaam and informed that a messenger had come with news from his country. They told him, "The brother you left in charge has been killed by your brother Sagamaganga, and now there is none to guard your country. You must give up all idea of going to Europe and must return to your own people. We will send a European with you, his name is Bwana Kaye(?)."

And he and the European journeyed together, Kiwanga's wound being quite cured. They returned together to Itwangilo and a house was built for the European there. The civil war died away and Sagamaganga did not return.

Bwana Kaye stayed in the country and travelled about to look at the country of the Wahehe. And Bwana Kaye, whose real name was Sakarani Viplim,* wanted Kiwanga to go with him to fight against Mkwawa, the Hehe Chief of Iringa, who was plundering Swahili and Arab caravans on the road between Iringa and Kilosa. And they fought Mkwawa and even forced their way into the place where he lived, which was called Kalenga. He had built a house of mud there and called it Lipuliya, and he built a wall all round it; it took one and a half to two hours to walk all round it, and the Great Ruaha River ran through the middle of the enclosure. Kiwanga and his men put ladders up against the wall, up which the German

* v. Prince, who is not really the same person as the man known to the Wabena as "Bwana Kaye" and did not come to Ulanga till shortly before the expedition into Uhehe in 1894. His nickname Sakarani meant, "He who knows no fear," or "He who hurls himself into danger like a drunk man" (M. v. Prince, *Eine Deutsche Frau im Innern Deutsch-Ostafrikas*, 3rd ed., Berlin, 1908, p. 14. Quotation by kind permission of Verlag E. S. Mittler & Sohn).

troops climbed and from which they fired on the people in the enclosure with rifles and machine-guns. They killed a large number of people who were inside the enclosure and fired a shell into Mkwawa's powder-magazine. This was on October 20, 1894.*

Mkwawa fled from his fort into the bush with only a few followers, and in the end his retinue was reduced to four people, two men and two women. And he said, "I see that it is now time for me to die. Do you agree to accompany me?" The women and one man agreed, but the other man only pretended to do so. Then Mkwawa killed his two wives and the first man, but the second ran away. Mkwawa chased him, but could not catch him, so he returned to the place where he had killed the others, and there shot himself. His people had brought wood for a fire, so that when he killed himself he might fall among the burning logs and thus prevent the Germans from finding his body. But his head fell slightly to one side, and when the Germans heard the shot and the words of the boy who had run away, they came and found him—dead. And they cut off his head.†

The Germans went on‡ and built Iringa Boma, and they told Kiwanga to put one of his men to rule there, so he sent one of his brethren called Lipambila. This man lived at Iringa and took his orders from Kiwanga. Kiwanga returned and went to his house at Itwangilo, but as soon as he got there he decided to move and to go and build his house at Mpanga.

When Kiwanga posted Lipambila to Iringa he gave him

* Actually it was October 30th.

† This was on July 19, 1898, nearly four years after the destruction of his fort See Appendix I.

‡ There had been a temporary station (Ulanga) on the Kilombero River below Ifakara, established in 1894 when supplies of food were being collected for the expedition against Mkwawa. This was moved in 1895 to Perondo in the foothills on the border of Uhehe, and in 1896, after abortive attempts to persuade Mkwawa to surrender, v. Prince moved forward into Uhehe and established himself at Iringa. (E. Nigmann, *Geschichte der Kaiserlichen Schutztruppe für Deutsch-Ostafrika*, Berlin, 1911. Quotation by kind permission of Verlag E. S. Mittler & Sohn.)

a man called Musumulipiki. And when the fighting under Bwana Sakarani Viplim had come to an end, Lipambila acquired one hundred and fifty slaves, and two of these he sent to Kiwanga. They were two women, and the name of the first was Mtwamunjigombo and of the second Semulapili.

Bwana Sakarani Viplim paid Lipambila for his services by giving him a pair of tusks, but he was afraid to sell the ivory and sent it to Kiwanga, who took the tusks, but gave Lipambila permission to keep any more that he might acquire, saying, "If you receive any more, sell them where you like, make use of them."*

Bwana Sakarani Viplim went away to Europe and Bwana Mawezi† came in his place. And a man called Mtaki‡ came forth and made complaint to the European about Lipambila, saying, "This man Lipambila is a 'brother' of Kiwanga. Why is he living in this country of Iringa? We are the proper rulers of this place." So Bwana Mawezi removed Lipambila, who returned to Kiwanga. And Kiwanga gave him a part of his country called Kimbwi,where he lived with one hundred followers.

Then a man called Semakungula bin Mofuga found some ivory and took it to Lipambila, but Lipambila could not use it as he had done when he was Mgaga [*sic*] of Iringa, and he sent it to Kiwanga because Kimbwi was in Kiwanga's country. But another man called Mwanasi Ndawa, who is now the Jumbe of Kiyotizamba in Iringa, went to complain of this to Mtaki, and Mtaki sent the matter before Bwana Mawezi. Lipambila was seized and imprisoned for six months, and he had taken away from him twenty-five head of cattle and thirty muskets. On his release he went back to Kimbwi, where Kiwanga had put him, and his cattle and guns were sent back to him, but only twenty head of cattle reached him as five

* In Bena law, all ivory belonged to the Mtema.

† v. der Marwitz.

‡ The Mzagira who was with Feldwebel Merkl when Mkwawa's body was found. See Appendix I.

died on the way, and ten of the muskets were lost in the magazine at the Boma.

All this punishment was inflicted because Lipambila had given the ivory to Kiwanga, and Lipambila replied, "I, Lipambila, have been driven out of Iringa district and now I live in Mahenge district under Kiwanga." And Bwana Mawezi answered, "Yes, I have sent word to Bwana Sakarani Viplim and he says that it is my mistake, and that you are not to be under Mahenge but under Iringa." And so, after his return, Lipambila followed the orders of Iringa and his country of Kimbwi became part of Iringa.

On the 18th day of September, 1905,* the fort of Bwana von Hassel was attacked by many thousands of rebels who, however, failed in their attempt and were driven off. This was the Maji-Maji Rising, and it spread right through Tambalale of Ulanga between Mahenge and Iringa. Because he had to prevent the rising spreading into the country of the Wahehe Bwana Nigmann could not come quickly to Mahenge and he could not reach it till September 20th, that is, a whole month after Mahenge was attacked. When he arrived there, he found that the rebels had assembled at a place called Kikapura, one and a half hours from Mahenge. Everything was made ready for the attack, and the rebels had no idea that he had arrived. They were surprised by a sudden burst of machine-gun fire from the guns hidden in the hills above them. They were all gathered together in a great throng and the bullets poured down on them like rain. Thrown into hopeless confusion, they scattered in all directions, each man for himself.

This rebellion was caused by a man called Hongo who deceived many tribes in the Mahenge and Songea areas by giving them medicine and a badge to wear on their foreheads. The badge was made out of the stalk of *mtama* (sorghum), and the stalk was threaded on a thong which was tied round

* The attack took place on August 30, 1905. Towegale's date for Nigmann's arrival to relieve Mahenge is correct.

the head. Hongo's medicine consisted of water only, but he tricked the people by telling them that if they drank it the enemy's bullets could not enter their bodies.

Kiwanga did not believe these words, and when news of Hongo's activities reached him at his house at Mpanga he went with his warriors to Mahenge Boma, he and his Wenyewaha and his Wanyitwangilo with their shields. And they stayed there inside the Boma while the enemy roved around outside.

The enemy were beaten off and scattered. Then Kiwanga was ordered to follow this man Hongo who had deceived the people and the elders, and to turn the hearts of the people back from their faith in his medicine. So Kiwanga set out from Mahenge and came to a place called Nyamadege, which is in Mkalimoto's country, and he stayed there for a month, and Mkalimoto and Dunduwala were with him.* Hongo refused to go before Kiwanga, and the elders who followed Hongo refused also. They would pretend to agree to follow Kiwanga, but they never meant it. They delayed and delayed and in the end never appeared.

When Bwana von Hassel saw that Kiwanga had been at Nyamadege for a whole month, he sent him a letter ordering him to meet him at Namhanga. The letter said, "We will go to Mpanga and then through Mgeta to Ifakara, for we cannot cross direct to Ifakara as we cannot get canoes, because all the people have taken Hongo's medicine."

When Kiwanga got this letter he set out from Nyamadege, crossed the big road from Mahenge, and, going in front, pitched his camp near Namhanga. But the enemy were following him and when he pitched his camp they agreed, "Let us be ready here." Now Kiwanga did not know that the enemy were following him. He and his men went to sleep and in the morning, when they woke up, Kiwanga's outposts saw people

* Two of the Wambunga who thought better of their ways and went to join Kiwanga. After the rebellion they were made chiefs.

in the distance. They reported this to Kiwanga and as soon as they had sent the news the enemy drew near. Kiwanga came out of his camp, he and the warriors who carried fire-arms given them by Bwana von Hassel, he and his son Mtengera (129) and his brother Mwanasekayamba.

The enemy approached and Kiwanga went about one hundred paces out of the camp, and the enemy recognised him from afar because he wore his distinctive clothes—trousers and coat and shoes and a big hat. They saw him and fired at him with their muskets, but did not hit him. Kiwanga and his men returned the fire, but they were outnumbered, because his other company had camped ahead on low-lying ground. And Kiwanga was hit with a small barbed throwing-spear, and he died.

The battle went badly. The rest of his men did not know of his death, but they heard a horn being blown and then they came and were told the news. They made a litter in which to take his body to Mpanga, and when they reached Namhanga they met Bwana von Hassel, and then all Kiwanga's people saw the body of their dead Chief. Bwana von Hassel was filled with grief at the news, and, indeed, he was amazed at such bad fortune since very few people besides the Mtema had been killed in the battle.

Then Bwana von Hassel sent his troops and Kiwanga's to pursue the enemy, while he went with Kiwanga's brother Mwanasekayamba to follow the route round by Mgeta, passing through Mpanga. When they arrived at the Ruipa River they met the enemy and beat them, and went on to Ifakara and Kiberege. Kiwanga died in the year 1905.

CHAPTER III

THE ROYAL HOUSE OF MANGA

1. NGURUCHAWANGI TO 1890

TRADITION speaks thus:

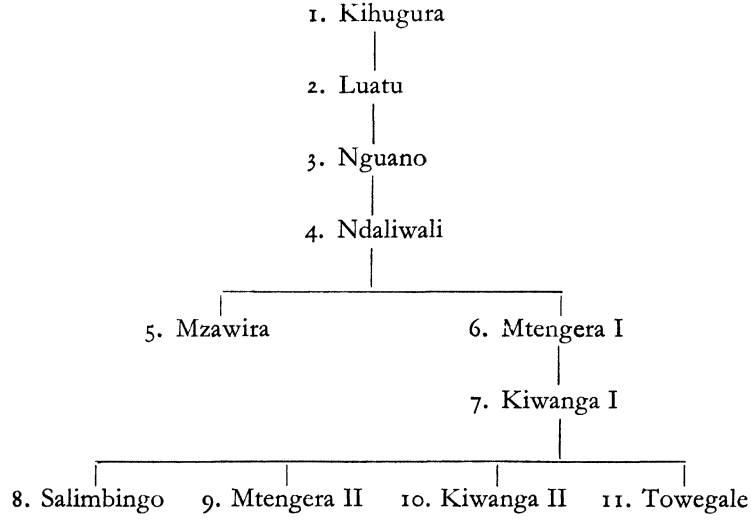
Seven generations ago three hunter brothers, Nguruchawangi (3), Muyinga (5), and Ngwira (4), came from the country of the Wavidunda, near Kidodi, with their dogs and climbed the Iringa escarpment in search of game. They were the sons of a white man [*sic*] whose name has long since been forgotten. After a little they quarrelled over a water-hole and so they divided out their dogs and other possessions and went their ways separately, each with his own followers. Ngwira returned to Kidodi and is the ancestor of the Vidunda Chiefs; the other two continued to wander in the highlands. Their prowess in the chase won the admiration of the people of the hills, and presently they both married. Nguruchawangi was given the daughter of Kiangara (1), ruler of a small area of Ubena of the Hills, while his brother received Semdude, the daughter of Mdude (7), an Mdongwe ruling at Nguruhe, near Iringa of to-day. In due course both women conceived, but the brothers returned to their own country before their children were born. They left instructions, however, that if their wives bore sons they were to be called Kihugura (8) and Muyinga (9) respectively, and so it was duly done.

The fate of the hunter Muyinga is not known, but Nguruchawangi subsequently returned to the hills, where he died a terrible death. Overtaken by a storm while out hunting, he sought shelter in a cave where he was imprisoned by a fall of rock. His dogs brought his friends to the spot, but they were unable to move the heavy boulders blocking the entrance.

Attempts to convey food to him through a hollow reed were unsuccessful, and he died of thirst and starvation. Thenceforward people always referred to him as Manga (= a cave) and his own name, Nguruchawangi, which meant "The feet of other people," was wellnigh forgotten.

The sons of the two brothers were brought up in their mothers' families, and grew into men of such personality and courage that they both eventually ruled over their maternal kinsmen. The clans they founded, in two among many obscure kingdoms in the hills, developed into the royal houses of Ubena (Manga) and Uhehe respectively.

Now the order of the Manga Chiefs is as follows:



Authentic history extends back only to the death of Ndaliwali, which occurred probably about 1860—that is to say, not a great deal further than the personal reminiscences of old people still living can take us. Prior to that date, for three generations the names only of the Watema Nguano, Luatu, and Kihugura emerge from the mists of forgetfulness, bare

names kept alive by religion without even legends of great deeds attached to them. Only the story of the death of Luatu is remembered; all else is lost. Then, if we are to believe the Wabena, at the fourth generation above Ndaliwali the mists apparently clear away with unexpected thoroughness, and tradition tells us quite a lot about Nguruchawangi or Manga, beyond whom again not even the names of the ancestors are known. He is regarded as the first ancestor of the clan, though his forebears are not forgotten at the sacrifices, when he is asked to greet and propitiate the spirits of those unknown ancestors beyond him. From him, according to Bena beliefs, comes the sacred Drum of the tribe, the *linyaútwa*, the "medicine" of the *tambiko*, handed down from some unknown forefather of Manga; the Drum which no man outside a small circle (and these favoured few only when protected by the virtue of properly observed ritual) may see and live, the symbol of all that is most sacred in the Bena constitution (see Chap. V). Manga, seen through the haze of many years, is invested with every heroic virtue and is regarded with great awe. Even the district from which he came is sacred ground, and the Wabena-Wakinimanga say that on no account would they ever fight there because it is the "country of the spirits."

The immigrant ancestor who marries a woman of the land and founds a new dynasty is a familiar figure in tribal tradition in Africa, but the story told by the Wabena is interesting in its agreement with what the Wahehe told Nigmann of their origin.* Whatever may be the truth as to the origin and colour of the common ancestor of the Manga and Yinga clans and of the way in which his two sons established themselves in Ubena of the Hills and Nguruhe (Iringa) respectively, the practices of the two clans certainly point to the reality of such an ancestor. They are "brothers" to this day. They have the same food taboos—the duiker and the mole. Marriage between them is unlawful, and when a great man of one clan dies the

* E. Nigmann, *Die Wahehe*, Berlin, 1908.

head of the other is recognised as an heir.* After the execution of Mtema Salimbingo by the Germans in 1917, Sapi, the Chief of the Wahehe, received Rs. 100 as his share of the estate. In time of want, one clan helps the other, the Wayinga sending cattle and the Wakinimanga rice to supply the need of the other. They did not, as we have seen, show any hesitation in fighting each other, but even in times of war they remembered that they were brothers. For instance, when Towegale and Kihogoza were killed at the Battle of Mgodamtitu, Mtengera sent the news to the Hehe Chief Muyugumba with a large present, "because he was the 'brother' of those who had died." The Wabena say, "The brave waged war like a game, to see who could get the upper hand, but always they fought honourably." They never killed a great man of the Yinga clan unless, of course, in the heat of battle they failed to recognise him, and vice versa. If an Mbena had the chance of killing such an one, it was customary for him to tap his own shield with his spear, saying, "*Ligaluwulilwa!*" = (freely translated) "My shield is your shield!" This indicated that his opponent had been recognised as a relative of his own Chief and was therefore entitled to a chance of escape.

The death of Luatu (10), the son of Kihugura, the only incident still remembered of the period between the accession of Kihugura and the death of Ndaliwali, was on this wise. Certain of his brethren, led by Muhegere (12), were exceedingly ill-disposed towards him and their jealousy was constantly stirring up trouble. The climax came when these rebellious members of the family came upon him alone and unawares and killed him, afterwards cutting up his body into many pieces. Presently the pieces were found by two loyal brothers, Mpingi (15) and Mbeyunge (11), who collected them for proper burial. The unfortunate Luatu was a young man as

* So say the Wabena, but how far such claims are acknowledged by the Hehe branch of the kin is not known to the writers. Nigmann (*Die Wahehe*, p. 10) presents their Chief in the light of an elder brother claiming dues from a younger, rather than acknowledging mutual claims. But see p. 110.

yet without children, but his senior wife was pregnant. She was inherited by Mpingi and in due course bore Nguano (16). Mpingi took charge of the kingdom until the child grew up, when the youth was formally installed as Mtema, and ever since then the Mpingi branch of the clan has been exceptionally influential. It ranks foremost among the collaterals of the royal house, rules the province of Masagati, and its present head is Mtema Towegale's deputy and trusty counsellor.

All that history relates of Nguano's son Ndaliwali (33) is that he was a very great man who lived to be very old, and we know that he started the movement eastwards, his being the earliest royal grave within the present boundaries of the Wabena-Wakinimanga; hence frequent references in these days to "Ndaliwali, our first Mtema." The last years of his life were spent in retirement, while his chosen heir, Mzawira, took charge of affairs of state on his behalf, but the latter's rule was apparently not much to the liking of the warriors, chafing restively under one who was not a man of war and denied them sufficient outlet for their energies in their favourite sport.

Taking stock of the position at this point, where the tribe begins to emerge from the shadows into the light of day, we find the Wabena-Wakinimanga a fairly large, well-organised, and warlike community. The kingdom of which Kihugura had become ruler had been one among many petty kingdoms: under the new line of chiefs it had grown greatly in power and had gradually dominated many of its neighbours, e.g. Wasovi, Wafwagi, Wakombwe, though the details of its development from its small beginnings are not recorded. The children of Manga himself had multiplied and become a (patrilineal) clan of considerable size, for it was customary for the Mtema to have a large number of wives, thirty or more, while his brethren followed suit, more or less in proportion to the importance of their position and the wealth it denoted. The collateral branches, growing rapidly in political power as

their numerical strength increased, had become a force to be reckoned with in affairs of state, and dangerous factions were liable to be formed as the subsequent history of the tribe shows.

Throughout the country there were many families who, belonging to other clans, were blood-relatives of the royal house in the female line; and this, in spite of patrilineal descent, was a very real tie. In the first place, any outstanding warrior of free birth might receive from the Mtema a Manga wife or the daughter of such an one, and then his wife's royal relatives would maintain a very considerable degree of control over him and his household. Moreover, it was the policy of the Wakinimanga to establish a marriage alliance with the ruling clan in most of the kingdoms which they conquered and absorbed into the tribe, and in accordance with the rules of cross-cousin marriage the first alliance was naturally supplemented by a succession of others in later generations. Thus every prominent clan in the tribe was eventually bound to the Wakinimanga by ties of kinship, and honoured the Manga spirits not only as the tribal ancestors, but as in some measure its own; while the Mtema and his brethren would similarly pay respect to the forefathers of those clans to which they were related.* The importance of the mothers, their pedigrees, and their relatives, past and present, is a striking feature of Bena society, historically, socially, and economically.†

Mzawira's partial abdication in favour of his more dashing and therefore more popular brother Mtengera has been described by Towegale, but its full significance has not yet appeared. Mzawira's mother was Ndaliwali's senior wife, Binti Kipolero (32); Mtengera's mother was Semukomi binti Uhenge (34). This introduces us to the two clans which were,

* The Wabena participate in religious rites in honour of both maternal and paternal ancestors, see p. 103.

† There is, however, no conception of the dual soul as found, for instance, in the Congo and Ashanti (E. Torday, "Dualism in Western Bantu Religion and Social Organisation," *J.R.A.I.*, vol. lviii, pp. 225 ff.; J. van Wing, *Etudes Bakongo*, Brussels, 1921, p. 80, quoted by Torday; Capt. R. S. Rattray, *Religion and Art in Ashanti*, chap. xxix). In Ubena the mother is "only a bag"!

and are, most powerful in the kingdom after the Wakinimanga themselves. The genealogical chart (Appendix III) consists chiefly of a complicated network of marriages between these three clans, the children of Manga, the children of Kipolero, and the children of Uhenge. The other great names, such as Mpingi (15), Hanja (28), and Mlengi (29), belong to collateral branches of the royal house descended in the male line from one or another of the old Watema, though indeed for all practical purposes they have come to be regarded as separate clans.

The chart makes no claim to completeness. The Mtema is expected to marry a large number of cross-cousins, and the Watwa (his brothers) do not do so badly either. It has therefore only been possible to cope with the main features in the pedigrees of the more important people, sufficient to illustrate the history of the royal house. Of set purpose, that history with its wheels within wheels is told at some length, as the core of tribal history.

In the first place, it displays in its proper context in tribal life a great deal that is typical of the internal politics of many Bantu tribes, for politics and the domestic history of the royal family are inextricably entangled. Plot and counterplot, loyalty and unscrupulous self-seeking, and the astounding longevity and bitterness of personal (and often extremely petty) quarrels constantly create knotty problems whose solution profoundly affects the life and well-being of the tribe as a whole; although the matter may appear comparatively simple, and certainly of very minor importance, to the outsider with a wider outlook but a limited knowledge of tribal history and values. A Bantu dispute is often wellnigh indestructible, with innumerable hidden roots and suckers capable of putting forth the most surprising shoots!

In the second place, this story is a study of a Bantu family and its affairs through several generations, how it regards and how it has tackled the various situations which have arisen,

apart from their political significance in the tribe. It throws interesting light on primitive African mentality and methods of reasoning, and on the kind of motives and behaviour encountered in real life, as compared with what one might expect after discussing tribal law and custom with the elders. If we set out with the idea that laws are made to be kept, that primitive people are slaves to unbending custom and that the characters in the story will fit neatly into their appointed places in the scheme of things, we shall very quickly find ourselves bewildered by contradictions and inconsistencies. We are dealing with human beings and not automatons; people who can be passionate, ambitious, jealous, cruel, loyal, treacherous, brave, energetic, lethargic; people who (no less than the most civilised!) are quite ready to make their own case an exception to the rule when they are strong enough to carry it off.

In the third place, the family studied here will supply us with material for illustration of various points in subsequent chapters, and a knowledge of its history will greatly facilitate our description of Bena life.

In general, it may be taken that men of the royal family marry cross-cousins who rank in their households in order of their importance, and that the eldest son of the Mtema's senior wife is the person most likely (in theory) to succeed to the Stool, though he is only one among a number of men whose birth makes them eligible for the office of Mtema. The application of the rules in any particular case depends on circumstances, convenience, suitability of temperament, or personal inclination and personal ambition if backed by a strong right arm.

The importance of a cross-cousin depends on several things: namely, the nearness of relationship to the common ancestor, his rank and power, and the presence of genealogical links between the woman and other famous men. For instance, it is explained that the present Mtema's senior wife, Semukomi

binti Mkwawa (131), owes her place firstly to her descent from Uhenge and secondly to the fact that Mtengera was also a child of Uhenge. Binti Lupogo (121) ranked below Semukomi because she was only a child of Mtengera, and "without Uhenge there would have been no Mtengera." In the frequent disputes which arise over the relative claims of various royal brides, political considerations play a prominent part, as we shall see presently.

Binti Kipolero (32) was Ndaliwali's chief wife, which is tantamount to saying that she was a very near and very well-born cross-cousin. In other words, the original alliance between the Kipolero and Manga clans had been made in an earlier generation. Semukomi (34), on the other hand, and her brother's daughter (36), whom Ndaliwali took at the same time, were the first of their line to be married into the Manga clan, and they therefore could not rank among the senior wives, who were of necessity cross-cousins. The accession of Semukomi's son to the royal Stool is consequently a matter of some interest.

Uhenge himself was the ruler of one of the small kingdoms of the hills. Towegale simply says of him, "He was a very great man who helped Ndaliwali, so Ndaliwali honoured him and married his daughter." The Mtema further acknowledged the power and importance of his clan by according him royal rank. He was made Mtwa Mwenyelutenana (see Chap. VI), the royal ruler of a province—the highest honour and greatest administrative post which could be conferred on him, normally the prerogative of the foremost brethren of the Mtema. Descent from him is almost as great an asset as descent from the Manga Chiefs themselves, and in the history of the royal house from Mtengera onwards the Uhenge connection has outweighed all others, even eclipsing the power of the Wakinikipolero. In recent times, however, the balance appears to be gradually shifting in favour of the latter. Both Kiwanga II (127) and Towegale (128) are the sons of Kipolero mothers, and

Towegale has a Kipolero wife (120) who, though second in his household to Semukomi binti Mkwawa, bids fair to be queen-mother later on; the unhappy Semukomi has buried three baby sons, has only a daughter living, and is greatly troubled by miscarriages.

To return to Mzawira and Mtengera. Mtengera excelled in the art of war and had all the characteristics likely to make him a hero of heroes in the estimation of his people. But Mzawira had been appointed by his much revered father and had been installed with full religious rites (see Chap. V). The elders felt that he was unsuitable; an unwarlike Mtema was liable even to open insult by his warriors. But they could not remove him from his religious position, for he had done nothing outrageous or sacrilegious, nothing for which he could be justifiably deposed with the approval of the ancestral spirits. The way out lay in the temporary separation of religious and secular authority, an expedient which forms an interesting parallel with the story of Kiwanga II and Towegale in the next chapter.

But tribal law lays down that the Mtema must be the son of a cross-cousin wife. How, then, did Mtengera step into that position? In Ndaliwali's huge household there must surely have been other wives of higher rank whose sons had therefore a better claim than the son of Semukomi. It should be noted that this particular point regarding the rank of Mtengera's mother is either carefully evaded by tribal historians or hurriedly glossed over with some such vague remark as, "Well, you never know. *Perhaps* there was some marriage between the two clans a long, *long* time ago. There *might* have been one which has been forgotten."

The truth of the matter is that the practical application of law and custom is elastic in the extreme, depending on circumstances, popular feeling, the balance of power among the most influential factions in the tribe, individual personality and authority, and so on. Its elasticity is not admitted; is not,

indeed, apprehended. An Mbena cannot consider an instance apart from its particular circumstances, does not compare one with another and observe the inconsistencies, while in any given case he notices the points in conformity with, or divergent from, custom according to whether he personally is pleased or displeased with the course of action taken.

Mtengera, as is obvious from Towegale's account of him in Chap. II, was the hero of the tribe. His courage and skill had made him supreme in military matters and his rise to the position of Mtema was perfectly in keeping with the practice of the tribe, though not in strict accord with custom as handed down to the young by each generation of elders. First of all, we see him taking charge of the army on behalf of his brother: he was obviously the most suitable man to appoint and the most acceptable to the warriors. The inevitable sequel was Mzawira's complete renunciation of his secular power, so that Mtengera was no longer his Commander-in-Chief but his co-ruler, supreme in his own sphere of activity. Wisely he made no attempt to gain too much at once. If he made a false step, if he alienated public opinion, people would bring up against him the fact that his mother was not a cross-cousin. He maintained friendly relations with Mzawira and respected the will of the ancestors by treating him with deference as the religious head of the tribe. He thus consolidated his position till people had become accustomed to seeing him exercise the authority of a chief, and Mzawira's nomination of him to be the next Mtema became inevitable. The Mtema theoretically chooses his successor, but unless he be exceptionally strong his choice is largely dictated by the influential men of the tribe and popular feeling. Mtengera was immensely powerful and immensely popular. In the circumstances no other choice was possible, even had Mzawira wished to make one. Mtengera was virtually the man in possession and he personally represented the supremely important union of the Manga and Uhenge clans; a fact which assured the permanence of that

alliance if he became Mtema, while his rejection would mean its dissolution. To-day all inquiries regarding the store set by relationship to the Wakinimhenge are answered by reference to their "great name." For example, Towegale's senior wife, Semukomi, is not so near a relation by blood as his second wife (120), but she comes first because she "has a great name." One can imagine this, the stock reply to all inquiries into these matters, first being used about the earlier Semukomi (34) when her son became Mtema, in extenuation of the fact that she was not a cross-cousin. "After all, she has a *very* great name." Which being interpreted might well mean, "Even if Mtengera did not happen to be just the kind of Mtema we like to have, his mother's people are far too strong for us to start toying with the idea of turning him out."

The history of Mtengera's reign, the Battle of Mgodamtitu, and the migration eastwards to the Ulanga Valley have already been described. There remains only the question of dates. Towegale gives us:

Ndaliwali	.. ..	? –1775
Mzawira	.. ..	1775–1778
Mtengera	.. ..	1778–1884 (!)

He also says that Mhako the son of Uhenge was sent by Mtengera to command the campaign in the low country in 1808. The only reliable date among these is the death of Mtengera, which is correct to within a year or so. Enough is remembered of the course of the civil war which followed to show that five or six years elapsed before Kiwanga's journey to the coast. His visit to Kilwa must have taken place early in the dry season (June–December) of 1890, the date being fixed by the following considerations:

1. It was during the period in which v. Wissmann was in command of the German forces, 1889 to February 1891.
2. The Germans did not recapture Kilwa from the Arabs till May 1890.

3. Kiwanga was absent from his people for a few months, and they declare that shortly after his return, accompanied by a European, "Bwana Herr Wissmann" himself passed through their country and presented Kiwanga with a sword. That v. Wissmann personally visited Ubena seems impossible, for he was on leave in the later part of 1890 and occupied in the Kilimanjaro area on his return.* But our informants are extremely clear about the name and office of the donor of the sword, and presumably therefore it must have been sent to Kiwanga before the termination of v. Wissmann's appointment in February 1891.

Now Mtengera manifestly did not reign for one hundred and seven years! The years of his reign are said to have been numbered by stones dropped into a pot and notches cut in a stick, both being thrown into the river after his death, and one can picture the elder entrusted with this duty scratching his head and saying to himself, "Well, a lot of exciting things have happened since I put the last stone in and cut the last notch. I'm sure it must have been at least a year ago." Or perhaps there were several elders who each feared the others had forgotten, and forthwith added one to the tally! After inquiry among old people who remember Mtengera, as to his approximate age at the time of his death, the ages of his elder children, and so on, combined with the consideration of the important dates in Hehe history as suggested by Nigmann,† the following dates seem nearer the mark:

Ndaliwali	.. ..	? –*c.* 1860
Mzawira	.. ..	*c.* 1860–*c.* 1863
Mtengera	.. ..	*c.* 1863– 1884

* C. v. Perbandt, G. Richelmann, and R. Schmidt, *Deutschlands grösster Afrikaner, Hermann v. Wissmann*, Berlin, 1906.

† *Die Wahehe.*

Mhako's appointment to Utengule may have been about 1868 and the Battle of Mgodamtitu was probably in 1874–5.*

With the accession of Kiwanga I we come to events that are still well remembered by old people, but as in most cases their personal feelings are involved they are neither impartial nor unanimous in their remembering!

Mtengera's senior wife was, naturally enough, an Mkinimhenge (62), the daughter of his mother's brother, Sangaramu (37). He could not, however, choose her son Muhagatila to succeed him because her first-born child was a girl, and among the Wabena if an Mtema's wife gives birth to a girl first, any sons she may bear later are excluded from the succession. Mtengera's choice, therefore, fell on Kiwanga I (94), the promising and popular son of his second wife, Binti Bilali (39). According to our ideas, Binti Bilali was only a distant relative (second cousin once removed) of her husband, but in the eyes of the Wabena she ranked among his foremost cross-cousins. Her mother was Binti Mpingi (22), daughter of the man who had been regent during Nguano's childhood and grand-daughter of the first Mtema, Kihugura (8). She was a "sister"† of Ndaliwali and belonged, moreover, to a very important branch of the clan.

As a princess of high rank, Binti Mpingi was brought up in the girls' school (see Chap. VII) under the eye of Ndaliwali's senior wife, and her marriage would be personally arranged by the Mtema. She might marry a cross-cousin, possibly a boy from the boys' school with whom she had some private understanding; she might be given to a warrior of renown, in recognition of his valour; or she might be destined for a marriage of political importance. The last fate befell her and her marriage formed the first matrimonial alliance between the

* Old Senjenge (87) says that her mother told her she, Senjenge, was still being suckled at the time of Mgodamtitu, but had nearly reached the age for weaning (i.e. she was between eighteen months and three years), and she says she reached puberty in the year of Mtengera's death.

† Though actually a generation above him, his father's "sister."

Wakinimanga and a recently subdued section of the Waikondo. Njavík (20), whose treacherous attack on Mtengera's disease-smitten troops later on is described by Towegale in Chap. II, was then chief and had his headquarters at Linyaútwa.* When he was conquered by Ndaliwali his "brother,"† Bilali, married the Mtema's "sister," Binti Mpingi. In the next generation, Mtengera's marriage to his cross-cousin, Binti Bilali, served the double purpose of confirming and ratifying the relations between the Wakinimanga and the house of Njavík, and honouring the Mpingi branch of the royal clan. As Binti Mpingi ranked high among Ndaliwali's "sisters," so her daughter ranked high among Mtengera's cross-cousins, taking her place in his household next to Binti Sangaramu herself.

Her son Kiwanga was a youth of fourteen or fifteen when his father died. Trained in the warriors' school and inheriting, apparently, many of those qualities which had made his father their chosen leader, Kiwanga was sent to war as soon as he reached puberty, so that he might establish himself as a leader of fighting men. He was actually away on an expedition when Mtengera was attacked by his last illness, and the vital question of his matrimonial alliances was still unsettled, Mtengera having decided to defer the decision until after the boy had found his feet among the warriors. There were three girls growing up whom Kiwanga was to marry—thus much his father had always impressed on him. They were to be his first three wives, but which of them was to be the first of the three? Mtengera died leaving that point undecided, and immediately the tribe was rent by dissension and quarrelling in the royal clan. To the feuds which sprang up then can be referred in the last resort much of the serious strife and discord of recent years, with their disastrous and disruptive effects on

* *Linyaútwa* = the "medicine" of the *tambiko*, see Chap. V, and thus indicated Njavík's royal village where his sacred "medicine" was kept.

† Their fathers were brothers.

tribal ties, and in particular the extremely bitter succession dispute of the years 1928–32, which came near to dealing the death-blow to the authority of the tribal administration.

The three girls, who all reached puberty about the same time—the year of Mtengera's death—and were awaiting their combined puberty and marriage rites (see Chap. XVI), were:

1. Senjenge, the daughter of Mtengera's full sister Semudodera (57) and Njenge (58), a warrior whose prowess won him the privilege (doubtful in this case!) of marrying the Mtema's own sister;
2. Binti Mkwando (74), the daughter of a princess of the Mlengi branch of the royal house and Mkwando (50), another distinguished warrior; and
3. Binti Kipolero (115), whose paternal grandmother (54) was Mtengera's half-sister and the daughter of Ndaliwali's senior wife, and whose claims can best be appreciated by reference to the chart.

Now there is no doubt that the selection of one of these three girls to take precedence of the others was an exceptionally thorny problem, and one can sympathise with Mtengera's wish to postpone the unpleasant task. Bitterness and strife were inevitable. In the circumstances, with a young and new Mtema ruling and his rebellious, ambitious brother Sagamaganga ready to take advantage of dissension, the events of the years following Mtengera's death are not surprising.

The claims of Senjenge were supported, first and foremost, by her formidable mother, Semudodera, who had a village of her own and was an Amazonian woman. Her daughter, Senjenge, is alive to-day and rules a province of Ubena. She is a little over sixty and looks nearer eighty, but her frail appearance belies her character. The fire within still bursts forth with surprising vigour when she is roused and her tongue has not lost its sharpness. A picture of the vigorous,

forceful Senjenge of bygone days is not hard to reconstruct, and yet from all accounts her character was lamb-like in comparison with that of her mother! It is related of Semudodera that when a child of hers died and the women were coming to wail with her, she saw that one of them was carrying a child on her back. With her own loss fresh in her heart, she was enraged at the sight and declared passionately that the woman was insulting her grief by flaunting the baby in front of the bereaved mother. She seized the child and threw it violently to the ground and killed it. One is sorry for Njenge: he died young.

Senjenge was, moreover, the "Uhenge candidate" for the position of chief wife, even though neither she nor her mother belonged to the Uhenge clan,* and her rejection was liable to give offence to influential men of that clan. On the other hand, many of the principal elders of the tribe did not wish to see her made chief wife because they argued she could not "bring new strength." By this they meant that she was "the same as Mtengera, she only led back to Ndaliwali and Uhenge," and the choice of a chief wife from a different circle of relatives would be more politic. It would, among other things, maintain a better balance among the factious family groups related to the Mtema.

The opinion of the elders regarding Senjenge was apparently heartily endorsed by Kiwanga. The general impression given by informants is that he did not want to marry Senjenge at all—one can hardly blame him for shrinking from such a step!—and calculated that refusal to make her his first wife would relieve him of the necessity of making her second, third, or *n*th wife. Semudodera's haughty, impatient spirit would have all or nothing for her daughter, and he could rely on her furious anger to lead to the abandonment of all

* Neither, of course, was Binti Bilali an Mkinimpingi, or Binti Mkwando an Mkinimlengi. We have already remarked the importance of maternal relatives. It is especially noticeable if mother happens to be a princess and father is not a prince! See Chaps. IX and XV.

talk of marriage. There was no love lost between them and he feared her as a possible mother-in-law.

Binti Mkwando's claims were strongly and insistently pressed by a group of the Mtema's relatives whose demands could not well be ignored, and on the whole it appears that the majority of the Manga elders felt this would be the most diplomatic course. But while their views about Senjenge were shared by the young Mtema, he was at variance with them on the subject of Binti Mkwando. He greatly desired to make Binti Kipolero his senior wife, and indeed the Wakinikipolero, too, were not lightly to be set aside. The Manga elders had, however, two weighty arguments against Binti Kipolero. The first was that the necessity for preserving the balance of power forebade the choice of her as senior wife. The Wakinikipolero had, as it were, already had one turn as Chief Wife's Relatives, and the head of the clan could claim as mother (real, not classificatory) a woman (54) who was the daughter of one Mtema and the sister of two others. The Wakinimlengi and their supporters, then as now ready to raise loud, insistent voices in tribal councils, had much to say about this. In the second place, the lady's mother (79) was not at all desirable as the Mtema's principal mother-in-law. Embarrassment and evasion greet all inquiries regarding her birth. It was at length elicited that she came from Masagati and is thought to have been an Mwikondo, one of Njavík's subjects, but her father, Mbanda (78), was definitely only a "person," whereas he ought to have been an Mzagira. In the royal pedigrees there are many men and women who were not of royal birth and who yet were quite acceptable to the royal elders, but in those cases they belonged to the Aristocracy of Worth if not of Birth. In other words, freeborn men who earn the honourable title of Mzagira (see Chap. VI) are commoners of considerable standing, and eligible for marriage into the royal family; really common commoners are outsiders. It is, of course, quite normal for pretty daughters of the latter to

find their way into aristocratic households in suitably humble positions as very junior wives, but their offspring cannot rank with those of the well-born wives. Should their children or children's children by any chance achieve great distinction and high position, they and their relatives draw a discreet veil over their maternal ancestry. In this particular case the low-born Binti Mbanda is the maternal grandmother of Mtema Kiwanga II and everybody tries to avoid giving a direct answer about her birth. To forget the unimportant links in a pedigree is, of course, normal, and this would not arouse the inquirer's suspicions were it not for the very obvious embarrassment in certain cases. It is manifestly untactful, for instance, to ask too many questions about Mtwa Mfalimbega's maternal ancestry; or to talk to Mtwa Filingafu (Sagamaganga's brother and the present ruler at Ifinga) about his slave mother; or to make bright remarks to Kiwanga II on the subject of his second wife, Safinia, who, as a commoner, has no business to be second, let alone to display undue curiosity regarding his mother's mother, Binti Mbanda.

The dispute over the young Mtema Kiwanga I's first marriage dragged on for some time and eventually ended in the triumph of the Wakinimlengi, Kiwanga being unable to withstand the force of public opinion among the elders. Binti Mkwando therefore became his senior wife, and Binti Kipolero, whom in actual fact he had married first, ranked second. But all his life he favoured the Kipolero clan and we shall see later how he did his best to ensure that one of his Kipolero children should eventually sit on the Stool.

Immediately Semudodera plunged the country into civil war. She was ruling the village of Isohiwaya, near Malinyi (in the Valley). Having lured thither Ngongomi, Mtengera's Mzagira wa Tambiko* and chief counsellor, with Mhandu, another of his principal advisers, she had them speared to death while they were her guests. As the result of this outrage

* See pp. 106–115.

she was forced to flee with her followers, Kiwanga's warriors hard on her heels, and she took with her Senjenge, whom Kiwanga had agreed to give to his brother Magwila. She was chased into the Masagati hills, where she joined the savage Sagamaganga, himself in disgrace and a fugitive from his brethren. With their then scanty following, they camped one night on the top of Madenge, a steep, rocky hill, precipitous on the southern and eastern sides and difficult of approach from any side. There they warded off the attacks of their pursuers by rolling huge boulders down on to them. After this they changed the name of the hill to Linyaútwa, "for," they said, "there we began our reign." The next day they fled south-west into Ifinga, the most remote part of Matumbi, inaccessible, mountainous, and isolated. According to Towegale, there was only one small settlement of Bena subjects there and it was thus an excellent hiding-place for the fugitives, in which they might rest secure while they rallied their wits and forces. Matumbi became their stronghold, Sagamaganga ruling at Ifinga and Semudodera establishing herself at Boma ya Lindi.

The course of the civil war has been outlined by Towegale. Sagamaganga was a man of violence if ever there was one, a born rebel, while the divisions in the tribe consequent on Kiwanga's matrimonial dilemma played into his hands. He was, it is alleged, a drug addict, and this largely accounted for his ungovernable rages and violent actions. He used a drug which is normally employed for stupefying fish* in the rivers, a little of which powerfully affects human beings. On one occasion, while under its influence, he tried to murder his wife, Senjenge, and actually succeeded in spearing her in the arm, and he apparently hanged ten young wives before committing suicide. Truly Sagamaganga and Semudodera and Senjenge were a remarkable trio!

It is said by the Wabena that Sagamaganga by himself, the

* See Chap. XVII.

son of a slave concubine, could not have acquired the following which enabled him to get so near his goal of usurping the position of his brother Kiwanga, and that his success was due to the support of Semudodera and her *tambiko*, without which men would not have dared to side with him against the Mtema. As it was, it was only his own foolish boasting about his mother which turned the tide of his success.

The Wabena reason thus about the *tambiko*: Sagamaganga's *tambiko* obviously could not prevail against that of his brother Kiwanga because Kiwanga, besides being the Manga heir, had also a "good" maternal *tambiko*. Without some additional supernatural support to make good this deficiency, Sagamaganga could not hope to prosper. Then Semudodera joined him. Kiwanga might be the Manga heir, but she was the great Ndaliwali's own daughter and full sister of the but recently departed Mtengera.* Moreover, when this quarrel began, Kiwanga was only a new-married boy and, though he held the title and secular power of Mtema, his instalment with full religious rites would not yet have taken place, pending the birth of an heir. He had not, therefore, the peculiar authority attaching to one so installed. But above all—and this is the point which strikes the Wabena most forcibly—according to Bena ideas Semudodera could *tambika* Uhenge himself, for he was her mother's father. Kiwanga could invoke his paternal grandmother, Semukomi, daughter of Uhenge, and through her he could normally expect the benevolent influence of Uhenge himself, and he could, of course, attend the public sacrifices of the Uhenge clan; but he was not himself in a position personally to *tambika* Uhenge. Herein lay Semudodera's great advantage, she could approach the spirit of the great Uhenge directly.

This seems to the Wabena to explain all Sagamaganga's

* Women can approach the ancestral spirits as well as men. They attend tribal, clan, or family sacrifices, but take no part in the ceremonial. There would be a very close bond between Semudodera and her brother Mtengera, in whom was vested the control of her affairs and those of her offspring.

popularity and success, but in point of fact it is not even consistent with their own statements regarding the approach of individuals to the ancestors. Mhako's son, Mkwawa, was, and still is, the head of the Uhenge clan, and he remained loyal to Kiwanga, whose intimate friend he was from the time when they were in the tribal school together. When pressed, the Wabena admit that Semudodera's *tambiko* could not really have been so very effective because the head of the Uhenge clan was making exactly the opposite petitions! Towegale offers as further explanation the statement that when Sagamaganga and Semudodera swept through the country, they took young Mkwawa prisoner and forced him to follow them. But, he adds, really Mkwawa only pretended to give them the power of the Uhenge *tambiko*, and as soon as they arrived near Itwangilo he contrived to send a message to Kiwanga telling him what had happened. Towegale does not himself appear really satisfied with this explanation of the matter, and he obviously and uneasily recognises the flaws in it when it is examined closely. But he genuinely believes in it none the less, for he has grown up in a society where everything is expressed as a manifestation of the supernatural in one way or another, and he thus finds it very difficult to think or express himself in any other way. So it is, too, with regard to all the knotty points of history and custom and tribal life, and Towegale, who does not examine or criticise, is sometimes sorely puzzled by these white people afflicted with the disturbing desire to do so.

Sagamaganga probably did derive some advantage from the prestige Semudodera enjoyed as daughter of Ndaliwali and Semukomi, and, of course, the tribe was ripe for trouble. Divisions among the tribal leaders very quickly undermine a chief's authority, and all the unruly elements among the people lose no time in making the most of such a situation. Those who have real or imaginary grievances, schemers and adventurers, take advantage of the disorder, uncertainty, and

loss of discipline resulting from the quarrels among the elders. This process, on a physically less violent scale than of yore, has been observable during the recent succession dispute. Serious strife among the great dislocates the whole tribal machine, so that certain sanctions* making for unity and conformity to rule are temporarily not in operation. The tangle of intrigues and conflicting interests, which is normally masked by outwardly stolid submission to authority, is immediately revealed when the tribal organisation is thus thrown out of gear and the prestige of the central authority seriously impaired.

In spite of all the talk about it, the fear of ancestral wrath does not in practice exert any very greatly deterrent effect when men's inclinations are strongly in conflict with law and custom, unless there is some perfectly good and far from supernatural deterrent to help it! The Mbena talks and thinks in terms of religion, but he unconsciously restricts his thoughts to a line of argument dictated by circumstances. The resulting inconsistencies between one case and another trouble him not at all, because each case is considered independently and he cannot generalise. He is not an arrant hypocrite in this matter, and though he is admittedly capable of deep cunning on occasions, it must be said for him that often the most glaring contradictions, adorning his earnest efforts to express himself and his method of reasoning to the stranger, remain quite unperceived by him. The outsider will see perfectly sound political, social, or economic causes of a certain train of events: the Mbena sees in it some manifestation of the supernatural. The outsider, again, will see perfectly good political, social, or economic reasons for acting in a certain way: the Mbena honestly regards it as a religious matter. Unconscious that the necessity for, or the wisdom of, acting in such a way arises from the organisation of the society in

* Fundamentally economic in a people to whom starvation is a very real possibility.

which he lives, he refers it all to the will of the ancestors; whom, therefore, he quite genuinely fears, though he is equally ready to disobey them if his wishes run contrary to theirs and he can see any prospect of disobeying with impunity.

For example, Kiwanga I had numerous opportunities of killing his troublesome aunt Semudodera, but he could not take advantage of them because "such a shameful thing would have angered the ancestors beyond measure, especially the powerful spirits of her father and brother." On the other hand, Sagamaganga and Mgopolinyi were not afraid to try and kill their brother in the dastardly manner related by Towegale, though one can hardly think the spirits would have been delighted by such treatment of their chosen heir. Nor did the thought of ancestral wrath deter the murderers of Luatu. But, and it is a very big "but," the man on top must watch his step very carefully lest he alienate the sympathies of his supporters, and he has too much to lose to dare take any action which may give people a handle against him; while the man who is not on top, but would like to be, will run risks to gain his end and has less to lose in case of failure. The same thing can be seen to-day in Towegale's scrupulous care not to hurry too fast lest he wound the susceptibilities of the conservative and put them in the mood to listen to his disparagers; while all along his opponents have treated tradition and custom in a much more cavalier fashion.

CHAPTER IV

THE ROYAL HOUSE OF MANGA—*contd.*

2. 1890–1933

THE arrival of the Germans put a stop to the civil war, but the mere fact of the cessation of hostilities did not indicate the healing of the wounds in the tribe. Sagamaganga was far from willing to make peace, much less to admit Kiwanga's overlordship. When v. Prince called on him to bring his warriors to help in the campaign against Mkwawa in Uhehe he appeared as an independent chief, not as a subject of Kiwanga's.* The tribal historians tell how he went as bidden to the German station at Perondo and then with v. Prince into Uhehe, but he is alleged to have been found out in some double-dealing regarding cattle given into his care. In a rage, and to prevent public disgrace, he returned to Ifinga and killed himself with fish poison. Frau v. Prince, writing at Iringa on July 28, 1897, makes the following reference to his death, suggesting a different motive:

"Kiwanga came in the evening to take leave of me; he will set out early to-morrow with his men to join Tom. . . . Not all that my guest sought to entertain me with was edifying, I confess; he gave me a detailed account of how his brother Sagamaganga had hanged ten of his young wives and then poisoned himself. The spring of action out here, too: *cherchez la femme*. I have got this Sagamaganga in a photograph together with his brother Kiwanga. He was the most powerful chief between Mahenga (Kiwanga) and Chabruma, and a strikingly dignified, handsome native."†

* Matumbi is often referred to as an independent kingdom in German books. See, for instance, Frau v. Prince's remarks about Sagamaganga below.

† M. v. Prince, op. cit., p. 128.

Sagamaganga was followed by his brother Mwanamhomi. The elders declare that Kiwanga "appointed" him, for they are naturally disinclined to admit the virtual independence of the southern provinces after the civil war; he was certainly regarded by the Germans as an independent chief when he sided with them in the Maji-Maji Rebellion, though probably the very fact that he did this indicates Kiwanga's influence. His reign lasted at least from 1897 to 1905–6, and after his death, the story runs, a daughter of Mtengera, called Ilagunga, "appointed herself" and began to rule! Another spirited woman among the descendants of Semukomi (34) binti Uhenge! She was turned out by Kiwanga's youthful successor, Salimbingo, and his advisers, and Sagamaganga's full brother Filingafu became the ruler of Ifinga. It would appear that this was partly due to the fact that the Germans did not realise the origin of the "kingdom" of Matumbi or the true relationship of its leaders to the Manga Chiefs, and it therefore seemed quite in order that the full brother of Sagamaganga should take the "kingdom." Moreover, the people of Ifinga were firmly devoted to that branch of the royal house and probably left the young Mtema but little choice.

The Manga elders naturally hold that Filingafu has really no more right to rule a province than his brother, for he too is the child of the Fwagi slave woman. But he is accepted now as an established institution, and, indeed, the old man, with his four or five hundred people, quite considers himself a chief. His son Albert acts as regent, for Filingafu himself is past any great physical effort and his wild people are scattered over a very large area of wild country.

Semudodera died about the same time as Sagamaganga, and Senjenge, inherited by Kiwanga on the death of her husband, ruled her mother's village of Boma ya Lindi, where Kiwanga placed her "to honour her," as Towegale says, "because of her mother who was from Uhenge." The Wabena originally thought of her only as a village ruler like her mother

but, her position possibly having been somewhat misunderstood in the beginning by the white men, she has become an Mtwa Mwenyelutenana, ruler of a province. Its population, like that of Ifinga, is small and widely scattered.

The whole of Matumbi (i.e. Ifinga and Boma ya Lindi) was administered from Songea until the introduction of Indirect Rule in 1926, when these two Bena provinces came under their rightful, but long since rejected, Chief, the Manga Mtema. Apart altogether from European administrative arrangements, they have since 1886–7 been more in contact with their Angoni friends than with their fellow Wabena, in so far as the extremely scattered, unsociable, and primitive inhabitants of this isolated country can be described as being in contact with anybody! Many features of Bena culture are unknown there, including all its songs and dances, and Angoni influence is immediately apparent to the observer. The Mtema, not unexpectedly, often finds the people of these provinces difficult and has to exercise much tact and patience in handling them. On the whole, however, things do not go so badly and will, no doubt, be much easier after the passing of those who remain of the old generation of rebels, now become greybeards. One must in fairness add that Senjenge works loyally with and for the Mtema, who has the greatest respect and admiration for her shrewd ability. She was the first to voice the suggestion that Mfalimbega (107), a younger member of her generation, should be Towegale's deputy and adviser, an idea with which he readily agreed.

She, as one would expect of a daughter of the redoubtable Semudodera, is by no means at a loss as ruler of a province, and she takes her place with the utmost composure among the Watwa Wenyelutenana in the Mtema's council. At Boma ya Lindi a young male relative relieves her of the more arduous work of her position, but she herself dispenses justice in her court and, in spite of her age, she covers long distances on foot to appear at tribal headquarters for meetings of the

elders or on other important occasions. On the whole, she does not hold a very high opinion of the way "the children" manage affairs these days, and seeing that all the great men of her generation are already dead and that nothing can be done to restore the good old days when people "knew how to behave,"* she holds herself rather aloof, watching with disapproving eyes the methods and manners of the "children." When she in her turn was privately asked her opinion regarding the question of the succession, before Towegale's election in September 1932, she merely shook her head and said in effect, "I do not wish to be dragged into these disputes. They are all a pack of children, let them get on with the muddles they have made." She feels, and truly, that between her and the younger generation is a great gulf which she cannot bridge. She was brought up in the days before the white men arrived with their strange ways and outlandish ideas, bringing an utterly bewildering series of changes in their wake and making a bigger gap, mentally and materially, between her generation and the succeeding one than between her and her father's fathers to many generations. Change there had, of course, always been as the tribe adapted itself to meet different situations, but it was at a rate more in keeping with the slow minds of a primitive people, a very different matter from the terrifying (to the old-fashioned Mbena) torrent of new ideas of recent years. Like many another lonely old survivor of a past generation in a world where the rate of change has been almost incredibly increased, champion of past days and past ways, Senjenge goes her own old-fashioned way with dogged determination, and deep disapproval of the new-fangled notions of what she considers a disrespectful younger generation. At the same time, she is shrewd enough to appreciate certain advantages of the new order of things, as, for instance, her hospital,† of which she is immensely proud,

* This comes well from the lips of the old rebel, does it not?

† Tribal dispensary with native dresser.

and she is also fully alive to the fact that she personally has gained much both politically and socially.

Tucked away in the remote wild country of southern Ubena, she and Filingafu, to whom she usually refers as "that rude, ill-bred old man," enjoy the luxury of a perpetual and indestructible feud. At present their boundary is ostensibly the bone of contention. Neither of them really cares very greatly about it, but, on the other hand, they are both very greatly attached to the long-established quarrel, and the boundary will serve as well as anything else to keep the feud going.

There was a dramatic scene one day in Senjenge's court-house when Filingafu had arrived to meet the administrative officer who, with Towegale, was visiting Senjenge. In front of a crowded court Filingafu scored a bull by telling Senjenge that she ought to have been his wife because, if everybody had their rights, he should have inherited her before Kiwanga, who was only Sagamaganga's half-brother. This was a particularly stinging taunt, for her matrimonial affairs had always been a sore point, and it struck right home. Trembling with rage, her little green silk kerchief awry on her head, she rose up before the assembly, paused a moment to draw a deep breath as though inflating her whole body, and then, with her eyes almost starting out of her head, she loosed a torrent of abuse at him that made the spectators gasp, powerless to stop her. Gone was the fragile old lady and in her place stood a veritable virago. She quite forgot the dignity of her years; she quite forgot her customary air of detachment. With flashing eyes and in a voice that had lost its usual quavering feebleness and regained something of its former full tones, she poured out all her hatred and contempt of the old man in a burst of eloquence which, after the manner of native abuse, spared neither his morals nor those of his mother and her relatives. Meanwhile Filingafu, thoroughly alarmed at the effect of his gibe, tried his best to efface himself, creeping into a corner of the court-house and hiding behind his son.

Yet, strangely enough, these two old enemies do on occasions fraternise to some extent. Filingafu never makes any decision which seems to him weighty without consulting the wise old lady across the border, and she goes to Ifinga to attend the *tambiko* at Sagamaganga's grave. Filingafu, though quite as old if not older than herself, is to her a "young" brother because her husband was his elder brother, and should he be in her opinion too "uppish" he is firmly snubbed: "Be quiet, you are only a child!" Provided he remembers his manners and humours her vanity by being duly respectful, she is willing to be gracious. But these genial moments are not over-frequent, for the old sinner Filingafu takes a mischievous delight in teasing his irascible sister-in-law. But we must return to the history of the 90's.

Mgopolinyi's treacherous attempt on Kiwanga's life was probably the salvation of his tribe, in that it necessitated the Mtema's visit to the coast. He thus had the advantage of learning something of the Germans before they arrived in his country, and the significance of what he saw was not lost upon him. He appreciated their power, their knowledge, and their skill, and, being extremely practical, the utter folly of opposition on the part of a small primitive tribe like his own. Consequently he steered his people along the wiser course of peaceable acceptance of the newcomers and the new order. We must, however, do him justice and point out that, as far as he personally was concerned, it was not merely a matter of bowing before superior power and accepting the inevitable with as good a grace as possible, in order to avoid unpleasant consequences. We must remember that he had himself received hospitality at the hands of the Germans, and hospitality is important in the eyes of the Wabena. He had been healed of his serious wound and generally treated with consideration, and he never went back on his benefactors. Moreover, he genuinely admired the white men for their knowledge, and though he came of a primitive people, he realised something

of the value of that knowledge and of the gain to his backward tribe of peaceable contact with the possessors of it. He himself set to work at once to learn to read and write and had all his sons taught.

He was apparently very well thought of by the Germans. Frau v. Prince refers to his various visits to her and her husband at Perondo and Iringa, when she entertained him with cigarettes and cognac!* v. Götzen, Governor of German East Africa, 1901–6, in *Deutsch Ostafrika im Aufstand, 1905–6*, cites his loyalty and assistance in the Maji-Maji Rebellion as a striking testimony to the success of a policy "which, wherever possible, relies on the hereditary authorities," and describes him as one who had been "for a long time one of the best supporters of German rule."† And v. Hassel, who defended Mahenge against the rebels, writes of him thus:

"Chief Kiwanga I kept faith with his German masters, even unto death. We Germans remember with the deepest and most sincere thankfulness this good man who gave his life for us, who in the hour of Mahenge's greatest need, when everything seemed to be breaking up at once, had the courage to take his place by the side of his friend Mamula.‡

"When Hongo's magic water was brought into his country he forbade any of his people to drink it, for it was nothing but a sham! He explained further, 'I do not betray my friend Mamula, I am going to Mamula now with my family.' And so he did. Kiwanga came to Mahenge Boma with his family and a thousand warriors to help us. At his wish, we drank the pledge of blood-brotherhood in the presence of his elders. Because of this, he brought all his people to my side."§

The later years of Kiwanga's reign appear to have been

* M. v. Prince, op. cit.

† Graf G. A. v. Götzen, *Deutsch Ostafrika im Aufstand, 1905–6*, Berlin, 1909, p. 138. Extract by kind permission of the publishers, Dietrich Reimer (Ernst Vohsen) Aktiengesellschaft.

‡ v. Hassel's native name.

§ Written at Mahenge on February 2, 1933. Apparently they did not actually drink the proper pledge, in blood.

comparatively peaceful as regards the internal politics of the tribe, and nothing is recorded of them save that sometime during the war in Uhehe (1894–8) he married a young girl who was both a daughter of Kipolero and of Uhenge, another Binti Kipolero (116). This girl, who became Towegale's mother, took her place in his household above her elder half-sister (115), for the younger was the better born. Both were daughters of Kipolero, but the latter had the advantage that her maternal pedigree, too, was beyond reproach. Her grandmother (38) was Uhenge's daughter and Mhako's sister, and had married one of Mhako's principal warriors, Kisetu (18), an Mfwagi whose mother was a daughter of Muyinga II of Uhehe. Thus Towegale has actually by right of birth a better title to the Stool than the brother who preceded him as Mtema and who was the son of Kiwanga's first Kipolero wife: there are no doubtful links in Towegale's pedigree.

As in his youth, Kiwanga still inclined towards the Wakinikipolero and the new marriage strengthened their position. It also increased the chances of there being a future Mtema with a Kipolero mother, and Kiwanga I's spirit doubtless rejoices that, as things fell out, both his Kipolero wives bore an Mtema!

He greatly desired to nominate Kiwanga (127), the son of Binti Kipolero (115), to succeed him, but the same circumstances which had prevented him from making that lady his senior wife thwarted him once again. The Wakinimlengi and their friends prevailed; Salimbingo (123), the son of the chief wife Binti Mkwando (74), was made the heir, though at his father's death in October 1905 he was only eleven years old, while Binti Kipolero's son was born about 1889. All knew well, however, that the Mtema wished his son Kiwanga, if it were possible, to rule after Salimbingo.

v. Götzen* mentions v. Hassel's formal installation of the eleven-year-old boy as Mtema under the guardianship of

* Op. cit., p. 138.

his mother and an "uncle,"* with pomp and ceremony designed to avert any slackening of Bena loyalty through the death of Kiwanga, and he records the resulting readiness of the warriors to continue fighting for a power "which respected their tribal laws." Naturally, however, such a young boy was not made Mtema wa Tambiko and much had yet to be achieved before the Wakinimlengi could feel that they were firmly established in power. To his people the boy was only, as it were, provisionally Mtema, and as things fell out he never became anything more. For one reason and another, he never received the royal Stool and the sacred Drum, was never made religious head of the tribe, and after his death the kingdom passed to his brothers.

It was common knowledge that his father had wished there to be no great haste in the matter of the Stool, in the hope that some twist of fortune might give the Kipolero side an opening. Further, the usual practice of awaiting the birth of an heir, the son of a near cross-cousin, necessitated the passage of some years at least before Salimbingo could be made Mtema wa Tambiko. Though he died when he was only twenty-three, he is said to have taken thirty wives by that time! They availed little, however. His third wife, Togani (134), bore a son, Kiangi, and two very junior wives also bore sons; but in each case the child was illegitimate, though Kiangi figured prominently in the succession dispute of 1928–32.† Lastly, in some way which has not been altogether explained, the fact that his mother, Binti Mkwando, refused to be inherited by one of the royal family and married an Mdamba—a proceeding which, to judge from the tone of voice used in speaking of it, should have been completely beneath her dignity—adversely affected his chances of receiving the Stool.

There are plenty of people who remember Salimbingo and

* Towegale says several of his Mlengi relatives, his mother's maternal uncles or cousins, had control of affairs.

† For the story of Kiangi's birth, see pp. 363–4.

yet little is known of him, his figure remains vague. Probably he was too young, and later not sufficiently self-assertive to make any lasting impression on his people. One thing is clear: during his reign, though not necessarily through his fault, tribal ties began to loosen in a serious way. It was unfortunate that at a time of difficult transition, when an organisation designed for a state of perpetual if desultory warfare was in the first throes of adaptation to new conditions, the tribe should lack a tried and trusted leader, one who had captured the hearts and imaginations of his people and who was Mtema wa Tambiko as well as a secular ruler. Moreover, the tribal school first was greatly reduced in numbers and then gradually died out altogether, a calamity whose detrimental effects on tribal discipline and unity can hardly be estimated. It is alleged that, in the atmosphere of suspicion which naturally prevailed after the Maji-Maji, Salimbingo (or his regents) dared not keep a large body of warriors and budding warriors at tribal headquarters. This may or may not be true. In any case, there was probably the feeling that, since tribal wars and cattle raids were no longer allowed, the whole point of the school was gone, so that it died out partly from lack of interest and enthusiasm. But it had done much more than train boys to fight, and that its wholesome influence in other ways is appreciated to-day is evident from the enthusiasm now shown by the tribal elders over its reopening, to assist the restoration, and ensure the maintenance, of discipline.

The Great War, 1914–18, brought fresh trouble to the tribe. In addition to the general disturbances inevitably resulting from the fighting which took place in its country, internal feuds broke out anew after the execution of Salimbingo in 1917. He was accused of communicating with the British and was shot at his village of Itanga. It is at least doubtful, however, whether he was not himself the victim of treachery. v. Hassel, in the letter quoted above, writes of him, "The tragic fate of Salimbingo, whom I personally installed as Chief

after Kiwanga's death, deeply affected me. He was *not* guilty of treachery." Dark suspicion hung over Kiwanga II, but nothing was ever proved against him.

It appears that the British forces were on the north bank of the Ruhuji River and the Germans were at Itanga when this tragedy occurred. According to Towegale, "Bwana Klaus" (?) at Mahenge had previously warned Salimbingo of the danger of misunderstandings and difficulties and urged him to go to Mahenge, but the Mtema had disregarded his advice. Information reached the Germans to the effect that he had sent a letter to the enemy and he was immediately seized. All save one of the Wanzagira with him succeeded in escaping, and Salimbingo's deputy and brother Mtengera was ordered to pursue them, but they fled across the Ruhuji to the British at Tanganyika. After the execution of Salimbingo, the Germans appointed Kiwanga II (127) as Mtema just before they retired southwards, and he then went over to Tanganyika to greet the British. When Salimbingo's Wanzagira saw him come, they at once accused him of treason and asked that he should be put to death, but there was no evidence against him. He was, however, sent to Nyasaland and for the space of a year Ubena was without an Mtema.

In the latter half of the following year, 1918, word reached the elders that one Jumbe Chanja, an Mdamba, was trying to fool the British officer at Mahenge into believing that he was the rightful ruler of Ubena, and so they decided at once to send a deputation to the "Big Bwana" at Iringa. They would inquire after Kiwanga, and if he could not return they would ask that Mtengera (129) be made Mtema in his place. Now Mtengera was the eldest son of Kiwanga I, but he was not really eligible because his mother was a slave concubine. They felt, however, better he than an Mdamba! And as he had been Salimbingo's deputy he was already *au fait* with all the ramifications of public affairs. True, Kiwanga I had left other sons, but they were either considerably younger or the sons of

unimportant wives, or both. The only one who was really well-born, Towegale, was not more than fifteen. The mothers of Machumani and Rufu were distant cross-cousins of Kiwanga I, the mother of Halifa was a commoner, and Storki* was the son of a slave girl. The Wakinimlengi dared not then put forward the infant Kiangi as Salimbingo's alleged son, for his mother's disgrace was too recent, and, further, it was not the moment to force a child Mtema on the tribe. They bided their time for ten years, till the boy was grown and the memory of the scandal somewhat blurred.

The deputation to Iringa consisted of Mtengera, Rufu, Machumani, Storki, Towegale (all sons of Kiwanga I), and two Wanzagira. They learned that Kiwanga was alive but still in Nyasaland; so as he was not available they asked for the appointment of Mtengera, who was duly made Mtema. But the elders never gave him the Stool, for his birth excluded him from the office of Mtema wa Tambiko, and to the tribe he was, in truth, little more than a stop-gap.

His reign was destined to be very short. Before he had ruled for a year, he found himself in trouble both with the authorities and with his brothers, and he was deposed and banished from Ubena. By that time Kiwanga had been allowed to return from Nyasaland, and at last his father's wish was fulfilled. Kiwanga I's son Mnyaubena, called Kiwanga II, sat on the Stool of Ubena, installed with full religious rites, after nearly fifteen years during which the tribe had had no Mtema wa Tambiko.

This happy event did not, however, lead to any great peace and prosperity, for Kiwanga II† is one of the wiliest, most incurable scoundrels who ever sat on a Stool. The tale of his evil doings would make many pages of exceedingly unedifying reading. A cheat, a liar, a thief, a cunning schemer, he has yet a certain charm of manner which has won him friends to help

* Called after v. Stocki, who was in charge of Ulanga Boma in 1895 and founded Perondo Boma that year.

† See *Plate I.*



KIWANGA II
(*p.* 92)



WABENA TURNED OUT FOR A LION HUNT
(*p.* 175)

him out of scrape after scrape and has gained him many Another Chance. The loyalty and unostentatious generosity of his brethren, including cousins, have saved him from disgrace time and time again, and he maintained a remarkable hold on the affection and respect of his people long after he was deposed and imprisoned in 1928 for stealing Government money.* On his release he returned to Ubena and continued to be a burden to his brethren until 1933, when the story of his sacrilegious treatment of his father's grave, the principal tribal shrine, came eventually to light (see p. 128), and at long last the tribe as a whole lost its faith in him. Even then he found some elders to plead for him and to strive for his reinstatement as Mtema; but they proved to be wily members of the Mlengi faction, whose aim was to oust and disgrace Towegale and then to wait until Kiwanga ruined himself again, which he would assuredly very speedily do, when the way would be clear for Kiangi. The exposure of their plot discomfited and surprised them not a little, and for the moment Kiwanga's star appears to have set. He is living at present (1933) in retirement on the border near Perondo, having been refused asylum by his "brother" Sapi of the Wahehe and by the other neighbouring chiefs. But he is tenacious, and it seems too much to hope that he will ever accept defeat and let things rest!

The question of nominating his successor in 1928 gave rise to a prolonged and exceptionally bitter dispute, in which the Mlengi quarrel figured prominently. The Wakinimlengi set out to discredit the old story of Kiangi's illegitimacy, and presented him before the British authorities as the rightful heir. The tribe as a whole was deeply attached to Kiwanga and felt that nobody could take his place, and the Wakinimlengi were thus opposed not so much by enthusiastic supporters of any other claimant as by people who longed only for the return of Kiwanga, and if they could not have him did not

* Towegale and Mfalimbega raised the heavy fine imposed on him, and scant thanks have they ever received.

really know what they wanted or care much who was appointed. Those who knew the truth about Kiwanga were a small and loyally silent minority, who felt themselves in too weak a position to push the claims of anybody else with any fervour. There were also, of course, certain lone adventurers playing solely for themselves, notably Rufu, who had been banished on account of his dangerous political activities.

In short, all was at sixes and sevens, and no satisfactory solution offered itself. As a temporary expedient, therefore, a Council was formed of the rulers of the provinces with Towegale—then ruling Malinyi—as president. That still left one pressing problem: who should take Kiwanga's place as ruler of Utengule province, which had come to be regarded as the royal province, the seat of the Mtema? This was solved in an interesting way.

It was felt that the appointment of any member of the royal family might prejudice the future. So an honoured and greatly respected Mzagira, Sadalla, was appointed by the tribe. The interesting point is that he was not an Mbena at all, but a freed slave—son of an Mgindo prisoner of war and an Mdamba slave girl. He had been a slave in Kiwanga I's household and had won the confidence and respect of his master, whose sons had been placed in his care. When Salimbingo, one of his young charges, became Mtema, Sadalla had become one of the principal powers behind the throne. He gradually acquired enormous influence in the tribe despite his slave birth, which has never been forgotten, although like all other slaves he has been freed,* and he was even accorded the signal honour of marrying a princess.

He took up his appointment in Utengule and wielded the powers of an Mtwa which, to all intents and purposes, he was. He even began to use the title, but this was eventually denied him, the royal family declaring that he was, and could be, nothing more than Mzagira. They feared his growing ambition

* See Chap. VI on the position of slaves.

and suspected that he planned in the end to have his children, if not himself, accepted as royal. He had been a faithful servant of the house of Manga for many years, but there were limits to the height to which he could rise. Unfortunately he himself forgot this in the glory of his new position, and when the time came for the new Mtema Towegale to take the royal province of Utengule, in 1933, Sadalla was deeply offended that he was expected to revert to private life and was not given Towegale's old province of Malinyi. His sympathies, moreover, really lay all along with Kiangi, his latest and darling nursling, and, the attempt to make Kiangi Mtema having failed when success seemed almost assured, he hoped to keep the Stool of Malinyi "warm" for his favourite, and so eventually to procure his entry into public life. Offered instead the position of deputy to Towegale, he angrily declined and retired into the background to join the ranks of the plotters and whisperers, and spreaders of disparaging rumours about the Mtema.

After the formation of the Council, consisting of Towegale, Mfalimbega, Filingafu, Senjenge, and Sadalla, there followed several years of utter confusion in the tribe. The divisions among the elders wrought havoc in the already weakened tribal organisation, discipline was undermined, the leaderless people began to disperse, some settling as far away as the coast. No agreement could be reached. Eventually in 1932 the by then released and apparently reformed Kiwanga seemed likely to be reinstated, but fortunately before this occurred he accidentally revealed his still unregenerate state to the British authorities! Then the Mlengi faction appeared to be on the verge of triumph. Their loud, insistent voices had nearly succeeded in persuading the world of Kiangi's legitimacy and drowning their less noisy but certainly more numerous opponents. The elders who really had the welfare of the tribe at heart were greatly alarmed, for they knew well that recovery would be out of the question under the rule of a weak boy with ambitious relatives, and that further trouble would arise

over the Stool. In passing, let us note once again the weakness of supernatural sanctions. Theoretically, fear of the spirits should be more than sufficient to prevent people from trying to cheat them by placing an impostor on the Stool, and from claiming for him the rights of the *tambiko*.

In September 1932 these disputes were at last brought to a close—perhaps that is unduly optimistic!—by the triumph of the true heir, Towegale, the best-born of all possible claimants. The defeat of the Wakinimlengi was secured when Kiangi's real father, Saulanga, eventually stepped forward and acknowledged his offspring, and it was admitted that Salimbingo was away in Dar es Salaam when his wife conceived. Saulanga has long been an exile from Ubena and lives among the Wapogoro, while Kiangi's mother was degraded from her position as third in Salimbingo's household and at his death was inherited by the father of her child. These things had been most carefully hidden from the authorities by the Wakinimlengi, whose opponents were afraid of being unable to substantiate their allegations until they could get hold of Saulanga.

Thus on September 29, 1932, Towegale was proclaimed Mtema and began his onerous task of reconstructing his tribe in the face of endless difficulties. Those who have good reason to dislike a strong ruler still hanker after Kiangi, under whom they hoped to lead an easy life, evading their obligations and pulling strings to their own advantage. At first, too, many people still clung to their loyalty to Kiwanga and looked on Towegale as no more than a figure-head. Lastly, there are those enemies who are concerned for themselves alone, notably the banished Rufu who lives in Mahenge and has acquired considerable influence over young Kiangi. When he, like the other Watwa and leading men, was privately asked his opinion of the situation prior to Towegale's election, he modestly replied that he really could think of no one more suitable to be Mtema than himself!

But progress is being made. A marked change is noticeable after only one year of the new régime, and the spirit and pride of the tribe are reviving. The most important step of all is that Towegale has been installed as Mtema wa Tambiko. This was actually done secretly by the leading elders with a *tambiko* at Mzawira's grave the very month after his accession to secular power, but the tribe as a whole did not know of it then, for the time was not ripe, and its affection for Kiwanga II was still too strong. Kiwanga himself did not know, though he was, of course, aware of his own disgrace in the eyes of the elders and knew that he was no longer admitted to the house of the sacred Drum where the Stool and other heirlooms are kept. According to the elders, he had officially "died." Not until he had lost his place in the hearts of his people and Towegale's "flitting" from Malinyi to his new village in royal Utengule was accomplished did they hold the big tribal *tambiko*, which proclaimed to Kiwanga and all men that Towegale was now in very truth Mtema.

CHAPTER V

RELIGION

He who would write of the religion of a primitive tribe sets out to tread a path at once difficult and full of pitfalls, and ere he has taken a single step along it finds himself confronted by the first serious obstacle. How is he going to define religion? And where draw the line between religion and magic? He reads the pundits: they disagree. He observes and appreciates the strong points of each definition, and the objections which may be raised against it. It is evident that whatever line he takes he cannot please everybody, but he may at least take his choice and please himself!

In approaching the study of Bena religion, we find that the Wabena themselves help us to choose where we shall draw the dividing line between religion and magic. Their own attitude towards the subject points to the adoption of the widest possible definition of religion; that is, as "the cult of the sacred* in so far as it is symbolic of an infinite good,"† a cult which includes all things done for the supposed benefit of the community, as opposed to magic which is malignant, designed to control supernatural forces for anti-social purposes. The objection to this definition is well known and obvious: it implies a moral judgment, and Anthropology is not concerned with moral values. But, none the less, it is certainly the definition best suited to our present study, setting our minds at once in tune with Bena ideas on the subject. For the Wabena themselves so divide up the cult of the supernatural, their criterion being not the form of the rite nor yet the type of belief lying behind it, but simply and solely whether that rite, with all it involves, is social or anti-social, judged, of course, by their own standard of values. Starting from this definition,

* In the sense of Latin *sacer*. † Dr. R. R. Marett's definition.

then, we find that a large number of practices often referred to as "magical" will have to be considered under the head of religion.

For convenience in studying the subject, Bena religion may be divided into three categories; but it is necessary to bear in mind that no hard-and-fast line separates one from another, that such a classification is imposed from without simply as a device to help us sort our ideas, and that to achieve its end it must be used intelligently and with discrimination. In particular, the first and third categories tend to become entangled, due chiefly to confusion of thought concerning the first.

The first category comprises the beliefs about Mulungu. The second is ancestor worship, wherein supernatural powers are attributed to the spirits of the dead and can be exercised by them to influence the living, so that it behoves the latter to maintain such relations with the ancestral spirits as will ensure that their influence shall be benevolent. The third category is called *uganga* and includes charms, divination, medicine, and all the arts whereby the medicine-man seeks either to influence supernatural forces for the good of men or to learn how man has offended and how he may please the spirits.

The belief in Mulungu is exceedingly complicated and the ideas held about him or it are both contradictory and confused. One says, "Mulungu is the Chief of the *mahoka* (spirits of the ancestors), who live with him," but he adds shortly afterwards, "The medicine of the medicine-man (i.e. curative medicine) is Mulungu. The evil power of the wizard (i.e. harmful medicine) is also Mulungu." Another will not have this last, but declares, "The witch-doctor kills because Mulungu wills it, and as the victim's *mahoka* will not help, he goes to Mulungu." And again, it may be said, "This medicine is my life, it is my Mulungu, and without it I should die." The sick man says, "Mulungu has entered me," and his doctor tells him, "This medicine will cure you, it is Mulungu."

It is clear that there are two entirely different conceptions of Mulungu, though they are often confused by the Wabena. The first is that of a High God, the Creator: the second is impersonal, Mulungu as the summation of the supernatural, something akin to *mana* among the Melanesians and *orenda* among certain North American Indians.

Towegale, the present Mtema, a man whose intellectual development far outstrips that of the majority of his people, who is not unacquainted with both Christian and Moslem ideas about God, naturally adheres to the first view of Mulungu. He expresses his belief thus, "Mulungu has no face, hands, legs, or body. Mulungu does not speak, but he hears and sees. Mulungu is everywhere at once. Mulungu does whatever he likes. There is nothing to which Mulungu can be likened. He is the lightning, and the thunder is his voice. The good are rewarded by him and the bad are punished. Mulungu is sheer mind and a very great mind." (He spoke in Kiswahili and his actual words were, "*Akili tupu, akili kubwa sana.*") "The dead are subject to him as are the living, and he rewards them according to their deeds on earth." Here Mulungu is definitely a High God, and it is interesting to note that when Towegale sacrifices to the ancestors he also calls on Mulungu. Mulungu to him is a spirit, devoid of most of the physical characteristics found in anthropomorphic deities, but capable of perception and thought, and possessed of something not unlike human personality. There are many other Wabena, less articulate than the Mtema, who in effect hold something like this view of Mulungu, whom as High God and Creator they know under a variety of names, e.g. Nguruwi, Mlongaweka.* As we might expect, this belief in its most advanced form is usually associated with the more educated and progressive elements of Bena society, men who have come into contact with Islam or Christianity or both; but even the least inconsistent among

* The meaning and origin of Nguruwi is unknown. Mlongaweka = He who speaks by Himself.

them still retain many beliefs which are, strictly speaking, only compatible with the other view.

The conception of Mulungu as an impersonal, ambivalent force that pervades everything but may become associated with certain persons or things is strongest among the most backward and uneducated sections of the community. In many cases, however, the two ideas have become inextricably mixed, so much so that a man will say, "I have been poisoned, Mulungu has entered me. I must seek out a doctor who will give me good medicine which is Mulungu. And Mulungu will help me so that I shall recover, for he has not yet called me to him."

Passing on to consider the beliefs of the second category of Bena religion, we find that every man is thought to consist of three parts. The first is the *muwili*, the body, which decays at death; the second is the *mtima*, the life-giving spirit which the Wabena identify with the liver* and which also decays after death; the third is the *kihoka*,† the spirit or soul, which is immortal and after death "goes to a place appointed for it by Mulungu." It is usually assumed that the status of a man's *kihoka* in the next world corresponds more or less with his status while alive. One informant states, "No one really knows whether a man has the same status after death as he had on earth, but Mulungu would never think of making a slave a chief, or vice versa." We may therefore take it that a powerful man retains his influence after death, a belief which establishes a hierarchy of *mahoka*. Thus it is believed that the spirits of chiefs can influence the whole tribe for good or bad, whereas the spirits of commoners can only affect the welfare of their relatives. Moreover, the spirits of persons recently dead are always considered to be more potent that those of men who died long ago, though even the latter may be greatly feared.

* *Mtima* is actually the word for liver.

† *Kihoka*, pl. *vihoka*. Also *lihoka*, pl. *mahoka*. In practice, *kihoka* and *mahoka* are the forms most usually employed.

This is but natural: the nearer ancestors are still very much alive in the memories of their children, while those of long ago have faded to a shadowy unreality, a mere name or perhaps not even that. But the forgotten ancestors, understanding that human memory cannot hold their names for ever, are content with a collective greeting from the "children" to "all those whom we cannot remember." For instance, when the Mtema sacrifices to his ancestors he calls on the old Chiefs in their order of seniority, starting with the first, whose name is still known, Nguruchawangi, and beseeching him to propitiate the spirits of those ancestors whose names have been lost.

The principal tribal sacrifices take place at the graves of the following Chiefs: Mzawira at Ifema, Mtengera I at Mkasu, and Kiwanga I at Mpanga,* their graves being visited in turn. Salimbingo's grave at Itanga is also visited and his spirit honoured, but the ceremonies performed there are more in the nature of family rites than of public sacrifices, since he was never Mtema wa Tambiko. The grave of only one other Mtema is still known, that of Ndaliwali at Uchindile. This is far from the present centres of tribal life, and it is believed that so long as his name is mentioned at the sacrifices he will "see pity" and excuse his descendants from making the long journey to his grave.

The head of every family and important clan periodically performs similar rites at the graves of his ancestors, and every man's immediate concern is to keep in the right relationship with the departed of his own blood, though with the decay of the clan system (see Chap. VIII) in many cases this does not mean more than honouring the spirits of, say, two generations of the family pedigree. Descent is reckoned in the male line, but, as already mentioned, a man will often attend ceremonies held in honour of the more important spirits to

* The ceremonies cannot at present be properly performed at Kiwanga's grave as they cannot continue all night there; see p. 128.

whom he is related in the female line, and if summoned to attend by the head of a clan to which he is thus related, he must do his best to obey. For instance, sons and grandsons of Waviari (princesses) must, if they can, attend the Manga sacrifices, while when Towegale hears that a big Kipolero or Uhenge *tambiko* is being held, he must do his best to be present. This, of course, refers mainly to the aristocracy, for nowadays few others remember to what clans their mothers belonged; and the members of the aristocracy only remember their relationship to those clans which are considered important.

The relations between the living and the dead in a family are the private concern of that family, and the circle of people to be affected by anything going wrong is limited. The ancestors of the royal house, however, are different. They are the tutelary spirits of the tribe as a whole, and the maintenance of good relations with them is a matter of public concern. The Mtema has special responsibility in this, but no man of the tribe is quite free of it. True, the ordinary man is principally and directly concerned with his own particular ancestors, whose sphere of influence is limited to the living of their own blood. But the great tribal ancestors are not so limited in their activities: gross and persistent neglect of custom and flagrant, impious breaches of the law in important matters on the part of even the humble members of the tribe may kindle their anger and spell far-reaching calamity. Few people in the tribe stop to ask *how* the *mahoka* achieve their results. Towegale, striving to reconcile this belief with his belief in the High God Mulungu, declares that they pray to Mulungu to send good or ill to their decendants. When the living and the dead are in conflict, Mulungu judges between them, and a prudent man therefore keeps on the right side of both Mulungu and the *mahoka*.

While it is open, then, to the tribe as a whole to offend the spirits of the departed Chiefs, it is in the power of only one man to propitiate them on behalf of the tribe as a whole.

The Mtema is the religious head of his people, and it is his most solemn duty to carry out all the rites necessary to retain the favour of the tribal ancestors and thus to ensure prosperity and avert disaster. He is the only priest of the whole community, though the head of every family is a priest at his private family sacrifices. The Mtema is, indeed, assisted by diviners who attend him at the tribal sacrifices, but they are in no sense priests, and are only called upon to determine whether the rites have been successful or not, to prescribe the remedy in case of failure, and on occasions to read what fate the omens portend for any undertaking. On the proper performance of the Mtema's religious duties hangs the welfare of all his people; he is indispensable. From his exalted religious position he derives much of his secular power and authority, though it is not impossible for the two functions to be temporarily separated, e.g. Mzawira and Mtengera, or the years of the Council, 1928–32. He is believed to be in constant communication with the spirit world, to be supernaturally inspired, and only prolonged and serious abuse of the privileges and authority of his position will shake this faith. It was thus possible for the rascal Kiwanga II to maintain his personal influence long after he was officially deposed, and although he was himself apparently entirely lacking in any sense of the responsibilities of his sacred office as priest-king. But he did not even stop short of sacrilege, and therein ultimately lay his ruin in the eyes of his people and the release of his relatives from the silence with which they had shielded him for so long, often to their own heavy material loss.

To an Mtema who takes his position seriously, the religious aspect of his office is, of course, supreme; and all his public life, guided by his supernaturally inspired mind, is to him the practical expression of his religion. He lives in close contact with the spirits, the wisdom of the greatest of his ancestors is his if he will but listen to the thoughts they put into his waking mind, the dreams they bring to him sleeping.

Towegale thinks and dreams particularly of his father, Kiwanga I, whom he believes he remembers, though he was a very tiny child at the time of Kiwanga's death. His diplomatic skill, his understanding of the minds of his people and the way to lead them, waiting on their slowness instead of stirring up anger and bitterness by driving them; the growth of order and discipline in the tribe since his accession; all avoidance of pitfalls; the power of reading in the small happenings of life the signs of supernatural approval or disapproval of his actual or projected course of action in any matter; the lucky accidents which have disclosed to him plots to nullify his efforts and even plots against his life—all he attributes to the watchful care and personal guidance of his ancestral spirits and, above all, of Kiwanga I. He says, "I have my diviners to help me, but mostly I am my own diviner. I study the thoughts that come into my mind during the day and the dreams I dream at night, to learn what the ancestors want to tell me. My fathers did this, too. In the days of tribal wars they used to receive warnings in this way of the approach of the enemy, so that their camp could not be taken by surprise. It was by this power of understanding and foreseeing that my father Kiwanga knew the medicine of the Maji-Maji medicine-men was a snare, and that those who drank would suffer many calamities. Thus he saved our people. Still his spirit watches over them, and he guides them through me."

Yet in spite of the enormous importance attaching to the office of Mtema wa Tambiko, and in spite of all that is said regarding the disasters which may be expected if his duties are not adequately performed, it is not at all unusual for the tribe to be without an Mtema wa Tambiko for several years, e.g. if the new Mtema is young and has yet no heir. Within reason, this hiatus does not cause any anxiety. The very long gap between Kiwanga I and Kiwanga II was, of course, unusual, and in truth was accompanied and followed by enough troubles to confirm the Mbena in his belief! During

such a period, the man who is wielding the secular power, accompanied by the elders, sacrifices as usual to the spirits, but the rites are then private ceremonies rather than tribal occasions. They lack the special meaning and peculiar efficacy of a *tambiko* performed by an Mtema wa Tambiko, and, of course, in every department of the Mtema's public life that constant supernatural inspiration is missing.

In view of such periods, during which the Stool and the *linyaútwa* and the other heirlooms have no royal keeper, the existence of a special officer to take charge of them is not surprising; though two whole years elapsed from the time when the writers first began to make friends with the Wabena to the day when his existence was at last revealed.

This man, the Mzagira* wa Tambiko, is not a priest, for he cannot offer the tribal sacrifices, but he has control in all matters concerning the royal *tambiko* and the Mtema cannot offer the sacrifices without him. With him rests, too, the final decision regarding the admission of the Mtema to the secrets of the heirlooms, the final word which permits or denies him the possession of the Stool and initiation as Mtema wa Tambiko. No Mtema is really and truly Mtema until he holds the royal Stool, though without it he may out of courtesy be addressed and treated as Mtema, and may rule the tribe as a secular authority.

This Stool is not the only one of its kind, for any three-legged stool is a seat of honour upon which no man may sit in the presence of his superior, save only when he has been raised by the Mtema to the Rank of Sitting on a Stool. Mfalimbega (107), Barakali (71) the present Mzagira wa Tambiko, Binti Mkwawa (131) and Binti Kipolero (120), Towegale's first and second wives, have recently been accorded this privilege.

The Mtema, moreover, does not necessarily receive the identical Stool his predecessor had before him; in a country

* For various meanings of the title Mzagira, see pp. 143–4.

where insect pests devour everything, a new one has to be made from time to time and substituted for the old decrepit Stool, but the new one is none the less *the* royal Stool. The present one, worn and eaten by white ants, dates from the time of Mtengera I. The Watwa Wenyelutenana (rulers of provinces) also have their stools of office, and though nowadays one speaks of a man holding the *baraza* of Masagati or wherever it may be, it is also right, and historically more correct, to say that he holds the *stool* of Masagati, etc.

The Stool and the other heirlooms are called the *vinu vya tambiko* = the things of the *tambiko*, and are housed in a special hut near the Mtema's, with that of the Mzagira wa Tambiko close by. Admittance to this shrine, the *mahóngoli*, is a great privilege, and only two Europeans have ever been taken into it. One was a German called v. Glocke (?) who, despite Kiwanga I's protest and warning, beat the sacred Drum. He died four days later! Since then the very existence of the *mahóngoli* and the *linyaútwa* has been hidden from the Europeans. The second white man admitted was one of the writers.

Those who would enter must abstain from sexual intercourse for anything up to five nights, according to the time available and the importance of the occasion, but one night will do if time is short and the visit more or less informal. On admittance to the shrine, the appropriate invocations, whose words are known only to a very small circle of people, must be addressed to the spirits. The initiates include the Mtema (if he be Mtema wa Tambiko), his chief wife, the Mzagira and his chief wife, one or two notable old men like Mkwawa (97), and certain Wanyangutwa* who have been at one time or another initiated as assistants of the Mzagira (see below). The Mzagira has the final word in deciding when the *mahóngoli* shall be entered and by whom, and even the Mtema does not

* Mnyangutwa = a man descended in the male line from one of the chiefs, i.e. an Mkinimanga. See p. 132.

go into it without first obtaining his permission. It is visited perhaps seven, eight, ten times a year, to see that all is well within, and the women are sent in to sweep it out and make the place clean and tidy. They too, of course, must be properly prepared by observance of the taboo on sexual intercourse, and, further, they may on no account set foot inside it when they are menstruating. Formal entry is made on special occasions, such as when the tribal sacrifices are being held, and in the past the Mtema used to invoke the aid of the spirits there before embarking on a raid. At the ceremony of installing a new Mtema wa Tambiko, he enters the *mahóngoli* with the privileged elders and in front of the *linyaútwa* he and the Mzagira, with their chief wives, drink a special medicine. Meanwhile, outside, a great feast is held with dancing to celebrate the event, *liheyu*, *lipara*, and *ligubo* all being performed (see Chap. XVIII).

The Mzagira must be careful always to keep the ancestral spirits posted in all news affecting the tribe, and the royal house in particular, by going into the shrine and there, squatting before the sacred Drum, recounting to the spirits what is happening to their children. His perpetual presence at tribal headquarters used to be considered essential, but in these more lenient days he is permitted to absent himself for not more than one night at a time.* Should anything serious happen in the royal household during his absence, such as the sudden death of one of the family, his chief wife, with whom he leaves the key of the *mahóngoli*, must see to it at once that some suitable person—the Mtema or, in his absence, his chief wife or some other initiate—goes to tell the ancestors.

The *mahóngoli* is a simple mud-plastered hut with a thatched roof, and is divided into two rooms (Fig. I). One of the writers was taken into it by Towegale and the present Mzagira,

* He must always, of course, have been able to leave in order to attend the sacrifices at the graves of the Watema. Possibly Ngongomi (see p. 75) was returning from rites at Mtengera's grave at Mkasu when Semudodera lured him to his death at Isohiwaya.

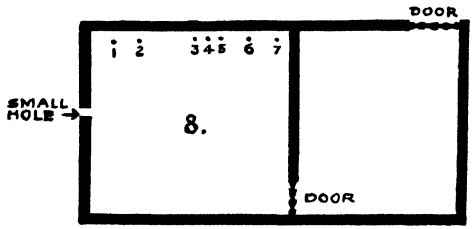
Barakali, both of them not a little apprehensive as to the reception the spirits might accord the stranger. Bare-headed and bare-footed, they wore the *ngololo*, a dignified robe consisting of a length of heavy cloth, about three yards by four, swathed round the body and draped over one shoulder; and the visitor deposited his shoes and hat outside the door. The three then entered the first room and squatted down in silence for a few moments, after which Towegale recited the ritual invocations in Kibena. He then motioned Barakali to proceed further, and the latter advanced to the doorway leading into the inner room. Squatting just inside the threshold, he reverently introduced the stranger to the ancestral spirits, explaining why he had been admitted to the *mahóngoli*. All then waited for some moments and a tense, anxious silence filled the building till it became apparent that the spirits were not going to strike dead the presumptuous intruder or his companions, or otherwise disturb the peace of the afternoon. The Mtema then led the stranger into the inner room and the atmosphere gradually became less strained as he and Barakali realised with thankfulness that all was well.

Suspended by a wooden hook from the roof of the shrine hangs the *linyaútwa*, a small drum perhaps two feet long, ancient, solid, and heavy in appearance. Skins are stretched over its open ends and lashed one to the other. When these need renewing, two men perform the task sitting back to back with the Drum between them and working with their hands behind them, so that their eyes shall not look inside it. No one knows what the "medicine" of the *linyaútwa* may be, whether it is actually any tangible object possessed of supernatural powers inside the Drum, or whether the power, the *mulungu*, of the "medicine" resides in the Drum itself. The *linyaútwa* was already a relic of a distant past in the far-off days when Manga brought it into Ubena of the Hills. It is believed to be indestructible and to confer immunity from fire on the house where it is lodged. Moreover, men say that should it not wish

to be removed to a new home, three men cannot lift the Drum, and that recently when it was brought from Old to New Utengule—a distance of little more than a mile—the journey took three days!

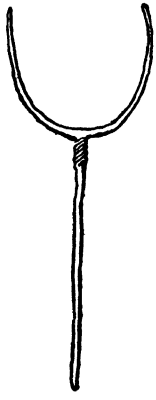
The tribal heirlooms, stuck upright in the ground, are ranged along the foot of the wall behind the *linyaútwa*. Standing apart in the left-hand corner are two small spearheads (Fig. I, 1 and 2), one which was sent by Chabruma with the blade bent over as a sign of a beaten enemy suing for peace (see pp. 170–1), and the other, unbent, which came from the Hehe Chief Mkwawa as a mark of respect for an honoured foe. At the right-hand side stand three curious iron objects (Fig. I, 3, 4, and 5), very old in appearance. An interesting feature is the imitation of cord lashings which occurs at the head of the shaft in each case, suggesting an earlier composite form. Towegale and Barakali particularly pointed out these simulated lashings as an interesting decoration. What the objects are they have no idea, nor do they know whence they came beyond the fact that Manga brought them with him as heirlooms handed down from his remote ancestors. Nothing similar is found among the Wabena or their neighbours, save only that the Wahehe are said also to have a *mahóngoli* in which, since Manga took the originals, they have placed copies of these ancient objects. Manga's retention of the heirlooms throws an interesting side-light on the unwillingness of the Wakinimanga to acknowledge the claims of the Wayinga as *elder* brothers. Next these strange iron implements stands a ceremonial axe with a long wavy tang (Fig. I, 6), and in the corner of the room is the worn little royal Stool which has come down from Mtengera.

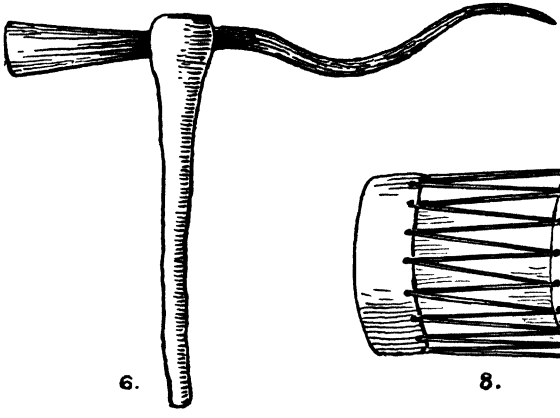
A somewhat amusing incident occurred later the same day in connection with the pronged heirlooms. The other writer, who had not yet heard all about the contents of the *mahóngoli*, was busy with callipers measuring heads, when she noticed Barakali observing her intently from a little distance, staring




3.


4.


5.


6.

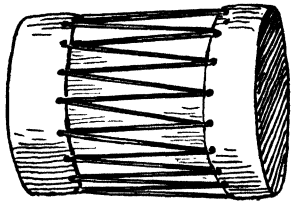

8.

Fig. I.

open-mouthed at the callipers, with his eyes starting out of his head. Still staring, he came closer and gazed long and earnestly at them over her shoulder, breathing beery breaths down her neck, for festivities were in progress celebrating the successful *tambiko* outside the *mahóngoli* on the previous night in connection with the formal opening of Towegale's new court-house. Knowing nothing of the significance and associations implements of such a shape might have for Barakali, she invited him to be measured—whereat he fled without vouchsafing a single word. Presently, however, fortified by a little more beer, he plucked up courage and came back jauntily, laughing and joking, and sat down to be measured.

In interesting contrast to the perils threatening adults unless great precautions are carefully observed in approaching and handling the *linyaútwa*, is the freedom with which small children may draw near to it. Before the Mtema's schools were abolished under Salimbingo, the outer room of the *mahóngoli* used to be much larger than it is to-day and the little boys among the Wenyekongo used to sleep there, small guardians of the inner shrine. The door of the inner room was kept shut and they did not apparently enter without permission, but any of them could go in when their elders visited the *linyaútwa*, and many a man remembers seeing it when he was a child. And even after the abolition of the Wenyekongo, boys of the royal house continued to be taken in while they were still little, to see the *vinu vya tambiko*. Towegale, who was born about 1902–3 and was never an Mnyekongo, saw them many times in his childhood, but from the time he reached puberty to the day of his installation as Mtema wa Tambiko he never set foot in the *mahóngoli*.

The Mzagira wa Tambiko is chosen by the Mtema and he must be the son of a princess, the idea being that he should have the blood of the royal ancestors in his veins but not on the male side, lest at any time he become a candidate for

a high administrative post.* He holds office till death, unless he grossly offends, but when he is old a second, younger Mzagira may be appointed also to be his pupil, assistant, and eventually successor.

This important elder ranks next to the Mtema himself, whose chief counsellor he is, with greater power even than the Watwa Wenyelutenana. In the past he was actually the Mtema's official deputy, but now these offices have been separated because his duties as deputy would in these days necessitate much travelling, and he may not leave the *mahóngoli*. Probably, too, there is some idea of shielding the Mzagira and his functions from the inquisitive eyes of the white man. He lives at tribal headquarters, and his tax is paid and he and his wives are fed and clothed at the Mtema's expense. When there is no Mtema wa Tambiko, the man who wields the secular power and performs the *tambiko* as a sort of substitute supports the Mzagira. For instance, during the years of the Council, these tasks fell on Towegale as President. When Mtengera I's Mzagira Ngongomi was killed by Semudodera, Kiwanga I adopted his children and later swore blood-brotherhood with his eldest son Ngongomi.

Alone of all the great officers of the tribe the Mzagira is installed with the same ceremonies and dances as the Mtema himself, and is allowed to sit on the Stool. An Mnyangutwa chosen by the Mtema assists him, but, unlike the Mzagira, this man does not hold office for life and will almost certainly be replaced by another when a new Mtema is installed. While he acts as assistant guardian of the *mahóngoli*, he is debarred from seeking any administrative office, and for that reason ambitious Rufu refused the honour when Kiwanga II offered it to him. Storki accepted it under Kiwanga, whose intimate friend he was, but now that Kiwanga's day is over he has gone to live as the "big man" in the little pastoral community

* See chart for pedigree of Barakali (71), who is the son of a warrior and the daughter of one of Ndaliwali's brothers.

near the border at the Kigogo River, and his place has been taken by a member of the Mpangachuma (92) branch of the clan. The relations of the Mtema, the Mzagira, and his assistant to one another were expressed thus by Towegale, "They all three share the Stool, they sit on it together." At the same time, it is equally true to say that great care is taken that the officials associated with the *linyaŭtwa* shall be quite distinct from those of the tribal administration. Towegale says, "The work of ruling and the work of looking after the *tambiko* must always belong to different people."

The truth is that religion and politics cannot be placed in two watertight compartments; they are always reacting on one another. In the old days, when the Mzagira was also the Mtema's deputy, he and his assistant used to try cases and take part in administrative affairs at the royal village, and he still has, as he had then, very great influence in politics through his position as chief adviser of the Mtema. But the opposite idea of the separation of religious and administrative functions finds expression in the safeguards against the officers of the *tambiko* holding political (or, in the past, military) posts with territorial jurisdiction. Their work concerns the tribe as a whole, not any particular section of it, and they must never, therefore, be men with a special interest in one part of the tribe, men to whom the inhabitants of one particular area are "*my* people."

Summing up, we find that the essentially religious functions of the Mzagira wa Tambiko constitute, unperceived by the Wabena, a most effective check on the political power of the Mtema. Religious rites and the conduct of secular affairs are closely bound up with one another in tribal life, and the Mzagira's control in the sphere of the supernatural, his power to dictate when, where, and how religious ceremonies shall be performed, gives him tremendous influence in political and administrative matters. He is in touch with public opinion among the elders, but he has no political axe of his own to

grind, and his opinions in practice usually reflect the approval or disapproval of the more responsible tribal elders.

Now though in any group of people there is one man whose special duty it is to perform the formal rites in honour of the ancestors of that group—whether it be the Mtema sacrificing on behalf of the whole tribe, the head of a clan on behalf of all his clan, or the head of a family on behalf of a small family group—it must not be overlooked that every person has the right to solicit the aid of his or her ancestors and to call on them individually. How far he or she will succeed in influencing them is another matter and depends on circumstances. Apart altogether from the question of the personal merit or otherwise of the petitioner in the eyes of the spirits, one person will be held to have more influence with them than another by reason of his position in the family. The case of Kiwanga I, Semudodera, and Sagamaganga well illustrates the considerations which must be taken into account. Why it appears to the Wabena a matter of such great importance to Sagamaganga that he received the supernatural reinforcements brought by Semudodera has already been shown in the historical chapters of this book.

This brings us to our last point regarding the second category of Bena religion, a point which has already arisen and will arise again in our study of Bena life, and which therefore needs only a passing reference here. It is the relation of ancestor worship to the everyday affairs of the people, its place in the life of the tribe. To the Wabena the ancestors are the source of all law, the givers of all prosperity, and the senders of all misfortune, though Mulungu too has a vague and ill-defined place in their ideas as a dispenser of rewards and punishments. Theoretically every Mbena does certain things and refrains from doing others for fear of the ancestors; his life is regulated by them. He really thinks it is. But when we consider "applied religion" in the tribe—and that includes

the regulation of all social relations and every aspect of tribal life—we are confronted with a very different spectacle. Ancestral wrath loses much of its dreadfulness when there are innumerable recognised ways of averting it, of breaking the rules and evading the consequences. Endless inconsistencies in the application of supernatural sanctions lead us to ask whether, if we accept their own exposition of their law and its sanctions, we shall not be setting up what the Wabena *believe* controls men's actions in the place of what really does so. The pursuit of that inquiry does not, however, belong to a chapter devoted chiefly to what they believe.

Turning now to *uganga*, let us first of all consider the exponents of the esoteric arts of medicine—spell-making, exorcism, and divination—a fraternity whose members have tended to keep very much in the background since the advent of the white men, though in native society a successful medicine-man is a highly respected person.

There are numerous types of medicine-men or *wanyamgoda*,* including persons of both sexes. Some are doctors who practise curative medicine only; others specialise in charms and amulets to prevent disease or misfortune; and others in medicines to avert the consequences of a breach of custom. Any of them may be called upon to pronounce a man fit or unfit to work or fight. Certain women are particularly famed as midwives or as experts in initiation, but they usually combine this kind of work with a knowledge of some other branch of the profession, except exorcism and the counteraction of witchcraft, work which is beyond their powers. Again, some medicine-men specialise in divination, while others make a name for themselves in the task of suppressing witchcraft. But whatever their particular line or lines may be, they all rely on the supernatural for the production of their results;

* *Mnyamgoda* is the usual term for doctor, but there are a number of others. *Mwilwana* (pl. *walwana*) is specially used of the tribal dressers, trained in Government hospitals. Another name is *mnyalihondo* (pl. *wanya-*) = the man with the bag.

and they are one and all the avowed enemies of the sorcerers, though now and then cases come to light where an *mnyamgoda*, imperilling both his own good name and the honour of his profession, has in fact been practising both the white and the black arts, the first openly and the second in secret.

The profession is open to anyone, from the highest to the lowest, to whom an *mnyamgoda* chooses to impart his knowledge. In practice it tends to remain in certain families, being passed on from father to son, mother to daughter, but it is sometimes taught to pupils on payment of a fee. In the old days certain of the Wenyekongo (children at the tribal school) were selected by the Mtema for training, especially in all the branches of the art likely to be required in war.

The medicine-men are not all Wabena by birth. The Mtema rules, as we already know, over a mixed population, and his Ndwewe subjects are particularly interested in medicine, many of the most renowned doctors being found amongst them. A notable example is an old man called Tembatemba, who swore an oath of blood-brotherhood with Kiwanga I and served as one of his medicine-men and diviners. He must have been a fine-looking man in his day, tall and well-built, but he is bent with age now. His face is deeply lined and his piercing eyes are sunk in their sockets, but in spite of advancing years he retains a good deal of the energy of youth and leads an active life, travelling about incessantly from place to place, a long spear in one hand and an old goat-skin bag* slung over one shoulder. This bag contains his most treasured possessions —roots and herbs of all descriptions, rams' horns filled with evil-smelling concoctions, a few cents, a little tobacco, a double string of beads with a shell at either end which he uses for divining, a very soiled breviary which he picked up somewhere or other and to which he evidently attaches considerable value although he cannot read, and his photograph

* Alas for the picturesque! When he last met the writers the goat-skin bag had given place to a tattered khaki kit-bag!

(Plate II) which he treasures as his *mtima* or life-giving spirit. On occasions he is extremely vivacious and bubbles over with boisterous spirits, teasing the children, filling the air with noise and laughter, and even bursting in on weighty conferences of the elders. But all his eccentricities are borne with tolerant good humour for the sake of his famous skill and kindly heart.

A really good *mnyamgoda's* fame spreads far beyond his own country, and even in the troublous days of inter-tribal wars the skill of such an one was a sure passport, enabling him to journey through hostile country in perfect safety. Wherever he goes he is welcomed by others of his trade, intent on gleaning fresh knowledge from the famous stranger. Tembatemba made full use of the immunity from attack conferred by his profession. He travelled east to the coast and west as far as Lake Tanganyika. He sojourned among many warlike tribes in the course of his wanderings, and now in his old age delights to tell of his adventures amongst the Wanyamwezi, the Waha, the Wasukuma, and even the dreaded Masai.

In the course of a varied career he has acquired a mass of knowledge, and his stock of herbs and roots is said to be the best in the district. With perfect confidence in himself, he claims to be able to cure almost any disease in either natives or Europeans and admits of only one rival, the European who can "make the face of a man," i.e. take a photograph! He is at the top of his profession, an expert in its occult mysteries, and typical of the greatest men of his class. With his reputation to maintain, he takes himself most seriously. He is far too big a man to condescend to witchcraft, though he admits with sorrow that some of the lesser fry do so on occasions, thereby disgracing their honourable calling.

One thing most noticeable about Tembatemba is his genuineness. There is no suspicion of hocus-pocus about him, and although many of his practices cannot really be effective,

there is no doubt that he himself believes whole-heartedly in their efficacy.* His ideas may be based on erroneous hypotheses, but he is no charlatan, and when he defends his cult he does so with genuine conviction. Nothing can be more unfair to the medicine-man than to confuse him with the wizard, *muhawi*. Nor is it fair to regard him as necessarily a fraud, the clever mountebank who fleeces the gullible villagers. This is most certainly not true in Ubena, where not only the common people believe in the medicine-men, but the medicine-men believe in themselves. Failure to produce results in certain cases will not disillusion them or their clients, for there are always a number of other explanations at hand to account for it, while persistent failure on the part of any one doctor will discredit him but not his profession.

Their ideas regarding the source of their powers are vague. The Wabena certainly do not believe, as do some tribes, that these powers reside in individuals and are inherited. As we have seen, anyone may acquire them provided he is taught by a competent man. Rather they believe that a man through expert tuition learns how to control for benevolent purposes certain forces external to himself—forces which reside in natural objects such as plants and which are all classed together in the one word *mulungu*. *Mutatis mutandis*, all that has been said of the medicine-man applies equally well to the sorcerer, the furtive weaver of evil spells and brewer of poisons; the power behind both *uganga* and *uhawi* is *mulungu*.

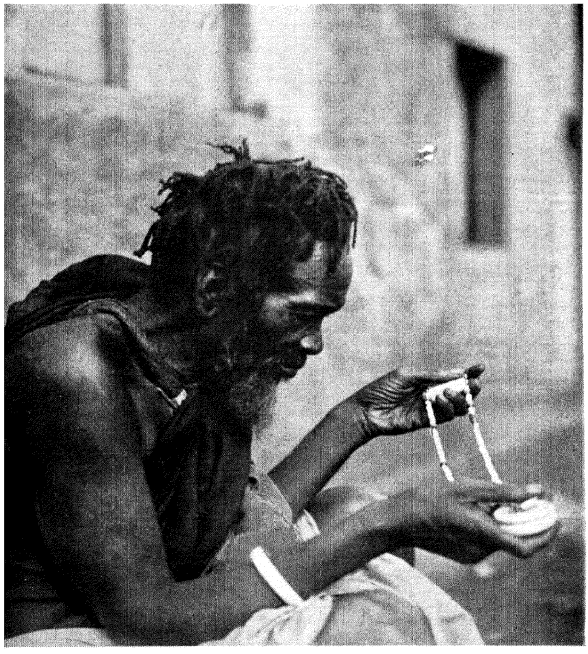
Naturally it is hard to find out anything about the practice of witchcraft and how the sorcerers regard the forces they profess to control. Among the medicine-men, however, the personal and impersonal conceptions of Mulungu seem to be combined in proportions varying from one individual to another. For instance, when administering an aperient a doctor says, "Mulungu drive it (the bad matter) out," and he also

* A detailed description of his (unsuccessful) treatment of one case is given in Chap. XVII.

calls on Mulungu when digging up roots for his concoctions. But what kind of Mulungu he means is not defined: indeed, it could very well be either or both, and his words a spell or a prayer, according to taste! Towegale, who is well versed in the lore of the medicine-man, is careful to make the reservation that medicines cannot prove effective unless Mulungu wills, and he adds that sometimes it is also necessary to propitiate the ancestral spirits before they can take effect.

Some of the medicines themselves will be described in detail in a later chapter. Let us now consider another side of the *mnyamgoda's* art—divination.

Man has always had a strong desire to see into the future and has throughout the ages exercised much ingenuity in his endeavours to foretell the trend of events. So great is his longing to know what lies ahead that diviners are very frequently persons of considerable social standing. In Ubena, the Mtema always has one or more attached to his household and invariably consults these men at any crisis in his life or in the life of the tribe. But the task of the diviner is not only to tell the future, to forecast the fate in store for any projected enterprise and thus to pronounce upon the advisability or otherwise of proceeding with it, nor merely to discover which of several possible courses is the one to take. He must also be able to disclose the causes of any ill-fortune which has overtaken his clients—what ancestor has been offended and how, who is the wizard responsible for the trouble or wherein a rejected sacrifice is displeasing—and then to advise a remedy. The diviners employ various methods for arriving at the answers to the riddles with which they are confronted, among the most common being throwing the bones, examining conical heaps of flour, and splitting a green stick. The answer depends on how these natural objects arrange themselves, influenced, of course, by Mulungu. Oracular power may also reside in an animal, e.g. the hedgehog, which, the Wabena believe, is never encountered casually



MEDICINE-MAN, CALLED TEMBATEMBA, DIVINING
(*p.* 121)



MEDICINE-MAN CALLED TEMBATEMBA
(*pp.* 117, 398)

and without special reason. It has a message for the tribe, and he who finds it takes it to give its message to the Mtema. He places a spear, a pot of water, and a hoe in front of it. In the past, if it went towards the spear, the enemies of the tribe would attack within the year; they come with spear no longer, but there may be other trouble from outside, perhaps over boundaries. If it goes towards the water, the rains will be excellent and the harvest good; if towards the hoe, a lean year is foretold and much additional agricultural work will be necessary to make good losses.

As there are two distinct views of Mulungu, so there are two distinct and corresponding theories about divination. Those who conceive of Mulungu as an impersonal force, on seeing the bones or whatever it may be that the diviner has used, cry, "It is Mulungu": those of the other school of thought say, "Mulungu has said . . ."

There is another form of divination worthy of mention in that it is based on a principle entirely different from that described above. It is purely subjective, something akin to the Mtema's study of the thoughts that come into his mind. Plate II shows the famous medicine-man, Tembatemba, divining with a double string of beads. He holds them and simply gazes at them intently. After an appreciable interval of time the oracle speaks. It seemed at first that this method was similar in theory to throwing the bones, the answer depending on the grouping of the beads, but Tembatemba denies this. He says, "I look at the beads and a thought comes into my mind: it is Mulungu."

The foregoing attempt to present the confused and contradictory ideas lying behind the religious practices of the Wabena displays once again the commonly observed characteristic of primitive religion—the predominance of action over thought. The philosophy of their religion is comparatively unimportant to the Wabena, and a man may think what he pleases about the mysterious person or force called Mulungu, the ancestral

spirits and their respective spheres of action, provided he knows what he must *do* and does it, provided he is ritually blameless. The majority of the people think very little if at all, and for them religion and ritual are synonymous. The very existence of the intellectual aspect of religion as distinct from the ceremonial is unguessed, and they do not attain to more than a nebulous faith that somehow they will benefit from the correct performance of certain rites and the observance of certain rules, and an unanalysed idea that all these things, together with calamities and punishments, are referable to the ancestral spirits and the mysterious Mulungu. Those who do try to analyse and express the beliefs behind their practices seldom get very far along the road towards a satisfying and coherent philosophy, and still more rarely does one exponent agree with another.

The rites themselves in which so much trust is placed are numerous, but not on the whole elaborate. Certain things must be done at certain times and certain ceremonial acts must be carried out, but the manner of their doing is singularly informal. The rites range from the great tribal sacrifices at the graves of the past Chiefs down to the simplest private ceremony in the home. They will be found scattered throughout the pages of this book, playing their part in each department of life and accompanying the progress of each individual from birth to death, bathing in supernatural light everything in the public life of the tribe and the private life of the individual. Little wonder that the Wabena talk of law and history and family relations and economics in terms of religion! Living is a dangerous occupation and unknown evils, doubly feared just because they are unknown, attend men's steps on every side. So, being afraid, they perform some acts which they are assured on the best authority will protect them from danger and ensure their prosperity: they feel better, confident, hopeful, and happy.

The public ceremonies of the tribe are held whenever any

serious crisis arises—drought, too much rain, sickness, political upheaval, etc.—or any event occurs of great import to the whole tribe, but even without some such special reason the great ancestors must not be neglected for too many months on end. When much beer has been prepared at home for the rejoicing which takes place after a successful *tambiko*, the Mtema and his relatives, with the Mzagira wa Tambiko and other important people, including diviners, gather at one of the royal graves, women attending as well as men. The Mtema performs the necessary ceremonial, assisted by the Mzagira. He kills the sacrificial animals, which may be cattle (preferably) or sheep, but never goats. Then he takes some *togwa* (unfermented beer) of finger-millet, and with his diviners studies the behaviour of the carcases and the beer to see if the ancestral spirits find the sacrifice acceptable. If the flesh of the animals quivers unduly or over-long after death, something has gone wrong with the *tambiko* and the ancestors are not disposed to accept the sacrifice. The omen of the beer cannot be read till morning. The carcases having behaved as they should, the Mtema places choice portions thereof—pieces of liver, stomach, hump—on the grave with the *togwa* and some flour, praying to the ancestors in their proper order, together with Mulungu, if his personal beliefs so demand. Separate pots of beer are placed on or around the grave for each ancestor mentioned, and beside each spirit's pot is another for his mother, so that neither the mothers nor the fathers of the tribe are forgotten. The rest of the meat is taken by the congregation, groups of friends usually cooking their share together and reserving some for other people who were unable to come, but there are no hard-and-fast rules in this. Dancing and singing (*liheyu*, see Chap. XVIII) are kept up till morning breaks, when the *togwa* is anxiously examined. If it is sweet and good and the grain shows signs of sprouting as it should, all is well; but should it have turned sour overnight, or any of the pots have been upset, the ceremonies have

been in vain and the diviners must set to work to find the cause of failure and prescribe the remedy.

The ceremonies periodically performed at the graves or a clan or a family differ only in degree from the tribal *tambiko*. In all cases, now that burial in the courtyard of the dwelling has gone out of fashion, sacrifices are performed at the graves only on important occasions. A "small *tambiko*" may be held either in the courtyard or outside under some tree, which is then regarded as the tree of the spirits. It is a common custom to erect a small grass shelter under which the offerings are placed, but this is not regarded as a spirit-house: it serves the strictly practical purpose of keeping off rain and the heavy dew of the river country. The royal family, too, perform ceremonies of a private nature as well as holding the tribal *tambiko* from time to time. Less important ceremonies are often held outside the *mahóngoli*, e.g. a sacrifice was held there the night before the formal opening of Towegale's new court-house.

A tribe in whose religion ancestor-worship plays such an important part must obviously regard the proper burial of the dead as a matter of prime importance. The newly departed spirit must take its place in the next world with fitting ceremony, and everything possible is done to establish friendly relations between it and those whom it has left behind on earth so that its influence may be for good.

When the heart stops beating the body is stretched out, the eyes and mouth are closed, and *kiwembo*—ceremonial mourning—begins at once, except in the case of a first-born child, for whom it is forbidden to mourn. The shrill wailing of the women in the house swiftly conveys the news to friends and relatives in the village, and the first point to receive attention is the sending of the tidings to relatives at a distance. Failure to send off special messengers at once to inform them is worse than a grave breach of etiquette. Should the news creep round to them by other means all sort of incriminations, charges of witchcraft and the like against those present at the

death-bed are liable to follow. Similar accusations may be levelled against any relative who should come to mourn and does not. Weeks after the death, perhaps, a relative from a distant village will arrive to pay his or her respects to the dead and renew the *kiwembo* at the house for a few minutes. The length of time spent in deep and really noisy mourning varies according to the relationship of the mourner to the mourned. A wife or near relatives may continue for as long as a month, but this is unusual. It depends also on the age and importance of the person who has died. The women are on the whole more conscientious about it than the men, who tend to slip away to the back-yard or a neighbour's house for a drink and a chat while the women carry on, sobbing and wailing, in the house.

The funeral rites of rich and poor are alike in form, varying only in degree. Formerly the dead were buried in the court-yard of their houses, but nowadays most people prefer to make family or village cemeteries, while sometimes a single grave may be made by itself near the village. The corpse, wrapped in a mat or sometimes in these days a length of new cloth, is laid in a grave four and a half to five and a half feet deep and is placed on its side with its face to the east, with the grave goods beside it according to the station of the dead when alive. The poorest man may have only some weapons, a little food, and possibly a pinch of tobacco; the rich man may have more and better weapons, ornaments, more and better food, plenty of tobacco, and perhaps a selection of household goods. In the old days the Mtema took with him into the next world tusks of ivory, ornaments indicating his royal degree, and two slaves, a man and a woman, in addition to the ordinary grave goods. These two unfortunates were sometimes buried alive and sometimes killed beforehand, one being placed at their lord's head and the other at his feet, and usually the best of his slaves would be singled out for this grim honour.

Women do not attend the graveside ceremonies, but remain secluded inside the house, sobbing and wailing. As Towegale explained at the funeral of his baby daughter on the day of his accession, "They have not the self-control to attend. They would start weeping noisily and upset us all."

Those who can afford it slaughter an ox or a sheep for the funeral *tambiko*, or, in the case of a rich man, several animals may be killed, while humbler folk seek to content the spirit with offerings of other kinds of food. The rites follow the same lines as those described above. The principal mourners of both sexes shave off their hair, scattering it anywhere and everywhere around the grave and the house.* After the burial and *tambiko*, the near relatives remain in the house while the others mourn outside, dancing *libeyu* with suitable songs. Food and drink, in as large quantities as the means of the family permit and the importance of the mourned demand, are provided for the mourners, who feast both loud and long at the *kiwembo* of a great man.

The following day more *togwa* is prepared. A little is poured over the grave as an oblation and a pot of it placed at the grave's head. Should the grave be at some distance from the house, the pot is placed outside the hut and a little poured on the grave next morning if all is well. The mourners examine the pot in the morning to see if the spirit has approved of its *kiwembo*. If the beer is unspilt and good, they are reassured and proceed to drink it, but if anything has gone amiss with the brew or the pot has been upset, the spirit has signified dissatisfaction; then the mourners anxiously seek out a medicine-man to divine the cause of the trouble, that they may put things right. In these cases the medicine-man usually divines by rubbing ashes between the palms of his hands and examining the marks they leave.

Later a hut may be erected over the grave of an important

* In contrast with the care usually taken, when cutting the hair, to dispose of it so that no enemy can take some for nefarious purposes.

man to keep his memory green, and members of the family renew the building from time to time as the need arises.

The funeral rites are known as *ugimbi ya matapatapa* = the beer of causing to arrive. These, of course, are held for everyone who dies, man, woman, or child. In the case of men they are followed some months later by *ugimbi ya mapwere* = the beer of inheritance, when the heirs assemble with feasting to divide the property, and the fate of the widows is decided. During the period between the two mourning feasts, the nearest female relatives wear old, unbeautiful clothes and hang coils of string round their necks as a sign of mourning. They also smear mud on themselves and usually refrain from unnecessary ablutions! But on the day of the *ugimbi ya mapwere* they come forth washed and groomed and, when possible, clad in bright new clothes. Sexual intercourse is forbidden to all the relatives until after the completion of the *ugimbi ya matapatapa* ceremonies, and widows are expected to be continent until after the *ugimbi ya mapwere*, when they are inherited or else return to their own people.

A noticeable phenomenon in the months following the harvest, when food and beer are plentiful, is the number of people who are busy attending this or that *kiwembo*. This arises from the fact that at whatever time of year the death may have occurred, the second ceremony will in all probability be reserved until the season of plenty. If a man dies in the lean months, it is usually impossible to give him a lavish feast at the *ugimbi ya matapatapa*, but all deficiencies will be made good at the *ugimbi ya mapwere*! It is a necessary and practical arrangement in a primitive community where supplies tend to fluctuate from one extreme to the other.

In the past the death of the Mtema was kept a close secret among his relatives and his immediate followers, the alleged object being to prevent the news spreading to the enemies of the tribe, who might take advantage of any temporary confusion among the Wabena to make war on them before

the heir had a chance to establish himself in his new position. The Mtema was buried quietly and secretly in his house, all the usual noisy wailing being forbidden. An *mlangali* tree was planted on the grave and the news of his death was not made public until the sapling forced its way through the roof of the hut, in about two years' time. Then a great funeral *tambiko* was held with feasting lasting many days, for which people gathered from all over the country. It is forbidden to announce the Mtema's death in the usual words, "X has died." When the news of his death was at last spread abroad the phrase used was always "The reign of X is over."

The new Mtema and the elders carried on the administration of the tribe as deputies of the dead man, whose hut they frequently visited to learn his "commands." All decisions were ostensibly made by the old Mtema, all commands ostensibly proceeded from him. By the time his grave-tree appeared through the roof, the people were accustomed to seeing the heir at the head of affairs, albeit nominally only as his father's deputy, and the news of the death of one whom they had not seen for so long caused no crisis. One can hardly think that they were altogether unprepared for the news by the time two years had elapsed since the Mtema's last personal appearance, though the Wabena vehemently assert the people never guessed! Ndaliwali and Mtengera I were buried thus in secret, and as only three years elapsed between Ndaliwali's death and his son Mzawira's virtual abdication, the latter can only have been the acknowledged Mtema for a very short period.

Kiwanga I's death could not be hidden as he was killed in battle, and in any case the need for secrecy, to which the Wabena themselves attribute the custom, had by then been removed. His body was taken to his village of Mpanga for burial and a tent set up over the grave. Owing, however, to certain misunderstandings regarding the site, largely due to his untrustworthy son Kiwanga II, this grave is actually in other hands and therefore neglected at the present time; but it is

hoped soon, through the sympathy and understanding of those into whose hands it has now come, to restore it to its proper honourable position and then to build a brick house over it.

It was also impossible, of course, to hide the death of Salimbingo, and under modern conditions the custom of secrecy will presumably fall into disuse.

Except in the case of the Mtema himself, men killed in war were left where they died without any ceremonies, but logs were piled on top of them to keep off hyenas and vultures. The bodies of executed criminals were sometimes treated thus, but were more usually merely thrown out into the bush or the swamps, as happened in the case of Kiwanga I's traitor brother Mgopolinyi. In other cases of violent death the victim is buried with the usual ceremonies.

When a man commits suicide, certain precautions must be taken against the evil power believed to remain in the instrument of death and to pervade the scene of the tragedy, endangering the lives of other people. This constitutes an excellent example of the "infectious" nature of the supernatural—the malevolent force which induced one suicide, yet another manifestation of the impersonal *mulungu*, remains active, residing in the objects asociated with the death and capable of exerting its baneful influence on some other victim. A medicine-man is therefore called in to remove the danger. He prepares a concoction in a pot, into which he then puts the rope or weapon used by the suicide. After that he makes the dead man's relatives drink some of the evil-dispelling liquid, with a view to preventing further suicides in the family, and finally he disposes of the rope or weapon by throwing it away into a river or swamp or burying it. Next, the site of the tragedy receives attention. If the man hanged himself from a tree, that tree must go, roots and all. If he killed himself in a house, the building with all its contents must be destroyed. So runs the rule, but common practice diverges somewhat from the strait path. As one informant

succinctly put it, "The house is demolished—if it is a bad one. Its contents and all the dead man's goods are destroyed—unless somebody wants them. Of course, in the old days *everybody* followed custom strictly." We take leave to wonder a little about those law-abiding ancestors; from all accounts, neither before nor since can the world have seen such paragons. In the sadly degenerate present, falling a long way short of their heroic forefathers, the Wabena cannot bring themselves to such a pitch of self-sacrifice: fortunate are they that the obliging medicine-man can, for a consideration, dispel the evil power which haunts the infected objects and render them once more harmless and fit for use by ordinary people!

Other rites, which concern the private lives of individuals, will be described in the appropriate chapters. As we should expect, certain periods of life involving change, times when the ordinary routine is upset by unknown powers, when men feel these mysterious powers around them and are afraid—puberty, marriage, pregnancy (especially the first one), childbirth—are associated with special rites and observances, to ensure the welfare of those immediately concerned and of those who come into contact with them. Other kinds of change and crisis, too, social undertakings such as the establishment of a new village, calamities such as an epidemic, all are fenced about with appropriate rites, and these also will be described in their proper place in village and domestic life.

At the present day, ceremonies vary somewhat from family to family and person to person, owing to the exotic influences to which the tribe has been, and is being, subjected. Many people perform rites which represent a strange admixture of Bena, Moslem, and Christian practices. The tribal religion is, however, very far from being superseded by any other, and though many a man may have changed his name to Saidi or Musa or Emanuel or Johanni, if he can be led into frank and unconstrained conversation he will seldom be found to have done more than overlay the still living old with a thin veneer of the new.

CHAPTER VI

TRIBAL ORGANISATION

INSPECTION of the material for this chapter makes plain the necessity of a prefatory warning that no nice straight lines can be drawn through Bena society, whether they be up and down, across or diagonal. A man's position is the result of several different ways of dividing society, and it is not an easy task to describe the tribal organisation of the Wabena coherently.

To begin with, taking the tribe as it was before the abolition of slavery, a man was by birth bond or free. If one parent was free-born and the other bound, he was legally free, but had not quite the same standing as a true-born freeman. The Wabena say, "He could not be trusted, he would remember the tribulations of his forebears." Such men might be found in any class of society from the Watwa (brothers of the Mtema) or the Waviari (princesses) downwards, and the fact of being "half-and-half" did not necessarily inflict any practical disability; the stigma would, however, be called to mind if circumstances or the man's conduct demanded it.

Bond, free, or "half-and-half": this was a man's hereditary status, and while it was possible to fall from the estate of a free man, it was impossible to rise to it. Freemen might become bound, bondsmen could never become free, though they might and often did cease to occupy the menial position of slaves. Under the old régime Sadalla, though he was for several years the respected ruler of the largest province in Ubena and had been for many years before that the Mtema's right-hand man, would still have been legally a bondsman. Here, then, is a line of division which may well cut right across any others: all slaves were bondsmen, but not all bondsmen were slaves. They might be found among the most influential men in the land, the finest warriors, the

wisest counsellors, men whose disability it was a deadly insult to mention in public or in their presence; but it was remembered by the tribal elders and made itself felt when any question arose involving religious authority and the possession of the right ancestors, or concerning the marriages and proposed political positions of the children of such a man.

Similarly the accident of birth determines whether a man is or is not a member of the royal family, and if he is not, he may yet be the son of a Viari, and as such something higher than a commoner. The title of Mtwa (distinct from Mtwa Mwenyelutenana) denotes a brother of the Mtema, that of Mnyangutwa a descendant of an Mtema in the male line, while the Mtema's young children are called Wapondwa. The son of an Mtema does not become an Mtwa until one of his brothers succeeds to the Stool, and should the succession go to someone else he remains an Mnyangutwa. For instance, Saidi (Mtengera), the son of Kiwanga II and a Viari, is an Mnyangutwa, not an Mtwa; but Storki, the son of Kiwanga I and a slave woman, is an Mtwa. The title of Viari belongs to the daughters and daughters' daughters of an Mtema or Mtwa, and also to the daughters of the Wanyangutwa.

While it is true that birth could not, and cannot, be overlooked, it is also true that whether a man be of royal blood or a commoner or a (now freed) bondsman, his actual standing in the tribe is dependent more on his personal character than on his hereditary status. Even the Mtema succeeds not only by right of birth but by right of birth combined with the necessary intelligence, influence, and personality. There are usually other candidates with sound claims so far as birth is concerned.

As is but natural in a fighting tribe, it is often difficult to distinguish military (i.e. professional) rank from social and political rank. In one case the distinction will be plain, in another it will be lost to view. While admitting that an estimate of any man's standing in the tribe must be based on a con-

sideration of all these categories, the writers make no attempt to apply a rigid classification, but seek to describe the tribal organisation just as it stands or, in certain cases, as it stood in the past. The position of the Mtema naturally attracts one's attention first, but it will be easier to describe that when we have gained some idea of the organisation of which he is the head. We will therefore begin with the lowest order of society, the Wawanda or slaves.

This class was composed of captives taken in war, criminals sentenced to slavery, debtors, and the children of slaves. Very few criminals received this particular punishment, and the debtors, also comparatively few in number, were men who had either to pay blood-money or a heavy fine for some other serious offence. If a man were unable to pay, a rich man might come forward and do so for him, whereupon the debtor forfeited his freedom and became the rich man's slave. Other large debts were practically unknown and in any case could not enslave a man. The numbers of criminals and debtors who became slaves being thus very limited, it follows that the great majority of slaves were of alien extraction and thus had at first no stake in the tribe, no clan or other group to be responsible for them or to which they were answerable, and no religious affinities with the tribe. They were allowed to follow their own religious customs, and those from the same tribe would unite to hold their own rites, praying to and propitiating the ancestors of their own people, the enemies of those amongst whom they lived. After one or two generations, however, if not earlier, it often happened that they gave up their tribal rites and ceremonies and followed Bena custom, becoming indistinguishable from the Wabena themselves. Their families grew, those of the younger generations knew nothing of their own people save by hearsay, their interest in the tribe of their masters increased. This process of absorption was accelerated when slaves of different tribes married. One informant says that in such a case the sons followed their

father's tribal custom and the daughters that of their mother, but where the father of a slave woman's children was an Mbena, bond or free, her consent would usually be obtained to the initiation of her daughters, too, according to Bena custom. Others say that while the children of *both* sexes *could* follow their father, it usually so happened that when slaves of different tribes married, their children were brought up according to Bena custom, going through the Bena initiation ceremonies. Thus it came about that many slaves, while often still calling themselves by other tribal names, were in fact initiated Wabena, and, naturally, it was common for those of the second or third generation to drop their own tribal name and refer to themselves as Wabena.

Another feature of slavery in Ubena, which materially helped slaves to settle down in their new surroundings, was that they seldom changed hands, save at the death of their masters when they were, of course, inherited by the heirs. Then their families tended to be broken up, but husband and wife would be taken by the same heir and young children were never parted from their mothers. Apart from this, their transfer was definitely disapproved by the Mtema. The sale of slaves was only allowed with the consent of the master's tribal superior, and then only for some good reason, such as the liquidation of a big debt. Their owners might, however, give them away without obtaining anybody's consent, but it was unusual to do so if they were satisfactory. On the other hand, those who were really badly treated could get away from their cruel master if they could prove their point in front of the Mtema, who would then send them to another master. On the whole, under this system, slaves remained with one master, settled down in one place, and were in due course absorbed into tribal life. Very often a kind of father-son relationship grew up between master and slave, and many ex-slaves still live near their former owners, with whom they have an understanding regarding mutual help.

Slaves could sue and be sued in the tribal courts; but since free men received preferential treatment and slaves had to bring overwhelming evidence (and if possible free witnesses) to gain their point, they avoided the courts as far as possible. Should one of them make an unsuccessful complaint against his owner, he could, of course, look to suffer for it afterwards, for masters could mete out any punishment short of the death penalty and mutilation, which the Mtema alone could inflict. Death sentences on any class of offenders were carried out by the Wakumaguru, the Mtema's principal slaves, who were the official executioners.

As far as can be discovered at this distance of time, the lot of slaves in Ubena was not actually a very hard one, and it certainly had its compensations. True, they had to work, often hard, cultivating the fields, drawing water, cutting wood, carrying loads, looking after children, working in the house, building, or anything else that might be demanded of them. At the same time they worked no harder than the young son-in-law in families of the rank and file of the tribe when matrilocal marriage was a flourishing institution; he was, indeed, no better than a slave and had more to lose if he rebelled. Against the hard work which might be demanded of a slave and the disabilities involved in his position—in practice it seems many were treated very leniently—one must set the protection and help afforded him. He would never starve so long as his owner had food to share with him; he and his family would be cared for in sickness; if he was married, his master gave him a house and allotted him fields. He received his wife at the hands of his master and, if well favoured, might be given a free woman, even perhaps his owner's daughter. On the other hand, the master, who had as a matter of course the right of intercourse with any unmarried girls among his slaves, had also the right, if he desired one of his married slave women, to take her away from her husband, provided he gave the man another wife in her

place! This, however, is not so harsh or disconcerting in primitive society as it sounds to civilised ears.

Trusted slaves went to war along with the free men, sometimes as porters, sometimes as warriors, and if they produced before the Mtema the necessary evidence (see Chap. VIII) of having killed any of the enemy, they were allowed to share in the spoils of war. They might even receive slaves of their own, thus creating a class of slaves of slaves. Any property they acquired was their own just as though they were free, and at their death was inherited by their heirs in the usual way.

They were buried with the same care and ceremony as free men, as was but prudent, for the anger of a spirit is not lightly to be incurred, even if it be only the spirit of a slave; and their masters attended their funerals and mourning ceremonies. The Mtema's slaves (and probably those of other much-married men too) were allotted to his various wives, each wife being responsible for all matters concerning her particular slaves, including the arrangement of their funerals. She would report to her husband, "My child —— has died," a phrase which suggests the affection commonly existing between slaves and their owners.

We cannot, however, pass over two grim services slaves might be called upon to render, though the second at least fell to the lot of very few. They might have to submit to poison ordeal in the place of their masters, and one man and one woman had to accompany the Mtema into the spirit-world.

It was always open to slaves to improve their lot and, as we have seen, they might rise to positions of great power and honour, though they could never acquire the status of a free-born man. An exceptionally promising child might be selected by the Mtema for training in the tribal school, along with the sons of the aristocracy, in which case a splendid career opened up before him if he knew how to avail himself of his opportunities. Naturally very few slave children had

such a chance, and usually they were from the household of the Mtema himself, or of an Mtwa or other highly placed man who could speak a word for them to the Mtema when he was seeking children for the school.

It must be remembered that all information given regarding slavery is hearsay evidence, as its working can no longer be actually observed, and it is impossible to tell just how far its practice agreed with what the Wabena remember about it. But the ties still existing between ex-slaves and their former masters, and the positions of certain one-time slaves like Sadalla, do not belie what is said of the past. Towegale, who is too young to remember the slave days, probably over-emphasises the smallness of the difference between bond and free, but there seems no doubt that to the casual observer many a slave would hardly have appeared as such. The term Wawanda covered many grades, from the meanest labourer to the most trusted servant and friend of the family, a man who had possibly married his master's daughter or might have been placed in authority over his master's children, who had a house and fields and slaves of his own, and whom the stranger would almost certainly imagine to be a son of the house. The privileges and obligations of slaves were, in fact, as varied as their origins and characters.

The next section of the community which claims our attention is the Wanu (pp. of *munu* = person), the lowest rank of freemen, all such as can neither by birth nor by personal merit or effort claim any kind of social, political, or professional title, in short, the *hoi polloi*. In times of war they would go to fight under their local leader; at the periodical tribal game drives (see Chap. VIII) they would be called up to do their share when the game was being driven in their locality; at other times they lived, as they mostly live to-day, a simple agricultural or pastoral life, bothering but little about affairs of state.

In the days of the old tribal wars the Wanu, though not

professional warriors, had as members of a fighting organisation to submit to a certain amount of military discipline. The constant danger of attack naturally led to the formation of fairly large settlements, each one under the personal care of a member of the royal family or some other prominent person, possibly one who had married a Viari or who was the son of a Viari. Now and again a royal lady of outstanding ability might have her own village, which she ruled with the help of some of her male relatives. Two such ladies were Ndaliwali's wife Semukomi (34), who ruled at Kitivele and later at Mkasu, and her daughter Semudodera (57), who, before her flight to Matumbi, had held sway first at Ihowanja in Utemekwira and then at Isohiwaya, near Malinyi in the Valley, and who later still had her village of Boma ya Lindi in Matumbi. But it was not customary for a woman to have more than a village settlement under her, and the old Wabena can hardly have envisaged the possibility of one holding office as an Mtwa Mwenyelutenana as Semudodera's daughter (87) has done successfully for many years. Towegale bemoans the way the women of the royal family have slipped out of public life now, fallen back in education and intelligence, while the men have on the whole gone forward. They have lost all interest in anything outside their domestic lives, become dangerous chatterboxes, and ceased to display the tact and discretion necessary if they are to be in any way companions or partners for their husbands. Probably the closing of the tribal schools has had much to do with it. The Mtema's wives, particularly the principal ones, were public characters, with public duties to perform in connection with the work of the schools. They had themselves been trained in the girls' school, learning about tribal history, law, and custom and the conduct of affairs of state, as well as the subjects which concerned their own sex exclusively. These things they handed on to the next generation of pupils in the girls' school. They had wider interests than the royal ladies of to-day, who for the most

part know nothing of the past, or indeed of the politics of the present. The Semukomi (131) of to-day is quite incapable of doing as did the Mtema's senior wife in former times, holding her own court of law while travelling from one part of the country to another, weighing up the claims of rival litigants in the light of tribal law, making valid decisions in disputes: indeed, the idea is laughable to anyone who knows the simple-minded, shy, and unambitious chief wife of these days. The senior wife of the past admittedly dealt only with minor cases, passing on the more serious ones to a higher court, but she of the present would be overcome with confusion if called upon to decide the pettiest of disputes in public. Not one of the royal ladies now troubles to attend at the Mtema's court-house when he is transacting public business, as their predecessors used to do. Only one of Kiwanga II's wives somewhat recalls the women of the past. She was not afraid to raise her voice in the assembly of the family elders when they had met together to deliberate concerning Kiwanga. In front of them all she rose and denounced his public life and the great harm he had done to his people, let alone the shame he had brought on the family, his incorrigible dishonesty, and his disgraceful treatment of his loyal relatives. Among Towegale's wives, too, there is one, Adija, his third wife, who takes an intelligent interest in tribal affairs and whom to some extent the Mtema trusts with secrets of public importance. Like the most famous women of the past, she is of Uhenge blood. But on the whole the women count for little in the public life of the tribe to-day, and the royal wives are apparently quite unconscious of the deep dissatisfaction with which their lord the Mtema regards their absorption in petty interests and idle chatter.

Each village ruler was responsible for all that concerned his village, for reporting to his superior anything of note that occurred, for the maintenance of discipline and the settlement of disputes. On the whole, all aimed at keeping their Wanu contented, lest the latter should remove themselves to

another more congenial village; for each tribal official owed his own importance and the amount of his revenue to the number of people over whom he held sway. But let not the desire to keep their followers be thought to indicate a weak rule. It merely served as a check on the manner in which they wielded their power, discouraging overweening tyranny. Migration on the part of the Wanu from one village to another was by no means encouraged by the higher authorities, whose permission had to be sought; so that the head of a village knew he did not endanger his position by exercising any necessary firmness and maintaining a strict control over his people. Only if he meted out blatantly unjust treatment, giving them real cause for complaint, would they be able to obtain permission to leave him.

In the village settlements the houses were all built near one another for purposes of defence, while the fields outside the village made a more or less compact block of cultivation. The "big man" lived in a roughly fortified enclosure with the houses of his people close round him, and the very smallest of the village rulers could turn out to war with at least thirty active, able-bodied warriors behind him.

The contrast with the present day is striking. For the last thirty-five years or so the people have been scattering. The movement began before Salimbingo's reign, soon after tribal wars ceased, but it did not gather much way until the restraining influence of Kiwanga I was removed. The Wabena themselves say they dispersed for several reasons, all directly connected with the advent of the European. The cessation of tribal wars made dispersal possible; the periodical visits of the Government tax collectors to the larger centres made it prudent for the would-be tax-defaulters; later the fighting in the Great War made it still more prudent for many who could appreciate a savage set-to with primitive weapons, but found the white man's way of carrying on a war altogether too alarming. In hilly country like Masagati the change of

diet within the last two generations has greatly encouraged dispersal, for while people growing chiefly maize and finger-millet could easily form large settlements in the hills, land suitable for rice, at least for the "wet" varieties, is not so generally obtainable and tends to be found in small acreages scattered among the scores of valleys in this broken country. But the people of Masagati mostly grow *meri*, which is a "dry" rice, so that considerably closer settlement than is at present in fashion should not prove impossible.*

After the War the process of dispersal continued and even the biggest villages of to-day are comparatively small and straggling. Ubena of the Rivers is an excellent country for those who wish to hide, and though with the comprehensive tax registers of to-day the hidden hamlets in the hills no longer escape notice, the dwellers in that country of a thousand small valleys have developed a taste for isolation and a distrust of their fellow-men. They are accustomed now to little family settlements tucked away in the valleys of Masagati or Ifinga or hidden in small clearings in the dense long grass of the alluvial land near the big rivers. There they feel their hold on their women is more secure, and, moreover, the head of such a small community loves to talk of "my village" when he attends social gatherings at the village of his Mtwa or elsewhere.

The years 1928–32, when the tribe had no Mtema, completed the process of disintegration and threatened the death-blow to all tribal discipline. Now it appears that the turning-point has been passed; the tide has definitely set for re-organisation. The tribe is no longer breaking up through want of a strong Mtema as the focus of its life. Towegale has a long way to go to achieve his object, the reconstruction of his tribe on progressive and not reactionary lines, and he has much prejudice and not a little suspicion to overcome. He and his loyal deputy and cousin Mfalimbega have no easy lot leading people who hate being worried and in most

* See, however, pp. 233–4.

cases are quite indifferent to anything outside their particular valleys. Yet barely a year after his accession this indifference was already giving way before the reawakening tribal spirit. The Bena tribe, with its motley collection of people, is coming to life again and a feeling is abroad in the land which was wholly lacking a short while ago. Wanderers are coming back from far and near; even as far as the coast the word has gone that calls them home. Tribal loyalty, tribal pride have been reborn. The Wanu are relearning the meaning of "respect" and "obedience" and are gradually remembering what "is done." A year before, who would have predicted that in June 1933 the old men of Utengule—not, of course, all Wanu—would have besieged Sadalla with demands to know where the Mtema's new fields would be, that they might clear and prepare them against his coming? A small thing, but it illustrates the change of feeling among the people. Or who, knowing the previous apathy, would have expected the wave of enthusiasm which swept through Utengule over the proposed restoration of Kiwanga I's grave to its proper place in the tribal religion—practical enthusiasm which expressed itself in a readiness to give their services in the work of restoration, when the necessary negotiations shall have been completed and the tangle created by Kiwanga II's impious knavery unravelled? Again, the reopening of the Wenyekongo, described in Chap. VII, has been greeted with unbounded delight expressed in most practical ways.

The problem of the tiny scattered settlements of to-day is engaging the new Mtema's attention, and he is busy preparing the ground for the inauguration of a move back to bigger villages and the creation of blocks of cultivation, in place of the present haphazard system of small isolated clearings. This is of immense economic importance to the tribe in respect of any scheme of organised protection of crops against game and vermin, a subject discussed in Chap. VIII. Towegale has set about this task by compiling a list of Mtengera's

principal villages about the time of the Battle of Mgodamtitu; that is, in Ubena of the Hills, Utemekwira, parts of Masagati and Utengule, when Mtengera was at the zenith of his power. Against each village he has placed the name and rank of the man (or woman) who was ruling over it at that time. The next step, which is not yet accomplished, is to seek out the present representative of those men, son or grandson or whoever it may be, and to offer him a similar position to-day in the reorganised tribe. They are all prominent people and each has a large circle of relatives and friends. If they can be convinced of the wisdom of creating larger settlements as of old, their co-operation and influence should go far towards solving the problem. It is hoped that if they can succeed in gathering all their relatives and friends into their respective villages, the movement for closer settlement will become general and the small isolated communities of to-day gradually die out.

The village headmen were originally called Wanzagira, and the use of this title is becoming increasingly common at the present time. The title of Jumbe was substituted during the reign of Kiwanga I, who reserved that of Mzagira for a senior official who ruled over several Jumbeates. Under the village heads and appointed by them from among the Wanu were Wanyambiki (called Kapitau since German times). Their task was to assist the village ruler in any way whatsoever. The Watambule, mentioned on p. 31, were simply the "parish notables," "men who were known." The title merely denoted the most respected of the common people of the village, a sort of advisory committee to which matters of common concern might be referred for discussion, but which wielded no administrative authority.

The Wanzagira were appointed by the Mtema himself, with due consideration of the village's wishes in the matter; usually, or at least often, the same family remained in charge of any given village from one generation to another, the position becoming more or less hereditary and the Mtema

merely deciding which of the heirs should step into the dead man's place.

The title of Mzagira had more than one meaning. It was used not only to denote a tribal official as above, but also as a military title. The bravest and most honoured warriors were called Wanzagira and ranked higher than those, also warriors, who only held the administrative title, though, of course, the village ruler was usually an Mzagira of both types. The military Wanzagira were the "captains of war," each personally leading at least thirty men in battle. They held all the most important posts in the military world and their leaders were the Mtema's trusted counsellors and personal friends. Although there are no more tribal wars, the title is still a mark of honour and is conferred on highly respected elders. In some cases it appears to pass from father to son, but this matter is not altogether clear. Yet again, there is a purely honorary use of the title to denote the son of a Viari.

The warrior class, the Wenyewaha, was composed of men from every stratum of society, from the royal family to bondsmen. The description of the training they received as Wenyekongo must be reserved for a special chapter. After training they dispersed to take up their various tasks, and were to be found in all parts of the country. Some joined the "regiments" which formed the standing army (see Chap. VIII), quartered at the villages of the Mtema and his Watwa Wenyelutenana and at important places guarding the frontiers, or wherever the need of the moment indicated. Others entered the personal service of the Mtema, the Watwa, and administrative Wanzagira, forming their bodyguards and assisting them in the discharge of their public duties. From this class were drawn all officials of the tribal administration (except the Wanyambiki), and also the messengers, members of the "Intelligence Department" and frontier guards, who between them enabled the Mtema to keep touch with his people and to know what was happening all along his rambling and somewhat vague borders.

The heads of villages were and are answerable not directly to the Mtema but to the Watwa Wenyelutenana, the rulers of the provinces, of which there were at one time more than there are now and of which the Mtema personally rules one. The title means "The chief on the hill," i.e. a man raised above his fellows. In common usage it is shortened to Mtwa and thus is rather easily confused with the courtesy title Mtwa, meaning the brother of an Mtema. The succession to the office of Mtwa Mwenyelutenana is partly hereditary and partly selective. Nominally the Mtema appoints any man he pleases, usually from among his brothers and near relatives, but if the late holder of the office leaves a suitable son by a cross-cousin, or other well-born heir, the mantle will in fact usually fall upon him. (The word "mantle" is not so out of place as might be imagined, for on state occasions the Watwa Wenyelutenana, like the Mtema and the Mzagira wa Tambiko, wear the dignified *ngololo.**) Of course, the dead man's heirs are also the near relatives of the Mtema, and the above remarks really only amount to saying that the Mtema appoints a near relative of his own, generally one of those most nearly related to the late holder of the title, too, whose expressed wish to be followed by a certain son or other heir carries great weight. More often than not the successor has been decided upon by an agreement between the Mtema and the Mtwa long before the latter's death. Public opinion in the province and in the important families of the tribe is also tested and considered, and the ultimate appointment is, as it were, the result of striking a balance between hereditary claims, personal qualifications, the will of the ruler, and the wishes of the ruled.

A detailed account of particular cases may be useful as showing the actual working of the system.

Ndaliwali, ruling at Uchindile in Utemekwira (now part of Utengule province), appointed the renowned Uhenge (17),

* Nowadays this has, as a matter of fact, ceased to be the exclusive privilege of royalty, but on the whole only elders will be seen wearing it.

who was no relation, to be an Mtwa Mwenyelutenana, probably as the means of making an alliance with his powerful clan and drawing it into the Manga organisation; and he cemented the friendship by his marriage with Uhenge's daughter, Semukomi (34). It seems probable that he was the ruler of a petty kingdom which then became a province* of the Manga kingdom. The name Uhenge appears in Towegale's list of the heads of villages against the village Mwigovole which is said to have been near Mufindi. Later the Uhenge clan moved eastwards and set up a new Mwigovole in southern Utemekwira, with Semukomi ruling just "across the way" at Kitivele. This second home is almost deserted now and the followers of Uhenge are gathered round the son of Mhako (64) in Utengule, whither Mhako was sent by Mtengera before the migration, to further the Bena cause in the Valley.

Uhenge's appointment as an Mtwa Mwenyelutenana, contrary to the usual rules governing such matters, is sufficiently distant now for the present Mtema to say vaguely, "Well, you see, we don't *know*. There *might* have been a marriage further back which made him a relative." Anyway, the Uhenge clan stepped at once into a position of immense importance in the tribe, and when Semukomi's son (56) became one of the greatest Watema the Wabena ever knew it was obvious that her clan would not speedily sink into obscurity. But no other members of it were Watwa Wenyelutenana: in this case there was nothing hereditary about the title. The house of Uhenge is still, however, esteemed above all others, next to the royal house itself, and its daughters are often called Waviari by courtesy. Its present head is Mkwawa (97), the father of Towegale's principal wife. He is a greatly respected old Mzagira who lives near Utengule and was one of Kiwanga I's closest friends. He was on "swear-

* But see p. 241 for the way in which the idea of territorial jurisdiction is often only secondary to that of "*My* people are *mine* wherever they live." The title Mtwa Mwenyelutenana did not necessarily, therefore, have a definite territorial significance.

ing terms"* with Kiwanga—"he could insult the Mtema, they could not meet without swearing at one another, that is the mark of intimate friendship"—and the old man was overcome with emotion when shown a copy of the photograph which appears in this book.

Utengule is traditionally the Mtema's province, though circumstances kept the tribal headquarters east of the rivers for twenty years or so, and how Sadalla came to rule the royal province from 1928 till 1933 has already been explained. Towegale's new royal village, about a mile from old Utengule, is growing rapidly, and his new burnt brick court-house has been formally opened. All save three households of old Utengule have migrated thither, with a number of people who have followed Mfalimbega from Masagati. The Mtema has developed ideas on the subject of town-planning and the prevention of fires, and a village laid out with ample open spaces and in orderly lines is growing upon the hillside below his house, while all around the base of the hill stretch acres of fertile land for the village fields.

The appointment of a new Mtwa to fill the vacancy at Malinyi caused by Towegale's move to Utengule was typical of the system. With the full approval of the people of Malinyi, the Mtema's choice fell on Mpangachuma (92), a man of Kiwanga I's generation, though only about forty years of age. He was already one of the leading Wanzagira in the tribe, and was one of the best born and most respected of Kiwanga's "brothers," his father being a brother of Mtengera I and the son of Ndaliwali's second Uhenge wife.

Masagati is in the hands of the Mpingi branch of the royal clan, under Mfalimbega. Exactly how the succession has gone there is not clear, and a baffling vagueness in answers to direct questions concerning this pedigree forbids the discourtesy of pressing home inquiries which are obviously distasteful to the

* Towegale is on similar terms with the Jumbe of Mkasu and he says: "We must therefore be related to one another, though we don't know how. We can swear at each other and so could our fathers."

family. In Towegale's list of headmen the Mpingi branch appear settled in Utemekwira. Mtwa (Mwenyelutenana?) Mwanalivachi (24) was at Likuga, Lubuli Mpingi (25) (Mfalimbega's grandfather) at Isava, and Makoligasenga Mpingi (26) at Ihaki. The two last were Wanyangutwa, and Mwanalivachi was the head of the family then, though that distinction has since passed to Lubuli's line. Their old home in Utemekwira is deserted now, possessed only by the spirits of their line, and when the writers passed near Likuga they were told, "This is the country of the *mahoka* of the Wakinimpingi, their children have moved away to grow rice!"

Lubuli's grandson, a portly man of about forty years of age, is now head of this house. Deep affection exists between him and the Mtema, who has great respect for his opinion and his knowledge of tribal law and history. He is inclined to be suspicious of strangers, and reserved—almost speechless, in fact—in their presence, but once his heart melts towards them he reveals himself as a shrewd but delightfully naïve friend, with a dry sense of humour and a funny little husky chuckle. He has moved his house to Utengule since he became the Mtema's deputy, but he still holds the Stool of Masagati as well and his old village is only one day's walk away from Utengule, and the people of Masagati are still "his."

The southern provinces of Boma ya Lindi and Ifinga, large but almost empty, need not detain us here, for the historical chapters have already explained how one comes to be ruled by a fiery old lady and the other by a fiery old man who, Mtwa though he be, is the son of a slave woman. They merely serve to round off the picture and confirm the impression made by the history of the other provinces, that there are no rigid rules governing the appointment of Watwa Wenyelutenana. Like most of the rules of tribal life, whose essential elasticity often passes unobserved under the tribesmen's apparently meticulous regard for custom, their working depends on circumstances. Sometimes a son follows his

father; sometimes another relative steps into the vacant place; it once happened that a distinguished man who was not an Mkinimanga at all was made an Mtwa Mwenyelutenana; at this very moment a slave girl's son and a woman are holding office; and an ex-slave, an Mgindo, has but just relinquished it, though indeed he was always grudged the use of the actual title. The rules really do no more than indicate generally the lines along which the Mtema will reach his decision. When the matter has been thrashed out behind the scenes, a *baraza* (court or assembly) will be held and the new Mtwa Mwenyelutenana officially installed.

We have now worked our way up through all classes of society—the slaves, the common people, the warriors, the village headmen, the rulers of the five provinces. We have still to consider the man on whom the efficiency of the whole organisation depends, the central figure in tribal life. His religious functions and relations with the Mzagira wa Tambiko we know already. Invested with the authority, of the ancestors, he has enormous power, whether for good or ill. He is theoretically possessed of absolute authority, and in the old days a man who disobeyed his command was liable to flogging, slavery, or even death; to-day the punishment is less savage, but disobedience receives its reward none the less.

Actually the Mtema's power and prestige depend very largely on himself, on his fulfilment of certain obligations. He must give as well as take. It may happen that retribution for failure to live up to the standard required of him is slow in coming, but generally speaking his security and power are directly proportionate to the respect he personally inspires, by doing and being all that his people expect of a man who is at once the representative of the ancestral spirits and the secular leader and commander-in-chief of a one-time fighting tribe. The affection and loyalty of the tribe stood firm through many disillusionments concerning Kiwanga II, who believed in taking everything and giving nothing, but he found in the

end that he had tried his long-suffering brethren and people too far. He could not learn the fundamental rule in tribal life: privileges and power are balanced by obligations, and if you want to have and keep the former you must attend to the latter.

What, then, from the point of view of the Wabena, are the marks of a powerful Mtema? They are not precisely defined. Primarily he must guide the affairs of his people in accordance with tribal custom and the "will of the ancestors," with whom he must maintain good relations for the benefit of the whole tribe. Formerly, he had to be a skilful and keen warrior so that his men could have plenty of fighting and be proud to follow him. Mzawira failed there and lost his authority, Mtengera I excelled and became an adored hero. He must rule justly according to Bena standards, not only in affairs of state but in the endless petty matters which are mixed up with them in Ubena. He must put the proper cross-cousins at the top of his household and be politic in his dealings with their families, to consolidate the position of the royal family and avoid intrigue. Traditionally he must be open-handed and hospitable to an astonishing degree, for this was the hall-mark of a great man (see Chap. XIV). Modern conditions have inevitably modified this, but unluckily for him it was the one characteristic of an Mtema which Kiwanga II possessed, in an exaggerated degree and preferably with somebody else's property!

There are few outward marks of royalty. The dignified robe worn by the Mtema and the Watwa Wenyelutenana has already been mentioned. Only they and their sons may wear the skin of the otter, the royal emblem, and the Mtema used to be distinguished by a feather head-dress made up mostly of red feathers. Following out this idea, Towegale goes about with a hat in the ribbon of which he has placed a small bunch of (dyed) red feathers, though it is said that the real red feathers of royalty are being collected for him. The Mtema

is also entitled to a special greeting, "*Kwahawanga!*" meaning that he is the man who can give the order to drink the war "medicine" (*kuhawanga* = to drink war "medicine"). He replies, "*Aase!*" An Mtwa, too, is accorded a special greeting, "*Ajiseng!*" to which he replies, "*Aase!*" while the greeting between ordinary folk is "*Kamweni!*" with response also "*Kamweni!*"

In the past, the Mtema derived his revenue principally from the sale of ivory to Arabs on the coast and the tribute of his people. Tribute might be paid in cattle, hoes, food, labour, etc., and within reason he could demand what he required. It was collected through the tribal administration, whose officials received a share which varied according to their importance and the number of their subjects. All ivory was the property of the Mtema, who divided something like half its value between the man who brought it in and his headman. In return for the ivory sent to the coast he received chiefly cloth, which was immensely valuable in those days.

The Mtema received much, but he also had innumerable calls on his exchequer, so that while he was by far the richest man in Ubena, his riches melted as fast as they were collected, and he personally lived almost as simply as the meanest of his subjects. Anyone in distress would look to him for help, whatever his need might be—a little food, the wherewithal to pay bride-wealth, new weapons, a new hoe. It was further customary for the Mtema to send new-born children some cloth and a hoe, and the children, when they grew older, were told about these gifts and exhorted to follow the Mtema faithfully. In addition to all this he was continually dispensing lavish hospitality to guests, while periodically enormous feasts and beer drinks were held at his expense. He still is expected to hold beer drinks on a generous scale after a *tambiko* and on other sociable occasions. The other great men of the tribe had, of course, to meet expenses of a similar nature, in proportion to their wealth and position.

All spoils of war belonged to the Mtema, but he was expected to divide them out among those who had been in the fighting, those who had killed most men receiving most of the booty.

The same elasticity which we remarked in the rules governing the appointment of the Watwa Wenyelutenana reappears in those concerning the succession to the Stool. There seem to be precisely two conditions which must always be fulfilled: the first is that the Mtema shall not be the son of a woman whose first child was a girl; the second, that he must possess a sound *tambiko*, so that he can influence the powerful tribal ancestors for the good of his people. These two points have already arisen in the historical chapters and need not be elaborated here. The Mtema normally nominates his own successor, probably choosing the eldest son of his senior wife, if he is both eligible and of suitable age and character, and sometimes a child may succeed under a regency, e.g. Nguano and Salimbingo.

It is plain that to be really successful as Mtema a man must have considerable gifts and the energy to make full use of them. He who has the diplomatic ability and the knowledge of tribal lore to steer clear of the many pitfalls which lie in his path becomes indeed a "man having authority," wielding real power. But it must not be forgotten that while his subjects have duties towards him, he on his side has obligations towards them. The same principle of mutual obligations applies to the relations between the Watwa Wenyelutenana and the village headmen, the headmen and their villagers, and any one group of people and another. It must be realised that in everyday life there are no great gulfs between the classes. The great man lives simply like his poorer neighbours and social intercourse is easy and natural. All classes of society are in constant contact with one another. If one oversteps its privileges or overlooks its obligations the whole system is upset. Somebody suffers, possibly many people suffer, till equilibrium is restored.

CHAPTER VII

THE WENYEKONGO

In the foregoing chapter we studied the tribal administration. Now let us look at the raw material in training to take its place therein, or to be wives and mothers of warriors and tribal dignitaries.

The Mtema selected children of both sexes of about four years of age to be educated under his care. The boys remained at school till they were about sixteen, the girls till puberty and marriage. The majority of the children of important men went through this training, together with others of lower birth who showed sufficient promise. The Mtema would take perhaps two out of three of the sons and daughters of all the Watwa and most of the principal Wanyangutwa and notable Wanzagira, leaving the other sons to be trained by their fathers and the remaining daughters to help their mothers and be brought up at home. From the children of lesser lights he would select only those who showed signs of future ability. A really promising child, no matter how low his birth, might be given a chance to prove himself. Even the sons of slaves might be picked out for education. Those of low degree did not find themselves altogether on a level footing in the school with the sons of the aristocracy, who enjoyed certain privileges, such as having the first pick at meals! But all received exactly the same training and those who excelled, whether aristocrats, commoners, or slaves, were noted and were eventually allotted posts in the tribal organisation commensurate with their ability. On the other hand, boys who proved themselves failures in the school were expelled forthwith and returned to lead an undistinguished existence in their native villages. A good deal of wastage of talent was thus avoided. If a low-born youth distinguished

himself and later rose to a position of authority, it was considered an unforgivable insult to refer in any way to his humble origin, and in time it might even be forgotten by the majority of the people. The elders, however, would remember it, and occasions might arise when it would have to be taken into account, but it would never be mentioned except strictly in private. Sadalla has already been cited as a striking example of a slave who rose to a position of great responsibility and honour.

It is not remembered which of the Watema first introduced this system of education for both sexes, and from this we may suppose that it was inaugurated at least before the end of Ndaliwali's reign (*c.* 1860), the point at which the detailed record of tribal history begins. Its value and influence are apparent to anyone who studies the life and history of the Wabena, but, as we have seen, it died out under Salimbingo. The lack of discipline, respect, and courtesy among the members of the younger generation and the general slackness which has crept into social life are deplored by those who were brought up under the old system, and are attributed to a variety of causes, among which the loss of the schools figures prominently.

The schools were at the Mtema's village, under the personal supervision of himself and his senior wife, respectively. Hence the boys, who all addressed him as "Father," were called the Wenyekongo = "Those who live near (the Mtema)" and the girls were the Wenyekongo Wenyegendo. There were as many as three or four hundred boarders in each school, but these institutions cost very little because the children grew their own food and, with the help and supervision of their elders, the boys erected the buildings.

The Mtema appointed the teachers in the boys' school, whilst his wives brought up the girls very carefully and strictly. The masters lived on the school premises with their pupils and were assisted by those of the "old boys"—Wenye-

waha—who had not been posted to the provinces but still lived near the school. The Mtema's wives, on the other hand, had their own domestic duties to perform, and the girls' school was, therefore, built close to the houses of the royal family so that the royal ladies, while living in their own homes, could yet keep a watchful eye on the conduct of their pupils. The senior wife was also in charge of the commissariat of the boys' school. She had, of course, the help not only of the Mtema's numerous other wives, but of the Wenyekongo Wenyegendo, who doubtless learned their housekeeping by assisting her in this work.

In the boys' school the pupils were divided into age grades, all those who entered the school at the same time being classed together and called by the same name. These grades had, however, no connection with initiation ceremonies nor were all those of one grade initiated at one time, for among the Wabena these ceremonies are not held for a number of boys at once, but when each boy individually reaches puberty. No such system of grading existed among the girls.

As we should expect, the curriculum for the Wenyekongo was much wider than that for the Wenyekongo Wenyegendo. The latter learned domestic duties and agriculture, but by far the most important part of their training was in the rules of conduct that were to govern their lives as wives and mothers of brave warriors, so that the honour of the tribe might be maintained. They were taught something about tribal history and custom, too, much less than the boys but considerably more than the girls know to-day.

The boys were taught religion, law, and custom, tribal history, genealogies, manners and etiquette, military tactics, medicine, various handicrafts, agriculture, animal husbandry, hunting, and so on. Not all these subjects were compulsory for all the pupils. Individual tastes and aptitudes were taken into consideration. All, of course, without exception learned to fight, all received instruction in religion, law, history,

manners, and all had to become acquainted with matters of such universal importance as the production of the food supply. Manners and etiquette included respect for authority and reverence for the elders of the tribe, together with the duty of hospitality. It was—and still is to some extent—the Bena custom to keep open house for travellers, even for those of another tribe. He who refused a wayfarer food and lodging rendered himself liable to severe punishment. Should the matter reach the ears of anyone in authority, the culprit might receive a thrashing or have to pay a heavy fine. The elders would say, "You brought us all into danger, this stranger might have died in our village." The proper place for a free man to die is at his own home, among his own people and his own ancestral spirits. The Wabena fear the death of a stranger in their midst, and such an event would, of course, be doubly dangerous if their churlishness or neglect had been in any way responsible for the calamity.

Some of the Wenyekongo trained as doctors; some as smiths, learning to make not only weapons but also dancing bells and cowbells and so on; others became expert makers of shields, drums, ivory bangles, head-dresses, and other articles for use or adornment. It is hardly necessary to add that both sexes learned dancing and singing and the traditional games of the tribe, or that much of the instruction of the young was given through the medium of songs and dances.

The discipline maintained among the boys was very strict, and breaches of the rules, idleness, lack of courage, and so forth were punished by thrashing. Above all, the authorities frowned on cowardice. To instil the virtue of courage, they periodically sent the bigger boys on long journeys. At first a boy would go with five or six others, later with only one companion, and ultimately by himself. He was required to travel to a certain schedule and to endure the hardships of the way without complaint, sleeping out when necessary, keeping his wits about him, and defending himself from danger.

Those who know the African bush at night and the superstitious nature of the native will realise the courage necessary for a young boy, armed only with spear and shield, to travel alone in this manner in a district full of dangerous game.

The Wenyekongo were awakened at about 5.30 a.m. every day, one boy in each hut having been detailed the night before to wake the others, and at sunrise there was a parade of the whole school to detect defaulters. During the morning they drew water, collected wood, worked in the fields, and attended classes which the teachers held as convenient. Those children who were too young for more strenuous work looked after the flocks and herds. The boys were made to do jobs usually regarded as belonging to the women's sphere—drawing water, collecting wood, weeding, and so on—so that they should not become possessed with too great a sense of their own importance. There were all the Mtema's slaves, not to mention all the womenfolk, who could have done this work, but such "fatigues" were part of the boys' training.

In the afternoon they played games, mock battles with maize-cobs or with dummy spears made of reeds, against which they protected themselves with shields, being very popular. They thus acquired the art of turning a spear on a shield and learned all the tricks of attack and defence, together with quickness of eye and lightness of foot. At other times they arranged wrestling matches or held races to see who would be the strongest and swiftest warriors. A very popular pastime was mimic cattle-raiding. Some of the boys, with their goats and cattle, were dispatched to a neighbouring village to represent the enemy. Both sides then drove their flocks and herds to pasture between the two villages and presently a quarrel was provoked between the rival herdsmen, whereupon both sides advanced to battle with their shields and reed spears. There ensued a fierce struggle, he who failed to parry a "spear"-thrust being counted out, dead, and the victors eventually carried off the booty in triumph. Subse-

quently the captured goats and cattle would be returned to their original owners, but a small payment might be extorted from the vanquished.

Hunting was also included among the sports practised by the Wenyekongo, and from time to time, particularly if the game was doing damage to the crops, the Mtema would organise a drive. He and his personal followers would take part in it themselves accompanied by the boys from the school. They hunted game of all sorts, large and small, thus protecting the crops, teaching the Wenyekongo valuable lessons in bush-craft and providing the luxury of meat for the delectation of all.

It must be remembered that all the boys in the tribe, whether pupils at the school or living with their parents, had to be taught to fight, and mock battles and other sports calculated to foster skill in fighting were popular not only among the Wenyekongo but also among their brothers who remained at home.

At intervals the Mtema used to hold public combats at the school, the Wenyekongo being armed as usual with their reed spears. These were exceedingly popular events. A favourite hour for them was after the day's work was done, by moonlight or firelight. The Mtema attended in state and an enthusiastic audience gathered to appraise and criticise the future warriors and leaders of the tribe. The latter were thus encouraged to train hard and strive their utmost to excel their fellows, so that their ears might be gratified by the applause, never stinted, of those already famous as tried and valiant fighters. The Wenyekongo Wenyegendo also had their part to play in these social gatherings, displaying their skill in the twin arts of song and dance.

Periodically the boys would be drafted out to serve for a while under the Watwa and Wanzagira in the provinces, when they became Wenyekongo Wadodo = "Small Wenyekongo," as distinct from those remaining at the Mtema's

village, who were Wenyekongo Wakomi = "Great Wenyekongo." Their training continued in the provinces under different teachers and they acquired some knowledge of the practical side of tribal administration, while in case of war the older boys, both of the Wenyekongo Wakomi and of the Wenyekongo Wadodo, received their first lessons in real fighting, following as servants in the train of their elders.

At about the age of sixteen the boys passed out of the school and, becoming fully fledged warriors or Wenyewaha, were appointed by the Mtema to fill various posts, as described in the last chapter. Some remained at headquarters in the Mtema's bodyguard and were more or less permanently connected with the school. They attended all its meetings and dances, and helped as needed in the running of the institution. This body of "old boys" appears to have fulfilled important functions. Its members assisted the teachers, saw that the tone of the place was maintained, and reported any matters of importance to the Mtema. The school therefore worked perpetually under the eyes of a "board of inspectors," every one of whom was keen to show the younger generation how much better things were done when *he* was a boy.

In addition to their duties within the school itself, the Wenyekongo and the Wenyewaha who were still attached to it had certain public duties to perform. They were the police force and fire brigade of tribal headquarters and were always ready to turn out as soon as the Mtema's drum sounded the alarm. They were also responsible for the cleanliness and tidiness of the Mtema's village. Moreover, the school was the place where all large meetings and dances were held, so that it became something of a tribal club. Taking all these functions into consideration we begin to understand the prominent part it played in the life of the Wabena. But there remains yet another way in which it exercised great influence on their social life: we have not yet discussed the two schools from the point of view of marriage!

In the days when tribal custom was more strictly followed, the Mtema exercised a very considerable degree of control over the marriages of the aristocracy. No Mtwa or Mnyangutwa could give his daughter in marriage without the permission of the Mtema, lest any should introduce an unworthy strain into the royal line, for where cross-cousin marriage is extensively practised the marriages of the daughters of the house are, of course, of immense importance to the family as a whole. The Mtema had, moreover, far-reaching control over all the young men of the royal house who became Wenyekongo, so that at least their principal marriages were, if he chose, his concern, especially as he would probably supply most of the bride-wealth they had to pay.

It is obvious at once that the Bena educational system favoured the maintenance of such control. The pick of the rising generation of both sexes was growing up together in the Mtema's village. Although the schools were run as separate establishments, we must not picture the sexes as living so strictly segregated as the idea of a boarding-school normally suggests to an English mind. Apart from the special duties imposed on them by the curriculum of their respective schools and from the fact that they slept in special buildings, the boys and girls lived an ordinary social life in the village, much as they would have lived in their own families. And let it be borne in mind that the Wabena are an exceedingly sociable people. It was therefore a matter of the greatest simplicity for the Mtema to arrange suitable marriages between the Wenyekongo and the Wenyekongo Wenyegendo.

The extent to which cross-cousin marriage was practised in the tribe as a whole varied during the course of its history, but it was at all times the rule for the men of the royal house as regards their more important wives. Some of the daughters of the clan married cross-cousins, too; others, as we have seen, were given to Wanzagira or made marriages of political importance with men who were not cousins. There were so

many children being educated in the two schools that the Mtema had not the slightest difficulty in arranging marriages which complied with custom. Nominally he commanded certain marriages, as seemed good to him, but in practice his senior wife made it her business to discover likes and dislikes among the young people themselves, so that the matter might be arranged with tact. Naturally she also was at some pains to foster suitable attachments.* The boys of royal birth had, of course, for the most part some particular cross-cousins marked down for them by tribal custom, and presumably, if they did not find them very attractive, they would not be unduly reluctant to do their duty by marrying them first, for they knew that, after they had satisfied custom by taking to wife the necessary cross-cousins, they would be at liberty to follow their fancy in the choice of any number of subsidiary wives. The Bena girls for their part seem to regard marriage but little from the point of view of personal attraction and look rather to the prospects offered them of social position, comfort, and good treatment.

Apart from marriages likely to be of importance in the matter of succession to the Stool, the boys who distinguished themselves most in their training were honoured with brides of highest rank, girls related to the Mtema or the daughters of important Wanzagira, while on the whole little attention was paid by the authorities to the choices made by the undistinguished rank and file of the Wenyekongo. The Wabena declare that great care and tact were exercised and that few unhappy marriages resulted.

When all the necessary arrangements had been skilfully made behind the scenes, so that the right choices were assured, the Mtema summoned a public meeting of both schools at which the girls of marriageable age were asked in turn whose wife they desired to be. History does not relate whether any

* "And," says Towegale, "*all* the Mtema's wives and sisters helped!" What fun it must have been for their young victims!

was ever bold enough to give the wrong answer. It hardly seems likely after all the time that had been spent on teaching them to do the right thing! The young man of her choice then signified that he was agreeable to the proposal and was bidden to go to the girl's father to hand over the customary hoes, unless his bride happened to be a daughter of the Mtema, in which case he had nothing to pay (see Chap. XV). It was considered a grave breach of etiquette for the bridegroom to show anything but the greatest reluctance in obeying the royal command.

Such were the tribal schools of the past. Mtema Towegale and his elders, appreciating their value and the injury suffered by the tribe through their abolition, decided it was essential that the system should be re-established. Times were hard and money was not forthcoming at first, but in spite of every difficulty the Mtema, during 1933, collected twenty-five boys at his new village of Utengule and placed them under an Mzagira, whose mother was a Viari and whose father was the son of a Viari. They range from round-eyed, round-bellied youngsters of about five years of age to boys of fifteen or sixteen, and the older ones take turns, two at a time, to accompany Towegale on his journeys. Thus they may both learn the country and the historical associations of different places, and also be in constant attendance on their Mtema so that they can watch and listen to him and see how the business of the tribe is conducted.

Scrapings and savings here and there in the tribal administration enabled a few essentials to be paid for, and the boys' fathers undertook to supply food for the school till the children's own crops ripened the first season. Temporarily housed in various places in the village, the Wenyekongo, aided by willing helpers of riper years, set to work to build themselves a house. When the digging season came round, they shared the use of the hoes and other implements of the royal household till such time as they could obtain their own, and

began to prepare their fields, both for food crops and for a cotton crop which should provide them with the necessary funds to procure things needed for the school and clothes for themselves, and, in case of need, to act as a reserve if their food crops should fail and they be obliged to buy supplies. Binti Mkwawa and Binti Kipolero, who relieves the former of most of her household duties, assumed charge of the domestic side of affairs, as did the royal wives of former days, but for the present the only Wenyekongo Wenyegendo under their care are the three little daughters of the house, Kimbongo, Mwira, and Peta.

Tremendous enthusiasm greeted the revival of this institution, and the great majority of the elders began to regard Towegale with really affectionate pride as an Mtema truly worthy of the name. He was besieged by parents anxious to send their young sons, and even by young married men who had grown up in the years since the system had fallen into disuse and who were ready to enter on the same footing and to submit to the same discipline as the children. Only the claims of a few sons of the more prominent notables, boys likely to be needed in the tribal administration, could be considered the first year, when circumstances indicated that only a very modest beginning should be made; but the Mtema greatly hopes that his treasury will be able later to afford the expansion for which his people clamour.

Before many months had elapsed after the new Wenyekongo assembled at Utengule, the school bid fair to win its way back to its old position as the tribal club, the centre of interest in the social life of the royal village, and on the last night the writers spent in Utengule the Wenyekongo held their first evening entertainment, in the moonlight outside the Mtema's house. There they danced and played games (see Chap. XVI), in which they were enthusiastically joined by no less a person than Barakali, and by other elders and the wives of the royal household.

The Mtema does not seek merely to revive the past: he seeks to combine the best of the old with the new. He is convinced that the old Bena educational system can be adapted to meet the tribe's changing requirements, providing schools where the best of the rising generation can be trained along suitably modernised lines, but—by their own people and without losing touch with tribal life.

CHAPTER VIII

WAR AND HUNTING

THE military organisation of the Wabena has been lightly sketched in in Chap. VI (p. 144) and the training of its future warriors described in Chap. VII, but its working and uses both in war and peace deserve further attention.

Like their neighbours, the Wabena revelled in the sport of war, round which centred most of their interest in life and all their ambitions. Its popularity as a national pastime is evident from the frequency with which its praises figure in their songs, in which it is sometimes actually referred to as "a game." Eager for war, the people would bring their impatience to the notice of the Mtema in the form of songs while they danced before him (see Chap. XVIII). The tribal wars are still a prominent topic of conversation and many are the tales told of the warriors of old, whose oft-recited feats never lose their glamour.

Let us first study the Bena military organisation from the point of view of defence against aggressive, warlike neighbours, such as the Wahehe and Wangoni.

The density of population in Ubena to-day is about 6·5 per square mile. Formerly the Mtema ruled over a larger number of subjects, but at the same time his kingdom extended far beyond the boundaries of the present day, and on the whole there is every reason to think that the density of population was rather lower then than now. This, combined with the great difficulty of quick communication, made the speedy mobilisation of an army far from easy. There were, however, special messengers employed by the Mtema, men famed for their speed and powers of endurance, whom he had picked out for this work while they were yet boys in his school. It was apparently no uncommon thing for them to travel as

many as forty miles in twelve hours, over the most difficult country. They were attached to the establishments of military leaders—Watwa and Wanzagira—and every frontier post had its quota, so that grave tidings from any part of his kingdom could reach the Mtema with the minimum of delay, and his commands be carried to the districts equally swiftly.

All the men of the tribe were warriors, but they were divided into those who had received special training—the Wenyewaha—and those who had not. The professional warriors were organised in "regiments," and the Mtema always had at least two of these at headquarters. Others were divided among the Watwa Wenyelutenana and principal Wanzagira in the tribal administration. One (the Wanyitamba) devoted itself to the defence of the important points along the Mtema's rambling frontiers and to observation of the enemy's movements over the border. Another (the Walambo) was armed with muzzle-loaders and, in addition to its military duties, was entrusted with the task of harpooning troublesome hippo. The Wanyitwangilo, who lived permanently at tribal headquarters, were considered to be the "senior regiment" and were picked out for their experience, skill, and surpassing courage. There was also a "regiment" of retired veterans who only fought in exceptional circumstances, normally remaining behind to guard the women and children. The names of other "regiments" are given on p. 41.

Every day all the warriors in attendance on the Mtema paraded at sunrise to give their master formal greeting. This happened not only when he was with his own "regiments" at his village, but wherever he went in his kingdom.

The Mtema, with two "regiments" and the older Wenyekongo and such non-professional warriors as lived near him, had a considerable force which he could put into the field at very short notice. It is difficult to obtain reliable data regarding its exact strength, but it must have been in the neighbourhood of a thousand men, while another force of about the same size,

also composed of both professionals and non-professionals, could be summoned within twelve hours. It is said that Mtengera I, when he first came down into Ubena of the Rivers, had some five thousand active fighting men at his disposal, some specially trained, some not; and though we have of course no means of verifying this figure, it is probably not so very far out. Out of an estimated total of roughly five thousand men, then, about two thousand were within easy call of the Mtema, the other three thousand being scattered through the length and breadth of the land, the Wenyewaha wherever their duties took them, and the non-professionals in their villages.

From the map the reader may wonder how the Mtema could possibly defend such a large expanse of country with this force. But the nature of the country is such that he was not required to defend miles and miles of border but merely a series of points. These points were often places where it was easy to arrange an ambush, and where a small force could do much to hamper the enemy. The defending force had the advantage, too, of friendly villages in the rear to supply it with food, if it had to move far from its own village and store-houses. The raiders, on the other hand, unless the raid was on so small a scale that it was not a serious menace, had a "baggage train" of supplies because they could not be sure of being lucky enough to capture adequate stores of grain, etc., for a large force in enemy country. This made them less mobile and more vulnerable than their opponents. Sometimes they might be further impeded, as the Wangoni certainly sometimes were, by cattle captured in a previous raid and not yet safely deposited among their own people. During the Great War, 1914–18, the hostilities in East Africa demonstrated the great advantage that the defending force enjoys in this bush country, an advantage which also held good in the times of the old tribal wars.

With the exception of the Walambo, the warriors were all

armed with spears (throwing and stabbing) and shields. The musket was regarded as an arm of secondary importance, a fact which is not surprising to anyone who has handled the old, worn-out Tower muzzle-loader! Its range is short, its accuracy negligible, and once fired it takes a considerable time to reload. The charge is liable to get damp, and when it does explode it will, on a still day, envelop the musketeers in a dense pall of smoke, giving the enemy an opportunity to rush them before the cloud clears away. It is, in short, far more valuable as a means of undermining the morale of a savage foe than as a lethal weapon. Its moral effect may be great, its killing power (on the enemy!) is at best problematic.

The Wabena did not originally use the bow, but in Kiwanga I's time it was introduced from Upogoro and is now employed by a few people for hunting purposes, the archers buying the poison for their arrows from the Wapogoro, the Wangindo, and the Wandwewe. The lack of bows and arrows was a serious obstacle to the expansion Mtengera had planned eastwards. The Wapogoro were excellent archers and past masters at guerilla warfare in hilly country. One of their favourite methods of attack was to hide in the tree-tops or among the rocks overlooking a ravine, and wait for the unsuspecting enemy to pass below. As soon as he came well within range they shot at him with their poisoned arrows, forcing him to retire quickly before his force was annihilated. Unless he met them with weapons of equal or greater range he was helpless, for they forced him to keep his distance and prevented him from getting to work at close quarters. The Wabena once or twice invaded Upogoro, but suffered such heavy losses that they decided to leave the Wapogoro severely alone.

In tribal wars there were no formalities in declaring war, or perhaps one should say that war had been permanently declared and all tribes were enemies until further notice or unless otherwise stated. But though the renewal of hostilities

was unannounced, news of a projected expedition would nearly always leak through to the enemy. Mobilisation of men and supplies for a raid of any size was not carried out secretly, but was a ceremony accompanied by public feasting and dancing, lasting some days, so that it was not difficult for news of the Mtema's aggressive intent to reach the enemy long before the Bena force had left its headquarters. It appears that the slaves at the Mtema's village, captives from other tribes, used promptly to convey tidings of impending war to similar captives in the outlying villages and thence across the border. With so many aliens in the tribe it would probably have been impossible to keep things quiet, even had the Wabena made any effort to do so. Only small bands of border raiders were ever likely to find the foe entirely unprepared. Rumour flies quickly to and fro in a Bantu tribe. Long before the Mtema issued orders to mobilise his forces, there would be whisperings of war, if not public demands for it, and the news would be over the border well ahead of the warriors.

All the warriors summoned to fight assembled at the Mtema's village under their local leaders, Watwa or Wanzagira. The Mtema slaughtered cattle for each group, and a great feast and beer drink was held and the necessary *tambiko* performed. The cattle set aside for this feast were called *baramakara*, which signified that they had to be eaten on the spot. During the festivities, every man in turn took the war oath (*kupapilingana*). One warrior, followed by a friend, would go before the Mtema, cut off a piece of meat from a roast carcase, and eat it, saying, "If I run away and leave my friends, X" (the friend behind him awaiting his turn) "can kill me and take my wives." X then took the oath, naming the first man. And so on, till all had sworn. Meanwhile those who had killed men in previous battles danced *ligubo* (see Chap. XVIII), and the novices looked on and supplied the chorus. The dancers hacked off pieces of meat, one for every victim that had fallen to their spears. Brandishing these trophies, they boasted of

their *másanja* (= enemies they had killed), recalled the glories of former bloody victories, fought mimic battles in their dancing, sang and yelled and worked themselves and their hearers into a fine frenzy. So it went on for some days, until all had assembled and taken the oath. Greatly fortified, the expedition then set out. Perhaps it was just as well that they had several days' march from tribal headquarters before meeting the foe, for the African is wholesale in his feasting!

More dances and festivities naturally celebrated the return from a successful expedition and the division of the booty. All spoils of war were taken to the Mtema's village for distribution, the largest share going to those who brought back grisly proof of having killed some of the enemy's warriors. At first they used to bring hands and ears, until it was discovered that some were cheating and killing women. Then the order went forth that the tally should be kept by means of mementoes which left no doubt as to the sex of the victim. This practice was maintained as late as the Maji-Maji Rising of 1905–6. Mfalimbega, who was then a youth bordering on adolescence, relates how he took part in the Maji-Maji as one of Kiwanga I's "pages," and was required to help carry the gruesome tally of the rebels slain by his valiant master. All his childhood he had been told to keep away when anyone died, and not to touch the corpse, and now, terrified, he refused to do as he was bidden, thereby earning a hearty beating with a stick. Another child also refused, whereupon Kiwanga, his blood running hot with the joy of battle, angrily threw the horrible objects in the boy's face. After that none dared to disobey!

No peace formalities ordinarily marked the close of an expedition, for a state of war continued to exist though hostilities had temporarily ceased. But the sending of a deputation to present a spear with the blade bent over admitted defeat, and was supposed to promise perpetual peace between him who sent and him who accepted the token. The bearers of a Peace Spear were, of course, entitled to safe conduct to

and from the camp of the enemy chief. Chabruma sent such a spear to Kiwanga I, and it is carefully stored among the heirlooms in the *mahóngoli*. The peace was faithfully kept, it is said, for a "long time," in fact till Sagamaganga persuaded Chabruma into an alliance—a period of perhaps three years! But it is maintained that Chabruma dared not thereafter himself set foot in Ubena, merely sending men under another leader to help Sagamaganga there.

We may note here in passing that extraordinarily cordial relations are said by the Wabena to exist now between them and the Wangoni of Songea, an affection based on the mutual regard of old well-known, well-tried opponents in the great game. They can enter each other's houses and demand food, and be as rude to one another as they like! With the Wahehe it is not so, "because our chiefs are the brothers of their chiefs, so we have to be careful, but with the Wangoni we are all commoners together." Other one-time foes such as the Wapogoro are regarded with contempt as having "no strength," more especially the Wapogoro, with their aversion for fighting as a man should, hand to hand and no nonsense.

The Bena military organisation was not merely a fighting machine. It had its peace-time uses, too.

Every year the Wabena lose a considerable proportion of their crops on account of the ravages of game and vermin. The chief offenders are pig, baboon, elephant, and hippo.* Between them they destroy large acreages† and involve the people in great loss and often hardship.

In the past the Mtema held organised game drives at least

* The Game Scouts make valiant efforts against elephant and other game, but they cannot be everywhere at once. Very few people still possess muskets, which are in any case unreliable. The villagers' efforts at scaring game and vermin are described in Chap. XII.

† Not acreage only! The writers stayed at one village where six elephant came nightly right into the village, knocked the light thatch off the store-houses, and filled up with the rice so conveniently placed there for their benefit. Lamps scared them not at all; they merely turned and routed the would-be intruders at their feast. They were subsequently dealt with by a Game Scout.

once a year, when nearly all the warriors turned out and drove the game away from the inhabited parts of Ubena. The big annual drive took place just after the grass was burnt, about October.* It started as a rule at the capital and extended over the entire populated area of the country, and in each district the non-professional warriors were expected to assist the Wenyewaha. It was every man's duty to kill any animal that attempted to break back through the line of hunters, and so effective was this procedure that the game kept right away from the fields for months. If it began to return to any particular area, a smaller local drive was arranged to deal with the menace. It is said that it was quite an event for a woman or child to see a wild animal, so few ever ventured near the villages. What a contrast with the present!

Hippo, of course, had to be dealt with separately, the Walambo being told off specially for this work. Armed with spears and harpoons they hunted in canoes, paying particular attention to any specially ferocious beasts and to those areas in which the hippo had done most damage to crops. If a canoe was attacked, the Walambo were promptly summoned to patrol the dangerous stretch of river until they, too, were attacked by the animal in question, when they settled him with their harpoons.†

This weapon, *kiopero*, is interesting. It was borrowed by the Wabena from the Wandamba and consists of a single-barbed iron blade, loosely hafted into a wooden shaft which is about eight feet long and an inch to an inch and a half thick. The blade, about four inches long, ends in a pointed tang on which a lateral spike is forged. Round the tang,

* Digging begins in November and the main harvest is in June–July. See Chap. XII, "The Agricultural Year."

† It is very noticeable that the hippo in, for instance, the Ruhuji River above Mkasu, where they are never hunted to-day, are far more dangerous and liable to attack canoes than those lower down the Ulanga Valley, where the Ndamba harpooners keep them under control. There they tend to flee at the approach of a canoe, hastily leaving the water for the shelter of the dense tall grass and reeds, and it is hard for the harpooners to get within striking distance.

just behind the barb, several small rolls of cloth are usually tied containing medicine to render the weapon effective. One end of a stout rope, about thirty feet in length and made from raffia palm, is firmly secured round the spike. The rope is then carried up the shaft, to which it is bound by a light cord passed round and round both shaft and rope, and is then turned over the butt and carried down the other side of the harpoon for some two feet. As soon as the rope is pulled taut with a jerk when the harpoon has found its mark, the light cord snaps and allows the shaft to become detached, floating free from the loosely hafted blade which then has a better chance of holding firm. Attached to the rope, near the butt of the weapon—that is, about seven feet up the rope from the blade—are several small iron bells which serve to locate the animal should he seek refuge in the long grass on the river bank. The loose end of the rope passes through a hole in a stout board three feet long and about nine inches broad, and is secured by a knot. Should the hunter release his hold on the rope, this board acts as a buoy in the water and an anchor on land.

Before the hunt the harpoons are placed on the ground near small heaps of flour, a little of which is dusted on their blades and anchors, and the hunters assemble and invoke the aid of their ancestral spirits. The weapons are then taken to the canoes, but the heaps of flour remain till after the hunt.

As soon as the harpooners sight their quarry, who immediately submerges himself (if he does not dash for the bank and the safety of the grass), the leader of the expedition silently stations his canoes at points of vantage and waits until the beast breaks water. If he hides too long, the hunters will search for him with long fish spears, poking about until he is located. When he appears, the canoes dash down upon him, their crews encouraging one another with yells, and if they are lucky enough to get within striking distance, a harpoon is hurled home. The beast dashes off under water. The hunters

grasp the rope and the first canoe is dragged along at speed by the wounded animal. The other canoes follow, and as soon as the hippo breaks water again other harpoons join the first. Sooner or later the victim becomes infuriated and, being unable to rid himself of the harpoons, turns on the canoes which he tries to demolish. Manœuvring their unsteady craft with skill, the hunters await the animal's savage rush with spears and harpoons, and if they are lucky kill him in the water. If not, and the hippo makes for the bank, the hunters let go the harpoon ropes, allowing him to rush off into the dense grass where the wooden anchors impede his progress. Guided by the tinkling bells, the men follow him up, tie the ropes to the grass, and spear him to death, a feat which requires no little courage in the tall thick grass.

When the hunters return home, they cook the heart and liver of their victim with the flour of the sacrifice, and partake of them as a solemn rite, thanking their ancestral spirits for their good fortune.

Except that certain men, usually of Ndamba origin, still hunt troublesome hippo, game drives no longer take place, and as a result the Mbena spends many a long wet night guarding his fields. The reasons for the abandonment of these drives need not concern us here, though it should be said that under present conditions they would be quite useless as a means of protecting the fields. During the last thirty years the Wabena have dispersed and settled in smaller and smaller villages, some containing only half a dozen houses or so. These hamlets, if they deserve even that name, are dotted about all over the countryside, so that most of the areas which were formerly uninhabited and into which the game was driven now contain scattered patches of cultivation. No scheme of game control can work effectively under these conditions, for it is quite impossible to protect such small settlements. Ousted from one "cabbage-patch" to-day, the animals are harassing the owners of the next to-morrow.

So long as one finds a couple of acres of cultivation here and a couple of acres there, so long will it be impossible to prevent the large annual loss of crops through game and vermin. The first step in cultivation protection is close settlement and compact blocks of fields. The Wabena realised that close settlement was necessary for purposes of defence in the days of the old tribal wars, but what they did not realise till quite recently* is that close settlement is just as necessary in times of peace, to make possible the efficient protection of crops against damage by the many intelligent animals, who agree with man that cultivated plants are far more appetising than wild ones!

Although the game drives no longer take place, communal hunting has not died out altogether in Ubena. The lion hunt,† the most thrilling of all the hunts, remains. Lions cause a good deal of trouble in parts of Ubena, carrying off cattle and goats, and sometimes human beings, and the Wabena pride themselves that they alone of all the tribes of the Valley are brave enough and skilled enough to deal with these nuisances themselves, without the aid of the white man.

When a lion seizes a victim, whether human or otherwise, the women at once start the peculiar call which summons help from all over the countryside. It is an unmistakable sound, high-pitched and thin and surprisingly small in volume, ending abruptly, as breath gives out, with an upward inflexion—"Oo-oo-oo-wi!" But it carries well, and the alarm is rapidly taken up by women in neighbouring villages in an ever-widening circle, till people even perhaps twelve or fifteen miles away are on the move. The writers were in camp at Malinyi on one occasion when an alarm was started from a hamlet a mile or two away, and they shared in the shiver of excitement which ran through the village when this eerie

* Only a few of the more enlightened have yet managed to take this in. Towegale's scheme for gathering his people into larger villages is described in Chap. VI.

† See Plate I.

call for help broke the stillness, just as the first grey light of dawn was stealing over the countryside. From every house around the women took up the cry, while their men-folk snatched up their arms and set off at a jog-trot in the direction from which the first calls had come. For hours, and long after the whole affair was over, small parties came jogging through the village, excitedly calling, "Where is the lion? Tell us, where is the lion?" Even from across the Pogoro boundary they came to answer the summons.

Every able-bodied Mbena who hears the cry must turn out, rendering himself liable to prosecution under tribal law if he fails in this duty. Conversely, it is an offence deliberately to give a false alarm, thereby causing scores of people to make a long hot journey in a great hurry all for nothing, and dislocating the day's routine in villages for miles around.

Every man takes his favourite weapons, the majority preferring spears, while some set out with knob-kerries, Pogoro bows and arrows with little caskets of poison, axes or even bill-hooks. Those spearmen who have still got shields take them, of course, but they are in the minority now.

On the occasion mentioned above, which was in the dry season when the ground was iron-hard, they lost their lion and returned to Malinyi. There rumour greeted them with word that the quarry had been sighted at the other side of Malinyi and the whole troop, some hundred strong, swept headlong down the village street in great excitement, a murderous-looking crew. But fortune was not with them, and they returned to dance outside Towegale's old house, now occupied by Mtwa Mpangachuma.

On more successful occasions, the hunt proceeds as follows, under the command of an Mtwa or Mzagira, or even of the Mtema himself if he happens to be in the locality. Once the lion's tracks are picked up, small bands are sent off from the main body to perform encircling movements until they are satisfied that they have got round ahead of their quarry, and

have thus localised him. A wide circle is then formed. Somewhere within it, hidden in the long grass which allows a range of vision of about three feet, is the lion, possibly more than one lion. A few men with spears and shields follow the tracks, while the rest of the party gradually close in from all sides, trampling down the grass and, if possible, heading back the quarry if he attempts to break out. Those who have shields are in the forefront, so that if possible the cornered beast's charge, when it comes, may be directed against one of them. He at once drops down, hiding beneath his shield, while his friends rush in and spear the lion. Three man-eaters were killed round Malinyi in this manner during the first few months of 1933.

All then return in triumph to the village of their leader, laughing and yelling and singing as they go, with such songs as:

Mleka apite mkali.
Allow the brave man to pass.

And

Yanika uhembe, ukae kule ngonda.
Get ready, there is the enemy.

Arrived at the village, they are entertained with beer if any is available, and celebrate the event with great festivities and the dancing of *ligubo*, choosing in particular the following song:

Kinatufe watuhakalira.
If we die they won't like us.

Chorus:

Hau! Hau! (clapping).

And so closes what is now the most stirring episode which ever breaks the monotony of village life and the agricultural round, reawakening for a brief space the warrior spirit of the past.

CHAPTER IX

SOCIAL ORGANISATION

IN preceding chapters we have made frequent use of the word *clan* and it is now time to examine more closely the significance of that term in Ubena of the Rivers. The Bena word *lukolo* (pl. ŋolo) denotes an exogamous, unilateral group of people who trace their descent from a common ancestor. When a *lukolo* grows very large, some of the branches may come to be regarded almost as separate clans, especially if circumstances such as distance or disputes assist the tendency to split. For instance, for all practical purposes in politics the Wakinimlengi are reckoned as distinct from the Wakinimanga. A direct question on the subject will receive the answer, "Yes, they are Wakinimanga, too, but they are not of our set, they are Wakinimlengi."

The clan defined as an exogamous, unilateral group descended from a common ancestor is an important group throughout the Bantu peoples. Descent may be reckoned in either the paternal or maternal lines. Though the Bena clans proper are patrilineal, various matrilineal clans have at one time and another been absorbed into their kingdom. No clan has yet been found in the Ulanga Valley still following the maternal line to-day, but the Wandamba, for instance, the majority of whom were subjects of the Bena Mtema till their own administration was set up in 1926, only changed their method of reckoning descent within living memory. Throughout the social organisation of the Wabena we shall find features indicative of compromise between mother-right and father-right, and in this connection the inclusion in the kingdom of matrilineal clans, side by side with patrilineal, must be borne in mind. It will be evident, too, when we come to study marriage and family life, that on the whole maternal relatives,

even where there is no record of matrilineal descent in the past, have only in very recent years relinquished the reins of government—indeed, are still only in the process of losing their power. Descent is now uniformly patrilineal, but the division of authority is a matter of compromise.

Since the clan defined as above is normally the key-stone of Bantu social organisation, the writers naturally expected to find it occupying that position in Ubena of the Rivers, and spent a considerable time hunting about for the usual manifestations of the clan system. When, however, it became clear that the great majority of people knew Father and Grandfather but declared that Great-grandfather was an unknown spirit whose very name had been forgotten, it was obvious that the family tree which usually provides the fundamental data on which clanship is based had gone, and that all that remained were parts of the bole and scattered fragments of its spreading branches. It is very common to find men and women who have no idea to what clan they belong, and only know that they are Wabena. One may say that, with the exception of members of the leading families of the more important clans, it is unusual for an Mbena to have any accurate knowledge of his antecedents, and in many cases it is not the father's line or clan which is remembered at all but some maternal ancestress who was a Viari.

What, then, of the clan *tambiko* mentioned in Chap. V? Among the common people there is really no such thing. The family *tambiko*, or at best the joint *tambiko* of an extended family, is as far as they get. But it is still true to say that the clan *tambiko* does exist, though it is maintained only by the more important families of the clan. The main line descended from the founder remembers, and those families most nearly related to it may remember. The branches forget. The head of the *lukolo* still propitiates the spirits on behalf of all members of the *lukolo*, but he does not know who most of the members are, and nor do they! The circle of relatives he summons to,

and expects to see at, the *tambiko* is really very small, even though it includes children of daughters of the clan who are, of course, themselves members of other clans.

When one inquires into pedigrees, one is struck far more by what is forgotten than by what is remembered. It is, for instance, curious in patrilineal society to be told that Mtwa Senjenge's mother was Semudodera who was an Mkinimanga and daughter's daughter to Uhenge, that the clan and antecedents of her father Njenge are unknown—the tone of voice suggests surprise that you should even bother to ask—and that the forceful old lady, who holds a position in the tribal administration normally open only to important brethren of the Mtema, lays down the law to both the Wakinimanga and the Wakinimhenge though she is a member of neither clan! Again, one often hears, "Who am I? My father was the son of a Viari. Oh, my father's *father*, did you say? *He* was only a commoner. I don't really know who he was." In short, a man tends to remember only those links in his pedigree which are socially important and which "place" him at once in the minds of his hearers. This is not done necessarily because he is ashamed of his relationship to the less distinguished clan or family, he simply is not interested in that. Sometimes, of course, there are links of which he is ashamed, and then this practice is an invaluable aid to the suppression of detrimental details. It is rather like the duke and his scullion. The former remembers his illustrious forebears and their deeds of valour on the field of battle: the latter forgets, never attempts to recall, his humble antecedents washing up the dishes. But if by any chance the two lines become entangled at any point, the scullion may recall the fact, but the duke keeps a discreet silence. Great men in Ubena often take lowly girls into their households, for, provided they place cross-cousins or other high-born ladies in the places of honour, they are at liberty to indulge their fancy with regard to lesser wives. Good looks and rank do not necessarily go together, and the

meanest girl in the land is just as likely as her better-born sister to be attractive. One day she may quite easily find herself in a royal household. There she will be treated with every consideration as the wife of a great man, but should her children rise, or wish to rise, to some high position they will not talk overmuch of their maternal relatives. Sometimes a long-lost bough of the family tree will be "discovered," to prove without a shadow of doubt that her lowly status was a mistake after all, and that she is in reality a cross-cousin of her husband and the child of an illustrious ancestor. For instance, since his accession to the Stool, Towegale is desperately anxious for sons, and yet more sons. Only two of his eleven wives are not cross-cousins, and it must have been very irritating to him to think that one of his three precious sons—he had only three at the end of 1932—was the child of one of those two lesser wives. "Luckily," however, at the beginning of 1933 he made an interesting discovery! The wife in question, Njumai binti Osmani (called by him Omlet!), is the daughter of a woman who came from the hills, whose paternal ancestry is now known—would you believe it?—to join up with the Kipolero line somewhere; so that—very distantly, of course!—she would be a cross-cousin of the mother's-brother's-child type. The whole matter is being "investigated." Meanwhile, Omlet has provisionally gone up to eighth in his household, though her son Kiangi does "not yet" rank as the son of a cross-cousin.

It is a fact that in compiling the Manga pedigrees given in Appendix III the writers found their informants did not know the clans, or anything about the pedigrees, of (*a*) most of the warriors who married even the most notable Waviari, e.g. Njenge, or Mkwando, and (*b*) the mothers of many important men and women of the Manga clan. As regards (*a*), all that was necessary had been said when the man in question had been described as a "good warrior, an Mzagira," and it might be added, "He had been an Mnyekongo and the Mtema

saw that his work was very good." His eligibility for the hand of a Viari depended on his personal merits and not on his pedigree. In the case of (*b*), the mothers are forgotten unless they were very great or very doubtful. The latter are officially "forgotten," too, but their existence in the pedigree is sometimes revealed by a certain self-consciousness and embarrassed, exaggerated carelessness in consigning them to oblivion. The task of remembering those who were simply "all right" but not outstanding—cross-cousins, daughters of Wanzagira and Waviari—would tax men's memories too heavily. When pedigrees are kept in men's heads alone without the help of pencil and paper, few save the essential links are usually recorded. For instance, only with difficulty could Binti Mkwawa (131) remember that her mother was an Mchungwa, or Binti Kipolero (120) that hers came from the Tani clan, which is on sufficiently intimate terms with the Wakinimanga to indulge in mutual abuse without giving offence. Binti Muhara (119) found it equally difficult to name her father's clan, Chungwa—she had always thought of him simply as a Bena Mzagira. Kisetu (18) and Masagara (111) were Wafwagi, but that is not a clan name; it indicates from which of the petty kingdoms of Ubena their fathers came. And the most important thing remembered about Kisetu is not the name of his clan but the fact that his *mother* was the daughter of the first Yinga chief. Binti Likulile (117) knows that her father was an Mdamba, but this again is not a clan name and has nothing to do with a *tambiko*. After prolonged thought, Kilauni (133) recalled that her mother came from Njavík, which pronouncement led to the further discovery that Bleki's (135) father, Mbago, was a direct descendant in the male line of the same chief. But the recollection of these few links was a great effort, and in the majority of cases it was impossible to get further than that So-and-So was an Mbena and an Mzagira, or the daughter of an Mzagira, even when the informant was talking of his or her own parents. It became

abundantly plain that, while personal names are remembered for a generation or two for the purposes of the family *tambiko*, clan names, indicating participation in a wider *tambiko*, have largely been forgotten.

In many cases identity of inherited food taboos is the only remaining link between people of the same clan, and these, as we shall see in Chap. XV, are of great assistance in preventing unwitting breaches of the marriage laws. The Wabena attribute these taboos to some unfortunate experience of an ancestor. He ate something which disagreed with him, or his eating it "caused" his children to die. So that food became *mwiko* to him and his descendants. Unpleasant experiences still lead to the adoption of new taboos and there is nothing to prevent people of different clans from observing the same *mwiko*. Consequently the discovery that a girl he wishes to marry has the same taboos as himself does not really do more than indicate the need for particularly searching inquiry into the possibility of their being any remote "brother-sister" relationship between them.

The taboos, which pass from father to child, are many and various. They may be an animal or a part of one; less often, a plant or a plant product. The Wabena believe that the most dire consequences follow their violation, and are convinced that the alleged increase of leprosy at the present time is due to people eating their *mwiko*.

In these days when men travel more than in the past, it is not too easy for a man to be sure of avoiding his *mwiko*. Who knows, for instance, what may have been cooked in the pot borrowed from a friendly stranger? The appreciation of this danger has given rise to a rite, of recent institution, whereby a man may be absolved from the consequences of eating his *mwiko*, whether he does so accidentally or on purpose. He ceremonially eats his *mwiko* cooked by a medicine-man along with certain "medicine," after which neither he nor his descendants will suffer harm from breaking the food

taboo. This custom is most often practised in cases where the ban is placed on a common article of food and where the strict observance of the taboo might cause great inconvenience.

Sometimes a man will give up his old *mwiko* and take on another, and this may account for the fact that some of the most notorious gourmands possess the most uncommon and least inconvenient *mwiko!* On the whole, however, the Wabena do not encourage tampering with these taboos and generally regard it as a dangerous proceeding not lightly to be undertaken. In case of change, the original *mwiko* is supposed to be remembered and handed on as a useful guide for the avoidance of incest.

The Wabena do not believe in animal ancestors of a totemic type, and though there is one legend suggestive of such a belief they regard it merely as a good story not to be taken too seriously. It runs as follows:

"Once upon a time there was a man who had a bitch. Now he was very fond of this animal and made it his wife, but of course he did not tell anyone about that, because he would have been killed. One day the dog became pregnant and the man took it to his mother and said, 'Mother, my bitch is going to have puppies. I am going on a journey, look after her and see that she and her pups come to no harm.' And he went away.

"Now his mother did all she could for the dog and made it comfortable and put it in a warm place to have its pups. And it had them, but instead of pups it bore a human child, a boy. And when the boy was old enough to understand, his relations said to him, 'Do not eat dog, or you will become very ill. It is *mwiko.*' "

Three things in particular in Bena society appear to have militated against the preservation of the clan system. The first, mentioned above, is the existence side by side in the tribe in the past of matrilineal and patrilineal clans, a fact which must have given rise to some confusion and many anomalies.

The effect of their interaction is, however, difficult to gauge precisely, since it is impossible to discover exactly the relative authority assigned by custom to the mother's and the father's people in the individual clans before they came into contact with one another; but we shall presently observe their contacts reflected in the history of social terminology among the Wabena.

Secondly, the Bena educational system tended to weaken clan loyalty. In each generation hundreds of children of both sexes were taken away from their homes at about four or five years of age and brought up by the Mtema. Their numbers included children of all classes of society, even slaves, and of all clans. Ties formed in their new surroundings soon took the place of the clan ties they had been too young to appreciate when they left home. The tribal history they were taught in school only dealt with the notable people of clans bearing great names, and none save the young scions of those houses learned to respect clan ties or to remember their pedigrees, beyond the one or two generations kept in mind by the *tambiko* at family graves of comparatively recent date. The boys were first and foremost Wenyekongo, later to become fully fledged Wenyewaha, servants of the Mtema and members of a brotherhood which cut right across the clan system. Similarly, among the girls, few remembered much about their clans except the Waviari, and they learned only their Manga relationships. No distinctions were made among the rest of the Wenyekongo Wenyegendo: they were all the Mtema's wards, being trained as fitting wives for his warriors.

In the third place, the clan system tended to be upset by the absorption into the tribe of small bands of Wangoni and other immigrants, besides numbers of alien slaves.* These people, though often adopting Bena custom and perhaps in later generations forgetting their tribal name and calling

* It should be clear from Chap. VI that this does not refer only to the general liberation of slaves in recent years.

themselves Wabena,* were really strangers, outside the social grouping of society. Many of the slaves and their descendants, as we have seen, became honoured members of the community, and they and other strangers had somehow to be incorporated in its economic grouping, i.e. in the system of mutual help essential in the life of a primitive people who may at any moment find themselves in dire straits.

These three influences, all in their several ways detrimental to the clan system, were probably the main factors in the development of the characteristic group of Bena society, a group which fulfils the economic functions normally associated with the clan and which, for want of any appropriate English term, we must call by a native name—the *mlongo*.

A man's *walongo* are all his blood relatives, both maternal and paternal, his and their connections by marriage, those with whom he has sworn blood-brotherhood, and lastly any particular friends on whom he may rely for help in time of need, and who will similarly look to him for aid.† It is a Mutual Service Society. An *mlongo* is described as "one who will feed you ungrudgingly and from whom you can borrow." He is the friend who is the friend in need. The practical convenience of such a group in aiding the absorption of aliens into tribal life is obvious. Its existence also partly explains the mutual obligations still existing between the families of freed slaves and their former masters.

A man is at home anywhere within the circle of his *walongo*, and consequently destitution, except in times of general shortage, is an unknown phenomenon in Ubena. Within the group a man must play fair, and sharp practice is definitely regarded as discreditable: without it he may be as crafty as he likes, and a trick successfully played on an outsider is rather a good joke.

* E.g. Jumbe Lambalamba (see p. 36) indignantly repudiates any suggestion that he is an Mgoni, though some of his relatives, who only left the Songea area to join him in 1905–6, still call themselves Wangoni.

† Cf. Kiswahili *ndugu* in its widest sense.

The group may perhaps seem too vague and indefinite to warrant a place among social groupings, but though its outer edges are somewhat ill-defined and the friends on the fringe of it may change from time to time, it is a very real factor in Bena society. Strictly speaking, it should be defined as a man's maternal and paternal relatives, his connections by marriage, and his blood-brethren. Intimate friends are really, as it were, honorary members of it, the name *walongo* is given them affectionately as a courtesy title; but, of course, it is not very difficult or unusual for an honorary *mlongo* to be transformed into a real one by a marriage between the two families. Even excluding the friends from the definition, there does not appear to be any sufficiently comprehensive English term for this relationship group. The widest is Rivers' *kindred* or *taviti* in Eddystone Island,* which consists of "all those persons with whom genealogical relationship other than by marriage can be traced, whether through the father or the mother." But the Bena group goes further than recognising the bilateral family: it includes in-laws.

Perchance the observant reader remarked that on p. 186 we did not indicate our intention of using a *Bena* word for this group but, more vaguely, a *native* name. That phrase was purposefully vague, because *mlongo* is Kindamba, Kimbunga, Kipogoro, and Kingindo, but not Kibena. An examination of the Bena words for social groups will not only explain the adoption of the term *mlongo* here, but illuminate the process of development which has resulted in the system we find in Ubena of the Rivers to-day.

The Bena word for clan, meaning a unilateral group, is *lukolo*. Yet we find that the Wabena refer to all their *walongo* as their *wenyelukolo* (sing. *mnyelukolo* or *mlukolo*). They understand perfectly the wide meaning of the Kindamba word *walongo* and yet positively assert that their word for all these "brethren" (paternal relatives, maternal relatives, connections

* W. H. R. Rivers, *Social Organisation*, London, 1924, pp. 13–14.

by marriage, blood-brethren, and even intimate friends) is *wenyelukolo*. Upon closer inquiry, however, it was elicited that *wenyelukolo* did not always cover such a wide range of people. In the past it referred only to members of the kindred, i.e. paternal and maternal relatives, and, strictly speaking, that is its meaning to-day, the wider use being regarded by many older people as a slack modern way of talking. In true Kibena, a man should speak of his *wenyelukolo*, his *waganafu* (parents-in-law), and his *walamu* (brothers- and sisters-in-law); i.e. a distinction should be drawn between the kindred and connections by marriage. But since actually the group known to the surrounding tribes as the *mlongo* is now the characteristic group in Ubena, the Wabena have come to include all the people of that group as "brethren," extending the use of their own word *wenyelukolo* instead of adopting an alien word.

Let us probe a little further. They say their *wenyelukolo* are their relatives, whether maternal or paternal, but the similarity between this term and *lukolo*, the unilateral clan, is too obvious to be ignored. It seems that further back still a man's *wenyelukolo* were a unilateral group, the members of his own *lukolo*. That was simple enough until the patrilineal Bena clans, which formed the nucleus of the tribal organism, came into contact with matrilineal clans whom they dominated and absorbed into their political system. This process presently entailed a further process of social adjustment as the two kinds of clans began to intermarry, shaking down together as members of one tribe and experimenting with a diversity of compromises between their respective social systems. One result was that the word *wenyelukolo*, which of course meant paternal relatives to some members of the tribe and maternal relatives to others, came to mean both indiscriminately. Thus divorced from its old meaning and cut adrift from its root-word *lukolo*, it has been still further modified in modern parlance to cover all those whom the surrounding tribes call

walongo. The writers feared, however, that the similarity between the words *wenyelukolo* and *lukolo* might lead to confusion, so in the interests of clarity they decided to use the term *mlongo*, a word which is very well known and understood in Ubena, though not actually employed there except among people of Ndamba stock.

This brotherhood of mutual service is, of course, far from being an undifferentiated whole. Presenting a united front to the world when occasion demands and fulfilling certain economic and social functions as a whole, it is, none the less, subdivided by the normal relationships of the family and those created by marriage, and relations within it may be at times anything but harmonious. Within it, men and women may squabble bitterly over their rights and duties as members of the narrower groups it includes. The attempt to describe the give-and-take in everyday life among the lesser groups, and particularly between the two created by marriage, is reserved for other chapters, and here we shall content ourselves with considering how the *mlongo* contributes to the orderly working of such a heterogeneous society as we find in Ubena of the Rivers.

First, however, let us look at the Bena names for various relatives and see how they group them in their classificatory system (see p. 190).

Rearranging the relationship terms as below, we can see at a glance what relatives are classed together in Ubena, though in some cases it is hard to see on what basis the classification is made.

Kibena	*English Equivalents**
Dada.	Father, father's brother, mother's sister's husband, father's father's brother's son, father's mother's brother's son, mother's father's brother, father's mother's sister's son.

* Unless otherwise stated or impossible, these are for either a man or a woman speaking.

RELATIONSHIP NAMES*

English	Kibena	RECIPROCAL TERMS	
		English	Kibena
Father (m. or w.s.)	Dada	Son (m. or w.s.)	Mwana mgosi†
Mother (m. or w.s.)	Mayi	Daughter (m. or w.s.)	Mwana mdala‡
Sister (m.s.)	Muhaja	Brother (w.s.)	Muhaja
Sister (w.s.)	Muhaja	—	—
Brother (m.s.)	Muhaja	—	—
Also: elder brother (m.s.)	Mama	Younger brother (m.s.)	Munuŋuna
Father's brother§ (m. or w.s.) ..	Dada	Brother's son or daughter (m.s.) ..	Mwana
Father's sister (m. or w.s.)	Papa	Brother's son or daughter (w.s.) ..	Mwana
Father's brother's wife (m. or w.s.) ..	Mayi‖	Husband's brother's son or daughter	Mwana
Father's brother's son or daughter (m. or w.s.)	Muhaja	—	—
Also: father's elder brother's son (m.s.)	Mama	Father's younger brother's son (m.s.)	Munuŋuna
Father's sister's husband (m. or w.s.)	Kuku	Wife's brother's son or daughter ..	Mwichukulu

Father's sister's son or daughter (m. or w.s.)	Muhiji	Mother's brother's son or daughter (m. or w.s.)	Muhiji
Mother's brother (m. or w.s.) ..	Yaya	Sister's son or daughter (m.s.) ..	Mwipwa
Mother's brother's wife (m. or w.s.)	Mayi or Papa	Husband's sister's son or daughter	Mwana
Mother's sister (m. or w.s.)	Mayi	Sister's son or daughter (w.s.) ..	Mwana
Mother's sister's husband (m. or w.s.)	Dada	Wife's sister's son or daughter ..	Mwana
Mother's sister's son or daughter (m. or w.s.)	Muhaja	—	—
Father's father (m. or w.s.)	Kuku	Son's son (m. or w.s.)	Mwichukulu or Mwana
Father's mother (m. or w.s.) ..	Kuku	Son's daughter (m. or w.s.) ..	Mwichukulu or Mwana
Mother's father (m. or w.s.)	Papa	Daughter's son (m. or w.s.) ..	Mwichukulu or Mwana
Mother's mother (m. or w.s.) ..	Papa	Daughter's daughter (m. or w.s.) .	Mwichukulu or Mwana

* m.s. = man speaking. w.s. = woman speaking. "Brother" or "sister" means both elder and younger unless otherwise specified.

† *Mwana* = child, *mgosi* = man. ‡ *Mdala* = woman.

§ If there is need to distinguish between father's elder and younger brothers, the former is *dada* and the latter *dada mdodo* = little father.

|| Our informants explain that she is not really "mother," but is given the title as a mark of respect.

RELATIONSHIP NAMES—*continued*

English	Kibena	RECIPROCAL TERMS	
		English	Kibena
Father's father's brother (m. or w.s.)	Kuku	Brother's son's son or daughter (m.s.)	Mwichukulu
Father's father's brother's wife (m. or w.s.)	Papa	Husband's brother's son's son or daughter	Mwichukulu
Father's father's brother's son (m. or w.s.)	Dada	Father's brother's son's son or daughter (m. or w.s.)	Mwana
Father's father's brother's daughter (m. or w.s.)	Mayi		
Father's mother's brother (m. or w.s.)	Kuku	Sister's son's son or daughter (m.s.)	Mwichukulu
Father's mother's brother's wife (m. or w.s.)	Papa	Husband's sister's son's son or daughter	Mwichukulu
Father's mother's brother's son (m. or w.s.)	Dada	Father's sister's son's son or daughter (m. or w.s.)	Mwana
Father's mother's brother's daughter (m. or w.s.)	Mayi		

Mother's father's brother (m. or w.s.)	Dada	Brother's daughter's son or daughter (m.s.)	Mwana
Mother's father's brother's wife (m. or w.s.)	Mayi	Husband's brother's daughter's son or daughter	Mwana
Mother's father's brother's son (m. or w.s.)	Yaya	Father's brother's daughter's son or daughter (m.s.)	Mwipwa
Mother's father's brother's daughter (m. or w.s.)	Mayi	Father's brother's daughter's son or daughter (w.s.)	Mwana
Mother's mother's brother (m. or w.s.)	Kuku	Sister's daughter's son or daughter (m.s.)	Mwichukulu
Mother's mother's brother's wife (m. or w.s.)	Papa	Husband's sister's daughter's son or daughter	Mwichukulu
Mother's mother's brother's son or daughter (m. or w.s.)	Muhiji	Father's sister's daughter's son or daughter (m. or w.s.)	Muhiji
Father's father's sister (m. or w.s.) ..	Papa	Brother's son's son or daughter (w.s.)	Mwichukulu
Father's father's sister's husband (m. or w.s.)	Kuku	Wife's brother's son's son or daughter	Mwichukulu or Kilemba
Father's father's sister's son or daughter (m. or w.s.)	Muhiji	Mother's brother's son's son or daughter (m. or w.s.)	Muhiji

RELATIONSHIP NAMES—*continued*

English	Kibena	RECIPROCAL TERMS	
		English	Kibena
Father's mother's sister (m. or w.s.) ..	Papa	Sister's son's son or daughter (w.s.)	Mwichukulu
Father's mother's sister's husband (m. or w.s.)	Kuku	Wife's sister's son's son or daughter	Mwichukulu
Father's mother's sister's son (m. or w.s.)	Dada	Mother's sister's son's son or daughter (m. or w.s.)	Mwana or Mwichukulu
Father's mother's sister's daughter (m. or w.s.)	Papa		
Mother's father's sister (m. or w.s.) ..	Papa	Brother's daughter's son or daughter (w.s.)	Mwichukulu
Mother's father's sister's husband (m. or w.s.)	Kuku	Wife's brother's daughter's son or daughter	Mwichukulu
Mother's father's sister's son or daughter (m. or w.s.)	Muhiji	Mother's brother's daughter's son or daughter (m. or w.s.)	Muhiji
Mother's mother's sister (m. or w.s.)	Papa	Sister's daughter's son or daughter (w.s.)	Mwichukulu
Mother's mother's sister's husband	Kuku	Wife's sister's daughter's son or daughter	Mwichukulu

Mother's mother's sister's son (m. or w.s.)	Yaya	Mother's sister's daughter's son or daughter (m.s.)	Mwipwa
Mother's mother's sister's daughter (m. or w.s.)	Mayi	Mother's sister's daughter's son or daughter (w.s.)	Mwana
Father's father's brother's son's child (m. or w.s.)	Muhaja	—	—
Father's mother's sister's son's child (m. or w.s.)	Muhaja	—	—
Mother's father's brother's daughter's child (m. or w.s.)	Muhaja	—	—
Mother's mother's sister's daughter's child (m. or w.s.)	Muhaja*	—	—
Other second cousins	Muhiji	—	—
Husband	Mgosi or Bambo†	Wife	Mdala
		Mtema's Chief Wife	Dinesu
		Wife of a great man	Mwehe
Wife's father	Muganafu	Daughter's husband (m. or w.s.) ..	Muganafu
Wife's mother	Muganafu		

* The children of two "brothers" or two "sisters" call each other *muhaja* (brother or sister) to any number of generations.
† *Bambo* = title of respect.

RELATIONSHIP NAMES—*continued*

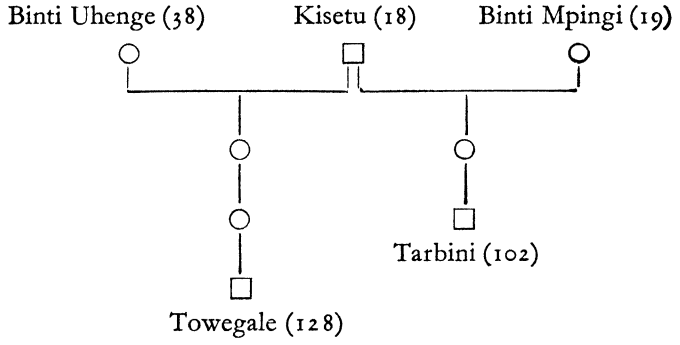
English	Kibena	RECIPROCAL TERMS	
		English	Kibena
Husband's father	Nyafiyara	Son's wife (m. or w.s.)	Kamwana
Husband's mother	Nyafiyara		
Wife's brother or sister	Mulamu	Sister's husband (m. or w.s.) ..	Mulamu
Wife's brother's wife	Mulamu	Husband's sister's husband ..	Mulamu
Wife's sister's husband	Mulamu	—	—
Husband's brother or sister	Mulamu	Brother's wife (m. or w.s.) ..	Mulamu
Husband's brother's wife	Mulamu	—	—
Wife's father's brother or sister ..	Muganafu	Brother's daughter's husband (m. or w.s.)	Muganafu
Wife's mother's brother or sister ..	Muganafu	Sister's daughter's husband (m. or w.s.)	Muganafu
Husband's father's brother or sister ..	Nyafiyara	Brother's son's wife (m. or w.s.) ..	Kamwana
Husband's mother's brother or sister	Nyafiyara	Sister's son's wife (m. or w.s.) ..	Kamwana
Son's wife's parents (m. or w.s.) ..	Kilemba	Daughter's husband's parents (m. or w.s.)	Kilemba

Kibena	*English Equivalents*
Mayi.	Mother, mother's sister, mother's brother's wife (also called Papa), mother's father's brother's wife or daughter, mother's mother's sister's daughter, father's brother's wife (as title of respect), father's father's or mother's brother's daughter.
Mwana.	Child, brother's child, sister's child (w.s.), child's child (also called Mwichukulu), brother's daughter's child (m.s.), father's brother's or sister's son's child, father's brother's daughter's child (w.s.), mother's sister's son's child (also called Mwichukulu), mother's sister's daughter's child (w.s.), wife's sister's child, husband's brother's or sister's child, husband's brother's daughter's child.
Muhaja.	Brother, sister, father's brother's child, mother's sister's child, father's father's brother's son's child, father's mother's sister's son's child, mother's mother's sister's daughter's child, mother's father's brother's daughter's child.
Mama.	Elder brother (m.s.), father's elder brother's son (m.s.).
Munuŋuna.	Younger brother (m.s.), father's younger brother's son (m.s.).
Papa.	Father's sister, mother's brother's wife* (also called Mayi), mother's father or mother, father's father's or mother's sister, mother's father's or mother's sister, father's father's or mother's brother's wife, mother's mother's brother's wife, father's mother's sister's daughter.
Kuku.	Father's father or mother, father's father's or mother's brother, mother's mother's brother, father's sister's husband, father's father's or mother's sister's husband, mother's father's or mother's sister's husband.

* With cross-cousin marriage, father's sister and mother's brother's wife may, of course, be one and the same person; likewise mother's brother (Yaya) and father's sister's husband (Kuku).

Kibena	*English Equivalents*
Mwichukulu.	Son's or daughter's child (also called Mwana), brother's son's child, brother's daughter's child (w.s.), sister's child's child, mother's sister's son's child (also called Mwana), wife's brother's child, wife's brother's son's child (also called Kilemba), wife's brother's daughter's child, wife's sister's child's child, husband's brother's son's child, husband's sister's child's child.
Muhiji.	Father's sister's child, mother's brother's child, father's father's sister's child (and its reciprocal), mother's mother's brother's child (and its reciprocal), mother's father's sister's child (and its reciprocal).
Yaya.	Mother's brother, mother's father's brother's son, mother's mother's sister's son.
Mwipwa.	Sister's child (m.s.), father's brother's daughter's child (m.s.), mother's sister's daughter's child (m.s.).
Mgosi or Bambo.	Husband.
Mdala.	Wife.
Dinesu.	Mtema's Chief Wife.
Mwehe.	A great man's wife (a term of respect).
Muganafu.	Wife's father and mother (and reciprocals), wife's father's or mother's brother or sister (and reciprocals).
Nyafiyara.	Husband's father and mother, husband's father's or mother's brother or sister.
Kamwana.	Son's wife, brother's or sister's son's wife.
Mulamu.	Wife's brother or sister (and reciprocals), wife's brother's wife (and reciprocal), wife's sister's husband, husband's brother or sister (and reciprocals), husband's brother's wife.
Kilemba.	Son's wife's parents (and reciprocals), wife's brother's son's child (also called Mwichukulu).

Sometimes, of course, generations get mixed and relationship terms more appropriate to the relative ages of the people using them may be substituted for the true ones. For instance, Towegale inherited his seventh wife, Samweti binti Mbago (135), from a man whom he called his *mama* (elder brother), but who was really an absurdly young *yaya* (maternal uncle), for Towegale's mother also called him brother. The relationship was as follows:



Similarly, Ndaliwali was called Binti Bilali's (39) maternal uncle because she was of suitable age to marry his son Mtengera, but really Ndaliwali and she were cross-cousins of the same generation.

Where no such adjustment for age takes place, somewhat amusing situations may arise. The writers observed two middle-aged women kneel to greet quite a young woman, who received the mark of respect as her due, with nonchalant self-possession. The matter was soon explained. "These are my children! Their father and my husband are brothers, the sons of two sisters." Again, a half-grown youth addressed (half jokingly, it must be admitted) a young man only a few years his senior as "father," because the latter had taken to wife the young sister of the former's mother. But joke or no joke, the "father" had to feed his "son" when called upon by him to do so, when they were both travelling with the writers.

Curious twists sometimes occur, too, in genealogies through the inheritance of widows with children, especially if they are young widows of an elderly man and are taken by men of the next generation. Yet another kind of twist is exemplified by the case of Towegale and Tarbini, if we assume for one moment that Bleki had borne Tarbini a daughter instead of a son. That daughter would properly be Towegale's cross-cousin, the child of his maternal uncle, and one of his marriageables. But the uncle-nephew relationship, though remembered, had been replaced by that of brothers, and so this hypothetical daughter of Tarbini's would have been regarded as Towegale's daughter and a non-marriageable, even before her mother became Towegale's wife.

Let us turn, however, to more general considerations. We have already drawn attention to the heterogeneous nature of Bena society. The relations between a man and the group with which he is connected by descent and by marriage vary, within wide limits, from place to place and family to family. The general tendency is towards the consolidation of the authority of the father's people, but in many cases, especially among the conservative folk of the more remote parts of the country, the mother and her relatives still rule the roost. Matrilocal marriage has not yet died out altogether, and within the memory of men in the prime of life it was the general rule, to which the warrior class was the only exception. The Wenyewaha had entered, as it were, an order wherein there was only one authority, the Mtema himself. He was to them father and mother and maternal uncle and father-in-law, all in one, particularly to those who married either his wards from the girls' school or Waviari who had not gone to the school. Apart from the special case of the Wenyewaha, however, the relative authority of the wife's and the husband's groups, and of the maternal and paternal relatives, is extremely variable to-day, a matter for adjustment according to the circumstances of individual cases. This would seem inevitable in

a tribe where matrilineal and patrilineal clans have existed side by side and intermarried. Some sort of compromise had to be evolved, and not unnaturally the solution of the problem in any given case depended very largely on the relative social positions of the two groups. Whichever enjoyed higher standing and wielded more power socially could impose its authority on the newly established household. The same principle was at work in all classes of society, from royalty down to rival fathers and uncles in the humblest social circles, but at the lower end of the scale, where there was often little to choose between the undistinguished obscurity of both groups, there was till recently a definite bias in favour of the maternal relatives. In the present stage of transition the bias is steadily if gradually shifting in favour of the father.*

The Bena social system would thus appear singularly disorganised and incoherent. The wide range of variation found therein seems to make a mockery of the heading of this chapter, "Social Organisation." But it is just here that the larger group, the *mlongo*, steps in to save the situation. All the relatives named in the foregoing schedule are *walongo*. Whatever their personal relations one with another and however widely those relations may differ from one family to another, all their manœuvrings for position take place within the more comprehensive group of the *walongo*, which thus forms the constant in Bena society. The significance of other terms varies: the word *mlongo* has one meaning throughout the tribe. If a man refers, for instance, to his maternal uncle or his father-in-law, we need to know much more about his circumstances before we can appreciate exactly what that means to him and how much the relationship really affects his life. The lack of uniformity greatly diminishes the descriptive value of the terms taken by themselves; they require to be explained and qualified. On the other hand, the word *mlongo* always means the same thing, "the friend in need." Certainly

* This whole subject is more fully discussed in Chap. XV.

this does not take us very far, describing only vaguely the relations existing between the people concerned, and in any given case we should want to know more about them, filling in the picture by placing them in their correct subdivisions within the *mlongo*. But, vague as it may be, it is at least the same in every case. No matter what the particular circumstances of a man's life, the word *mlongo* denotes exactly the same to him as it does to his neighbour, in contrast with the wide range of variation in the significance of many other terms. Summing up, we may say that this comprehensive group constitutes the framework within which all the diverse and often incompatible influences at work in Bena society may have full play, without destroying the economic co-operation and social solidarity essential to the life of the tribe.

CHAPTER X

CRIME, COURTS, AND SANCTIONS

REALISING that tribal law is a subject which cannot be confined to one chapter, let us here study some of its features with a view to making clear certain general principles which underlie the ordering of all social relations among the Wabena. Different branches of the law belong to different chapters, and the regulation, for instance, of marriage and family life or of economic activities is just as much a part of tribal law as anything we shall consider in this chapter. At the same time the essential unity of the law must not be overlooked: to the Mbena there are no divisions in it, all of it is neither more nor less than the rules of behaviour ordained by the ancestors and he does not analyse it. Hartland says of primitive law: "The law is one; every part of it is equally consecrated by long use, by religion, and by the instinctive submission of every member of the tribe."* "By long use"—yes; "by religion"—yes; but "by the instinctive submission of every member of the tribe"—most emphatically, no. The absence of articulate criticism implies neither meek acceptance of irksome rules nor blind obedience to them, and on closer observation apparently instinctive submission stands revealed as the product of sanctions whose efficiency is no whit diminished by the fact that they are both indirect and unperceived by those whom they constrain.

Let us begin with those laws whose sanctions are obvious, namely, those dealing with offences punishable in the courts of the Mtema and his subordinates. We shall take stock not only of what the Wabena prescribe as the minimum of good behaviour, below which a man shall not sink unpunished, and what penalties enforce that minimum, but also, as far

* E. S. Hartland, *Primitive Law*, p. 8.

as possible, of how far what is *said* to be done coincides with actual practice and how far society winks at misdoing.

Treason, spying, and similar offences against the safety of the tribe or its leader normally met with the usual and obvious punishment of death, for the offender was a public danger. Cowardice in battle, on the other hand, was not necessarily treated thus, in spite of the words of the war oath. The alternative penalty was none the less a dire one in its way, and such as to deter any man who felt inclined to shirk his proper task in time of war. Above all things the African loathes ridicule,* and ridicule was the reward of the coward who escaped death. He "became a woman" and, accompanied by the jeers of his former fellows, performed the domestic tasks pertaining to the sphere of the women. That was the public part of his punishment. The unofficial part, his reception by his womenfolk on returning home, is left to the imagination: Bena ladies know well how to make their displeasure felt. Having delivered themselves of much eloquence, his outraged wives would depart with all haste for the bosoms of their own families, and it would be long indeed ere he lived down the disgrace.

A far more serious crime against the security of society as a whole was the practice of witchcraft, the use of supernatural forces for anti-social purposes. Nominally the punishment was death. In practice, however, the supreme penalty was rarely inflicted in spite of the large number of cases in which witchcraft was proved, or alleged to have been proved. Very few of these cases were, in fact, ever taken before the Mtema, the only man who had the power to sentence a person to death, because the complainants knew full well the difficulty of proving the charge to his satisfaction. Their fear was

* One Bena acquaintance of the writer's, the son of Mtengera I's Mzagira wa Tambiko (see p. 75), has exiled himself from the tribe ever since 1905 for fear of ridicule. He was among the Wambunga at the outbreak of the Maji-Maji Rebellion, and was forced by them to drink the magic water, which his own people repudiated as a fraud.

twofold. If they were unsuccessful, they would go in terror thereafter of the revenge of the enraged wizard—assuming they genuinely believed the accused was one—who would redouble his efforts to encompass their destruction. Secondly, if the case was hard to decide, the Mtema would order the poison ordeal, and both accuser and accused had to drink the poison—an effective precaution against false accusations! In most cases their evidence against the accused probably rested principally on the divinations of some medicine-man and, unless he had a very good reputation and his powers and veracity were well known to the Mtema himself, these divinations counted for little when the case came to the Mtema's court. The elders of the tribe realised full well how extremely dangerous were prosecutions for witchcraft, what an opening they might give for the satisfaction of personal spite. Consequently people were seldom convicted, other than notorious sorcerers whose activities had really become a public danger. Unless very sure of his case, then, the complainant usually resorted to private and secret methods of warding off the supernatural attacks of his enemy. He retaliated with counter-magic, a method that greatly appealed to him. It was, in the first place, secret—a surprise attack on the enemy. Besides, the complainant felt that a supernatural danger demanded supernatural remedies, and that though the sorcerer's execution might satisfy the lust for vengeance, it was neither here nor there so far as personal safety was concerned, seeing that his inimical spirit would be at work in the unseen world.

The possibility of paying the death penalty, while admittedly it did not stamp out witchcraft, kept it rigidly within bounds. An occasional execution, when any grew too bold and, possibly, became a social danger by the use of real poisons, served to remind the more restrained practitioners of the black art that society only tolerated them (or, rather, turned a blind eye to their existence) so long as they did not make themselves a serious nuisance. Theoretically, of course, every detected

wizard was put to death, but yet every Mbena knew where to find one if he was in search of "medicine" for some nefarious purpose, and the discreet sorcerer might remain in business undisturbed for years.

Another striking instance of the difference between what is done and what is said to be done is found in the case of incest, at least as regards incest between parallel cousins. This offence, of course, is not only a crime but a sin, involving all manner of supernatural sanctions in addition to any punishment the courts may inflict. But we shall see in a moment that, in the type of incest cited above, the chief consideration in practice is not to be found out by society, and the fact that the ancestors know what is going on behind the scenes does not seem to strike terror into the transgressors' hearts, nor apparently does the knowledge of their pollution disturb them unduly.

The penalty for incest was at one time death for the man, but this was later commuted to a fine of cattle, one bull to the Mtema and one to the guardian of the girl. After the migration to Ubena of the Rivers, where few people were able to keep cattle any longer, fines had to be paid in other media, and in quite recent years the scale has been definitely fixed in money. The guilty couple must also be ceremonially cleansed by a medicine-man, who kills a dog with appropriate words and gives part of its entrails to the man and the girl who eat them raw. It may be noted in passing that the dog is (or was, before the principal men of the royal family adopted a superficial Mohammedanism) the food of kings, a delicacy of which none but royalty may partake save at this ceremony.

Let us see exactly what constitutes incest in Bena society, remarking specially certain points about "mothers."

A man commits incest if he has intercourse with his mother or her sisters, his grandmother or her sisters, his father's sisters, his own sisters, his sisters' daughters—using the word "sister" in its classificatory sense—or any women who rank

as his children. But it must be noted that even his nearest male relatives in the senior generations have wives with whom illicit relations on his part would constitute adultery only, and not incest. For instance, there may even be women in the home circle, in his father's household, his father's wives, whom he addresses as "mother," who yet really belong to the class of his marriageables, and who may one day be inherited by him. Some of his father's wives may, of course, be his own mother's sisters and therefore taboo to him absolutely, but the point we would stress is that not all women whom he calls "mother" are necessarily his non-marriageables. Cases of adultery between a man and his father's wife, his "mother," have come to the notice of the writers, and while this is naturally regarded as an aggravated form of adultery, it is certainly not regarded as incest. Again, the sisters of his father's wives are a man's "little mothers," but they may also be his marriageables. For instance, Ndaliwali married Semukomi binti Uhenge (34) and also her brother's daughter, another Binti Uhenge (36): his eldest son by Semukomi, Mtengera I (56), married Binti Sangaramu (62), the "sister" of his father's second Uhenge wife. As the daughter of his (Mtengera's) maternal uncle she was also, of course, a highly eligible cross-cousin. Again, Kiwanga I (94) married a Binti Kidai (mother of Rufu) and his son Kiwanga II married her sister.

With regard to a man's in-laws, the position is as follows:

1. *Same generation.*—His brothers' and classificatory "brothers' " wives (*walamu*) as such are taboo to him not on the ground of incest but only of adultery, though of course some of them may be in the class of his non-marriageables on account of some other relationship.

2. *Different generations.*—Intercourse between a man and any of his sons' wives, using *son* in its wide sense, is a heinous offence, for the daughter-in-law is regarded as in some sense his child—*kamwana*; and an even worse form of incest is that

between a man and his mother-in-law. The mother-in-law taboo and father-daughter incest are two aspects of the one rule that a man may never have intercourse both with a woman and also with the daughter she has borne. This holds good irrespective of the existence of a legal marriage between him and either woman. Indeed, if he so much as makes advances to the one with a view to intimacy, subsequent advances to the other are deeply disapproved as partaking of the nature of incest*; and so strong is feeling in this matter, that if a man commits this crime with the daughter of one of his wives, that wife can obtain a divorce *without* the customary return of bride-wealth (see Chap. XV).

Laws relating to incest have frequently been cited as good examples of the inflexible code of the savage, laws which above all others he follows blindly and submits to instinctively, positively shuddering at the thought of breaking them. But this is not always so. As far as the writers' knowledge of the Wabena extends, the more heinous forms of incest—mother-son, father-daughter, brother-sister (the children of one father or one mother), mother- and son-in-law, father- and daughter-in-law—are indeed extremely rare and quite genuinely regarded with horrified disgust. But the incestuous union of a man with his parallel-cousin, his "sister," is by no means as rare as one would expect if the savage were the law-abiding fellow many would have him. In all recent cases, the offenders had to face a considerable amount of ridicule, and the men were fined according to tribal custom. Many people displayed righteous indignation over these terrible crimes, and old men preached homilies on the depravity of the present generation, but one could not help feeling that behind it society laughed to itself and regarded the culprits not so much as criminals as fools for being found out. The old men gave vent to remarkably contradictory statements regarding the entire absence of such offences in their young days and the

* For other features of the mother-in-law taboo, see Chap. XV.

punishment the (apparently) non-existent offenders always incurred.

We find, then, in Ubena that incest is theoretically an unthinkable offence which sends cold shudders down society's sensitive spine, but in practice one form of it is certainly not so very uncommon as the tribesmen would have us believe. Exactly how frequently it occurs is difficult to say, because almost the only cases that come to light are those in which the woman becomes pregnant. Threatened with the supposedly terrible dangers of adulterous child-birth if she does not divulge the names of any men other than her husband with whom she had relations about the time of conception, she dare not keep silence, and so her sin is found out.

Adultery is regarded simply as theft of marital rights without any idea of pollution. It is admittedly very common nowadays, and its alleged increase is attributed by the elders chiefly to the abolition of private vengeance since the advent of the white man and to the lack of discipline resulting from the decay of the old tribal schools. The elders to-day insist that adultery was almost unknown in former times, and was such a terrible disgrace that the few cases which arose were never heard in open court, but in the strictest privacy. Formerly, of course, a woman's husband was often away fighting or hunting* when her infidelity was supposed to jeopardise his life, and if he met with any mishap searching inquiries might be made into her conduct. Adultery may therefore have been somewhat less frequent than in these less dangerous days, but was it as rare as the elders make out? The history of the penalty inflicted suggests, at least, that it is not quite so exclusively the offence of the present unworthy generation as they would like to believe. Once upon a time the man who was convicted of adultery was put to death, but Mtengera I, hard pressed by enemies and needing every

* Many an unsuccessful fisherman to-day still returns home wrathfully to find out what his wife has been doing.

warrior he had, found that this deprived him of valuable men whom he could ill spare, so he did away with the death penalty. His action and its admitted reason hardly imply that the offence was extremely rare. Moreover, there are old people who, in confidence, have been known to admit that "of course, we did just the same when we were young, but we weren't so indecently blatant about it!" It was not advisable to be anything but very discreet in the days of private vengeance and the death penalty! And the Mtema, who appreciates that human nature does not change overmuch, and that every generation is inclined to think the one below it deplorable while forgetting the peccadilloes of the past—even he maintains that adultery was rare in the past, but just *because* it was done so secretly. "Do you not see? What is done in secret does not exist. Therefore there was no adultery."

Mtengera altered the penalty to slavery or, in the case of a rich man, a heavy fine. The woman went unpunished—so far as the law was concerned. Now the guilty man pays twenty shillings as compensation to the wronged husband, the amount being increased if pregnancy has resulted,* while habitual offenders of either sex† are liable to imprisonment for a month. Before these cases are brought to court, the husband of the woman sends an intermediary to his wife's lover to make the accusation against him, and if the latter admits his guilt he sends back a small present to the husband, as a token that he is willing to pay compensation before the court. The social aspect of adultery, the attitude of husbands and wives towards it at the present time, and the legitimacy of children will be discussed in Chap. XVI.

Murder, which is not now within the jurisdiction of the native courts, could formerly be punished by private vengeance. In fact, the dead man's relatives were theoretically in honour

* See pp. 316 and 372.

† By habitual offenders is meant, of course, those who are constantly coming before the courts. Nearly every man and woman is, in fact, an habitual offender. See Chap. XVI.

bound to avenge his death by the death of the murderer or one of his relatives. They fully realised, however, that private vengeance, honourable though it might be, would start a vendetta and drag them into a lasting quarrel for which they usually had little or no desire. It was therefore customary for the family elders to follow the safer and incidentally more lucrative course of "having pity on the offender." They would agree with his relatives that he should go before the Mtema and pay blood-money* instead of forfeiting his life. The compensation was paid in cattle when possible, and the number payable depended on the status of the deceased. If the culprit and his relatives were too poor to pay, either a rich man would pay for him and he became the slave of his benefactor or, if no one was willing to help him, he was put to death. This procedure applied to all fines and was an effective way of preventing deliberate default in the days when there was no such thing as imprisonment!

Wounding and lesser assaults, insult and slander, all rendered the offender liable to a fine, most of which went to compensate the injured party and the rest to the official in whose court the case was tried. Fines were divided thus in all cases save those in which the Mtema was personally concerned as the injured party, e.g. in cases of perjury (see the oath below), concealing ivory, disobedience to the royal command. In such cases the imposition of a fine was regarded as a mild alternative punishment, perjury usually leading to the death of the offender and concealing ivory very often doing so, while disobedience to royalty normally entailed enslavement.

Theft among primitive people who have little beyond the necessaries of life, to whom a small loss often means hardship and whose property is for the most part easily accessible if anyone sets out to steal it, must needs be regarded as a serious offence and severely punished in order to secure some measure

* *Lifimba* = (payment for) a corpse.

of security. Formerly the culprit's thieving hands were tied in bundles of damp grass and placed over a fire until terribly and permanently injured, so that he was not only branded for ever but also physically debarred from living the only life proper to a man—that of a warrior.

Minor offences might be punished by the pillory, a thrashing, a fine, or the performance of a few days' manual labour for the benefit of the local authorities, e.g. in the fields or in connection with building.

The poison ordeal could only be held at the express bidding of the Mtema and was seldom used save in cases of witchcraft, but resort might on occasions be had to it when some other offence punishable with death was in dispute. If the accused died, he was obviously guilty and deserved to die. If the accuser died, the accused was obviously innocent of the charge so spitefully brought against him, and he who brought it deserved his fate. If both died, well, presumably the accused was innocent in this particular instance, but he must obviously be a wicked criminal, so anyway society was rid of two Bad Men, one criminal and one false accuser—unless, of course, either or both had substituted an unlucky slave to take the poison for him. In cases of substitution the Mtema dealt with the principals as seemed good to him in view of the result of the ordeal. The property of those who died under ordeal or of those who were put to death by command of the Mtema was not forfeit, but was inherited in the ordinary way by the rightful heirs.

Each Mtwa Mwenyelutenana had his court and heard the disputes of his own people, passing on the more serious cases to the Mtema's court, which was also a court of appeal. These courts are still in existence under the present régime, though offences such as murder, rape, etc., no longer come within their jurisdiction. In the past the Mzagira in charge of a village also had his court for the hearing of lesser cases, and we have already mentioned (Chap. VI) the right of the

Mtema's chief wife to adjudicate in minor matters when travelling through the country.

Besides the courts there are informal groups of village and family elders who, though they have no power to enforce their judgments or to inflict punishments, will often be consulted as to the rights and wrongs of disputes, especially in matrimonial quarrels and questions of bride-wealth and similar payments. They are, as it were, the local lawyers and they argue out the points at issue in the light of tribal law, in what in our terminology would be civil cases, and the conclusion they reach and the advice they give will often produce a settlement without recourse to the courts proper.

Cases are heard in open court and anyone interested may attend. The proceedings are quite informal, consisting largely of a free discussion of the case by all the elders and witnesses present, and the advice of a number of counsellors is often sought before judgment is given. An interesting point is the extremely wide range of admissible evidence. Facts which to us would appear entirely irrelevant are not only admitted as evidence but often carry very great weight. To begin with, the social status of every witness is taken into account. For instance, in the past a freeman's word was on the whole good against that of a slave. Then the witness's character is also of great importance, likewise that of accuser and accused, while hearsay evidence often figures prominently. It may seem to us that justice cannot be done under such conditions, but we must remember that in Bena society everyone knows everyone else so well that much evidence which would otherwise be unreliable or misleading is of real assistance in arriving at a fair decision. With its intimate and informal atmosphere, the court is not unlike an enlarged family council.

To-day appeal lies from the courts of the Watwa Wenyelutenana to the Mtema, from him to the District Officer, from him to the Provincial Commissioner, and finally to H.E. the Governor. The old Bena system, too, made provision

for redress when a miscarriage of justice occurred. Any man could appeal from the lower courts to the Mtema, and he could further take a sacred oath by tearing the Mtema's robes or breaking some object belonging to him. Thereupon the case assumed a totally different character. However trivial it had originally been, it now became a matter of life and death, in which the loser and all witnesses found to have lied after the oath had been taken were put to death for their perjury or, if very fortunate, they might escape with a heavy fine to the Mtema.* The oath could be taken in any case, however weighty, however petty, whether (in our terms) civil or criminal, and whether the Mtema's court was sitting as a court of the first instance or as a court of appeal. Taking the oath was a really serious business, not to be lightly or frivolously undertaken, and there is no doubt that in its day it did much to prevent things going awry in the courts. In effect it was a conditional curse, he who took it saying by implication, "The Mtema's *majestas* has been set at nought. He has been insulted. If I am the man responsible for this act of blasphemy and treason, let me perish at the Mtema's own hands."

So far we have only described some of those breaches of tribal rules that are dealt with by the legal machinery of the courts. Enough has been said to indicate how the system works. What is too often forgotten is that the courts are but a small part, the most obvious, perhaps, but not necessarily the most important part, of the mechanism for regulating social relations. Sanctions other than legal ones exist to keep the Mbena in the strait path and to assist the maintenance of discipline.

If asked why he observes any particular rule he invariably replies, "It is the custom of my forefathers. My ancestors

* In serious cases, even when no oath was taken, false accusers and liars might be put to death, unless there were so many people involved that it was rather inconvenient!

would be angered if I did otherwise." It is, however, a great pity that statements of this kind often seem to have been taken at their face value and, since they fit perfectly into the mosaic of beliefs concerning the supernatural, are accepted without further examination to see if there be nothing more behind them than a fear of ancestral wrath. As we have had occasion to remark before, the Mbena is not a hypocrite, he is sincere in all he says on this subject. He honestly believes he follows custom for fear of supernatural punishment, but it is significant that whenever the rules of behaviour prescribed by custom run contrary to strong inclinations, the threat of the spirits' anger is not by itself sufficient to keep him on the right road. In matters which do not greatly inconvenience him, the supernatural sanction alone undoubtedly effects a fair degree of conformity with custom, but the position is very different when custom seeks to control powerful desires and instincts.

In order to understand more clearly the limited influence of supernatural sanctions, let us examine the nature of the tribal code. Though considered by the tribesmen as sacred and inspired, it is, broadly speaking, the summation of tribal experience. This aspect of the subject is often lost sight of, owing to a very natural tendency on our part to judge primitive institutions and their value to the tribe by our own standard of values. We look at a given custom, fail to grasp its significance to the savage or its historical associations, and call it silly, meaningless, childish. That is from our point of view, but how different it appears to the savage applying his standards, and how different, often, to us if we take the trouble to study his outlook intelligently and with understanding! Our world and his are built up on entirely different hypotheses, and it is obviously unfair to divorce his ideas of what conduces to the common good from their proper intellectual environment and to judge them by our standards. Our ideas of good sometimes appear to him equally silly

and occasionally extremely dangerous when applied to his social system. To sit in judgment on standards of values, however, is not the task of the anthropologist. We would merely point out, in passing, that unless primitive ideas, codes, and institutions are sympathetically studied in relation to physical and mental environment and economic conditions, and their merits in appropriate circumstances appreciated as well as their weak points, the best-intentioned "improvements" imposed from without are liable to produce surprising and ungratifying results. The reaction to the stimulus may even be the very opposite of what was intended.

Custom, then, wrapped in a cloak of supernatural inspiration, is really made up of rules that have in men's experience been found to work, and to its essentially practical nature it owes most of its binding power. Hobgoblins and ghosts, spirits and spooks, have their part to play in enforcing it, but they are only effective because they are compelling people to conform not to a dead "cake of custom" but to a living system which, if damaged, reacts at once like any other living organism to repair that damage as far as possible.

Many writers have stressed the conservatism of primitive society. They have marvelled at the very slow rate at which custom changes, often failing to realise that as custom is the fruit of tribal experience, it cannot change very noticeably while the tribal environment remains as it has been for centuries. The Wabena are certainly conservative provided conditions do not alter, but when necessary they are far from incapable of adaptation to new social, political, economic, or physical conditions; they managed to adapt themselves quickly to their new environment after leaving the hills for the swampy river country, while their reactions to the new influences of the past forty years are, it is hoped, portrayed in the course of this book.

In some cases changes in tribal law are deliberate, by order of the Mtema, and it is frankly admitted that a strong and

tactful ruler can decree alterations even though the law is regarded as the expression of the sacred will of the ancestors; for he is their inspired representative—but he must be diplomatic about it. In other cases, the majority of cases, change is wrought not by royal decree but by the compromises and agreements and evasions of common people, and is only recognised after it has been accomplished in practice. This is particularly noticeable at present in the changes which have occurred or are now taking place in marriage laws and customs. During the last forty years conditions in Ubena have been altering comparatively rapidly as the Wabena have come more and more into contact with the outside world, and corresponding changes have been taking place in tribal life—a process which, given favourable circumstances and sufficient time, does not necessarily involve the disintegration of the tribe. Towegale has embarked on an attempt to show that reconstruction on conservative lines can be combined with progress.

The apparent absence of any compelling force belonging to this world to ensure the observance of customs which are not actually enforced through the courts has given rise to one of the most fundamental errors in anthropology. Finding that people do on the whole follow custom and seeing no obvious sanctions, writers have divided the honours between the fear of the supernatural and the law-abiding nature of the savage. They have endowed him with an innate virtue, not usually possessed by his civilised brother, by reason of which he instinctively, spontaneously, and without coercion of this world conforms to the rules of society, however distasteful they may be to him. Thus we read of the "chains of immemorial tradition": "These fetters are accepted by him as a matter of course; he never seeks to break forth. To some of them there are definite sanctions, to others none; but he does not distinguish between them. To the civilised man the same observations may very often apply; but the civilised man is

too restless, too desirous of change, too eager to question his environment, to remain long in the attitude of acquiescence. By the action of many generations his reverence for the thing that is, and for the wisdom of his ancestors which produced it, has been sensibly reduced; and he has no compunction in challenging either the one or the other, whereas it does not occur to the savage to do so, or if it does he does not dare to attempt it."*

So far as the Wabena are concerned, this picture of the primitive is entirely misleading. Not only does it frequently occur to them to "break forth" from the chains of custom, but the apparent lack of coercion when they do obey the law in cases where it clashes with their inclinations is an illusion. Instinctive obedience to rules that are onerous and demand considerable self-restraint and self-sacrifice is contrary to human nature, while to say that the Mbena fails to distinguish between those rules which can be broken with impunity and those which cannot would be to deny him the intelligence he undoubtedly possesses, besides being contrary to all the evidence. If his personal inclinations are in conflict with custom, he is not prepared to sacrifice the former provided he can see any way of avoiding unpleasant consequences. This is not the first time we have come up against this point and it will probably not be the last. It is like a theme-song: it runs through all the acts. Its importance has been so borne in upon the authors in the course of their field-work that they feel no apology is needed for its constant recurrence.

It is obvious that the error has crept in very largely through failure to distinguish clearly between the theoretical norm of behaviour and the actual standard to which the individual manages to attain. Writers describe the rules of society in detail, but too often omit to mention whether or not those rules are strictly observed, their silence on this point being taken by others to imply an observance which often does not

* Hartland, op. cit., pp. 138–9.

in fact exist. For example, the bald statement "Bena custom demands that the house in which a suicide has occurred shall be destroyed together with all its contents" is true as far as it goes. But it wears a rather different air when we add that there are well-known ways of evading the rule in the case of valuable objects or a particularly desirable residence. These methods are not usually talked about, but nevertheless they exist, and serve to show that the "instinctive" submission of the savage is but a haze which hides the actual facts behind. An old medicine man admitted that much of his time was taken up in assisting people who had broken some taboo or other, and who wished by appropriate ceremonies to placate the offended ancestors and thus to escape the consequences of their actions. The student of Bena life is constantly meeting instances of disregard by individuals of the prescribed rules of behaviour. For example, Sagamaganga had much to gain in this world's rewards by assassinating Mtema Kiwanga I, but on the other hand he *ought* to have trembled before the supernatural consequences of such an act. Would not the powerful spirits of the departed Watema overwhelm him with terrible punishments? Could any good come of such foolhardy and impious defiance? Would he not be smitten with frightful disease or die some horrible death? But he was not deterred. Again, intercourse with a menstruating woman is most strictly taboo, and yet there are certain doctors famous for the excellent medicine they sell to ward off the dreadful effects of breaking this rule. And to take but one example from history of how supernatural sanctions may be backed up by worldly ones, we saw in Chap. III how Mtengera I refrained from attempting to seize the religious as well as the secular power of his weaker brother Mzawira, and how, though the Wabena attribute his moderation and patience entirely to his great respect for the will of the ancestors, obedience to their decree was for him the way to worldly power and the fulfilment of his highest ambitions, while disobedience would almost

certainly have led to trouble with his brethren and followers and the frustration of his purpose. For the most part, however, the real sanctions behind the supernatural, in the everyday life of the people, are economic and will be discussed in subsequent chapters.

Taking everything into consideration, we may well ask ourselves, "Where is the inflexible code of the savage, where his spontaneous obedience or unquestioning acquiescence?" And the answer is, surely, "They are anthropological myths!" An account of Bena society could be written, true as far as it went, to show all these alleged phenomena of primitive life, but it would present only a small portion of the truth and would therefore be sadly misleading. Many primitive institutions have suffered thus at the hands of the anthropologist who, by failing to see things in perspective and by taking them out of their context, has too often given us a picture which is really a travesty of the facts and which depicts a state of affairs that cannot commend itself to our intelligence or, for that matter, to the savage's.

When we look for the effective sanctions behind tribal custom in Ubena we find that the basis of tribal life is a complicated system of mutual obligations with corresponding rights, binding each member of the tribe to his fellows. Briefly and vulgarly, it is a case of "I scratch you and you scratch me!" The whole is a network of duties and privileges, and dislocation of the system in one part upsets others not immediately or obviously connected with it, for the different parts are interdependent. One man's neglect of his duty may make life uncomfortable for a number of people in all sorts of ways until the matter is adjusted. If I fail you in something you have a right to expect from me, you or society on your behalf will sooner or later pay me back, directly or indirectly. I have disturbed the balance of your life, and the balance of mine will surely suffer to restore equilibrium. I may suffer material discomfort and hardship, or I may suffer

loss of dignity and prestige, things very dear to me. The dread of "losing face" is an exceptionally effective spur among people possessed of easily wounded vanity but very ready to laugh heartily at the other man's discomfiture, brutally frank in their comments and unsparing of anyone's susceptibilities!

Reciprocity pervades every aspect of Bena life, and it is only when this is appreciated that tribal custom becomes something more than a series of haphazard prohibitions and injunctions, and can be viewed as a whole, a closely knit system for the regulation of human relations. It is true that the network of rights and obligations in which he lives leaves the Mbena less scope for individual choice of action than we, living in a less closely knit system, enjoy; but let us really and truly grasp the fact that he is a human being, possessed of normal human instincts, and he does not obey simply because he never dreams of doing anything else.

CHAPTER XI

RIGHTS OVER LAND

THE Wabena were formerly a mixed pastoral and agricultural people, but since their migration to the Ulanga Valley, a region on the whole unsuited to cattle, agriculture has become of paramount importance. Not only are they entirely dependent on it for their very existence, but it is also their principal, if not only, means of economic development at the present time.

Broadly speaking, every family grows its own food. A few people—fisherfolk, skilled craftsmen such as smiths, medicine-men, canoe-builders, and the like, and sometimes members of the tribal administration—grow only a part of what they will require and buy the rest, in return for cash, their own products or services, from people who have grown more than sufficient for their own needs.

The staple food of the Wabena to-day is unpolished rice, a taste which would have horrified the grandfathers of the majority of them. It is estimated that the average consumption over a year is rather under 1 lb. per head per day, after taking into account children who, of course, require less, the appetites of grown men who like 2 lb. and more if they can get it, the women's use of the husks as food (see p. 250), and seasonal variations of diet. At the time of the principal maize harvest in March there is usually little rice left in the grain stores, and the people look to the maize to help them through until the early rice crop—*msonga*—comes on in April*; but unless the previous harvest has been an exceptionally bad one, a certain amount of rice is eaten even at this time of year to supplement

* *Msonga* is the early crop generally, which may consist of more than one variety of quick-growing rice. For a detailed account of the agricultural calendar, see next chapter.

the maize, for which the people do not much care and on which, they declare, they cannot achieve a really satisfactory "full" feeling. The consumption of rice reaches its highest point in the months of June, July, and August, when the harvest comes to relieve any whose rations have been low for weeks or possibly months; the season of feasting and full stomachs sets in then, but the subsidiary dry-season crops are not yet ready, so that the menu cannot be varied, as far as the principal dish of the meal is concerned. Later, the use of yams, the dry-season maize crop, and cassava somewhat reduces the consumption of rice, though nothing can take its place in the estimation of most members of the tribe. Beans, bush-peas,* pulse, dried fish, pumpkins, small tomatoes, various wild and cultivated vegetables known to the writers only by their local names, chickens, ducks, even meat—all are merely relishes to accompany the main dish of rice or maize-meal, though the Mbena feels about the last-named that if he only had enough of it he would gladly make it the *pièce de résistance*. Fruits in their seasons—pawpaws, bananas, pineapples, mangoes, nartjies, oranges, limes, lemons, guavas—are more often eaten as snacks at odd times than as part of the regular solid meals of rice (or its substitute) and relish; and, incidentally, the peel of nartjies, oranges, limes, and lemons is apparently very palatable if you happen to be really hungry! Pawpaws, bananas, pineapples, and mangoes are found in most parts of Ubena; the other fruits are very localised.

Pepper in the form of red chillis may be seen growing near many of the houses, while two grasses (one growing right in the swamps) and a floating waterplant supply the Wabena with salt of poor quality. The salt retailed by the Indian traders of the Valley is therefore much valued in Ubena and esteemed a precious luxury.

In parts of Masagati and Ifinga the people grow a certain amount of simsim for trade within the tribe, for very little of

* Very like green peas to eat, and obtained from a lanky, straggling bush.

it is cultivated in the lower-lying areas and the oil finds a ready sale throughout the tribe, being welcomed both by the cook and the *coiffeuse*.

Sugar-cane is very popular everywhere and at any time, but especially as a pick-me-up after strenuous labour or when on the march, and several yards of it usually figure among the loads of any *safari*. The people of Masagati, parts of Boma ya Lindi and the hills leading from lower Utengule into Utemekwira cultivate another form of refreshment most welcome to the traveller or weary field-worker. It is a wine called *ulazi*, the juice drawn off from a bamboo of which groves may be seen in or near some of the villages. Cool and bittersweet when freshly drawn, in an hour or two the wine has already become highly intoxicant.

In Ifinga and Boma ya Lindi and parts of Masagati, finger-millet (Eleusine coracana *Gaertn.*) to some extent takes the place of rice. The people of Ifinga eat more of this unappetising-looking *ulezi* than they do of rice, but in Boma ya Lindi and Masagati it is chiefly grown for beer and is not extensively used for food unless rice runs short.

Tobacco is popular both for chewing (by both sexes) and for smoking, and a few plants of it are usually to be found among the dry-season crops. Some years ago there used to be a little colony of tobacco-growers in the lower part of the Mweza Valley, from the point at which it emerges from the steep Ifinga hills to where the River Mweza enters the Ruhuji, a distance of some eight or nine miles. A rice crop grown in the rains was followed by a dry-season tobacco crop which was mostly exported to the Rufiji Delta. But latterly the river has taken to undue flooding which washes away the rice, so the people have moved and their tobacco trade has died out. The village of Mweza to-day consists of perhaps half a dozen scattered huts.

Of cotton little can as yet be said. It was introduced experimentally in 1925, but marketing difficulties proved too great

at that time. The establishment in 1932 of a ginnery at Kiberege in the country of the Wambunga led to the repetition of the experiment in Ubena of the Rivers in 1933, and this time the outlook so far as that part of the Valley is concerned is more promising. The Mtema is keen about it, and he did all he could to persuade his people to plant, but many hung back the first year. Some were dubious after the previous failure, pictured themselves spending time and trouble on an unmarketable crop, and gave no heed to the Mtema's assurances that the ginnery was going to open local buying-posts. Others merely displayed the lethargy that might be expected of the happy-go-lucky primitive African when confronted with any scheme calling for immediate additional effort for the sake of a comparatively distant and problematic reward, and not a few planted grudgingly and under protest and too late. In spite of all this, however, the Mtema's enthusiastic campaign and personal touring of his country bore fruit, and many were persuaded to follow his example and make the experiment. Later they enjoyed the envious regard of large numbers of unbelievers who, regretfully upbraiding themselves for their foolishness, saw their fellows paying tax from their cotton plots and doing as they would with the whole of their surplus rice—eating and drinking* all of it, if so it seemed good to them. The prospects of an increase in the number of cotton-growers in Ubena the following year therefore seemed good!

The above brief sketch of Bena agricultural activities will be amplified in subsequent chapters, where a more detailed description will be given of the yearly round with some account of how the Wabena dispose of their produce, of trade within and without the tribe and kindred matters. Here let us consider the distribution and density of the population in relation to the geographical distribution of the principal crops, and then endeavour to obtain some general ideas on the subject

* One of the local beers is made from rice.

of acreages; for these matters directly affect the Bena system of land tenure.

At the 1931 Census the figures for the Wabena of Ulanga were given in round numbers as follows:

Men	4,600
Women	6,000
Boys	2,500
Girls	3,000
Total	16,100*

The area of Ubena of the Rivers is about 2,500 square miles, the density of population being therefore roughly 6·5 to the square mile. The history of the tribe will already have made clear that besides Wabena these figures include various small groups of people of diverse origins and names, now part and parcel of the Bena tribal organisation. The population appears to have been increasing exceptionally rapidly of recent years,† and the return of many former subjects, anxious to live under Towegale, is materially assisting that process at the moment. Apart from Wabena proper who are coming home, it is not uncommon to find, for instance, little groups of ten, twenty, thirty Ndamba tax-payers who are proposing to move themselves and their families into Ubena, to live under the Manga Chief as did their fathers. But for our present purpose we shall base our argument on the figures of the last Census.

Taking the distribution of the tax-payers as a fair indication of the distribution of the whole population, the Hut and Poll Tax Statistics show the tribe to be divided as follows among the five provinces:

* Men = all males who are initiated, i.e. past puberty. Women = all females past their first menstruation.

† We do not propose to venture on to ground so full of pitfalls as a discussion of the Census figures. Suffice it to say that owing to changes of boundaries and a variety of local causes, comparison of the totals shown in the 1913 (German), 1921, 1928, and 1931 censuses would be misleading.

	Per cent
Utengule	43·75
Masagati	28·75
Malinyi	13·75
Ifinga	8·75
Boma ya Lindi	5·00
	100·00

The population is thus largest in the two provinces nearest the old hill kingdom of the Wabena. The northern and highest part of this area is suitable for cattle, but not there must we seek the descendants of their cattle-loving forefathers. After the Battle of Mgodamtitu the Mtema, with the bulk of the tribe, withdrew east of the big rivers on account of pressure from the Wahehe, but as soon as Mkwawa's power was broken by the Germans, Kiwanga I moved back to the western side of the Valley towards the old haunts of the tribe. The changed habits of his people, however, led them to settle nearer the flat river-country than their fathers had done, and they sought the fertile lowlands and valleys which would bear rice rather than the rolling cattle-country of Utemekwira where they would have to eat maize and millets. In all the "fly"-free Utemekwira hills there is to-day a mere handful of herdsmen, perhaps a hundred and fifty households,* and the people of Utengule and Masagati are to be found in the foothills south and east of Utemekwira, on the fringe of the river swamps or even right among the swamps.

Ignoring the little pastoral community in Utemekwira, we may say that in Utengule and Malinyi and probably half of Masagati, containing between them about 70 per cent of the total population, rice is both the staple food and the source of beer. In Boma ya Lindi and the rest of Masagati, that is, for about 22 per cent of the tribe, it is the staple food, but *ulezi*

* Up to the Great War, cattle were comparatively numerous in Ubena, and Utemekwira was somewhat better populated than now by herdsmen tending not only their own cattle but those of various people who preferred themselves to live in the rice-lands.

is eaten to some extent and beer is more often made from the latter grain*; while the remaining 8 per cent in Ifinga grow and eat less rice than their fellows and regard it primarily as a cash crop, depending chiefly on *ulezi* for both food and drink. Everywhere maize and root crops are grown to eke out the principal food crop, but as they are very largely grown on the same plots of ground, either before or after the main crop, they need not concern us for the moment. Simsim, on the other hand, is growing at the same time as the main crop, being sown in January and reaped in July, so that it requires an additional plot of land, usually of very modest proportions, on which the simsim seed is very thickly sown.

From the foregoing it is clearly not unjustifiable to regard the Wabena as dependent on rice for their food, for most of their beer, and, till the introduction of cotton, for an export crop. The following figures have been arrived at after observation of agricultural activities in different parts of Ubena, and of the use made of the crops; it need hardly be added that they make no claim whatever to be more than the merest approximations, to provide some indication of the scale of Bena efforts in this direction.

At something less than 1 lb. per head per day, and with due allowance made for babies and for those who eat much or little *ulezi* instead of rice, the Wabena require about 2,000 tons of hulled rice for food in the course of a year. Some 70 per cent of the tribe also make their beer from this crop and would appear, on an average, to use for that purpose about one-tenth of what they use for food—let us say 140 tons in the year are turned into beer.† The rice sold outside the tribe, to the Indian traders or to people requiring rations for labour,

* Not altogether from choice, for most people prefer rice-beer. But the really popular heady rice-beer is made from *faya*, a "wet" rice, which owing to the hillier nature of the country is not grown so much in these areas as in lower Utengule and Malinyi. Beer made from rices suitable for "dry-field" cultivation is said to be "too cool." A little maize-beer is also used.

† Actually unhulled rice is used for this, but we give the corresponding amount in terms of hulled rice; 140 tons hulled = about 210 tons unhulled.

porters, and so on, usually amounts to something between 250 and 500 tons, the actual quantity depending not only on the harvest but on the price. When the price is bad, the people will only sell just enough to cover their tax* and essential outgoings, eating and drinking what remains over. A good price, on the other hand, will often tempt them to sell some of that which they would normally eat or turn into beer, whereupon they make good the deficiency in their grain stores by increased dry-season cultivation. It may also sometimes happen that they find themselves regretting the lure of immediate gain, when the end of the year comes round and belts, if any, have to be tightened. Thus if the export figures are low, it does not necessarily indicate a bad harvest; the price may be unattractive and a surfeit of feasting and drinking take the place of export. Similarly, if the export figures are near the upper limit, the total production for the year is not necessarily unusually large, for less than usual may be set aside for food and drink. Let us take 360 tons as a fair figure for the purpose of our argument. Lastly, the Wabena use about 50 lb. of seed per acre, and something in the neighbourhood of 150 tons of unhulled rice must be reserved for this; that is, the equivalent of about 100 tons of hulled rice.

We then have the following sum:

	Tons (hulled rice)
Food	2,000
Beer (210 tons unhulled) ..	140
Export	360
Seed (150 tons unhulled) ..	100
Average annual production	2,600

Under favourable conditions the Wabena can produce about 1,300 lb. of hulled *faya* rice to the acre, so that they would require a minimum of 4,480 acres to obtain 2,600 tons. Actually,

* We are here describing the Wabena as we have seen them before the introduction of the new cash crop, cotton, whose full effect on the economics of the tribe it is too early to estimate.

of course, the acreage under rice in any one year is very much larger, probably about half as much again. They have to contend with the vagaries of the weather, which may cause untimely or over-heavy floods or leave their fields parched; they have a hard battle to fight against the depredations of game, vermin, and birds; and there is always the possibility of a visit from a swarm of locusts. Further, the "dry" rice, *meri*, grown by the hill-folk and depending entirely on the rainfall, yields badly in comparison with the "wet" *faya** of the swampy valley bottoms and the river-country. The *meri* fields on the slopes of the hills are noticeably larger than those of the *faya*-growers, and their crop appears sparse and meagre to the eye accustomed to the more luxuriant growth of *faya*. Taking all things into consideration, lucky indeed is the village which gets anything approaching an average of 1,300 lb. to the acre, and we may estimate the area of rice planted each year as in the neighbourhood of 6,700 acres. There is, of course, a good deal of fluctuation from year to year, partly reflecting the optimism or otherwise engendered by the price received for the crop just sold, partly due to the success or failure of the previous harvest. The bitter lessons of a lean year produce the determination to have full store-houses next time, and clearing and digging proceed apace: in a fat year cares and forethought are drowned in pitchers of beer, hunger is an unremembered ghost, while recollection of the amount of hard work needed to produce such plenteousness again next year tends to be lost in the present enjoyment of feeling "full" and lazy and expansively at ease; till sowing-time creeps near and behold, there is neither time nor inclination to clear large fields.

The size of individual fields varies considerably, depending not only on the variation in personal diligence and energy

* Other varieties of rice besides *faya* and *meri* are grown, including quick-growing rice for the *msonga* crop, but in such small quantities that we do not propose to consider them separately. They are intended to be included in this estimate of acreage.

of both husband and wife, but also on the number of children to be fed from the field and able to help the woman in charge of it, and on the habits of the household with regard to economic needs. It may be a more or less self-contained economic unit, supplying all its own requirements in the way of food and drink, and only selling rice to cover tax, an occasional small purchase at the trading-store, and, when necessary, instalments of ceremonial payments. Or it may be a household which only grows part of its food-supply and makes up its budget by professional activities of some kind. And yet again, it may cultivate a crop for trade within the tribe—a larger acreage of rice than it needs for its food and tax, or a plot of simsim, to be exchanged for all manner of goods and services. We may pause a moment here to define the term "household." It includes all people living under the care of the master of the house, and may vary from the simplest form of one man and one wife to a complex group containing the man, his wives, children of both sexes (not necessarily the offspring of any member of the household), any unmarried, widowed, or divorced female relatives temporarily or permanently under his guardianship, possibly a grown son who has not yet set up his own establishment, and maybe an aged and infirm relative. The important point about it with regard to agriculture is that every adult able-bodied woman has her own field, except possibly a daughter or ward who is not likely to be long at home and who may contribute her share towards the maintenance of the household by helping her mother or one of the other wives. What she does depends on the wishes of the women concerned, and is of no moment provided she does her fair share of work for the little community.

Taking all in all it may be said that the average acreage cultivated, apart from cotton, small "back-door" vegetable patches, and the plots occupied by sugar-cane, bananas, and so forth, is rather under two acres per household, or about one and one-third acres per woman—that is, roughly 8,000 acres

for the tribe. If our calculations about rice are substantially correct, the land under *ulezi* or simsim works out at about 1,300 acres, or one-sixth of the total area tilled, a proportion which does not conflict with the personal observations of the writers.

Cotton has been deliberately ignored in this discussion of acreages, since it is only in the experimental stages in Ubena, and the extent to which it will ultimately be adopted by the tribe cannot be foretold. It may be noted, however, that with the 1933 price of 15 cents* per kilo of first-grade seed cotton and 6 cents per kilo of third grade (stained), a man could expect to pay his tax of Shs. 7/- off a patch of only one-quarter of an acre.

Allowing a wide margin of error, let us estimate that the Wabena do not till more than nine or ten thousand acres each year, exclusive of cotton—an insignificant fraction of the total area of Ubena of the Rivers, roughly 2,500 square miles or 1,600,000 acres. It must be taken into consideration that some of the country is heavily flooded from February to May and is consequently entirely uninhabited, except in the dry season when small parties of fisherfolk build temporary huts on the banks of the rivers and, if they happen to intend to stay in the one camp long enough, may plant perhaps an acre of *nganyangira* rice† in a backwater as the river falls. Most of the fishing community, however, spend the dry season flitting from camp to camp, so that not many grow an *nganyangira* crop unless disaster overtook a large proportion of their main crop in its early stages, while they yet had time to sow seed-beds for transplanting. Ubena is, however, above the main flood area of the Ulanga Valley and only eastern Utengule and north-eastern Malinyi are seriously affected. Most of the

* 100 cents = 1 shilling East African = 1 shilling British.

† *Nganyangira* is sown near the houses in April and planted out on the edge of the receding water as the floods go down. This method is not extensively practised in Ubena, and belongs really to the people living lower down the Valley.

country is habitable, fertile, and well-watered, and even considering both the needs of a specialised crop like rice and the necessity for shifting to new ground after two to four years, the Wabena use only a small fraction of the land at their disposal.

On the alluvial fans near the big rivers, the villages are more or less permanent, and their inhabitants do not migrate in search of new fields. The cultivation shifts back and forth round the village, without any organised rotation, fallow plots being cleared again after due time for recovery, though not necessarily cleared by the same family as before. Ground left fallow is in an incredibly short space of time covered with a dense growth of tall grass and small bush, which prevents erosion and loss of humus. The grass not only protects exhausted land while it recuperates, it also shades the empty wet-season fields during the dry weather and helps to conserve the humus. A couple of months after harvest the signs of cultivation are almost obliterated except where work continues in connection with dry-season crops. In these lowland areas the village is sometimes comparatively large—or, shall we say, less small?—perhaps fifty to a hundred huts, and its fields form a block of cultivation round it, their proximity one to another greatly facilitating their protection from marauding animals. In fact, there are still in existence in this part of the country examples of the settlements into which the Mtema is anxious to draw his scattered people once again.

The case is different in the hills, e.g. Masagati, Ifinga, and parts of Boma ya Lindi. There a more truly shifting type of agriculture is practised by little communities of a few families, moving from one to another of the innumerable valleys. A little *faya* rice is grown on the swampy land at the bottom of the valleys, whose sides are suitable for the "dry" rice, *meri*. The slightly higher local price of *faya** is inducing some of

* But *meri*-growers actually receive much the same price, or even sometimes a slightly better one, because they go to the trouble of taking their rice into the highlands, up the steep hill-paths to Lupembe, etc. See pp. 285-6.

the people to seek out more particularly the places, often very small in area, where this type of rice can be cultivated, and this somewhat increases the already pronounced tendency for settlements to split up into tinier and tinier groups of relatives or friends. A headman is proud if twenty households acknowledge his authority, and he may have to traverse nearly as many valleys to find them. Here the hamlet itself is moved, and not the fields only. Return to old fields is therefore much less certain than on the alluvial fans, though it will sometimes happen that people eventually go back to an old site because it is easier to clear secondary bush than to cut fresh fields out of the forest. We may note in passing that exhaustion of the soil is not the only reason for migration—quite often elephants become too troublesome, so they are given best.

In the hills it might be thought that this shifting cultivation would cause irreparable damage to the soil of the abandoned fields, but this is not the case. In very few places have the writers observed signs of erosion, although *meri* is grown on steep slopes. In all this country, as in the lowlands, the tall grass, eight, ten, twelve feet high, springs up thickly the moment a field is deserted, together with a prolific growth of secondary bush. Three years ago the people of a certain village between Utengule and Masagati left their old village and settled a mile and a half away. The old site, marked by the absence of forest except for a few mighty trees, is now an impenetrable jungle of grass and bush and creeping plants, through which the traveller passes along a well-worn track, one of Mtengera I's "roads." Further, the Wabena have a habit of leaving a crown of forest on the top of a hill whose slopes they clear for cultivation, a practice which doubtless contributes to the conservation of the soil.

The fact that Ubena is to all intents and purposes empty, that the Mbena has more than ample room to move when he wishes and to pick and choose a good site for his new fields is reflected in the system of land tenure. There is, practically

speaking, no system with regard to agricultural land, though in the past rights over grazing-grounds were well defined (see below, page 237).

Land *per se* has no value in the eyes of the Mbena and nobody bothers about it until it is cleared. Any member of the tribe, or any stranger* who has been granted permission to settle in the country, can of right take and clear as much land as he requires for his house, his fields, and possibly a family burial-ground. As soon as he has done this, the position has changed. The work he has put into the plot gives it value. It is now his property and no one may encroach on it. So long as it continues to be used, it remains in the possession of him or his heirs. House plots may be occupied by the same family for many years, while a burial-ground will be held by the family until such time as all the graves are so old that no one comes any more to sacrifice there, and the place gradually reverts to bush. Tenure of agricultural land is, in the nature of things, more transitory. When a man deserts exhausted ground, he no longer calls it "my field." He will, however, refer to it as "my old field," indicating thereby that he still has certain proprietary rights over it should he care to exercise them. He has, in fact, the right of first refusal when that land is ready for use again. So long as his former occupation of it is remembered, anyone else thinking of taking possession of it will first ask him if he wants it any more. If he says no and the other takes it, his rights naturally lapse in favour of the newcomer. And if he does not return himself nor does anyone else occupy it, his old rights will be forgotten in a few years and the one-time field will just be as any other piece of the bush, having reverted to the common store of land from which all may draw as they require.

This practice is based more on a tacit understanding than on a formulated right. Everybody knows that a certain plot

* "Stranger" in this context means, of course, a person from another tribe and not a non-native.

is So-and-So's old field and he may want to come back to it again in due course, so nobody else thinks of appropriating it without first asking him. There is such abundance of fertile land that disputes do not arise, but it seems that the first occupier could if necessary make good his claim in the tribal courts.

The ordinary man does not on the whole bother much about this right. He requires only a small area of land and, unless his old plot had peculiar advantages, he is just as likely to move on somewhere else as back to the old place. On the other hand, richer and more important men quite often maintain a permanent hold on land they have once cleared, for thus the fields of all their womenfolk can be kept more or less together as a block of cultivation, shifting back and forth in a given area.

The temporary occupier of a field is thus regarded as something more than merely its user, he has rights which extend beyond the period of actual use. It is considered as his absolute property so long as he wishes to keep it. This may mean just so long as there are unexhausted improvements in it, or it may mean more, according to his choice. That he does not usually retain possession of it while it lies fallow is simply due to the abundance of land, which renders such permanent possession unnecessary. He knows he will never be short of land for his crops, so in the majority of cases he does not trouble about any except that which is actually in use at the moment. Because of this, it seems at first sight that he has a right of use only, but that is an erroneous idea. His rights over it last as long as he wishes, whether it is in use or not, and, further, he has the right of disposal. He can if he wants dispose of a field to his neighbour. Such transactions naturally take place but seldom when every man has land and to spare for the taking, but they do sometimes occur, as, for instance, when a man has inherited a good field at some distance from his home. He may negotiate a transfer to another, usually a relative, receiving in exchange goods, cash, or services of some kind.

But as land itself has no value, he is really, of course, selling the work of clearing and breaking the ground and any crops which may be growing on it at the time of transfer, i.e. he is actually being paid for improvements and not for land itself, though at the same time he as the owner is transferring his rights over the actual land.

Formulated theories about permanent rights and the systematic regulation of land tenure only arise when the requirements of the people drawing on the general store become commensurate with the supply, thus necessitating the crystallisation of vague ideas and common custom into a well-defined code. Ubena of the Rivers is so thinly populated that the desire to hold a given area of agricultural land permanently, both while under cultivation and while lying fallow, is not likely to be widely felt for many years to come. There is ample room for all without quarrelling. The most that we can say, then, about the ideas of the Wabena concerning ownership of agricultural land is that they really have not thought about it at all. There is so much room that the whole matter can easily be arranged by informal agreements and tacit understandings among the villagers. The question of legal rights over land as such does not arise, and the Wabena are concerned rather with rights over improvements and produce.

Before the Great War the regulation of tenure of the comparatively meagre grazing-grounds in Ubena of the Rivers was far from being so happy-go-lucky as the system, or lack of it, described above. When the cattle-loving Wabena left the highlands they proceeded to seek out, by a process of trial and error, certain places in the Valley where it was possible to keep cattle. Apart from the fact that many of them were settling in swampy country with rank grasses very different from that which they had known in the highlands, the greater part of their new kingdom was "fly"-ridden; while in certain places, in apparently "fly"-free country such as the southern

Masagati hills, they found the presence of a poisonous plant precluded even the possession of goats. Taking the country as a whole, they found that once they left Utemekwira there were very few localities suitable for cattle until they arrived high in the eastern hills, at Ligamba and in the Ndwewe Mountains. Consequently places where cattle could live immediately became extremely valuable, the demand far exceeding the supply, and he who found a good place clung to it tenaciously. No man might take possession of grazing land without the permission of his tribal superior, Mtwa Mwenyelutenana or Mzagira as the case might be, who would first satisfy himself that no other person had already a claim on it or, if he had, that he was agreeable to the advent of the newcomer to share it with him. The tribal authorities could also, if necessary, refuse a man rights over the whole tract of pasture applied for if they knew he was being outrageously greedy, but this must not be read as meaning that pasture was systematically measured out per head of cattle. Within reason, having regard to the size of his herds, the man who found good grazing-grounds would be allowed to take possession of all he desired. On the whole, it was first come, first served. Once a man had been permitted to take a certain area, he could decline to share it with anyone, and would most certainly refuse to do so with someone he did not know. He might, however, allow a limited number of relatives or friends to join him, no doubt after complicated negotiations greatly enjoyed by all parties. Briefly, in granting him permission to take certain grazing-grounds, the tribal authorities gave him both rights of use and rights of disposal over it. At his death the appropriate heir or heirs inherited the land on the same terms, and thus the family might hold it permanently. During the War, however, the Wabena lost nearly all their cattle, and there is now plenty of room for the handful that remain, so that the danger of quarrelling has disappeared and the rights of individuals over well-defined areas are no

longer strictly regulated; the supply, meagre as it is, now exceeds the demand.

With regard to small stock, a few goats and an occasional sheep are to be seen in most parts of Ubena, but their numbers are so small that there is no need to define the grazing rights of different owners, and the animals feed at random on uncultivated land in and around the villages.

With regard to both agricultural and grazing land, we must remember that the Wabena were in the past a community of warriors organised under a hierarchy of officers whom they were trained to obey not only in war but also in ordinary village life. The local authorities, though military in origin, had control of civil affairs, too, including the division of land, and the foregoing remarks must be interpreted in the light of that fact. The head of the village had (and still has to-day) not only the first choice of uncleared land for his own fields, but also, if he cared to exercise it, a rather vague power to dictate to his people where they should or should not cultivate. Similarly, he had absolute discretion in the matter of grazing-grounds. But let a man once clear a patch of land, and he could not be evicted, nor could the local authorities turn men off grazing-grounds of which they had once taken possession. The degree of control exercised nowadays is usually very small, often negligible. In truth, it is not so much a feature of the system of land tenure as of the general tribal organisation for the maintenance of order and discipline among the tribesmen.

We have studied the rights over land exercised by individuals within the tribe, and it is time now to consider the tribal lands as a whole. Although the Wabena maintain that unoccupied land belongs to nobody, they are not slow to resent the intrusion of unauthorised strangers into the tribal area. Their fear in the past is easy to understand. All those living within the tribal borders must be subjects of the Mtema, and strangers coming in, e.g. Ngelangela and his Wangoni

(p. 36), must ask leave of him and become his men. Unauthorised strangers were enemies. To-day people from other tribes are welcomed, for fear is gone, but they must still virtually become members of the tribe, paying their tax to the Bena authorities. Increased numbers mean increased importance and a more prosperous Native Treasury; and even if he does not appreciate the intricacies of tribal finance, the humblest tribal official likes to augment the number of people in his area, for so he acquires prestige and greater honour in the tribe. Thus it has been ever since the days when the man who could bring with him many spearmen to the war assembly held his head high, receiving respectful attention when he spoke his mind in the council of the elders, and when the more subjects he had, the more tribute passed through his hands and the greater was his share. The encroachment of subjects of other chiefs into even the emptiest of areas like Utemekwira are still resented and resisted with determination as insidious attacks on the Bena kingdom. Quite apart from the trouble which inevitably arises over tax collection, there is always the danger that their chief will presently point to the long-established residence of his subjects in a certain locality and claim the area as part of his kingdom. Then a wearisome boundary dispute ensues. His claims will be obstinately resisted, for however little value land may have as a commodity, there exists a very strong sentiment towards "the country of our fathers" even when "we" have no practical use for it, a sentiment closely connected with the ties created by ancestor-worship. Moreover, an immense pride of possession as regards "*my* country" fills the heart of every man who has any territorial jurisdiction whatever, whether his "country" be the whole of the kingdom or the humblest subdivision of a division thereof; and from the Mtema downwards all are extremely jealous of their boundary rights. Therefore every man wielding a little authority, though very willing to admit new subjects, is equally ready to resist the entry into his area

of people who continue to acknowledge the authority of another.

There is, however, a struggle between the rival ideas of territorial jurisdiction and of a personal tie between ruler and ruled irrespective of place of residence. These ideas exist side by side in the Bena mind and sometimes lead to interminable disputes, as in the case of Senjenge and Filingafu, whose people are apt to wander indiscriminately in either area, continuing to call themselves Senjenge's people or Filingafu's people irrespective of which side of the border they live at the moment; while a Jumbe in Matumbi has often no village or area but a number of scattered followers dotted about all over the place. Again, a border dispute has arisen over Wahehe coming down with their herds into Utemekwira from Mufindi. The Bena Mtema defends his boundary and demands that all who live within it shall own his authority and pay tax to him: the Hehe Chief and the immigrants represent the opposite idea of personal allegiance, and Sapi therefore claims rights over the area occupied by his people. Sometimes, however, adjustment between the two ideas is possible without disputes, as in the case of the Malinyi–Utengule border. Mtwa Mpangachuma was formerly a Jumbe of Utengule province and his people lived round Mkasu and Itanga. When he was appointed to the Stool of Malinyi and the Mtema went to Utengule, the latter as a matter of course altered the boundary so that those people were still under Mpangachuma's care without the necessity of migrating. A tribal official is much more than a mere official and the personal tie between a great man and his people, a sort of father-children relationship, is still a potent force in tribal life.

It is sometimes important in present-day African politics to know in whom, or in what, rests the right to alienate portions of the tribal lands. In many tribes there is no record of the alienation of land to strangers, other than to those who paid allegiance to the chief and so really became members of the

tribe. In the case of the Wabena, however, we are more fortunate, for even before the arrival of the Europeans we find two instances of large tracts of country being alienated, in each case to the Angoni chief Mpepo.

Mpepo, as we already know, together with his Nduna Mgendera, broke away from Chabruma and allied himself with Kiwanga I, receiving from the latter part of Ubena in which to live. He first settled at Mafingi, but later left Mgendera there and himself went to Kilosa* in south-east Ubena. To what extent these two areas were settled by the Wabena is difficult to gauge exactly, but it is practically certain that their population was very sparse. It probably consisted of little more than a handful of men to watch the frontier, and so relinquishing these districts was a matter of little economic moment to Kiwanga and his people. On the other hand, the Angoni settlers in Kilosa made a very useful buffer between Kiwanga and Chabruma, and assured the former that the hills enclosing the south-east corner of Ubena, where he had only been able to keep scattered outposts, were guarded against hostile expeditions. It must be understood that Mpepo retained his independence and never at any time owed allegiance to Kiwanga. He was an ally, not a subject. Both Mafingi and Kilosa were, and still are, definitely regarded as Angoni territory, the Wabena having relinquished all rights over them.

Here, then, is a perpetual transfer from one tribe to another of all rights in the land. The contracting parties were, according to popular history, Kiwanga and Mpepo, but it would be erroneous to imagine that these two men, entirely on their own responsibility and as individuals, made the pact whereby Mpepo helped Kiwanga against his foes and in return was granted land for himself and his people. The Mtema had not power to do this by himself, and the agreement could only be made after much consultation with his Watwa Wenyelutenana and his Wanzagira, headed by his chief counsellor,

* Not to be confused with Kilosa on the Central Railway.

the Mzagira wa Tambiko; and, further, after considering that vague power, so indefinite but so real, which we call public opinion. Ubena was not a consciously democratic state, nor had the common people a recognised voice in affairs of state. Their power was and is more subtle than that. It is indefinable and officially unrecognised, not easily (or with trustworthy and desirable results) elicited by direct inquiry of the common people. By its own hidden and devious channels it makes itself felt in the councils of the elders, who rarely decide on a course of action which has not got a generous measure of public approval. The historical chapters have shown how essential to the Mtema is adequate support from the elders and the people.

It is therefore untrue to say that the right to alienate land belonged to any section of the community. In theory it was the Mtema's, but he was rather the instrument through which the right was exercised than the independent exerciser thereof. In practice all rights in the tribal lands as a whole belonged to the tribe as a whole, which in the cases cited above assented to its disposal by means of that vague and entirely unorganised public opinion which often baffles us to whom popular control suggests representative government and the ballot, but which is nevertheless such an important factor in Bantu society.

CHAPTER XII

THE PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION OF WEALTH

1. THE AGRICULTURAL YEAR

AGRICULTURE is the foundation of Bena economics and the principal occupation of the great majority of the people throughout the year, and no serious study of the life of the tribe can afford to omit a detailed account of the progress through the seasons of that work which fills the days and often the nights of the Wabena most of the year. Economic activities form the setting in which Bena life, both in the publicity of the village and the privacy of the home, and the whole organisation of the tribe must be viewed; their study is indispensable if a proper perspective is to be maintained and a proper appreciation of the different parts of the whole to be reached.

Let us therefore begin by following the Bena rice-growers* through the yearly round.

By the end of October or the first weeks of November the rice-stores even in the fattest of years are beginning to look somewhat depleted, and serious thoughts of the new season's tasks occupy the attention of the head of the house. Very probably the fiat goes forth, "There will be no more beer in this household." If supplies are really low and the outlook for the coming months unpleasant, a second command is likely to follow the first, "Fields will be bigger this year, a shortage of food does not please me." And the programme for the new year is taken in hand forthwith.

* Most of what follows about rice applies both to *faya* and to *meri*, but where there is any distinction between the two we shall follow the work of the *faya*-growers and leave the necessary modifications for the "dry" rice to the common sense of the reader.

Armed with bill-hook or a broad-bladed double-edged knife, a hoe, and a glowing ember, the man sallies forth to clear and burn the fields he intends to use, both old and new. In November showers begin to fall, softening the parched soil, and he sets to work breaking and cleaning the new ground, a task which often demands considerable physical strength and falls to the lot of the men. His womenfolk meanwhile begin to dig over their old fields, once he has cleared them.

Their only digging implements are hoes, and in truth little more than a mere scratching of the earth's surface is accomplished. Deep digging is quite unknown. Even root crops like yams and cassava are grown in shallow beds—long, narrow raised beds with furrows between them from which the earth for the ridges has been taken. A depth of about eighteen inches of loose soil is thus achieved, chiefly by heaping up instead of digging down, and an examination of the depth of broken earth in a native vegetable bed usually reveals compacted, untouched soil only a few inches below the original surface of the ground. A common method of making the ridges is to hoe up all the weeds and grass on the area to be cultivated, gathering them in long rows, and then to pile earth from each side of the rows on to the weeds; the vegetable beds are then ready.

The new ground a man breaks is apportioned among his womenfolk. Each woman must be supplied with a sufficiently large field to keep her and her children, but her right to this is balanced by an equally important obligation. It is her duty to use that land properly and to contribute her just share of work towards supplying all the needs of the household, including the maintenance of her husband, ceremonial payments, clothes, tax, and so on.

During December the work of digging proceeds apace, and when the men have finished their own tasks on new land they give the women a hand, so that all shall be ready when

the short rains begin to fall regularly. This probably happens* in the latter half of the month and a crop of maize is at once planted on the ground least liable to early flooding. In some places, where premature floods are feared or for any other reason a very forward rice crop is desired, rice is sown dry as soon as rain appears imminent, even as early as the end of November, so that it shall begin to grow at the very first storms. On the other hand, it also has a good chance of being eaten by birds before the rain actually comes!

While the short rains are at their best in December and January, the rest of the rice crop is sown. It is broadcast at the rate of about 50 lb. to the acre and the seedlings begin to make their appearance in a very few days. Some is sown among the maize, for the latter will be harvested and uprooted while the rice is yet young. It must be in the ground as soon as possible when the correct moment comes, and the weather and the soil are just right. No time now for the dilatory to finish preparing the plot which should have been clean and ready. Nature demands punctuality and promptitude. The final hoeing must be timed to take place just before the sowing so that the weeds shall not have a start on the rice, and the work of sowing must be accomplished with expedition. Delay of even a few days beyond the proper time is liable to result in loss, for the crop must both be established before the short break between the short and the long rains occurs and also reach a certain height before the flooding begins. Even after the most punctual sowing things may go amiss, for neither rains nor floods work to a time-table. There follows a period of anxiety lest ill-timed fine weather wither the seedlings or too heavy rain, not so much in Ubena of the Rivers itself as in the hills, cause a premature rise in the level of the rivers and either wash away the young crop in the low-lying fields or

* The onset of the rains is very variable and the agricultural programme necessarily varies with it. Moreover, since the early storms are extremely localised, one village may be considerably ahead of its neighbour.

cause it to be eaten out by fish, which nibble off the young shoots if they have not got their heads well above water.

A dry spell of perhaps a couple of weeks usually sets in about the end of January, marking the end of the short rains, but this is not invariably the case and both its date and its duration are always uncertain.* Much speculation takes place, therefore, as to when, if ever, this fine weather may be expected, to bring on the maize; and weather prophets scan the heavens for signs with an anxiety inversely proportionate to the amount of rice left in their store-houses. A feeling of tension is abroad in the tribe until this critical period for both maize and rice is safely passed.

The maize crop should be ready about the middle of March, when the tension relaxes and a pleasant feeling of sufficiency descends for the time being upon the people, of whom at least some in every year have been living on short rations for some little time past. By the time the maize is finished, the early rice harvest should be ready, i.e. towards the end of April, and that will carry them through till the main crop begins to come in about the middle of June.

March and April are months of very heavy rain, and during the latter the main rice crop at last reaches the stage when it needs no further weeding. Till then the proper performance of this task is essential to the success of the crop, for in most places the grass grows to a terrific height and would speedily smother the rice before it became tall enough and thick enough to keep out the light and prevent the weeds from coming up. From the end of January till April this, the most tedious task in the whole agricultural cycle, makes enormous demands on the time of the women, who spend the greater part of the days squatting on their haunches in the rice-fields patiently pulling out the grass. Coming at the wettest time in the year,

* In 1933 it occurred as late as the last week of February. See Appendix II. Only 13·8 mm. of rain fell at Kiberege between February 20th and March 6th, inclusive.

this work in the sodden fields is extremely trying, even though they often take shelter in their little store-huts during the heaviest storms. As the crop is broadcast, all the weeding must of necessity be done by hand, thus constituting a task which above all others limits the amount of rice a family can cultivate. It has to be done twice between the end of January and, say, the middle of April. Anyone who is familiar with rich alluvial lands in the tropics will understand what this means and how fast grass can grow. One weeding is barely finished before the second must begin, for it takes a long time to clean the smallest fields when the grass is mixed up with a thickly sown grain crop. Even the practised eye of the native can easily err, especially at the first weeding, when young rice and young grass are running a neck-and-neck race, and progress through the field is but slow. While it must be admitted that the Wabena do not grow as much rice as they could, even under these and other difficulties, it is hard to see how they can ever very greatly increase their output so long as the seed is broadcast. At the same time, experiments in 1932 with rice sown in rows, to allow of hoeing, encountered unforeseen obstacles and the problem proved less simple than it seemed! Under local conditions, there is much to be said for broadcasting the seed, and for the present the verdict is in favour of the old method, though doubtless continued experiment will in time solve the problem.

In May the rains slacken, and in June the wet season is over, but occasional showers may fall in any month of the year. The main rice crop comes into ear during May, and then the fun begins! A campaign has to be organised against the myriads of small birds which threaten the grain. The protection of the *msonga* crop coming into ear in March is comparatively easy by reason of the small size of the crop, but now the fields as a whole are involved, and much ingenuity and lung-power are called for. If there are no store-huts suitably situated, the husband builds a little grass shelter on piles in each wife's

fields and there, armed with a split reed or bamboo and a basket of dried mud pellets, for the next few weeks she spends most of the day scaring birds, using the split bamboo as a sling with which to put a long-distance shot into any flock of birds which has become inured to her caterwauling. When in their turn her children take over from her, she has expended so much vocal energy during her hours on guard that she sinks exhausted in the shade and sleeps, oblivious of the pandemonium around her. This work has to be done day by day by one member or another of the family until the grain begins to ripen, when it loses its attraction for the birds and women and children can rest.

At last, about the middle of June, comes the reward of all their labours, and reaping begins. This again is done by the women, but the men will often help. They use the shell of a large mollusc* as a reaping tool, or sometimes an ordinary knife, dropping the severed ears on the ground to be collected later. In fine weather these may be allowed to lie for several days, sometimes covered with grass or banana leaves, sometimes sheltered only by the long stubble. When collected, the crop is placed in the little store-huts built on piles, to await threshing by the women, who take the ears when thoroughly dried, place them on a mat, and beat them with bamboo rods to dislodge the grain from the straw. If the rice is required for food at once, they do not wait to thresh thus, but remove the grain from the ear simply by drawing the ear between the thumb and a piece of wood or bamboo.

The rickety-looking store-huts, which may be near the dwelling-houses or away in the fields, then receive the grain still in its husk. The women take it out, dry it still further in

* The variety of ways in which this creature, called *konokono*, is used is interesting. Its flesh is used for food or as bait for fish; its empty shell serves as a container for worms for bait, which are plastered into it with mud, and as an implement for reaping, for scraping the scales off fish, and for smoothing pottery before it is fired; while broken pieces of the shell are used for making designs on pottery.

the sun, and hull it with wooden pestles and mortars as it is required for use, whether for the domestic purposes of food and beer or for sale. They winnow the rice from the chaff by tossing it in round, shallow basket-work trays, giving a subtle flick of the wrists which gathers the husks to the edge furthest from the performer. From the husks they are in the habit of making a porridge which does not sound appetising, but which they appear to enjoy. Their menfolk do not condescend to partake of it, but the women say it saves them the trouble of extra hulling, and besides, what a pity to throw away so much good food! Why, there is as much chaff as rice!

Pepeta, unripe, uncooked rice, crushed in the process of hulling because the grain is still soft, is regarded as a local delicacy, and not by the black man alone! As it swells after being eaten, the sensation resulting from eating any quantity of it is left to the imagination. When food is short and the harvest eagerly awaited, unripe rice is reaped in considerable quantities, both to be cooked and to be eaten raw.

And what have the lazy men been doing between seed-time and harvest? All the work appears to have devolved on the women between the sowing and the harvesting of the crop, and, indeed, any visitor by day would usually find the majority of the men at home, sleeping and idling. But let them not therefore be condemned. Through the long nights, wet or dry, they have been up and doing, scaring off the game and vermin with much noise, both vocal and instrumental, and the occasional roar of an ancient muzzle-loader. From planting-time onwards, they have no more peace than their womenfolk until the crop is safely in. When the women and children are working in the fields during the daytime, they can keep watch against baboons and monkeys, but in fields where no work is in progress at the moment, some of the men may have to be on guard in the day, too. On some days a party of them, armed with spears, will organise a pig-hunt, for this animal is particularly destructive to the maize and to the small patches

of cassava growing near the houses. Given a chance, baboons by day and pigs by night will work havoc in a maize field in an almost incredibly short time; and often, one cannot help feeling, it must be from sheer malevolence, for apart from damage done after the cobs have formed, they will attack and wantonly destroy acres of young maize not yet bearing, from which they themselves derive no benefit.

The greater part, however, of the men's work while the crops are growing is done after nightfall. They stay out in the fields waiting for elephant to come trampling all before them, hippo to lumber up from the rivers for a good feed in the lush rice-fields, pig to start rooting up the crops, or any other animals to come along and join the fun. Not every man will be out every night, of course, arrangements often being made for mutual help in the matter, more especially among *walongo*. This task is not only dangerous but unpleasant and unhealthy, for it must be remembered that the crops require guarding through the months when there is drenching rain and the nights are comparatively cool; so that the unfortunate guardians of the fields are constantly sopping wet and shivering, an undesirable condition for anybody, let alone those who are chronically infected with malaria.

There is another method of scaring game at night which is slowly gaining popularity and which enables men to stay under shelter, except for occasional excursions when the game is over-bold and refuses to be frightened by mere noise. Some stones are placed in a number of vessels—usually, and of course most effectively, tins—which are then hung on poles at various points in the fields. Attached to each tin is a long string which is carried on forked poles to the house or, if that be too far away, to one of the store-huts. When game is heard entering the field, the appropriate "telephone wire" has only to be jerked and the message "Warned off" is loudly delivered at the other end. The advantages of this ingenious method are obvious. The men can stay under shelter, out of

the rain, warm and snugly wrapped in their blankets, instead of having to prowl round the fields. Sometimes one hut will serve as a "telephone exchange" for several fields, the different owners taking turns at sitting up to watch and listen. The same device can, of course, also be used in conjunction with mud pellets and the human voice for scaring birds during the day, and will, no doubt, whenever any old tins can be procured, be taken up by more and more families. Its general adoption might well make a noticeable improvement in the health of the tribe and add yet another notch to the tally of the services rendered by the 4-gallon petrol tin in Africa!

The respective places of cotton, *ulezi*, and simsim in the calendar can be seen at a glance by reference to the table on pp. 256–7, and the extent to which they are cultivated at present has been discussed in the previous chapter. Where *ulezi* is grown, the seriousness of any early damage to rice crops can be gauged by April when the *ulezi* fields are to be sown, and a threatened food shortage at least partly averted by increased sowing of this crop.

In all agricultural work assistance can be obtained from neighbours by anyone who has beer with which to reward his helpers. Beer is especially prized during the months of greatest agricultural activity because so many people have by then been reduced to husbanding their food with the strictest economy, and can no longer afford alcoholic luxuries. Most of the assistants will be women, but a few of the thirstier males can always be relied on to turn up, at least for digging. When it comes to harvest, the workers will nearly all be women, possibly because their own crops are also by then well on, and their menfolk are already able to quench their thirst at home without the trouble of working for a drink! A well-to-do man will call for labour and organise a beer drink on quite a large scale perhaps two or three times a year, and his humbler fellows may also do it in a small way. Two or three households, probably *walongo*, will often agree to help

each other if so be that they are able to brew a little beer for a sociable evening afterwards.

One or two customs connected with agriculture suggest a former belief in an intimate connection between women and the fertility of the fields and the seed sown therein. Some families, prior to sowing seed, dip at least some of it in water which has been tinted red with the bark of Pterocarpus bussei *Harms*. This is said to protect the crops from being blighted and spoiled if a menstruating woman happens to walk across the field. To the same end, some people put red earth round their tobacco patches, which they appear to regard as specially in need of such protection. These practices are, however, not so widespread now as in the past. A custom which seems to be very generally practised even to-day is as follows: When a pregnant woman (or her husband) sees people reaping, she (or he) must silently gather a few ears and hand them to the woman who has cultivated the field, or to her husband. This need not be done if people are merely picking for immediate consumption, but only if what they are gathering is to be stored, i.e. if some of it may be used for seed later on. Some people say that a woman with a child on her back may not reap, she must leave the child at home or at the edge of the field; but they give no reason for this. In general, if frightened of any harm coming to their fields, natural or supernatural, they will get a suitable "medicine" from a medicine-man and place it at the corners of the field.

There are no formal rites connected with sowing or harvest, but a little of the first dish made with each new crop—maize, rice, etc.—is placed in the yard for the spirits.

After the rice harvest the women, aided by their menfolk, dig over portions of their fields and plant their dry-season crops. These are chiefly cultivated close to the houses, not in remoter parts of the family's fields, and, in fact, they usually amount to little more than an extension of the perennial "back-garden," where a few vegetables may be seen at any

time of the year. Only round the larger settlements like the villages of Malinyi and Utengule is fairly extensive dry-season cultivation the rule. Elsewhere it only occurs when for one reason or another the supply of rice is going to run out before the new season's crops come in. Different areas favour different crops. For instance, Malinyi lies surrounded by maize in the dry weather; in the Masagati valleys, on the other hand, the people whose rice the locusts ate in 1933 were all busy growing two varieties of yams to take its place. Fisherfolk or other people living in suitable places make good any shortage with a crop of *nganyangira* rice,* while in part of the province of Utengule *ngapa* takes the place of *nganyangira*. *Ngapa* is irrigated rice, water from the Mpanga River being led on to the field and dammed up where necessary; but this crop is only grown when failure of the main crop necessitates dry-season activity and, like *nganyangira*, only on a very small scale.† The cultivation of rice in either of these ways is a less wearisome process than the growing of the principal crop, for there is no weeding to be done. The young plants are planted out in mud as the water goes down and get a long start on any grass which may spring up. The crop grows thickly and luxuriantly and smothers the weeds, and the yield from these plots is high.

The limits set by conditions to the production of rice have been mentioned in connection with the weeding of the principal crop. But the admonition to "Plant More Crops" is the watchword of the hour, and it may well seem that if the Wabena cannot very greatly increase their output of rice, they might at least extend their dry-season activities very considerably, producing a good maize crop for food and thereby releasing more rice for export. There are, however, several things besides mere laziness which militate against this.

In the first place the Wabena of the present day do not like

* See p. 232, note †, for method of growing *nganyangira*.

† This system is found on a much larger scale to the north-east of Ubena, on the Luri River in the country of the Mbunga chief, Mkalimoto.

maize, regarding it only as a stopgap in March when rice-stores are low, and pleasant enough in small quantities for a change in the dry season. But it does not appeal to their taste as anything more than a subsidiary item in their diet. And the same objections apply to other possible substitutes for rice. Their rice is what they like and want.

Secondly, there are those twin curses of Bena agriculture, pig and baboon, with their partiality for maize. The people are already tired out with guarding first their March maize and then their rice crops from marauding animals, large and small, and it is small wonder that they have little desire to undertake any further heavy tasks of this nature. With their rice-stores comfortably full of golden grain, they naturally prefer to sit back and enjoy life, with plenty of food and drink, and dancing of an evening when the spirit moves them.

In the third place, many want to be free to travel now that the fine weather has returned, feeling it is no time for a strong man to be tied to a field of maize. There is the business of selling the export rice, whether to the traders of the Valley or to the people and traders and white settlers of Ubena of the Hills. The simsim-growers of Ifinga and Masagati are busy peddling their precious oil, for cooking and ladies' hair-dressing. Medicine-men have their stores of drugs to replenish, a business which may take them far afield seeking roots and herbs. Some people have canoes to make, and must gather together their assistants and repair to the forest to fell and hollow out a suitable tree. The fishing enthusiasts go off to their river haunts, where the true river-people—inhabitants of the Valley swamps before the Wabena left their hills, communities akin to the Wandamba—combine fishing with the stirring excitement of an occasional hippo-hunt. Having caught and dried their fish, the fishing people set about marketing it within or without the borders of the tribe, and they may roam far with their tasty (and odoriferous!) wares tied up in a bundle of grass. Other people take advantage of their

Month	Weather*	General Remarks	Rice	Maize	Other Crops
November	Showers	Cleaning, burning, digging, etc.	—	—	Last cotton picked. Last dry-season foodcrops being reaped
December..	Short rains begin towards end of month	Digging and preparing continues	Dry sowing in some places. Ordinary sowing begins according to rainfall	Planting towards end of month	Cotton uprooted and burnt
January ..	Short rains. Dry spell expected about end of month and into February	Period of anxiety about both rice and maize. Men begin guarding maize at night	Sowing. Weeding begins where sowing was done early	—	Simsim sown
February ..	Beginning of long rains	Men guarding rice and maize fields at night	Weeding	—	Cotton planted in drier areas
March ..	Heavy rain	Men guarding fields at night	Weeding. *Msonga* (early rice) in ear and birds have to be scared off	Harvest begins about middle of month	Cotton planted in wetter areas

April ..	Heavy rain	Men guarding fields at night	*Msonga* reaped. Main crop tall enough now not to need weeding. *Nganyangira* and *ngapa* sown by few people about end of month or beginning of May	—	*Ulezi* (finger-millet) sown
May	Rains slacken	Men guarding fields at night	Main crop in ear, bird-scaring necessary till grain begins to harden	—	—
June	Rains over	As soon as rice is reaped, digging takes place for dry-season crops	Reaping begins	Dry-season crop planted as soon as ground prepared	Cotton-picking begins end of month in forward places. Dry-season crops being planted as soon as ground prepared
July	Dry season	People set about their individual dry-season tasks, fishing, etc.	Reaping continues. People with *nganyangira* and *ngapa* begin to plant out	—	Cotton-picking. *Ulezi* and simsim reaped. Dry-season cultivation in full swing
August ..	Dry season	—	—	—	Cotton-picking
September ..	Dry season	—	—	Earlist maize ripens	Cotton-picking. Various dry-season vegetables now in use
October ..	Dry season	—	*Nganyangira* and *ngapa* ready about end of month	Harvest	Cotton-picking. Various dry-season vegetables now in use

* For notes on rainfall, see Appendix II.

leisure to enter into lengthy negotiations about bride-wealth and other matters of personal concern. Some are busy taking rice down the river to Ifakara. Some who have, perhaps, no actual business which obliges them to take to road or river may be met on the move at this season—"just walking, *Bwana!*"—visiting distant relatives for a family festival or a mourning feast, or for no reason at all save that they were restless and wanted to walk. A few of the more restless spirits wander further afield into the highlands or down the Valley to Ifakara and beyond. Several hundred each year, especially people whose crops have not been good, go away to Mufindi, Lupembe, Mahenge, Ifakara, Kilosa, and so on, to seek work for two or three months to earn a little money, while their wives stay at home and attend to the dry-season crops. The Mtema hopes, however, that the more of his people who plant cotton, the fewer each year will need to work away from the tribe, for he is not at all sure that these sojournings in strange places have an altogether beneficial influence on his people. In short, July, August, September, and October are regarded by the Wabena as months either for relaxation after the hard and unremitting agricultural work demanded of them throughout the wet weather, or as a time for doing other business of all kinds. Unless there is widespread depression and feverish agricultural activity as the result of general failure of the rice crop, the dry months are the season of good cheer and festivities, of giving and receiving hospitality, of all manner of sociable gatherings, and of travel and trade and adventure.*

Fourthly, it must be remembered that the Ulanga Valley is extremely trying and enervating even to the natives, and that the state of a man's health may often account, at least in part, for lack of energy and enterprise. Anyone who has

* We write of the Wabena as we have known them, before the introduction of cotton, which may considerably modify the dry-season habits of those who grow it.

had much to do with these people can testify to the extent to which they suffer from chronic malaria, chest trouble, and hookworm.* The climate cannot in any way be called good or conducive to the production of a taste for more work than is strictly necessary. During the wet weather the men have to be out in the rain and cold at night, while the women spend their days in the sodden fields at a season when the weather is cool and the early part of the day tends to be misty and extremely cold. The penetrating damp chill of the nights and early mornings in this country during the wet months and well on into June is not to be trifled with. And then the latter part of the dry weather brings oppressive heat when the lightest work in the sun in the fields is a real burden.

Lastly, comparatively few of the Wabena know enough of the outside world to have any ambition to trade and get richer. Their wants are so very simple that it is small wonder if, when the rice crop is sufficiently good to meet their modest requirements, they cannot see any point in setting themselves the task of planting and guarding large crops in the dry season, and so forgoing the leisure to which they look forward after the rice is safely stored. The restless fever and multifarious wants of civilisation have not as yet touched the bulk of the population: it is not man's nature to work without incentive, and the measure of their simple wants is the measure of the effort they are prepared to make.

* Yaws used to be extremely common, too, but it is not nearly so prevalent now, thanks to the medical work of recent years.

CHAPTER XIII

THE PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION OF WEALTH

2. PROPERTY AND MUTUAL SERVICE

THE men clear and break the ground, the women cultivate it; the women scare the birds all day, the men protect the crops all night. Whose, then, is the crop when harvested?

We often read of polygamous societies where each woman has her own field, as in Ubena, and where what is grown on it is her property. So at first sight it is among the Wabena. As a visitor, you are entertained by the great man of the village, and perhaps in the cool of the evening you walk round his fields with him. Pointing to a rice store, you ask who owns the grain in it. "My wife, Binti X," replies your host, "This is her field." Perhaps, to make sure, you go and talk to the women of the household, putting the same question to them, "Whose rice is that?" "Mine," answers Binti X, and the matter seems clear: the women own the crops grown in their fields. But the next day, maybe, you walk round the village accompanied by a party of men. Looking inside a store and seeing a fine heap of golden rice, you ask whose it is. "*Mine*," says one of the men, thereby apparently contradicting all you thought you had learned on the previous day.

The solution of the puzzle, like the answer to many riddles, is simple enough. These statements must be taken in their context. It is so easy to overlook what is implied by the fact that the answers received the first day were from members of a polygamous household. They had quite a different meaning from that conveyed by the same answers if given by the husband of one wife or by that wife herself. In monogamous society, if the husband says, "This is my wife's," he means

"It is not mine." There is no alternative. But to the Mbena it is axiomatic that the produce of the fields belongs to him and he simply assumes that you, too, take it for granted; he would be utterly astounded if he was told that you understood his statement, "This rice is my wife's, Binti X's," to mean, "It is not *mine*." Its only possible meaning in his mind is, "That is Binti X's, not Binti Y's." He is making the distinction between one woman and another, not between himself and one of his womenfolk. It does not occur to him that anybody could understand the answer differently. Similarly, the woman emphasises her rights as distinct from those of the other women in the household, not as distinct from those of her husband. The following day, however, you were with a number of men and the implication of your question was, "To which of *you* does this rice belong?" and you received the appropriate answer.

The truth of the matter is that, with few exceptions (pp. 274–5), all the property of the family belongs to and is in the last resort controlled by the head of the house, but always subject to the recognised rights of other members of the household. A woman must be consulted over the proposed method of disposing of the crop she has grown, but beyond safeguarding her right to fair reward for her labour she cannot dictate to her husband what he shall do. Strict distinction is made between the shares contributed by the different women, and each, whether wife or ward, must be treated fairly and rewarded according to her effort. But the rice is not regarded as hers;* it is her husband's or guardian's, and she has no legal redress if he wrongs her. She has, however, other means of securing a fair deal. An aggrieved wife, backed up by angry relatives, is well able to look after her own interests! And if the woman in question be not wife but only ward, the household is not likely to be any less disturbed than by a wronged

* See also p. 278; the crops do not belong to her even after her husband's death.

wife, for her righteous indignation will stir up discontent among the other women, anxious lest their share be the next to suffer; while more often than not she will have other relatives to support her, too.

After all, it is only fair that the crop grown by one woman should not be used for the benefit of another without the consent of the first. One often hears the remark, "She is a good wife, she works hard in the fields." In fact, the two phrases are almost synonymous, for the maintenance of an adequate food supply is the primary preoccupation of each member of the tribe, not one of whom knows what it is to have large reserves or to be free for any length of time from anxiety about food.* Diligence in the cultivation of food is therefore the criterion of a good wife. The woman who works hard and cultivates a comparatively large field is highly prized; and "Feed the brute" is indeed the soundest advice that can be given to a Bena bride! But the industrious wife naturally expects recognition of her worth in more tangible form than mere words. Woe betide the husband who does not remember the virtue of such an one when he trades the surplus of her crop! She looks for his return with new clothes for her or the latest thing in trinkets. In a polygynous household she expects to go better dressed than her more easy-going fellows, and unless the husband fulfils his obligations towards her he had better stay away from home, for he will find no peace there. This does not mean that any woman will refuse to share out her resources when misfortune overtakes the family. When all have worked, it is impossible that one wife should starve because her field suffered disaster, while another wife, less unfortunate, lives in plenty. All have sufficient, or all go short together. Again, there may be relatives, *walongo*, in need of help on account of loss of crops or sickness. The question

* Their preoccupation with food is well illustrated in the fact that to expend wealth in any form is commonly expressed as "to *eat* wealth," e.g.: "I cannot return my daughter's bride-wealth, I have eaten it long ago."

of rights and fair treatment arises in the first place over the proper apportionment of such demands, i.e. the shares to be supplied from different store-huts, and secondly over the distribution of favours out of the surplus. If one, being young and attractive, is favoured beyond her deserts; if a hard-working woman, justifiably indignant, sees the fruits of her labours adorning the unworthy person of another in the guise of bright clothes or ornaments, then let the rash husband look out for squalls.

It is obvious that there is much give and take in the Bena household. If a wife can of right demand that her husband clear and break in a field for her, he on his side can force, upon pain of a severe beating, a slothful woman to cultivate the field he has cleared. And if he can beat her for refusal to work properly, she can in turn make things uncomfortable for him, perhaps less acutely but much more enduringly, if he neglects his duty of guarding the growing crops. Similarly, though the crops are regarded as his, and he has the last word in saying how they shall be used, the woman who grew them can bring considerable pressure to bear on him if he ignores her rights in the matter. The men keep their wives up to the mark: the wives spur their husbands. In a polygynous household the women keep an eye on each other, too, to see that each contributes her fair share of work. They are willing to share food with one another within reason, but none will help one who does not pull her weight and gets into difficulties through her own laziness. Her indolence comes back on her own head in the end, for her store-house will be empty before the end of the year, and her fellow-wives will be unwilling to help feed her and her children. She then becomes an embarrassment to her husband, who has to seek assistance for her from her relatives and naturally does not gain in popularity thereby, so that the cause of all the trouble may expect a good hiding to teach her to mend her idle ways next year. If either husband or wife is notoriously and persistently lazy, the marriage is

not likely to last long. In such a case the indolent husband seeking a new wife to replace the one who has left him is unlikely to find the father or guardian of any desirable girl ready to listen to him, while the lazy ex-wife will find a cold and probably painful welcome waiting for her at her own home and may long lack another suitor.

Fruit trees are the property of those who plant them, even if the owner moves to another village. At his death they are a part of his estate, separate from the fields in which they may be growing. It is quite common, for instance, to find that a man's son inherits a certain field while the deceased's brother inherits some or all of the trees that have been planted therein. The son will gather the fruit and send it to his uncle if the latter is living at a distance and cannot pick the fruit himself, and the younger man may not touch any of it without his uncle's permission. Trees in deserted fields away from houses may get broken down by elephant, but many, more especially those round the houses or in the village streets, go on bearing for years, the fruit possibly belonging to someone living miles away. For example, in uninhabited bush near Mbovu, on the hill-track running south from the village of Masagati to the River Ruhuji, the traveller climbs through a little grove of guava-trees which, he is informed, belong to the Bilali (21) family who moved some years ago to the valley of the Nyame River a few miles away. If the owner ceases to show any interest in his trees, taking none of the fruit, they may in due course be appropriated by others, and frequently a man will make a new field round neglected, unclaimed trees which are then considered to belong to him. It seems a common rule in Ubena that once a man leaves a thing unclaimed for any length of time, anyone may take it, whether it be a field or a tree or anything else; for what a man neglects he obviously does not want.

Another very important item of property in Ubena is the canoe. Canoes are simple dug-outs of various sizes to serve

various purposes, and are paddled or poled according to convenience. Their importance to the Wabena dates, of course, from the days of Mtengera's eastward movement, when his people had to adapt themselves not only to new agricultural conditions, but also to a new form of transport, to travelling through swamps and along hippo- and crocodile-infested rivers, and to all the arts of the river people who became their teachers.

When a man decides to make a new canoe, there are two courses open to him. The first is to hollow out the craft himself, for which purpose he calls upon some of his male relatives or *walongo* to help him in accordance with the general custom of mutual help. They receive no direct payment for their labour, because they are his brethren, but none the less they earn something more than the right to call on him at some future date to render them similar service. They enter into a special relationship with the maker of the canoe and each other, a relationship which lasts as long as the canoe is in use or until it passes from the hands of its maker, either at his death or, in rare instances, by transfer. They form themselves into a group whose members are bound to one another by mutual rights and obligations centering round the canoe. They hollowed it out and they will be its crew. This is, of course, at once a right and an obligation. As a right each can demand his place in the canoe and his share in the spoils when the "captain" is going fishing, or hunting hippo, or has hired his canoe out to someone requiring transport. Half of the "bag" in the first two cases is the property of the "captain," him at whose instigation the canoe was originally made and whose property it is considered to be, and half is divided out among his helpers; while when the craft is hired out the hirer pays an agreed amount to the owner and an agreed amount to each poler. If the group includes more men than are required for the particular expedition on hand, the matter will be duly arranged so that each takes part in

his fair share of such expeditions. On the other hand, the canoe is sometimes used for purposes less attractive and profitable to the crew—the owner wants to go to another village, or orders the craft out to collect rushes or drifting wood for fuel. As a duty, the necessary crew must turn out for his benefit.

In addition to these rights and obligations when the canoe is engaged in some work by command of its owner, each member of the group has further a right of use over the canoe for his own purposes of fishing, transport, collecting firewood, or whatever may be his need. The extent of this right is vague, the frequency with which it may be exercised undefined. It is a subject for informal arrangement in the group, to suit the convenience of all parties concerned—the owner, the men required as polers, the man who wants to use it now, and those who will be wanting it after him—the final word resting, of course, with the owner. This is part of the general system of sharing out the use of canoes among the people of a village and we shall return to it presently. Our concern at the moment is only with the economic group called into existence by the man who summoned his *walongo* to help him hollow out a canoe, and thereby formed a team not only to make but to man and use it. The mutual rights and duties within this group are not legally enforceable; men merely say it is customary to act in such and such a way. But it requires very little imagination to see where the sanction for so doing lies. Retribution swiftly overtakes him who would have more than his fair share of the advantages, and the man who ignores his obligations will soon find his rights disappearing.

The second course open to the would-be owner of a new canoe is to give an order to one of the experts in the tribe, who will then call together his usual assistants—probably *walongo*—and depart to seek a suitable tree. In this case the actual builders have no further concern with the canoe once it is built and paid for. The maker receives his reward, sometimes in these days in cash, but usually partly, if not wholly,

in some form of native currency* or in food. This is, of course, shared out by him among his assistants.

Unless, however, it is one of the very small ones, the owner cannot use his canoe all alone, and so gradually a group is likely to be formed somewhat similar to that described above. The men who agree to pole the canoe on a fishing expedition or to join in a hippo hunt receive their share of the "bag"; those who man the craft when hired out to a trader or other traveller receive their due; those who give their services on some less profitable errand will be allowed, it may be, to use the canoe themselves in return. But in this case there is not necessarily the same permanency in the personnel of the crew as in the former group. A man may agree to make one trip, receive his reward, and thereafter have no further concern with the canoe. In view, however, of the smallness of villages and of the common habit of seeking any needed help among relatives or at least near neighbours, there is a tendency for one set of men to turn out for the canoe time and time again, and so after a while to become a group almost as permanent as the first type.

In both types, all services have their just reward and the "captain" or owner has ultimate control of the canoe and the final decision in all matters concerning it. He can, if he wishes, break up the group by selling the canoe, though this is very rare. At his death the craft is part of his estate and the group naturally dissolves, possibly only to re-form itself under the leadership of the heir who inherits the canoe. In these respects the two groups are alike. But in the first case the owner is beholden to certain of his *walongo* from the outset, before ever he begins to use his canoe; the group is already in existence. In the second, he is in debt to the professional canoe-maker and possibly may not liquidate that debt entirely for some time, but he will eventually pay it off in goods or food or cash, not in rights over the canoe. He is therefore

* For native currency, see next chapter.

under no obligation to take any particular people into the crew. His relatives and neighbours have so far rendered him no service in the matter and have no claim on him. He starts off with a clean sheet, and, provided services on either side are adequately rewarded at the time they are rendered, there need not necessarily grow up any permanent relationship between the owner and those who accompany him.

Now a canoe is expensive, the task of hollowing it exceedingly laborious, and its conveyance from the forest to the nearest river arduous.* Nothing could be further from the truth than the common idea that the native will fell valuable trees for canoes unnecessarily and without thought. The professional builder requires as much as Shs. 120/– or its equivalent for hollowing out a large canoe, and no one is wealthy enough to commission any that are not really needed; while the man who undertakes the task himself with the aid of relatives has months of heavy work before him. Far from repeating the performance more often than is absolutely necessary, the Wabena and other peoples of the Valley keep their old canoes in commission till the last possible moment, relegating them to the less important work of ferrying and strictly local fetching and carrying in their old age. Canoes in the most astonishing stages of decrepitude may be seen performing services of this kind, still in use although battered and holed, and crudely patched with mud and pieces of wood.

The canoes at present (1933) in use in Ubena of the Rivers can be classified as shown on page 269.

One hundred and one of all the canoes in Ubena are found in Utengule, fifty-five in Boma ya Lindi, fifty-four in Ifinga, thirteen in Malinyi,† and none in Masagati. The life of canoes

* It is rolled over poles, foot by foot, by a gang of men, to the accompaniment of rhythmic singing so that all shall pull or push at the same moment.

† This canoe census was made before Mtwa Mpangachuma was appointed to the Stool of Malinyi, so that his people living round Mkasu and Itanga came under Utengule (see p. 241).

Tree		Average Life of Canoes	Number of Canoes			
Native Name	Botanical Name		Large	Medium	Small	Total
1. Mvuli ..	Chlorophora excelsa *Benth. and Hook. f.*	20 years	17	14	16	47
2. Mwawa ..	Khaya senegalensis *A. Juss.* (Mahogany)	7–10 years	5	3	9	17
3. Mtumbati ..	Pterocarpus bussei *Harms*	20 years	—	20	12	32
4. Mkongo ..	?	12 years	—	17	8	25
5. Mkofogwe..	?	2–5 years	7	9	4	20
6. Mfulu ..	Vitex cienkowskii *Kotschy and Peyr.*	2–5 years	—	19	9	28
7. Mpululu ..	Croton sp. nr. macrostachys *Hochst.*..	Indefinite	—	14	12	26
8. Mlendi ..	?	20 years	5	6	8	19
Unclassified	.. ..	—	—	7	2	9
		Totals ..	34	109	80	223

NOTES: (1) Nos. 1–4 inclusive are valuable hardwood trees.
(2) A large canoe will carry 1 ton of rice or more. A medium canoe will carry ½ to 1 ton of rice. A small canoe will carry less than ½ ton of rice.

can, of course, only be gauged approximately, and the figures given in the table on p. 269 for average length of life are for craft made from mature timber* and carefully used. But no matter how much care is taken, a certain number of them come to grief before their time through the assaults of rogue hippo, which sometimes hole them and in other cases bite the end of the canoe right off.

Let us examine the figures for a moment to see what relation there is between them and the qualities of the various trees as material for canoe-making.

Only *mvuli*, *mwawa*, *mkofogwe*, and *mlendi* grow large enough to make big canoes; and of these, *mlendi* trees are comparatively rare, *mkofogwe* yields a soft wood which does not last, while the life of a canoe of *mwawa* is only of medium length because this timber is gradually nibbled away by small fish—*ndagáa*. On the other hand, *mwawa* possesses the great advantage that when split it swells in the water and so "heals." It is thus particularly suitable for really rough work in streams full of sunken logs, rocks, or other obstructions, or where hippos are known to be dangerous. On the whole, however, it is not surprising to find that 50 per cent of all large canoes are made from *mvuli*.†

The choice of trees from which medium and small canoes can be made is very much wider. Here we find *mvuli* popular again, running a close second in Ubena to the equally enduring *mtumbati* (*mvuli* 30, *mtumbati* 32).‡ *Mpululu*, the most enduring of all the timbers mentioned, is unsatisfactory because it sinks, and therefore a canoe made from this tree will go to the bottom if by any chance it becomes waterlogged. Dangerous

* A canoe made from an immature tree will not last so long.

† If the figures for the whole Valley are taken, 217 out of a total of 411 large canoes are *mvuli*.

‡ In the Valley as a whole, however, *mvuli* is far and away the most widely used in these classes, too; the figures for medium and small canoes being *mvuli* 301, *mwawa* 197, *mfulu* 134, *mtumbati* 125—out of a total of 921. Taking all classes of canoes, we find *mvuli* is used for 518 out of 1,332, or 39 per cent.

in deep water, these canoes are serviceable for ferries on small streams and for work in shallow swamps. As in the case of large canoes, the figures for *mlendi* are low because this tree, though yielding very durable timber, is more difficult to find than those mentioned above.

It is natural that the Wabena should prefer the hard, more durable timbers to the soft woods which, though easier to hollow out, necessitate the repetition of the process every few years, and also produce canoes which tend to be unreliable and unsatisfactory, even during the short period they remain in service. Trouble is apt to arise after a very short time through the poor quality of the timber. It may give way under a sudden stress which a good canoe would survive, resulting in loss of perhaps valuable loads and even of life. Moreover, in some places on the small rivers the canoe has to be forced through thick reeds, and at times, even where the channel is clear, the bends are so sharp and the stream is so narrow that the current inevitably swings one end of the canoe hard against the bank, with a force of impact which no weak craft can stand repeatedly.

For all these reasons, soft, perishable woods are not popular, and are used principally for very local and light work. Sometimes, of course, it is a matter of necessity; it is not always possible for a man to find a good hardwood tree of suitable size at a convenient distance from his home or, when his need is urgent, within the short time he is willing to spend looking for it: in other cases, doubtless, the saving of immediate trouble in the work of hollowing out the canoe has some attraction for the more easy-going and improvident.

One point still remains concerning the use of valuable trees. When allowance has been made for canoes which come to grief before their time, the average number of valuable hardwood trees needed annually to keep the number of canoes in Ubena up to present strength is as follows:

mvuli	say,	3
mwawa	,,	2½
mtumbati	,,	2
mkongo	,,	2½
Total		10*

Fewer are actually being felled at present, because a large number of canoes were lost or damaged during the Great War and were replaced between 1919 and 1921. The majority of these are still in use, and will continue to be serviceable till about 1935–40, when a "boom" in canoe-making may be expected as the 1919–21 models are at last discarded! The annual average of valuable trees felled for the whole Valley is only 74½, a figure which can hardly be held to endanger the forests bordering on the Valley and extending for many hundreds if not thousands of square miles, where the trees cut for canoes must represent but a fraction of those destroyed annually by natural causes and replaced by natural regeneration.

The economic importance of canoes to the tribe will be appreciated if it is realised that no other form of transport save head-porterage exists in Ubena. Beasts of burden there are none; vehicles there are none. The rivers are the principal highways of the Ulanga Valley and down them goes all the rice bought in Ubena by the agents of the Ifakara traders. The only motor road connecting Ubena with the outer world enters the country at Malinyi and stops there; and it is, moreover, a difficult road which is passable for only four months in the year, viz. August to November. The cost of both head-porterage and lorry transport for rice from Malinyi to Ifakara by road (98 miles) compares extremely unfavourably with that of canoes, which take roughly seventeen days for the trip Mkasu to Ifakara and return, at a total cost of about Shs. 24/– for a large canoe—Shs. 6/– to the owner and Shs. 6/– to each of the three polers. The possession of canoes is therefore

* The corresponding figures for the whole Valley are 26, 40, 6, 2½, total 74½. *Mkongo* is not used outside Ubena.

essential to the trade of the tribe, for without this cheap means of transport the rice crop* would be unsaleable.

That is the outstanding service rendered by canoes to the Wabena. There are various subsidiary ones—transport within their country, domestic errands such as the collection of rushes or firewood, and the furtherance of the fishing industry which, though seen at its best lower down the Valley, is also of some importance in Ubena. Dried fish from the Ulanga Valley is carried, on men's heads, far afield to the markets of all the surrounding tribes, even reaching Kilosa and Morogoro. Traps, poison, fish-spears (with sharp stiletto-like blades), and hook and line all play their part in the initial stages of this trade and canoes are, of course, indispensable.

Canoes, then, are required for a variety of purposes and one man cannot as a rule afford them to suit all occasions, so that there has arisen among the riverine people a system of lending and borrowing among the various canoe-owners in a village. They will also be loaned to men who have none to lend back, but who repay the service in other ways. One man will have a canoe capable of carrying as much as two tons of rice, and extremely useful for collecting rushes and firewood and the transport of bulky loads of any description; another will own a light one which needs only one paddler, a handy little craft and just the thing for going the round of the fish traps; a third will have a medium-sized craft, not so small as to be dangerous for carrying the family and yet not too heavy for a couple of polers; and so on. There is no code of rules to regulate these transactions and claims are not legally enforceable. Like the arrangements made within the group of individuals centering round any one canoe, these agreements are purely informal, each (as he thinks) observing his obligations in the matter because it is the custom to do so, but each, in fact, constrained to do so whether he will or no

* With the exception, of course, of the rice carried by the producers into the highlands to the west.

by an economic sanction—if he breaks faith with his fellows, he will find himself outside the "Mutual Aid Society" and in sorry plight.

Crops and canoes are the most important forms of property in Ubena to-day, for the number of cattle and small stock is very meagre. Such cattle as there are have to be kept in those specially selected places where they can live, and there they are cared for by men who are not necessarily their owners. Sometimes the owner himself lives where he can look after his cattle, but in other cases beasts belonging to several people are kept together in one of the favoured localities, arrangements being made between their owners and their herdsmen as to reward for services. The cattle are not, as in some cattle-owning tribes, apportioned among a man's wives in trust for their children. With the one exception mentioned below they are the absolute property of the husband. The same applies to goats and sheep with the same exception, which is as follows: After a wife has borne two or three children, her husband must pay *mbopa* to her people. This payment often includes a she-goat and very occasionally a wealthy man may hand over a cow. Opinions differ as to whether *mbopa* is paid to the wife's father or mother, and possibly it varies with the history of the families concerned. Some people certainly consider that the beast belongs to the wife's mother; and all agree that the offspring of any cow or she-goat handed over as *mbopa* is the property of the wife on whose account the payment was made, passing in due course to her children.*

Houses are built and owned by the men, but each wife must have a separate one—probably only a separate room—allotted to her, and she may if she likes demand a special kitchen.† The women are expected to contribute towards the construction of the buildings by cutting and carrying home the grass for thatching.

* For further information about *mbopa*, see p. 327.

† See further in Chap. XVI.

Hoes for use by the women must be provided by the master of the house. In the past these implements played an important rôle as currency and were the recognised medium for the payment of bride-wealth. Some of them never turned a clod of earth, but were employed solely for these purposes, while a few became treasured heirlooms (see Chaps. XIV and XV).

Nothing need be said of personal effects such as weapons, clothes, implements, and utensils of various kinds. A few words are, however, necessary about women's property, in addition to what has already been said of *mbopa*. Certain women are professional doctors, practising particularly, of course, among their fellow-women, but not necessarily so restricted. Others make pottery, baskets, mats, etc., not only for their own families but for sale.* Their earnings from any of these professional activities are their own personal property, over which their husbands have no rights. If a woman dies possessed of property so acquired (a rare occurrence, for they usually "eat" all they earn), it is inherited by her relatives in the following order: grown-up children, brothers, sisters, mother, father. Her most important brother takes charge of the proceedings, and her husband figures nowhere in the matter. Similarly, anything a woman inherits is her own property.

The rules governing inheritance are not rigidly defined, and the heirs merely follow certain general principles, which give scope for much negotiating and manœuvring among them between the funeral and the feast at which the estate is formally divided. The members of a man's inheritance circle are as follows, in their order of precedence:

1. Grown-up children. The daughters do not usually receive large shares or any valuable goods, but are given the less important objects.
2. Full brothers.

* Men may also be seen plaiting baskets and mats, but they do not make pottery.

3. Half brothers, sons of the same father.
4. Half brothers, sons of the same mother.
5. Other male relatives (paternal). Maternal uncles often receive something out of courtesy, but this is regarded as a present and not as a legacy received of right.
6. Female relatives, including (sometimes) wives. Here, again, maternal relatives may receive something out of courtesy, usually only in the case of a great man's estate. For instance, when Kiwanga I died, both those wives who were cross-cousins and also his mother's sisters were given small shares.

Generally speaking, the estate is divided out as far as it will go, beginning with the sons and daughters, and after the principal heirs have picked out the plums from the pudding, as many people as possible from the whole inheritance circle receive some little token to show that they are not forgotten, so that nobody may have cause to be offended, more especially none of those who have stood by the dead man in any way in the past.

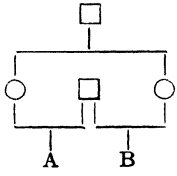
The phrase "enter in among the heirs" is used of all those relatives who might receive a small share if there were enough to go round. It is very commonly employed in everyday conversation as a way of indicating a near (in the classificatory sense) or otherwise important* relationship, and presumably refers to the gathering of relatives from far and near for the feast of distribution, the *ugimbi ya mapwere*. At that function, be it noted, the dead man's mother and maternal uncle always appear as important guests.

The interval between the funeral and the second feast provides an opportunity for argument about the division of the estate and the shares due to various people, and for the wishes of the widows to be ascertained and plans made accordingly. The discussion which takes place at the *ugimbi*

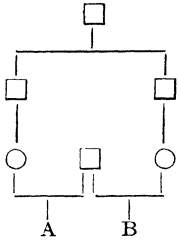
* E.g. a socially important but actually remote relationship, such as that of the Yinga (Hehe) and Manga chiefs; or that between a great man like the Mtema and relatives so distant even by tribal reckoning that the links would long have been lost among ordinary, socially obscure people.

ya mapwere itself really goes over old ground, the course of action to be followed having been informally decided before the relatives assemble. It is said that the heirs are usually bent on grabbing all they can, and that the distant relatives merely gather to restrain them and see fair play! The senior brother of the deceased performs the duties of executor, but he cannot take anything for himself until the just claims of the sons are satisfied.

A full brother receives twice the share of a half-brother, "one share because he and the dead man had the same father and the other because their mother was one." The meaning of full brother is extended to cover children of one father and mothers who were the daughters of one father, such children being held to have the "same" mother. This only applies in the case of true, and not to classificatory, sisters, i.e.:



A and B have the "same" mother



A and B have not the "same" mother

For instance, when either Kiwanga II or Towegale dies, the other will inherit as a full brother because their mothers were both daughters of Kipolero (77).

The estate consists of food, fields, crops, stock, house, weapons, household goods, personal effects such as clothes, etc., and—debts. Those who inherit the wives inherit also the debts, and if they will not or cannot pay, their new wives go home to their own people against the return of their bride-wealth,* with which the debts are paid. On the whole, matters

* Less, of course, certain amounts for children they have borne. See Chap. XV.

are so arranged that if there are any debts heirs capable of settling them take the wives.

A wife can choose whether she will be inherited by one of her husband's relatives or go back to her own people, who then send back whatever proportion of her bride-wealth is returnable in the circumstances. This applies even to an old woman, past re-marriage, who goes home to live with her own relatives, for in refusing to remain with one of her husband's sons or brothers she deprives him of her help in his establishment and as a producer of food—and a Bena woman has to be very old indeed before she lays aside her hoe and becomes a liability instead of an asset. An old woman who has a son commonly goes to live with him on the death of her husband. The case of Kiwanga's widows may be cited as typical. His chief wife, Binti Mkwando (74), refused to be inherited and subsequently married an Mdamba. His second wife (116), Towegale's mother, was taken by Semasta (93), son of Mpangachuma; her sister (115), the mother of Kiwanga II, went to Selanga (88), son of Towegale, both these men being "brothers" of Kiwanga I. Kiwanga II took two junior wives, Salimbingo two, and Mtengera II one. Some returned to their own people, and the rest went to more distant relatives of Kiwanga. The bride-wealth* of those who were not inherited was returned to Kiwanga's heirs, except in the cases of certain wives of whom he was particularly fond and concerning whom he had himself given instructions to the contrary.

The heir who inherits a wife inherits also her fields and crops, but she does not take them with her to her new husband as her own property. If she elects to go home instead of marrying him, she does not retain them, for they are part of her husband's estate and go to his heirs irrespective of what she does. The man who receives them is then, however,

* That is, in those cases where any had been paid. In the past the Mtema paid no bride-wealth, but Kiwanga established the custom of paying some for those wives who were not cross-cousins (or slaves).

under an obligation to send to her guardian a fair proportion of the fruit of her labours for her maintenance in food and clothes for that season, and if any of her children go with her, due allowance is made for them in the division of her produce.* Her return home without anything, besides being grossly unjust to herself after her work, would be almost certain seriously to embarrass her relatives with their slender resources.

In our survey of property in Ubena, certain principles have become plain. In the first place, nobody gets anything for nothing. Any privilege has its corresponding obligation: any service receives its recompense. Even in the days when men kept slaves, this principle was at work: the slave had his rights as well as his obligations, his rewards as well as his duties. Services may be paid for in some concrete medium, such as food or goods or money, but very often in privileges without any token passing from one person to the other. This gives rise to a network of rights and duties, help and counter-help, to which it seems undesirable to apply labels such as Collectivism or Communalism because they are apt to engender many misunderstandings, in that they imply the submergence of the individual in the group. Losing sight of the individual and his personal reactions to the society in which he lives, we shortly find ourselves perilously close to thinking of him as that mythical, spineless creature who follows the dictates of custom blindly, intuitively, spontaneously, in all his dealings with fellow-members of his group. The fact that he is economically and socially (note the order) closely bound to them does not rob him of his individuality, his desire to evade irksome or unpleasant duties if he can, his natural preoccupation with the needs and desires of himself and his immediate family, let what will happen to

* See pp. 306–7 for the way children are sent to various relatives even when both their parents are still alive. They may or may not be with their mother when she returns to her people.

others. Custom unbacked by potent practical sanctions fares badly when it comes into conflict with human nature. As we have seen in other chapters, so here again we find that a man's observance of customary rules, so far from being either automatic and unconstrained, or induced by purely supernatural sanctions, is clearly forced on him from without by sanctions inherent in the system of mutual rights and obligations in his group. Hunger is never far from the door, and the man urged by fear of hunger and physical misery to grab all he can and give as little as he need, is unlikely to subordinate his immediate interests to those of the community unless there be external compulsion of no small degree of efficiency.

In the second place we see this selfsame fear of hunger and misery harnessed by society to compel respect for property and economic obligations. Nobody lives so far above subsistence level that he can afford to ride the high horse. Everybody needs help, and needs it badly, at some time or other. When no one has reserves on which to draw in the day of trouble, a system of mutual help gives each that measure of confidence, security, hope, without which none could carry on the struggle with a brave heart. Those who have resources can be self-sufficing and correspondingly individualistic, but the nearer people live to subsistence level the greater their dependence on one another. No household in Ubena has the resources to be completely independent, and consequently no man dare be unmindful of his obligations lest there be none to heed his call for help in the day of misfortune.

CHAPTER XIV

THE PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION OF WEALTH

3. ECONOMIC STANDARDS

At the point which we have now reached in our study of economic conditions in Ubena arises the question of standards, of what the words "rich" and "poor" mean in these pages. Are we thinking in hundreds of shillings or thousands of shillings, or merely in cents? Does it appear to the Mbena that a large canoe costing about Shs. 120/–, is like buying a bicycle or a Rolls Royce? Further, we must examine relative values current within the tribe, the ideas of the Wabena regarding different commodities exchanged for one another in internal trade, which is still to some extent based on standards bearing no relation to the modern market value of those commodities.

On pp. 282–3 will be found certain budgets for households of various types. As estimates based on personal observation of the lives of many families in differing walks of life they may succeed in giving some idea of the standard of wealth—or, rather, of poverty! It has been found impracticable, however, to make even such tentative estimates as these regarding the budgets of any people other than those who live in the lowlands and concentrate their attention on rice. But observation does not lead one to suppose that the people of the higher areas, with their more complicated budgets, in which rice, *ulezi*, and simsim all figure, are either much better or much worse off than the lowlanders.* The standard of living is much the same throughout the tribe.

The budgets are, further, strictly limited on the one side

* The position of cotton is, of course, too uncertain at present to warrant any attempt to include that crop in the budgets.

EXAMPLE I.—MAN, ONE WIFE, ONE BABY

INCOMINGS	Shs.	Cts.
1⅓ acres yielding 1,110 lb. rice	55	50
Maize, root, and other subsidiary crops, say	15	–
	70	50

OUTGOINGS	Shs.	Cts.
Rice as food for 2⅕ people, 780 lb. ..	39	–
Rice for beer, say 30 lb. (45 lb. unhulled) ..	1	50
Maize, etc., consumed	14	–
Tax	7	–
Total	61	50
Balance	9	–
	70	50

EXAMPLE II.—MAN, TWO WIVES, ONE BABY, ONE SMALL CHILD, ONE OLDER CHILD

INCOMINGS	Shs.	Cts.
2⅖ acres yielding 2,210 lb. rice	110	50
Maize, etc., say	30	00
	140	50

OUTGOINGS	Shs.	Cts.
Rice as food for 4⅜ people, 1,600 lb. ..	80	00
Rice for beer, say 150 lb. (225 lb. unhulled)	7	50
Maize, etc., consumed	27	50
Tax: 1 at 7/–, 1 at 3/50*	10	50
Total	125	50
Balance	15	–
	140	50

* Plural Wives Tax. A man has to pay Shs. 3/50 for every wife after the first.

EXAMPLE III.—Man, two wives, one adult female ward, one baby, one small child, two older children

INCOMINGS	Shs.	Cts.
4 acres yielding 3,320 lb. rice	166	–
Maize, etc., say	45	–
	211	–

OUTGOINGS	Shs.	Cts.
Rice as food for 6⅛ people, 2,240 lb. ..	112	–
Rice for beer, say 240 lb. (360 lb. unhulled)	12	–
Maize, etc., consumed	42	–
Tax: 1 at 7/–, 1 at 3/50	10	50
Total	176	50
Balance	34	50
	211	–

EXAMPLE IV.—Man, eight wives, two adult female wards, three babies, two small children, one aged relative, one grown unmarried son of nephew

INCOMINGS	Shs.	Cts.
13⅜ acres yielding 11,070 lb. rice	553	50
Maize, etc., say	150	–
	703	50

OUTGOINGS	Shs.	Cts.
Rice as food for 17⅜ people, 6,340 lb. ..	317	–
Rice for beer, say 800 lb. (1,200 lb. unhulled)	40	–
Maize, etc., consumed	145	–
Tax: 2 at 7/– 7 at 3/50	38	50
Total	540	50
Balance	163	–
	703	50

to the produce of the fields, and on the other to outgoings in the form of food and drink and tax. It has been impossible to suggest any figures either for income from special professional activities or for expenditure in directions other than those mentioned above, both of which items vary a good deal. The unavoidable limitations of these examples must be borne in mind, and their shortcomings made good as far as possible from the general information supplied. They will best serve their purpose if read in conjunction with the whole of our economic survey of Ubena, not considered in splendid isolation.

There are a number of points to be dealt with before we discuss the budgets themselves.

The first essential is to know what is the value of the rice on which they are based. In a previous chapter the total crop in a normal year was estimated at roughly 2,600 tons of hulled rice, a figure which allows for the 150 tons of unhulled rice required for seed. The value of this crop to the Wabena, as their staple food, is hardly to be adequately measured in shillings, but for the moment our concern is solely with its market value. That varies considerably from year to year, the price in Ubena being tied to that in Ifakara, the commercial centre of the Valley. Further, some of the rices grown in the Valley fetch more than others, but in this respect *faya* ("wet" rice) and *meri* ("dry" rice) are the only kinds which need be taken into consideration here, for two reasons. The first is that the quantities of the other varieties grown are very small, and the second is that they are destined exclusively for the cooking-pots, so that any error in valuing them affects both sides of the budget equally and does not alter the balance.

The price paid in Ifakara is, of course, first and foremost dependent on the prices prevailing in the larger markets of the outside world, to which the Kilombero rice is going. But within the limit set by this consideration there is room for local rise and fall, and the history of recent fluctuations is

relevant to our discussion of the value assigned to rice in the budgets given below.

In 1931 the average price in Ifakara was 8 cents per kilo of hulled *faya* rice. In 1932 none was sold on the market at less than 10 cents per kilo, most of it realised from 15 to 18 cents, and some fetched as much as 23 cents. The general rise in 1932 must be in part attributed to the establishment of an auction market in Ifakara, and in part to the introduction of cotton among the Wambunga and the Mafingi section of the Wangoni, which relieved many of them of the necessity of selling rice to pay their tax. For both these reasons the traders found themselves obliged to pay better prices than had been their wont. The exceptionally high price of 23 cents was due principally to the combination of seasonal fluctuation with the fact that the producers had already paid their tax from a good cotton crop. It was the price obtained for the late crop from the Kalimoto basin, grown by irrigation during the dry season and offered for sale in December, by which time the local price has usually risen even in the best of years and particularly in a lean year like 1932. In 1933 the price in Ifakara started at 14–15 cents, but owing to low prices in the outside world it fell to 12 in the later part of the season, while the chances of a fancy price for the late Kalimoto crop were not so good in a year when most people had an ample store of food.

The price paid for *faya* in Ubena rises and falls with the price in Ifakara, but it must, of course, always be slightly lower owing to the cost of transport which, though individual agreements with the owners and crews of canoes vary somewhat, averages between 1 and 2 cents per kilo. In the budgets, hulled rice has been valued at 5 cents per lb., or about 11 cents per kilo—taking a price neither very high nor very low.

Meri usually fetches about 2 cents less per kilo than *faya* in Ifakara, but this is offset in Ubena by the fact that this rice is grown in the western hills and its outlet is not the Kilombero

Valley but the highlands of Njombe and Lupembe, where there is a local market for it. There, conditions of supply and demand enable its producers to obtain as good a price as do their *faya*-growing brethren who sell to the traders of the Valley.

The average yield per acre has been taken as two-thirds of the possible maximum of 1,300 lb. of hulled rice, and thus, after due allowance has been made for seed, about 830 lb. is available for food, beer, and sale. It has been assumed that the average area cultivated is about $1\frac{1}{3}$ acres per woman, but the remarks made in Chap. XI regarding variation in acreages must, of course, be borne in mind. In that chapter a consumption of rather under 1 lb. of rice per head per day throughout the year was stated to be a fair average. Here, however, we must differentiate somewhat between the members of the household. The budgets are calculated on the basis of a full pound per head per day per adult; $\frac{3}{4}$ lb. per child old enough to help in the fields (i.e. about eight years old or over); $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. per child younger than that but past weaning; and a couple of ounces (on an average) for babies at the breast, for while those under nine months or so are entirely breast-fed, the others between nine months and weaning (2–3 years) are given gruel and boiled rice in addition, often in quantities which would horrify the civilised mother and which give the youngsters an uncomfortably distended appearance!

The rice used for beer appears to average about a tenth of that used for food, but the proportion inevitably varies enormously from family to family, the poorer people being unable to spare so much, and the rich setting aside a greater quantity to meet their various social obligations, to reward those who help in their fields at digging-time and harvest, to provide for religious ceremonies on a scale befitting their social standing, and generally to maintain the position of a great man.

One thing is plain: the bigger the household, the bigger

the balance. But obviously the big household contains more people requiring clothes and simsim oil and trinkets and amulets and native medicines, and so on. None the less, the balance per adult increases slightly with the size of the establishment, and justifies the Mbena in regarding an industrious wife as his greatest asset! But the great man with a large household and many store-houses has, according to tribal ideas, to maintain a standard of hospitality and also of readiness to help poorer members of his *walongo* which makes serious inroads in the balance; though against this must be set the fact that the ability to maintain that standard is in itself a mark of social eminence and greatly desired. It raises the prestige of the master of the house, and thus his open-handedness has its reward.

We have budgeted for much brewing in the biggest household, and it must also be remembered that guests will often be from a distance and require feeding as well, perhaps for days at a time. To take an actual though rather extreme case, which illustrates excellently the effect of unexpectedly heavy calls of this nature, Towegale had to supply food and drink for upwards of fifty people (his royal relatives and their wives) for nearly a month at the time of his appointment as Mtema, besides extending a lesser degree of hospitality to scores of the lesser lights of tribal society, who had come to say their say, or perhaps only to grunt their approval or disapproval of what was going on. They gathered in September 1932 for the weighty conferences which took place as the culmination of those four years of uncertainty and disagreement. At the previous sowing, Towegale had no idea that he would have to meet such exceptionally heavy expenses. Though he foresaw some such gathering at his village, he did not expect it to last so long or consume so much. Various unforeseen occurrences prolonged the proceedings. As an important man, with ten wives (then) and a large and complex household, he reckoned in any year to expend a fairly large quantity of rice in giving

hospitality, but his calculations were completely thrown out by what actually happened, more especially as it came after a really bad harvest. There was, moreover, beer to be provided for the "coronation" celebrations, which were temporarily suspended by mourning for one of his little daughters, who died on the day of his accession and at whose mourning-feast more beer was consumed. Unstinting hospitality he was bound to give, especially at a time when so much hung on his proper observance of all practices expected of a man in his prominent position. In consequence, at the beginning of October the royal household was faced with the fact that it had a month's supply of food to see it through till the maize harvest in March. The women looked woeful and worried, but withal resigned to the pinching and scraping that must ensue. Such was the price of being the first ladies in the tribe! They and their husband regarded the hospitality they had shown their guests as entirely right and proper, something not to be questioned, and they faced the consequences with apparent calmness. Their situation was by no means uncommon in the society in which they lived. Every family around them went through such crises from time to time, regarded them as a feature of any normal life, and by care, ingenuity, and neighbourly assistance pulled through. To be sure, as Mtwa of Malinyi Towegale had a small salary from Government, but rice was getting dear by October on account of the bad harvest, and his increased salary as Mtema would not start until January. By then rice would be even dearer and, in that lean year, almost unobtainable. He had a good number of mouths to feed, including at that time his brother Kiwanga, with two or three of his wives and their children.* Towegale realised that his salary could not by any means be stretched far enough if he bought rice direct. So he did the only possible thing: he sent to Ifakara and bought salt from the traders there, for

* Kiwanga shortly afterwards found employment, and Towegale presumably no longer had to feed his family for him.

salt is a precious commodity in Ubena of the Rivers, and then he traded his salt for rice among his people. Even so his household had very short commons till the new season's crops came to their relief, and it is significant of the reality of the pinch that his little son Lindu, a bonny child of eleven months at the beginning of October, began to ail very shortly afterwards, when his mother, Binti Kipolero (120), was not getting sufficient food to suckle him properly and his feeds of rice had to be curtailed, too. Later, when the food position became less difficult, he was reported quite restored to health. So near the starvation line does even the foremost man in Ubena live!

Even the polygynous household has little margin, but those who are lucky enough to have more than one wife are, of course, in the minority. By far the commonest form of family is a man and one wife, with a varying number of children and possibly an unmarried son or daughter in the teens; though on account of the practice of sending children round to stay with different relatives the younger members of the establishment at any given moment may not actually be the offspring of the master of the house and his wife. The majority of households, then, are poor after the manner of Example I above, but they are withal contented, knowing but the simplest wants and having little ambition to improve their lot at the price of harder work.

Most of the trade within the tribe is still carried on by barter, but the number of cash transactions is increasing. Sometimes a man will set out to exchange one thing for another by some devious route with a number of intermediate steps, having somehow made the joyful discovery that a particular chain of transactions results in profit to himself. Towegale's discovery about the relative values of cash, salt, and rice is a simple case in point, and he was so delighted with the results that he decided to repeat the performance in 1933.

Apart, however, from the comparatively recently introduced

money, the Wabena have always distinguished clearly between articles of property termed "wealth" and regarded as legal tender, and those which are regarded as commodities pure and simple.* For instance, cattle, goats, cloth, and hoes are currency, legal tender for the settlement of any claim, and so formerly were muskets, which have now become too rare and precious to be exchanged at all. On the other hand, rice, fish, maize, and *ulezi* are not "wealth" but just food. Nor can the acceptance of simsim oil, salt, chickens, ducks, or dogs be demanded of a creditor. Most of these latter commodities are, in fact, extensively used in paying debts, and much bartering of them goes on because people need them and are therefore willing to take them. But no man is bound to accept any of them if he does not wish to. The Wabena draw a sharp distinction between them and those of the first category, and the more important ceremonial payments cannot be made in goods of the second class.† To take an actual case, a man was called upon by the Mtema to pay up a long overdue debt of some Shs. 8/–. He produced Sh. 1/– in cash, two lengths of cloth worth Shs. 2/– each, one duck, two or three chickens, and a dog. According to tribal custom, not only the cash but also the cloth was legal tender; but not the rest. The creditor, however, accepted the duck, which was worth Sh. 1/– according to local prices. He refused the chickens, but an onlooker obligingly turned them into cash at the usual price of 30 cents apiece. There remained the dog, which the creditor declined to take, and the matter was left over till next day when, finding he had no hope of obtaining the balance in any more acceptable form, he agreed to take the dog and call the account square. Or, again, a typical entry in the court record of some matrimonial case is as follows: "I have paid all her bride-wealth. I gave her father Shs. 15/–, three

* This refers, of course, only to transactions between natives.

† Certain minor payments from a man to his wife's people are, however, made in food, etc. See next chapter.

hoes, two she-goats, and four *kaniki*."* But such an entry never mentions rice, simsim oil, salt, chickens, or any other commodity of the second category.

The relative values of these various forms of legal tender are very difficult to ascertain, even to-day when the use of the ordinary East African coinage might be expected to provide a standard for comparison. The Bena mind, however, does not observe anything inconsistent in saying that A is worth Shs. 6/– and B is worth Shs. 4/–, but yet one of A is undoubtedly worth two of B; for it regards these as three totally unconnected equations. Moreover, in thinking of the value of A in terms of B, the Mbena is quite likely still to be referring to an old standard of values rendered obsolete by modern conditions. To-day a bull may be bought for about Shs. 30/–, a cow for perhaps Shs. 40/–; goats are worth Shs. 5/– or Shs. 6/– for a male and Shs. 8/– or Shs. 9/– for a female; cheap hoes are imported and sold at Sh. 1/– by the Indian traders; cloth of any kind has its trade price according to quality and pattern. But, nevertheless, in Ubena of the Rivers it would be rash indeed to lay a wager that consequently and obviously thirty hoes are worth one bull or five she-goats the equivalent of one cow. In local arithmetic the answer would very likely be quite different. Similarly, contradictory and confusing information is given regarding the past. The inquirer will be told without hesitation that in Kiwanga I's day one he-goat was worth one hoe (when hoes were valuable), one she-goat two hoes, one bull fifteen hoes, one heifer thirty-two hoes, and one cow forty hoes.† Bride-wealth in the past normally consisted of three hoes, but the Mbena thinks the stranger just a little stranger than usual if he suggests, logically enough, that one cow would therefore pay the bride-wealth of thirteen wives! On the other hand, his arithmetic will agree with the stranger's that *mbopa*,

* Lengths of black cloth.

† And, incidentally, one male slave = one bull; one female slave = one cow.

which normally was three hoes, could equally well be paid with one he-goat and one she-goat, one he-goat and two hoes, or one she-goat and one hoe. At present this payment is commonly Shs. 6/– to Shs. 8/– and is often made in the form of one she-goat, while the relative values of hoes and goats have altered in favour of the latter.

At what particular point in tribal history cattle were worth fifteen and forty hoes for male and female beasts respectively, and what was the real value of hoes at that time, it is impossible to say. Cattle were, undoubtedly, exceptionally highly prized after the migration to Ubena of the Rivers, when grazing-grounds in the comparatively few localities where cattle could live were very valuable, and from Ligamba on the east to Utemekwira on the west all suitable places were eagerly sought out. Many losses were sustained in the process of discovering these places, and the Wabena found that adult stock seldom survived the journey into the Valley. They therefore set to work to build up their herds from animals brought to their new home when very young. Rinderpest decimated the herds in the highlands in 1891, but how far it affected those in the neighbouring kingdom of Ubena of the Rivers is uncertain. In spite of difficulties, however, from all accounts there were before the Great War about as many cattle in Ubena of the Rivers as could conveniently be kept there, in view of the tastes of the people and the consequent distribution of the population. But with the loss of most of these cattle during the War, the Wabena appear to have lost, too, most of their interest in them. In addition to the necessity of making a choice between cattle and rice, there is the fact that the old glory of owning cattle has departed with the days when they were the principal prize in war, and when a large herd betokened a mighty man of valour. To the generation before the War, the stirring cattle-raiding days belonged to a comparatively recent and still vividly remembered past, and cattle were still desirable above all other forms

of property. But the present generation is too far removed from the days of tribal wars to be romantic about their herds or to feel impelled to struggle in difficult conditions to restore them. Older people remain sentimental about them, the possession of a herd is still the mark of a great man, and cattle are still sought after to play the rôle of victim at important sacrifices and great festivals; but for the tribe as a whole the peculiar emotional bond between a Bantu cattle-tribe and its herds has been broken, and only a few traces linger on. For the most part, cattle derive their value to-day from more material considerations than sentiment.

The "hoe standard" has, of course, gone out of fashion since the introduction of money and cheap imported hoes, and information regarding the value of the old hoes is far from unanimous. Some say that when rupees were first introduced a hoe was worth one rupee; others that it was worth two to four rupees.* Obviously neither figure really gives us any idea of the value of hoes to the Wabena themselves in the old days, considering that they were living in a country where iron was unobtainable, and had to buy their hoes from the people of Mkombwe,† who were within the empire of their enemies the Wahehe. Certainly the old-fashioned native hoes are bought in the hills for only Shs. 2/– now, but the demand for them is very small in these days and the old difficulty of obtaining them has disappeared.‡ There is therefore no

* A rupee was then worth about 1/4.

† A good deal of the iron actually came in the first place from further west, in Usangu, being traded into Mkombwe and so on into Ubena of the Rivers.

‡ A new difficulty can be foreseen for the near future, however; namely, a dearth of smiths in the hills as already in the Valley, for few young men seem ready to enter the profession. Towegale is very keen to revive it among his people so that they shall not be dependent on the traders for all their metal implements. The smiths of Ubena take the iron in the form of hoes, which they convert into weapons and other implements of all sorts. Some of them get together a most astonishing collection of miscellaneous primitive and civilised tools, with odd screws and nuts and scraps of metal in profusion. It is somewhat surprising, when one's bicycle sheds a vital screw somewhere in the Ruhuji swamps, to be invited to the house of the local smith to examine the contents of his tool-bag, and to find therein a screw and washer that fit—after a fashion!

reason why they should be very expensive and every reason why they should be cheap, for if they were dear no one would still buy them in preference to the cheap imported variety. It is significant that the higher figures for the value of hoes are invariably given by older informants, and in all probability the lower one does not really refer to the time when rupees were *first* introduced, but to a later stage when the price of hoes had already diminished.

Hoes were in the past the principal form of currency in Ubena of the Rivers. From all accounts they played an important part in that capacity in the hills, too, so there is no reason to attribute their prominent position in the Valley wholly to the loss of cattle consequent on the migration. Their high value in Ubena of the Rivers, where there was no iron, is easy to understand, for the perilous journey up the escarpment into the Hehe empire was not one which any man wished to undertake more often than was strictly necessary. Iron was indeed a precious possession. This fact, combined with the lack of skill of the smiths in the Valley, gave rise to a curious form of hoe. The blade is of the ordinary heart shape, but the tang may be as much as eighteen inches long, rendering the implement very heavy and awkward to use. Now when a hoe breaks, it usually gives way at the point where the tang joins the blade, when it must be completely forged out again. This process was quite beyond the indifferent smiths in Ubena of the Rivers, and the people therefore insisted that all hoes they bought in the hills should be provided with a very large tang so that, in the event of a fracture, their smiths could mend them in the following way: The tang was forged over into hairpin shape and heated. The blade, also heated, was then slipped in between the open ends of the "hairpin" and the ends were hammered down with the blade between, forming a new tang which was forged to a point for hafting. The result was a hoe in which the tang was continued as two ribs, one on each side of the blade—a

very strong join. Moreover, when the blade was worn out, or even before, the owner could use part of the large tang to make an axe, adze, or spearhead, an operation that was within the scope of the Valley smiths. It thus acted as a valuable reserve of metal, reducing the frequency of visits to the hills and so off-setting its disadvantages of weight and unwieldiness. A few people still prefer the heavy native hoes for their fields on account of their good big blades as compared with the small ones of the light foreign hoes from the Indian store, but most now use the latter.

Some of the old hoes were seldom if ever used for agricultural work at all, but served almost entirely as currency. Occasionally one which had been handed over as part of a girl's bride-wealth would be kept as a great treasure by her father and stored away in the rafters. At his death it would be handed on to his son, who would treasure it in his turn as a precious possession of his father's. Thus it would become an heirloom, referred to as *jembe la mahoka*, the hoe of the spirits. In certain families such hoes, greatly prized, are still carefully preserved to be passed on to the next generation.

The hoes obtained from the hills were paid for with cattle, goats, cloth, or muskets, never with rice or any other form of food. In this trade the distinction between legal tender and other goods was very clear-cut. As regards cloth and muskets, Ubena of the Rivers was a link in the chain of trade carried on by the Arabs from Kilwa with the interior. These goods were received in return for the ivory exported by the Mtema, through whom they were put into circulation in Ubena, being paid out as ivory rewards and so on.* Some then found their way further west into the highlands, where they were readily bought in exchange for hoes. Cloth still remains, as we have seen, a medium of exchange in the Valley, but its re-export to Ubena of the Hills has naturally died out in these days of the ubiquitous Indian store. The trade in muskets has

* For presents and rewards distributed by the Mtema, see pp. 151–2.

long ceased, and only a few muzzle-loaders now remain, much prized by their owners and still used in the work of protecting the crops, though probably with more risk to the user than to the intended victim.

All the old forms of currency are somewhat cumbersome, and they are most of them liable to death or destruction. In short, they could hardly be said to facilitate and encourage trade. Cattle certainly were desirable for their own sakes, and the acquisition of large numbers of them was highly gratifying to their owner; but conditions in the Valley forebade this. On the other hand the prospect of hoarding any other of the old forms of wealth in really large quantities was hardly one to spur men on to great efforts. Besides, in the days when porterage was the only form of transport outside as well as inside Ubena, what could a man do with his hoarded wealth in a country like Ubena of the Rivers, except watch it rust, rot, or die? The only commodity which was worth the long journey to the coast was ivory, and this brought into Ubena the cloth and muskets which could profitably be passed on westwards in return for iron; but trade could never develop very far along such lines. There was a definite limit to men's demand for any of the forms of wealth accessible to them, whether in the shape of something which the Wabena themselves were wont to consider "wealth" or something which they regarded as "just food."

The only really rich man was the Mtema, and he was not rich in the sense that he had an immense amount of stored wealth. Much passed through his hands, but it passed: it did not stay there. His outgoings were commensurate with his incomings, and what he received with one hand was sent out again among his people with the other, not hoarded or used for himself alone. Keeping up a great position in Ubena, then (and very largely it is still so), did not mean living in far greater comfort than other people and being surrounded with all sorts of expensive luxuries. How could it? The Mtema

had, indeed, no choice but to live as simply as his people, and as far as personal comfort was concerned there was little to choose between the royal household and the humblest in the country. Keeping up a great position meant, rather, being open-handed to a degree which was beyond the means of other men, giving help and good cheer freely on all sides. In an earlier chapter reference has been made to the many and various calls on the Mtema and, proportionately to their importance and wealth, on the Watwa, Wanyangutwa, and Wanzagira. This necessitated, of course, a large domestic establishment and, in the case of men holding prominent public positions, a constant flow of revenue from somewhere. The hall-mark of a great man was, and is, his lavish generosity and hospitality, and, paradoxically, the grasping man is often not so much striving after material benefit for himself as trying to obtain the wherewithal to distribute largesse and keep open house; in short, to indulge his social vanity. He seeks to acquire wealth in order that he may immediately give it away again with a lordly air—"What is that to a great man like me?" In the past it was the only form of living in state that the Wabena knew, and it is a form still to a large extent expected of the Great by the common people of the tribe, not infrequently to the embarrassment of the royal clan. In many ways Bena standards of wealth and behaviour still belong to an era whose social and economic conditions have already gone, or are rapidly passing.

To sum up, the small range of goods accessible, the limited uses to which these could be put, and the various things mentioned above which militated against the accumulation or storing of large reserves of any kinds of goods—all these circumstances fostered both that improvident hand-to-mouth mode of life, whose attendant hardships are somewhat mitigated by the system of mutual help, and also that lethargic, unenterprising frame of mind which materially retards the economic development of the tribe to-day. Nevertheless, with

increasing contact with the outside world, the advent of the trader, and the introduction of a conveniently small and non-perishable counter for wealth, the Mbena is very slowly discovering that all sorts of delectable things are within his reach if he grows some more rice or dries some more fish; and that any surplus after he has satisfied his immediate wants can be converted into cash which will be as good next year as this. But Ubena of the Rivers, perhaps fortunately for itself in some respects, is still comparatively inaccessible, and influences from outside penetrate only slowly. Both the general adoption of new ideas and methods, however excellent and worthy of promotion the outsider may think them, and also the creation of new wants with the necessary spirit of enterprise, are very gradual processes, accompanied by many of the familiar grotesque manifestations of contact between the civilised and the primitive—including the startling apparition of a deposed chief's wife in scarlet shorts!

CHAPTER XV

COURTSHIP AND MARRIAGE

THE subject of marriage, which might have been expected to follow Chap. IX on Social Organisation, has been left till now not through any under-estimation of its importance, but because the full significance both of marriage laws and of all the customs observed in the home is more easily appreciated if we are already familiar with the economic setting in which they function. Torn from their proper background, they inevitably become distorted and out of proportion; some points loom too large, the importance of others escapes notice, the balance of the whole picture is lost.

We have already had occasion to stress the wide variation in social organisation arising from the interplay of the social systems favoured by different clans within the tribe. These opposing influences have produced a most elastic system for the regulation of marriage, wherein is room for widely divergent individual agreements, kaleidoscopic in their variety. There is evidence to suggest that in some distant past the wife's people were all-powerful in all the clans, but our informants are very vague and contradictory about it. The "past" they talk about is, say, sixty, seventy, eighty years ago. By that time it appears that the whole system had entered upon a period of confusion which is not yet at an end, and during which the balance is gradually tipping more and more in favour of father-right. Social, religious, and economic influences from the outside world all combine to further the process of transition. The movement is irregular and haphazard. There has never, of course, been any authoritative pronouncement from the tribal elders who, like the common people, cannot visualise the system as a whole but are preoccupied with the peculiarities of particular cases.

The changes and compromises are therefore the work of individuals who do not generalise and cannot apprehend the principles involved, each making whatever arrangement best suits his own circumstances. The terms of each marriage agreement are the result of the interplay of all the forces—personal, social, and economic—brought into action by the various people concerned. Therefore it is extremely hard to find any generally accepted standard, and the following attempt to describe the system, as it was some fifty to seventy years ago and as it is to-day, does not profess to give a complete picture or to enumerate hard-and-fast rules. It is, as it were, but the theme upon which the most intricate and diverse variations are based. From the welter of contradictions and particular cases presented by our informants, themselves not a little confused at times—though they do not realise it—by the different forces at work in the tribe, we have tried to disentangle the principles on which the system works.

The prohibited degrees of relationship have been dealt with in Chap. X. We need only add here that after two men have sworn blood-brotherhood the women who are forbidden to the one, as his "sisters" and so on, become the "sisters" of the other, too. With the decay of the clan system and the imperfect recording of pedigrees, it is not always a simple matter for an Mbena to discover whether a girl is one of his marriageables or not, and there is considerable danger of making advances to a girl who later proves to be a parallel cousin. As a first precaution, the would-be suitor inquires into the inherited food taboo of the girl, and if he finds her *mwiko* is the same as his own, the most careful investigation must be made of her antecedents and the history of her *mwiko*. Even should her food taboo be different from his, she may still be within the prohibited degrees, related to him through the female line, and he must examine with care and the help of the elders of both families all that is known of their respective pedigrees, and the marriages of earlier generations.

In spite of all precautions, however, cases do occasionally occur in which incest, committed because a *mwiko* has been forgotten or a link in a pedigree lost, comes to light after the couple have married. This difficulty arose, for instance, in the case of a man who, thinking all was well, married a girl living at the coast, miles away from his home, only to discover later that she was a distant parallel cousin, a tribal sister. The marriage was at once dissolved and the couple sought a medicine-man, to be ceremonially cleansed from the taint of incest. These mistakes usually result from children having been taken away from the tribe very young and having forgotten, or having never learnt, their food taboos and pedigrees.

Cross-cousin marriage, always the rule in the royal clan, is said to have been adopted at one time by the tribe generally, but it was soon found to be an irksome rule and ceased to be observed. It remains permissible in all families, definitely approved in most important ones, and strictly observed by royalty.

An optional sororate is found in Ubena, where, when great friendliness exists between father- and son-in-law, the former will arrange for the young man to receive a sister of a dead or invalid wife, waiving the payment of bride-wealth entirely or in part. The sister may, of course, be only a classificatory "sister" and actually be quite a distant cousin of the first wife. For instance, Towegale's fourth wife, Amina (118), is a substitute for his dead wife, Binti Lupogo (121), the two women being regarded as sisters since their mothers, Binti Hanja (110) and Binti Mtengera (81), were both Wakinimanga.

In the past, bride-wealth was usually three hoes, each hoe being a separate payment and fulfilling a special function, but sometimes cattle or goats figured in the agreement. The Mtema paid no bride-wealth when he married a cross-cousin, and he sometimes absolved Watwa Wenyelutenana, too, from these payments in similar circumstances. The cross-

cousins were all his wards (except those so distant that they were not Waviari), and he had more control over their matrimonial affairs than their own parents. With regard to other marriages of the Mtema and the Watwa, these great men were in the habit of taking any unmarried girl they fancied and, if she was free-born, giving her father a substantial present as bride-wealth. He was expected to show great grief at the loss of his daughter, though really he felt he had been honoured and knew he would henceforth be a privileged person, and would from time to time receive gifts from his royal son-in-law, one of whose *walongo* he had now become. Nowadays the Mtema pays bride-wealth in the ordinary way for all his wives, but the payment he makes to the father of a cross-cousin is not very large.

The way in which the marriages of the Wenyekongo and Wenyewaha and the Waviari were arranged and controlled by the Mtema has already been described. Among the common people, the Wanu, the course of events was in the past somewhat as follows:

In the case of a girl who had already reached puberty, the suitor might first obtain her consent secretly, giving her some object such as a stick or a piece of string as a token. This was called *kibani* = that which is set aside. Both the token and the girl herself were *kibani*. The same root is used in the phrase *Imebanika* = it has been set aside, bespoken. This tryst was kept secret, both the girl and the man, if questioned, denying that they had met and plighted their troth. The official proceedings were opened when the man sent an intermediary to the girl's parents or guardians. Usually a male relative would do him this service, or a friend, but in the absence of anyone more suitable his mother might go. He gave the intermediary a hoe, round which was wound a string of beads. This hoe was the official *kibani*, and with the beads it was placed before the girl's parents, who were then informed of the suitor's name. When they had both con-

sidered the proposal—and the mother's opinion carried great weight—and approved of it, the girl's feelings were consulted. As a sign of her agreement, she put the beads round her neck and handed the hoe over to her father. The beads were not really part of the bride-wealth, but a personal gift to the bride, and were not usually returned with the hoes if the marriage subsequently broke up.

Having thus been accepted and having paid the first instalment of the bride-wealth, the man built a hut for himself and his bride near that of his father-in-law, for whom he was expected to work. He was his squire in war or on journeys, and his servant when at home, building and repairing his house, working in his fields, and performing all manner of menial tasks, though not necessarily in person if he had slaves to do the work for him. He might remain thus for many years serving his father-in-law, whom he was required always to treat with great respect. At the same time, he too derived certain benefits from the arrangement, he and his wife and children receiving assistance when in difficulty, e.g. through loss of crops, while the old people would always help to bring up their small grandchildren.

The first hoe, *kibani*, was literally only a token, and did not make the marriage binding. The girl's father could at any time return it and dissolve the pact without giving the young man any legal ground for complaint, while the latter was equally at liberty to change his mind about his bride and take back the hoe. It signified little more than a betrothal; or perhaps one should say a trial marriage, terminable at will without formality. The second hoe, *ligino*, confirmed the agreement, which could not thereafter be set aside from the girl's side without reason; but until she bore him a child her husband could send her back to her father if he wished. Should he do this, however, without cause or without the concurrence of her people, his father-in-law might refuse to return the hoes. *Ligino* was not usually paid until the couple had lived together

for some months and proved their compatibility. The husband was not thereby freed from the control of his father-in-law, but remained in a position which often did not differ greatly from that of a well-favoured slave. Moreover, until the third hoe was handed over, his children were in the power of their mother's people, though they bore his name and were members of his clan. Should the last instalment be still outstanding when a daughter was married, his wife's family and not he received the bride-wealth, though his father-in-law would usually give him a share.

The third hoe was called *libetu* and released the husband from much of the control exercised by his wife's family. He might now remove himself from immediately under the eye of his father-in-law, but he could not take his wife to live more than a few miles away without the approval of her people, and he usually continued to render them various services from time to time, though no longer, strictly speaking, bound to do so. He personally was free to travel, to go as far away as he liked, but he could not take his wife with him unless her mother agreed to let her go. If permission were refused, the wife remained near her mother while her husband roamed, were it days, weeks, months; but should he linger over-long, sending neither word nor gift, and thus anger her by his neglect, she would probably get a divorce. The women of the family thus tended to stay near one another from one generation to another,* while the men scattered as they grew up and married; but of course in practice it was extremely common for marriages to take place between families of the same village, so that the husband was, in fact, as much in his own home as the wife. If a widow was to be inherited by a man living at a distance, he might be able to come to some agreement with her people about it, or they might

* To what extent children were actually taken right away from their maternal relatives by their father on divorce or by his people when their mother was inherited by a man living some way away is far from clear. Cf. pp. 306–8, 314.

return the bride-wealth and keep her at home, the children belonging to their father's clan in either case.

After the payment of the third hoe the husband had much more power than before over his children; but all through life his sons owed greater respect to their mother's brother than to him, their uncle having a prior claim on their services and, if he chose, a greater influence on their lives generally; while his daughters were more closely tied to their mother than to him. The bride-wealth of the daughters now belonged to their father and not to their mother's people, but he normally handed over part of its value to his wife, who passed it on to her father. If she died before her *lihetu* was paid, it appears that her husband was not obliged to complete her bride-wealth and his father-in-law had no further claim on his services. He had still to pay *lipara* (then, one hoe and one chicken), which was and is always payable on the death of a wife; it is considered as a mark of sympathy with the bereaved parents and family, and the husband who refuses to pay it is held to have a guilty conscience and to be responsible for the death of his wife, by witchcraft or other means. Whether, in cases where *lihetu* had not been paid for the wife now dead, *lipara* was considered to take its place with regard to transfer of rights over the children is not clear; nor is the evidence satisfactory as to whether the father-in-law was liable to refuse acceptance of *lipara* with the idea of keeping full control of the children (cf. present practice, below). It appears, anyway, that their father could only remove them far from their maternal relatives if the latter agreed, though he himself was free to go and live where he would, e.g. with a new wife and her family. If he were living fairly near, his children would certainly spend part of their time in his house. When his daughters married, the proportion of their bride-wealth he (or his relatives if he had gone very far away) received depended partly on what claims his father-in-law had outstanding against him and partly on how

far he or his relatives had contributed towards the keep of the children.

Nowadays when a wife dies before the completion of her bride-wealth, the amount outstanding must be paid in addition to *lipara* (now Shs. 10/–). This change seems to have occurred through contact with the Wapogoro, among whom the idea developed some time after the Maji-Maji Rebellion of 1905–6. As regards *lipara* at the present time, a man will sometimes refuse all or part of the payment so as not to lose sight of his grandchildren altogether. He will be especially likely to do this if his son-in-law has a grievance against him on any score, and is consequently likely to sever the connection completely upon settlement of all his father-in-law's lawful claims. If the latter magnanimously waives all or part of *lipara*, his son-in-law will feel more kindly towards him, his grandchildren will come and stay with him from time to time and help him when he is old and infirm, and his son-in-law will give him a present out of the bride-wealth of each daughter—very often totalling more than the amount he refused to take!

Whether one is speaking of the past or the present, it is impossible to say, really, that children ever live with any particular relative, for the Wabena have always been in the habit of sending them all round the circle of relatives very soon after they are weaned. Thus, they say, in case of illness, death, or other emergency, there is no fuss with homesick children, for they are at home anywhere, and can at once be sent wherever seems most convenient. Both maternal and paternal relatives are included in the circle of homes to which children go, but they usually spend more time with their mother's people than with their father's, and in the past the inequality was much more marked. The fact that they still spend a great deal of time with their maternal grandparents is, of course, a natural consequence of the old system of matrilocal marriage. The real question is, not where they

live at any given moment but who has control over their movements and who makes the final decision about them in any matter of importance. The answer to this is often far from plain, because so much depends on the personal relations existing between their father and their maternal grandparents. It is certain, however, that all those who help to look after them receive their reward. As they grow bigger, the relatives who are housing and feeding them have the benefit of their services; while some to whom recompense is felt to be due will probably receive a little out of the girls' bride-wealth, though here again there are no fixed rules. The father, or maternal grandfather if he be the person entitled to the bride-wealth, gives presents out of it at his discretion, in the same way that the recipient of any windfall distributes largesse among his nearest friends, particularly remembering those who have helped him in any way or from whom he is likely to ask help in the future. Similarly, at the distribution of a man's estate, those who helped feed his children at any time will not be forgotten any more than those who helped his sons to raise bride-wealth. Accounts are not strictly reckoned. In the smaller groups within the *mlongo*, as in that larger unit, a man takes from his friends in his day of need and shares with those most closely bound to him by ties of blood and mutual help when good fortune comes his way. Provided he renders to his fellows fair return, considering his own social standing, for the services of various kinds which he receives, and provided he never turns a deaf ear to those who need his help and have a right to expect it (even if he does not actually "owe" them anything), his account is balanced and his position secure.

There is, however, a further reason why the recipient of a girl's bride-wealth is careful to distribute some of it among other relatives. If the marriage is dissolved later on, those who received the bride-wealth must all help in returning it. Thus in sharing it he also shares the burden of a possible

future liability, which might prove extremely embarrassing if he had to meet it alone, having long ago "eaten" what he originally received. This practice has the effect, of course, of enlarging the circle of people directly interested in the continuance of the marriage and therefore likely to discourage divorce.

But let us return to the past. If for any reason a girl's father wished to keep his son-in-law bound, and particularly if he was at all doubtful of the younger man, he would indefinitely postpone his acceptance of *lihetu*, sometimes right up to his death. Influential men, who honoured lesser fry by giving them their daughters, might do this because it flattered their sense of importance and enhanced their prestige to keep their daughters' husbands in their power. Indeed, the Mtema used to refuse all bride-wealth from his sons-in-law, nominally because it was beneath him to accept it. They consequently remained permanently in his personal service and completely under his control, with very little power over their wives and children. This was very satisfactory from the Mtema's point of view; his daughters were never removed, even partially, from his care, and their daughters, most important as cross-cousins of a future Mtema, were brought up in a fitting environment and their sons trained as Wenyekongo. Since the Mtema's brothers and other near relatives all lived near him, too, with the exception of those whose administrative and military duties took them away, and their children became Wenyekongo, he had a strong hold over the whole family. In ordinary cases, a man who paid no bride-wealth was not legally married, and had no more than the status of a lover, without any legal claim either on his wife or on her children, who belonged to their maternal grandfather, though they were members of their father's clan. This was remedied if he subsequently married the girl properly, or merely paid for the right to take his children, without making their mother his wife.* The

* See pp. 316 and 372.

son-in-law of an Mtema was, however, regarded as legally married in a way, for he had, for instance, a claim on his wife if she deserted him. He was peculiarly situated, something more than a mere lover, yet without the proper position and full responsibilities of a husband.

Among the common people, fathers-in-law did in many cases maintain but slight control in practice, and they were usually considerate in their demands. Where there was good feeling between a man and his wife's people, he might be granted permission to live more or less where he liked and be freed from his father-in-law's service even before the last payment had been made. Sometimes, if the suitor were well known, well-to-do, and trustworthy, the instalments might be accepted in quick succession and the whole matter speedily settled.

When a man took a second wife, even though he was still bound to the family of the first, the same procedure was followed. He built her a hut near her father's, and divided his time fairly between the two girls while he served both fathers-in-law, until such time as he received his freedom and could take his wives away and live with them both together.

The system worked much the same in the case of a girl betrothed during childhood, except that the secret consent of the child herself would not first be sought. Her parents were approached in the manner described above, and *kibani*, the first hoe, was paid as a sign of betrothal. The suitor then built himself a house close by, and the little girl would be sent to take him the food which her mother had cooked. Shy at first, she would after a little while stay chatting and playing, and as she began to develop he would lead her on to greater intimacies, even before she actually reached puberty; for Bena girls are precocious misses and conscious of the promptings of sex before they reach adolescence. During this time she always returned to her mother at night. The second hoe was usually paid over and the marriage made binding on

her side when she reached puberty, but sometimes an extension of the probationary period might seem advisable—as, for instance, when there was any reason to doubt fertility. In either case the girl went to live in her husband's house after the completion of the ceremonies attending her first menstruation.

The question of fertility was settled, if necessary, by the following test. Should the young wife not conceive within a reasonable period, she would return to her father's house and amuse herself with lovers, while her husband did likewise or formally courted a second girl. If she conceived by another man, the proposed marriage would very likely be cancelled, while if *she* proved to be at fault in the matter but, as quite often happened, her husband still wanted her, she returned to him and worked for him, helping his other wives to bring up their children. Usually infertility would be discovered during the *kibani* stage, but should it only come to light later and then cause discontent and strife between the husband and wife, a divorce would probably be arranged by mutual agreement, without recourse to the courts. This custom, the fertility test, which practically died out, is said to be slowly reviving.

Before passing on to consider certain of the changes apparent in Bena marriage customs to-day, let us see what the practice of the past has to teach us with regard to the functions of bride-wealth.

The Wabena themselves distinguish three functions, represented by the three payments. The first instalment, they say, simply marked the girl out as bespoken and inaugurated the trial marriage whereby the suitability of the proposed agreement was put to the test. It raised the relations of the young couple above the level of a mere liaison and, without committing them to an irrevocable contract, implied serious intentions on both sides. The second payment, they say, was to put the girl's parents in a good humour, to influence them in the young man's favour. The word *ligino* means "that

which humours" (equivalent of the Kiswahili *kubembeleza*), while the verb *kugina* is "to woo," with the idea that it is the girl's father who is being wooed in the first place and whose good graces are being sought. The father, in accepting this hoe, confirmed the position of his son-in-law and could not thereafter go back on his word. But, as we have seen, the girl's family had not by any means handed her over altogether to the care of her husband, although they had thus ratified the agreement: he was still living close at hand under their control. The function of *lihetu*, then, was to free him as far as he was ever to be freed while the marriage lasted. The word has no wider meaning and is used only in this one context. Its plural, *mahetu*, was formerly used to cover all the instalments of bride-wealth, while the verb *kuheta* means "to pay bride-wealth for." *Lihetu* has a synonym, *nola*, which is more often used at the present time for the last payment, while *lihetu* was the commoner word in the past. The derivation of *nola* is significant; it comes from the same root as *kutola* = to carry, take away, remove (cf. Kiswahili *kutoa* = to put forth, etc.).

But much more is involved in the system than is expressed in the explanations of the Wabena themselves. In the first place, the custom ensured that rash, hot-headed choices on the part of inexperienced youth were subjected to the scrutiny of older people. The control exercised by the girl's parents over her choice is obvious; that of the man's family over his less so, perhaps, at first sight. Since in the past Bena boys normally married almost immediately after they reached puberty, when they had as yet acquired no property, they were dependent on their relatives for the wherewithal, at least in the case of their first wife. Contributions might be made towards their bride-wealth by various relatives—father, uncles on both sides, elder brothers—but the man to whom a boy looked chiefly for assistance was his mother's eldest brother. This relative, and the others in proportion to the

help they were prepared to give, had therefore no small degree of control over the boy's choice of his first wife. He might be freer in choosing subsequent wives (if any) if he was by then in a position to raise the bride-wealth himself; but so long as he needed the help of his relatives they could prevent, or at least delay, his marriage to a girl of whom they disapproved.

It seems likely that herein lies the clue to the unpopularity of cross-cousin marriage and its failure to maintain a permanent hold among the common people. The powers of blood relatives and in-laws in their respective spheres, already sufficiently extensive to attain their object of keeping a check on impetuous and foolish youth, became intolerably and unnecessarily burdensome when the two sets of relatives began getting mixed up. For instance, a father-in-law who was also a maternal uncle was hard to bear. The people themselves say they found the system unduly restricted a man's choice and so they gave it up. Probably the irksome restriction was caused not so much by an actual shortage of eligible girls—for with a classificatory system of relationship a man has many cross-cousins beyond very near blood relatives—but by the fact that a boy and any eligible girls had common relatives, who could combine to dictate the choices of the younger generations: those who were to raise the bride-wealth and those who were to receive it were in league, if not (in certain cases) the very same people. To-day a youth will often be let off with a comparatively light payment if he marries his maternal uncle's daughter, but against that he has to set the fact that his *yaya's* hold over him will then be greatly enhanced, not only by reason of the new relationship, but also by the fact that his uncle has been so generous to him about the bride-wealth.

In the second place, the custom of paying bride-wealth as practised by the Wabena prevented over-hasty entry into a binding marriage contract. The interval between the first

and second payments varied according to circumstances. The relatives who provided and the parent who was to accept the second instalment could refuse, respectively, to provide and accept it if they felt that the young couple ought to remain longer on probation.

Thirdly, the payment of bride-wealth helped to stabilise marriage by discouraging needless divorce. Till the birth of a child made the marriage binding on him, too, the fear of forfeiting the bride-wealth already paid deterred a girl's husband from frivolous exercise of his right to send her back to her people. He would probably refrain from so doing unless able to convince his father-in-law that he had good reason for breaking up the marriage or unless all parties were equally desirous of the termination of the contract. He on his side was safeguarded from unfair treatment by his wife or her people by the fact that *ligino* bound her to him and that she could not run away home against his will, even if her father were willing to return the hoes. If she did so, she would be brought up before the family elders or one of the tribal courts, and forced to return to her husband. Unless he consented to the proposal, she could only get a divorce by application to the proper authorities, to whom she would have to prove ill-treatment or neglect. Adultery might be adduced as evidence of neglect, but it was not in itself grounds for divorce. After the birth of a child, which, owing to the frequency of miscarriage among Bena women, might not take place for a considerable time after marriage, the husband's position became similar to that of his wife. He too had then to seek divorce either by mutual consent or by application to the courts, where he would have to show that he had cause to be dissatisfied with her; he could no longer send her home simply at his own discretion.

The bride-wealth had to be returned in every case of divorce save, as mentioned above, when the husband, not yet bound by the birth of a child, sent his wife home without cause and

against the wishes of everybody concerned, and save, secondly, when a wife obtained permission to leave her husband on account of his incest with one of her daughters. This rule of returning bride-wealth naturally discouraged her or her relatives from stirring up trouble which might lead to divorce, for they would not willingly part with what they had received. As they had usually spent it, perhaps in helping sons or nephews along the road to matrimony, its return was not only unpleasant but difficult to arrange. When, on the other hand, a wife had good reason to divorce her husband, her bride-wealth provided her relatives with a guarantee that any compensation ordered by the court for injuries sustained by her would be paid. Useless for her husband to put forward a plea of poverty and inability to pay: her relatives held the bride-wealth and before returning it could deduct whatever was due.

At divorce, children of the marriage theoretically belonged to their father, but the question of where they should live was dictated by circumstances—their age, the circumstances of the husband and of his father-in-law, the circumstances in which the divorce had occurred, and whether there was a bitter quarrel or not. Apparently the husband actually had the right to claim the children and remove them, but how often this happened is not clear. They were, however, legally his, and he would be expected to help to keep them, wherever they lived. When his daughters married, he could claim their bride-wealth, but the amount he actually took depended on how far he had fulfilled his paternal duties and contributed to their support.

One hoe was retained on account of the children by their mother's father when he gave back the bride-wealth at her divorce. The number of children was immaterial: one hoe was kept whether there were two children or ten. This, it is said, was to recompense him for all the care and food lavished on them in their early years. Our informants are not explicit

as to whether the hoe retained was regarded as any particular instalment of the bride-wealth, but it is not unreasonable to think that there was some connection between *lihetu*, which gave the children more or less into their father's keeping, and the hoe retained on their account by their maternal grandfather in the event of divorce. Now that the old meaning of *lihetu* has been lost, paternal authority is both considerably greater and assumed earlier than formerly, and no particular payment has special reference to the transfer of control over the children.* But the amount of bride-wealth retained on their account by the wife's father at divorce, no longer any fixed sum or necessarily equal to any one instalment of the bride-wealth, refers explicitly to the children of the marriage. It varies with the number of children, usually starting at Shs. 10/– for one child, while if there are many, none of the bride-wealth will be returned, "for he has already got his profit," and very probably in this case the woman has begun to look old and is not likely to be courted again.

The above remarks on bride-wealth and divorce in the past hold good whether all three hoes or only two had been paid. Now let us consider what may be learnt from the particular functions of *lihetu*, the third instalment. After *ligino*, the husband remained under the close supervision of his wife's parents for as long or as short a time as circumstances, his inability or lack of desire to raise the last hoe, his character, or the will of an autocratic father-in-law might demand. The degree of independence conferred on him by the payment of *lihetu* also depended on several factors—his age, his personal qualities, the relative social importance of himself and his father-in-law, the degree of affection or otherwise existing between the two, and so on. The transfer to him of at least partial control of the children suggests a time when patriliny was not yet firmly established, and when children normally belonged to their mother's clan. It should be noted that in

* See, however, the ghost of the old *lihetu* in *nola*, pp. 325–6.

both past and present practice the child of an unmarried woman belongs to her father until and unless its father pays an agreed sum ranging from Shs. 10/- to Shs. 30/- for its transfer to him; but it takes his name and is a member of his clan, i.e. follows his *tambiko* and inherits his food taboos or *mwiko*. Similarly, at the present time, the father of a married woman's illegitimate child must pay Shs. 10/- over and above the ordinary compensation for adultery in order to have legal control of the child, the rights over whom would otherwise be vested in its mother's husband (see p. 372). At the stage of development with which we are for the moment concerned —in the Bena clans proper—the transfer to the father of rights over the children who already belonged to his clan was simply a part of the whole system of gradual assumption by the husband of the privileges and responsibilities of marriage, and was a feature of the compromise which was necessary when matrilineal clans came into the tribe and intermarried with patrilineal.

But even if there were no children, *lihetu* was still payable; their transfer was not its only concern. It also gave the husband greater authority over his wife and greater freedom of movement, with release from most of the duties which had bound him to his father-in-law—in short, a certain degree of social and economic independence. His father-in-law's acceptance of *lihetu* indicated that he had become an elder and had been adjudged fit to take up his full responsibilities. In this connection it should be remembered that an elderly and respected man taking a new young wife would be treated with a great deal more consideration than an unfledged youth courting his first wife, and all three payments might be made almost at once, the girl's parents feeling confident that they were giving her into good hands. To be an elder in this sense of the word did not necessarily mean the attainment of any great age. The words used are *muvina* = great, large, grown-up, or *mkomi* = grown-up, socially important (cf. Kiswahili

kukomaa = to be fully ripe, mature), not *mwaha* = old. It really meant that the older generation considered he had reached years of discretion. An unstable man might never be considered to have reached them: a man with good qualities might be adjudged *mkomi* while still little more than a boy in years. The son-in-law, however worthy, of a great man was, of course, often an exception to this, being kept in bondage indefinitely, not through any defect in himself but to satisfy the social pride of a father-in-law who aspired to make himself something of a patriarch, with all his daughters and their families around him.

Summing up, we find that in the past the three instalments of bride-wealth signified a provisional agreement, a binding marriage contract, and the husband's assumption of the full rights and responsibilities of marriage, with all that they entailed. And we have considered how it fulfilled its functions at the various stages.

A modified form of matrilocal marriage as described above is still common among the more conservative sections of the community. Many men still go to live near their wives' relatives for a certain period, though fathers-in-law have not the same power over their sons-in-law as formerly. They continue, however, to watch over their daughters and to see that their privileges in marriage are properly respected, and many a daughter will still refuse to go far away with her husband without her mother's permission. Sometimes a modern daughter will trick her mother by getting leave to go away with her husband on a short visit. Thus she will slip away and stay away for a year, two, or even three years. But sooner or later the young people will feel it is time to make amends for the deception, so the husband buys some presents and they return to the girl's anxious parents, softening the old people's anger with, "See, father, here's a fine warm blanket for you," and, "Hey, mother, but these clothes we've brought for you will make you finer than any woman in the countryside."

A boy still shows great respect for his maternal uncle, who is, as in the past, the person to whom he looks first and foremost for help in raising bride-wealth; but the outward and visible signs of this uncle's control over his life generally are less noticeable and a friendly intimacy usually characterises their relations. On the whole the power of the maternal relatives over the children has waned, while the parental authority of the father has greatly increased.*

The partial and increasing decay of the old system of matrilocal marriage set in many years ago, and very likely received its first serious shock when the Bena military organisation began to take shape. The creation of a standing army, whose members had to live wherever their military duties dictated, irrespective of where their relatives or those of their wives might be settled; the development of a special class of warriors and women who had been taken away from home influences at a very early age and placed under the sole authority of the Mtema, established a rival system of marriage, whose strength increased with the passing years. But though it was firmly established among the warriors, it did not spread at first. A big man would, of course, be likely to have the best of both systems, expecting to have full control over his wives if their fathers were less great than he, and at the same time keeping a strong hold on his daughters and their husbands whenever possible. As far as ordinary people were concerned, however, the two systems existed side by side in the tribe for a long time without the newer one gaining much ground, though its ultimate spread beyond the warrior class was only to be expected, other sons-in-law finding the prospect of greater freedom most attractive. It did not make much headway for some time, however, for the influence of the matrilineal clans brought within the Bena kingdom was on the side of the fathers-in-law, who were tenacious of their rights, and, moreover, the Wenyewaha and leading lights of the tribe

* Cf. pp. 337–8 on personal relations in the family.

were jealous of the privileges which made them different from the common herd. But with the penetration into Ubena of social and economic influences from the outer world, the matrilocal system began to lose its hold. The old ways were suited to an environment which has disappeared, when life was fraught with danger and the women were best left in the safe keeping of their people while their men were away, when wage labour and money were unknown and there was no scope for individual enterprise or ambition in the economic sphere, when social and religious influences from the outside world had not as yet touched the tribe. Though the changes penetrate but slowly to the remoter corners of Ubena, where the writers have actually met adult Bena women who had not previously seen a European—a rare thing in the East Africa of to-day—the new conditions are bringing new ways of living and thinking, and matrilocal marriage, with its corollary, the power of the wife's relatives, will probably not long hence be altogether a thing of the past. In the parts of the country more accessible to outside influences, the girls themselves are becoming more venturesome, less and less afraid of travelling away from home; and in the interplay between the various interests involved the girl's wishes more often than not decide the issue. If she is willing to go with her husband and to break away from home ties to live a more independent married life, her parents can do little to keep the couple under their supervision. It is by no means unknown nowadays for a girl to announce her intention of marrying a certain man and going away with him, whether Father likes it or not, and if the latter tries to prevent the marriage by refusing to enter into negotiations about bride-wealth, he may find himself left without either daughter or bride-wealth. True, she is not really married until he does accept some, at least, of the *mahetu*, but that will hardly deter her since Bena society does not spurn couples who live together for years without any legal tie. The father who sees that he is going to lose his

daughter anyway, derives little satisfaction from the fact that she is not married, and he probably puts a good face on the matter and takes her bride-wealth. On the other hand, her husband cannot force her to leave the shelter of her home if she is old-fashioned or unadventurous. She, in fact, holds the balance between her father and her husband.

In describing Bena marriage, it is difficult to avoid giving an impression of a fierce struggle between father- and son-in-law, but in real life a friendly atmosphere usually prevails. The whole matter is in most cases arranged with amiability on both sides, and much give and take in the way of mutual services. The actual agreement reached, as to the amount of the *mahetu* and other conditions of the marriage, varies greatly in individual cases, according to the circumstances of the parties concerned, but there is seldom any serious friction unless one party feels that the other is really trying to evade his obligations. The *sine qua non* of any satisfactory agreement is that both sides should be reasonable in their demands.

Hoes, now obtainable for Sh. 1/– each at any small store, have ceased to play so important a part in marriage formalities as they did in the past, though they may still be used in conjunction with cash, goats, and cloth. The total value of a girl's bride-wealth to-day varies, roughly, between Shs. 20/– and Shs. 60/–. This is undoubtedly an increase on the three hoes of the past, but how great an increase it is hard to estimate, for the real value of the old hoes, which has been discussed in the last chapter, is uncertain. The Wabena are, however, fortunate in that they have so far kept comparatively clear of the idea that this is a road to wealth, and the transaction has not as yet been commercialised. The increase seems to be due main to two things. First, the economic development of recent years, slow and halting as it may appear to us, has made bride-wealth easier to find, and so the raising of a larger amount than formerly does not necessarily entail hardship. Secondly, the increase is due to the growth of patrilocal

marriage, which has three results. It causes a very real feeling of the loss of a daughter, it deprives the girl's father of the services of his son-in-law, and it gives her straight away much more fully into the hands of her husband, diminishing though not destroying the control exercised by her people. Her parents therefore require both compensation for the first two and an extra guarantee that her husband will treat her rightly. It is not, strictly speaking, a guarantee, because should she be ill-treated and get a divorce, her husband does not forfeit what he has paid, though, of course, if compensation is awarded her by the court, he will not get back all that he handed over. But, in fact, it works as a guarantee because its return is a long-drawn and complicated process, in which her father naturally does nothing to minimise the difficulty of finding the means to return it. Often he will say he cannot hand it back till the receipt of instalments from some new suitor gives him the wherewithal to do so. He may drag out the business to such an extent, and create so much ill-feeling in so wide a circle of people, that the bad son-in-law derives little satisfaction from the instalments when they eventually come dribbling back to him.

In negotiating the amount of bride-wealth, three things are taken into consideration: the character, looks, and general attractiveness of the girl, the circumstances of the suitor and his family, and the prestige of the girl's people. The first two carry most weight, prestige being upheld less by the actual amount received than by the rank of the suitor and the social position of his people. Unless something has gone wrong somewhere, a great man will expect his daughter to be courted by a member of another great family or by a man who, though perhaps of humble birth, has distinguished himself in the tribe; and the girls themselves have no time for serious advances from any they consider beneath them. Often, of course, the man whose social standing renders him an acceptable suitor for such a girl will also be in a position to pay

a fairly large sum for her, but not necessarily so: it is possible for the social pride of her family to be satisfied though her bride-wealth be comparatively small. Her father probably feels flattered at the opportunity of being condescendingly generous in the matter to an important suitor. Ordinarily, it is only natural that fathers should try to get as much as they can from their prospective sons-in-law, but they are not avaricious over it like the fathers in certain neighbouring tribes, where nowadays the older men tend to look round for the highest bidder and often cause considerable distress among the young men. In Ubena of the Rivers, fathers on the whole consider that demanding too big a sum savours unduly of sale of the daughter. The ruling class has steadily opposed any general increase of bride-wealth on a scale likely to cause real hardship, and will not support the claims of a greedy father. If a young man, driven to distraction by the exorbitant demands of his prospective father-in-law, elopes with the girl, the tribal authorities, while seeking to effect a reconciliation, will not lend a very sympathetic ear to the father's diatribes, and will not hesitate to point out in plain language that he has brought the trouble on himself, so he had better put as good a face on things as he can.

As a result, abuses are few, and the practice of paying bride-wealth continues to exert a beneficial influence on Bena marriage. The missions in Ubena fully realise this, and it is interesting to note that they refuse to marry couples according to Christian rites until the bride-wealth has been paid in full, giving their male converts opportunities to work for wages so that they may earn the necessary sum.

The giving of the unofficial *kibani* as described above is becoming more and more common, for, as far as can be discovered, fewer girls are betrothed before puberty; on the whole boys, too, now marry rather later than they did, and many adolescents of both sexes appear to go through a period of unacknowledged sexual freedom before marriage. As a

result, it is rapidly becoming the general custom for the young people themselves to come to a secret understanding before the formal negotiations are opened. It is strongly suspected that in the past, too, there was greater freedom among young people than the Wabena are willing to admit,* as, for instance, is suggested by the former test for fertility. It is mentioned quite casually that the girl went back to her father's house and took several lovers, as though there were plenty of them at hand and it was nothing unusual to behave thus in her old home. Moreover, the unmarried mother was no more disgraced then than now, when neither she nor her child suffer any reproach or disability. But naturally the general practice of very early marriage in the past would rule out, or at least greatly shorten, the period of freedom in the majority of cases.

Occasionally nowadays an instalment of bride-wealth called *mbalulawanja* = that which allows one to live on the plot, a payment which really amounts to no more than a small present, is made by a would-be suitor to the father of the wife he desires, before he sends the official *kibani*. Very often it is a present of food in some form or another. This is done with the idea of introducing himself and making friends, but it is not apparently a very common practice, and would, indeed, be unnecessary in the numerous cases when the suitor does not live far away and is already well known to his prospective parents-in-law. No doubt, however, a comparative stranger finds it useful to prepare the ground a little in this way.

The official *kibani* is now the equivalent of a few shillings in beads and cloth given to the girl, though occasionally it is paid in cash. As in the past, it inaugurates a trial marriage, terminable at will with return of the goods. The principal change at this stage of the proceedings is that *kibani* is now regarded as distinct from *mahetu*, which word covers only the subsequent instalments. After the marriage contract is

* Cf. also their assertions about adultery in the "good old days."

sealed by *ligino*, *kibani* is not now returnable upon divorce, except occasionally when the marriage has lasted only a very short time and the husband feels unusually bitter and aggrieved about the treatment he has received. This modification is no doubt due to the introduction of the custom of paying *kibani* in more or less perishable articles of adornment for the girl herself.

The remainder of the bride-wealth, or, rather, in modern Bena parlance the bride-wealth proper, is paid in irregular instalments, sometimes extending over years, and new terms for extra instalments have been invented. *Ligino* is usually the second payment as in the past, and may be the whole balance (i.e. *ligino* and *nola** in one) or only a few shillings. Its particular function is still to make the marriage binding on the woman. Sometimes, after paying *kibani*, a man finds himself in financial straits and unable to raise anything for *ligino* within a reasonable time. He will therefore scrape together any goods he can lay his hands on, such as a few chickens, and take them to his prospective father-in-law, to show he is still keen to win the girl, and to ask that he may "borrow" her yet a little longer. This present is called *mbandulamatwi* = that which opens the ears, or *kuoneka* = to make oneself known. It is really an extension of *kibani*, designed to stave off the pronouncement that he has delayed too long, and the cancellation of the proposed marriage in favour, perhaps, of another suitor who is more likely to put the matter through all its stages at a reasonable rate. Such a present is also sometimes made as the immediate forerunner of *ligino*, the suitor bringing it to the girl's father a day or two before he intends to make that important payment. He thus, it is said, paves the way for himself, and ensures that he will not be received coldly when he comes with *ligino*; in other words, he puts the old man in a good mood for the ratification of the contract.

There is yet another form of *mbandulamatwi*. When a woman

* The word *libetu* has practically dropped out of use.

has left one husband and is desired by another man, the latter brings a small gift to her father to inquire whether or not all the negotiations regarding the divorce and return of bride-wealth have yet been completed, so that he may proceed with his formal suit. He may or may not already have paid *kibani* for the woman.

A picturesque name for another instalment is *twáchire moto* = we have come to the fire (family hearth). The number of payments made, and even their order, varies from case to case, the names of the less important ones being used somewhat at random, but each is paid with ceremony in the presence of witnesses. The name *nola* is always reserved for the last, and *kibani*, *ligino*, and *nola* continue to mark the three essential steps in the proceedings.

In these days a girl's husband may live for a little while near her father and help the latter, but he need not now wait until *nola* is paid to take his wife and children away from the immediate supervision of her people, and to assume control of his own household. With the growth of patrilocal marriage, most of the meaning of the old *lihetu* has been lost, but its ghost still survives in one respect. It survives in that, if a man has not paid all his wife's bride-wealth, her father will take most of what is received at the marriage of her daughters, giving his son-in-law only a small part; and should the wife die before her *nola* has been paid, her father can forbid his son-in-law to take the children more than a few miles away until the balance of bride-wealth has been handed over. Thus in these days what is left of the old *lihetu* has become merely a spur for the dilatory son-in-law to ensure the ultimate payment of the instalments. In the past the question was whether the *old* man would accept the last payment and admit his son-in-law to his full rights and responsibilities: now the question is whether the *young* man is ever going to produce the amount still outstanding. Formerly, if he did not, or was not permitted to, complete the bride-wealth, his father-in-law

had, instead, absolute authority over the lives of him and his children. Now, with the one reservation about the bride-wealth of his daughters, which serves as security for the balance due if there are any daughters, he may assume the privileges and independence of one whose marriage formalities have been completed, long before he actually pays *nola*.

In the foregoing we have emphasised the aspects of bride-wealth which have changed most: those which are almost, if not quite, the same in both past and present must not be forgotten. The system still gives the elders on both sides considerable control over the young people's choice, though "emancipated Youth" does on occasions find ways and means of eluding this control when a deadlock arises. Secondly, there is still the period of probation before the contract is sealed. Thirdly, the payment of bride-wealth continues to discourage hasty and frivolous divorce, for any changes that have taken place in conditions of divorce do not alter the principles at work and do not affect the functions of bride-wealth.

Generally speaking, now as in the past, its various functions all work together for the stability of the marriage bond and the fulfilment of the obligations of family life. Some contribute directly and obviously to this end: others indirectly, by stressing the seriousness of matrimonial and social responsibilities or playing on the desire for prestige and a position honourable in the eyes of men; or by combining with many other Bena customs to bind the newly established household firmly in its appointed place, in the intricate network of mutual obligations within the *mlongo*.

So far we have only dealt with bride-wealth and *lipara*, but other payments are also required of a husband. The first, *lisumiru*, is at his wife's first pregnancy, when a special initiation dance, *uwaha* (see pp. 358–60), is held for her, and for him if she be the first of his wives to become pregnant. This payment consists of an axe or a piece of a hoe, with a cock and a hen and a pot of unfermented beer. We shall hear more

of these and of what is done with the beer in the next chapter. In the case of subsequent pregnancies the husband merely sends a present called *ndenyeligulu*, consisting of one chicken, to his wife's parents with the good news.

The second payment, which must be made in one of the recognised forms of "wealth," is *mbopa*, certain features of which have already been described on pp. 274–5. It is paid to the wife's parents after she has borne two or three children, and though it was apparently once regarded as a voluntary gift, made or withheld at the discretion of the husband, the wife or her people will at the present time demand its payment and may even bring the matter to court. The idea behind it is compensation to the wife's people for the lost youth of their daughter, who, now that she has been married some years and has borne several children, must be regarded as getting old. In case of divorce, she is either unlikely to find another husband or at best unlikely to find one willing to pay a substantial amount for her bride-wealth. She has lost her looks and general attractiveness while living with her husband and bearing his children. The first child is his due, but she has done more for him. He has got "profit" from the marriage, in contrast with her loss, and he must show his appreciation of the situation.

An account of Bena marriage and the relations of the two groups involved cannot be concluded without some description of the social relations between a husband and his wife's parents and a wife and her husband's parents. In both cases a certain degree of formality is observed. The young couple address their parents-in-law by their relationship names,* *muganafu* and *nyafiyara* respectively, while the latter use *muganafu* (son-in-law) or *kamwana* (daughter-in-law), personal names, or simply *mwana* (child), according to choice. The

* This is, however, merely in accordance with the usual practice of the young towards their elders—father, mother, uncle, aunt—and not a mark of respect peculiar to this case.

husband is required to observe very special formalities with regard to his mother-in-law, of which more in a moment. His relations with his father-in-law, and those of his wife with her parents-in-law, though often most cordial, are seldom if ever quite as free and easy as with blood relatives; and the younger people may be severely reprimanded or even punished by the elders of their respective kindreds if complaints are made before the latter of their over-familiar or disrespectful behaviour towards their parents-in-law. The wife is naturally shyer of her father-in-law than of her mother-in-law, but she has no particular taboos to observe where he is concerned. It is otherwise with her husband and her mother, who may not meet until, on the initiative of the latter, the ban is lifted. The young man must at all costs avoid her, though he may see as much as he likes of his father-in-law. The taboo* is normally removed by the ceremonial exchange, in the presence of a gathering of relatives of both parties, of beer provided by the woman and chickens or money provided by the man, but if circumstances render both the continuance of the taboo and its formal removal extremely inconvenient, a mother-in-law may send to her son-in-law and invite him to stop avoiding her without any further ceremony. The taboo need not, of course, ever be removed if the mother-in-law chooses to refrain from the initial step, and when she and her son-in-law would seldom meet in any case—a state of affairs becoming increasingly common with the growth of patrilocal marriage—that step is often never taken simply because the taboo causes very little inconvenience. When mother- and son-in-law are to meet with proper formalities, they turn to their relatives for the necessary assistance. The man's people help him to raise the money or chickens he will need—one fowl or 50 cents for each pot of beer—and they doubtless attend the ceremony fully prepared to square

* Cf. pp. 207–8 on the particular horror with which the Wabena regard the man who makes advances to both mother and daughter.

accounts in beer. On her side, the mother-in-law enlists the aid of her female *walongo* in preparing the necessary quantity of beer, and in return the helpers naturally look to share what her son-in-law gives her. After the formal ceremony of exchange, the assembled relatives of both parties make merry together with the beer, and thereafter the son-in-law is relieved of the somewhat irksome duty of fleeing from the face of his mother-in-law. They may meet like any ordinary relatives.

The subject of divorce has already received some attention in the course of our discussion of bride-wealth and its steadying influence on those inclined to hasty and irresponsible actions, but the reasons for which, and the manner in which, marriages are dissolved in Ubena require further elucidation.

The commonest reasons for which a man divorces his wife are her laziness, insufferable bad temper, or refusal to have marital relations. The first two need no further comment. Evidence as to the real causes of the third is, not unnaturally, somewhat difficult to obtain, but it seems certain that a wife's refusal is never due to instinctive and incurable revulsion, for where such feelings manifest themselves, the marriage does not get beyond the *kibani* stage. The husband who suddenly finds himself repulsed immediately assumes the existence of a lover who is not content to remain a lover, but who has set out to lure the woman away to be his wife. Forthwith, if he is not willing to divorce the woman, the husband sets a trap to catch the cause of all the trouble, in order that he may know who his enemy is, bring him before the tribal courts for adultery, and take steps to prevent any further developments in the matter. The attitude of husbands towards lovers who do not aspire to become anything more and who remain discreetly in the background will be discussed in the next chapter.

The woman who seeks permission to leave her husband and cannot arrange the matter by mutual consent (that is, without coming to court) has to show that she has good

reasons for her action before the tribal elders will grant her request. She may complain of gross neglect, lack of food or, in these days, clothes, refusal to cohabit with her, constant and unjustified beatings and insults, and so on. If the husband's shortcomings are considered venial, the court may order him to pay her a small sum by way of compensation. If, however, his ill-treatment of her warrants the granting of her request, she will get her divorce subject to the return of her bride-wealth. The dissatisfied wife is a most familiar figure in court. The Bena court records are full of cases brought by women asking for divorce, but it must be realised that in only a comparatively small percentage is it actually granted, or for that matter expected. The aggrieved wife as often as not sues merely as a matter of form, to have an opportunity of airing her grievances in public and so shaming her husband into mending his ways. Moreover, if he continues to ill-treat her, she will be able to say the next time, "This is the second time I have had to come to court about him. This time, I insist on a divorce." She probably gets one the third time! The elders exercise caution in the matter and will not readily or hastily accede to the request of a wife seeking a divorce, for they know that time and much argument are needed before they can arrive at some idea of the real reasons underlying her complaints. Sometimes, of course, these are genuine enough, at other times a wife making a great to-do over the way her husband has assaulted her will in the end reveal that she is seeking release from a man who is impotent and yet unwilling to turn a blind eye to her intrigues; but it may equally well turn out that she is making a long tale of woe out of small grievances in order to get free to marry a lover. Society being polygynous, there is no need, of course, for husbands to have recourse to such subterfuges when they wish to take another wife; they have only to turn their attention to the problem of finding bride-wealth.

The older people, as might be expected, deplore the passing

of the days when wives made no trouble and were not for ever appearing in the courts to tell the world of their matrimonial difficulties, the Golden Age when women treated their husbands with respect and everyone did as he or she should! The truth appears to be that in the past a great deal that now comes before the tribal courts used to be settled privately and informally by the people concerned and the elders of their kindred.

Often a woman who wants to leave her husband can see no hope of getting a divorce herself, so she sets about the achievement of her purpose indirectly, developing into a thoroughly bad, lazy, ill-tempered wife till he is glad to be rid of her. She probably comes in for a good deal of beating by her husband, or even by her own relatives if they are unsympathetic towards her, but it takes a lot to break the will of a determined woman, and in the end the husband is likely to capitulate and divorce her for the sake of peace. It is difficult to say how far the fathers help their daughters in some of these escapades, but it seems that before the divorce takes place in such circumstances they usually know all about the girl's secret lover, and make sure that he will provide funds to facilitate the return of her bride-wealth.

These cases rarely seem to occur in households where there are several wives, for in a large household the women are far more free than those in a smaller one. The husband, obviously, demands less of the time and attention of each than does the man with only one or two wives, and they have therefore greater opportunities for the excitements and pleasures of flirtations outside the home, at the same time retaining their secure position in the great man's household. This is a state of affairs that appeals to the Bena girl, and the husband, probably himself enjoying stolen fruit from time to time elsewhere, usually turns a blind eye to it. He never, of course, allows his womenfolk to know that he understands what goes on, lest they should not only despise him but be

terribly angry that he had not made a great display of jealous wrath, beating them fiercely for their misdeeds!

On the whole, it may be said that divorce in Ubena is sufficiently easy to ensure that few couples live together who would really and genuinely rather live apart, and though this may not be good for the stability of marriages, it undoubtedly accounts very largely for the contented nature of the average Bena household. There is no disgrace about divorce, and any idea of indissolubility of the marriage tie is quite foreign to Bena ways of thinking. The law regarding bride-wealth ensures a reasonable degree of stability, and regard for responsibilities and duties. It must always be remembered, too, that in a society where children are equally at home in a large circle of related households, the divorce of their parents is not the catastrophe for them that it is when they have only the one home. Indeed, it usually makes very little difference to their lives. They belong to their father, but the households to which they go from time to time probably include the mother's new home among their number. Even if parents live together, the children are not perpetually with them, but learn very quickly after weaning to accustom themselves to absence from one or both. In babyhood there is, of course, a special tie between mother and child, and babies are never separated from their mothers if there is a divorce, but for the older children who divide their time among a variety of "fathers" and "mothers," the bond between themselves and their parents is only one among many similar ties. The home circle in which they move is too large for the quarrels of two individuals, whether they be their own parents or another "father" and "mother," to cause any serious disturbance in their lives; and though the preliminaries of divorce may be stormy, social relations in the extended home circle are such that, once it is accomplished, readjustment takes place easily and without dislocation of family life as lived in Ubena.

CHAPTER XVI

FAMILY LIFE

It is difficult to know where to break into the circle of family life. Marriage—the beginning of the new family—and birth—the beginning of the new individual life—both have advantages as a starting-point. Since, however, in Ubena the ceremonies attendant on marriage are closely connected with puberty rites, it seems better to begin with the birth of the individual and to follow him or her through the cycle of life to parenthood.

As in most Bantu tribes, birth takes place out in the bush if possible; that is, if it happens during the day. When she feels her pains begin, the mother calls the women who are to help her, and they go into the bush to a suitable spot, where she is stripped of her clothes and ornaments and set down on a neatly folded pad of cloth, her back against a tree or against another woman. Neighbours and relatives, themselves experienced in the business of childbirth, take turns to sit with her, fan the flies away, and encourage her with a robust brand of humour. Her relatives also play upon her fears of death to make her disclose the names of lovers, if she has not already done so; but of this more anon. During her labour, her husband must see that he has no belt or tight clothing round his waist, for that would make things more difficult for her. At nightfall the sick woman is moved into the house, for they dare not stay in the bush after dark; and the husband and children, except small babies on their mothers' backs, betake themselves to the neighbours, leaving the women in full possession. They all declare that few mothers die in childbirth and that little difficulty occurs save in the case of mispresentation, when, of course, the native midwives are helpless.

The father of a child which presents itself in the wrong position forthwith goes to invoke the aid of the spirits, to

prevent the recurrence of such a misfortune. He takes a white fowl to present to the tribal ancestors at the *mahóngoli*, sending word of his arrival and errand to the Mtema, whom he may not see face to face till after the ceremony. The Mtema takes some flour and goes into the *mahóngoli*, shutting the door behind him, and when he hears the man approach he opens the door just sufficiently for the fowl to be handed in to him. While the father waits outside, the Mtema presents the fowl to the spirits in the inner shrine and then, taking some of the flour in his mouth, he blows it through the primitive grass door and comes forth to be greeted—"*Kwahawanga!*"—by the father, now assured that his subsequent children will be born in the normal way. The fowl becomes the property of the Mzagira wa Tambiko, who may take the Mtema's place at the ceremony if the latter is absent or busy, but if he does so and the Mtema is at home, the father must not leave without going to his house to give him respectful greeting.

The Wabena do not appear to have any superstitious fear of a child born abnormally. It is a misfortune for the very obvious reason that the lives of both mother and child are endangered, but the child itself is not unlucky or possessed of any evil influence. Similarly, twins are not welcomed, not from any superstitious fear of them, but for the extremely practical reason that the mother has but one back on which to carry them!

To return to the normal course of events, the child is received by one of the attendant women, and as soon as the afterbirth comes away, the baby is carefully washed and wrapped in some of its mother's clothing. Then the mother herself receives attention, and old clothes are torn up for dressings and bandages. After a little while she is able to walk home from the bush, to sit in the house and be waited on by her husband and the women for three to six days, until her milk is established. During that period she does no work at all, but sits resting with her child, receiving visits from all

the women around who hasten to offer congratulations and admire the baby, while her father sends her a goat and some rice as a sign of his rejoicing. As soon as mother and child are safely settled in the house, the attendant women examine the father for haemorrhoids, which if found must be treated at once, for it is believed that the infant of a man suffering from this complaint will be liable to chronic and continual fever.

As soon as she is able to suckle the child satisfactorily, the mother resumes her ordinary occupations in the house and fields, carrying the child with her on her back. The question of her relations with her husband (or other men) during the period of lactation will be discussed later. Here we are concerned chiefly with the child.

According to Bena ideas, the greatest misfortune that can befall a child at this stage of its existence is for the umbilical cord to fall between its legs. The boy to whom this happens will be impotent and the girl barren. The mother hardly dare sleep until this danger is over, and her husband is expected to help her to watch over the child and to refrain from sexual intercourse with other women until the cord is safely detached. As an additional precaution, the cord is usually passed over the child's shoulders and tied in position with string. After it comes away, some people bury it, carefully noting the spot, and others put it away in the house until the child grows up, when it is thrown away or buried anywhere and forgotten.

Until it can run about, the baby spends almost all its time slung in a length of cloth or, among the poorer and more primitive people, in a goatskin, on the back of one of the women. Naturally it spends the greater part of its time with its own mother, but most of the women like nothing better than looking after a child, and those who have no tiny infant of their own love to pick up somebody else's baby for a while. It grows so accustomed to living on a woman's back that its little legs stretch out in the right position the moment it is lifted. Oblivious alike of noise or movement, it rides to work

or play, to the fields, to a dance, to a confinement, or a wailing, on long journeys or short, in rain or sun, to the river for water, to the bush for wild vegetables, here, there, and everywhere as the woman goes about her ordinary duties at home and abroad.

The mortality among children in Ubena is terribly high, malaria and chest troubles apparently being the most common causes of death. Inquiry into the history of a number of families shows that most mothers see only about half their children reach puberty, though at what ages the rate of mortality is highest it is impossible to say. There are still many years to run before Towegale's family will all be grown up, but already six out of sixteen (excluding one stillborn child) have died, in spite of the fact that his children are probably the best cared-for in the tribe. The history of this household is typical. Semukomi (131) had first a son who died as a baby, then a stillborn son, then a daughter, Kimbongo, who was born in January 1927 and survives, and, lastly, a son born in July 1933, who only lived a fortnight. Ariba (120) also bore a son first,* but he died in infancy; her next child was a girl, Kimbongo, who was born in April 1926 and died the following January; in March 1928 she bore a daughter, Mwira, and in November 1931 a son, Lindu, both of whom are living. Adija (130) has had no children. Amina (118) had a daughter in 1931, but she died the same year, and now she has another little girl, born in May 1933. Biskuti (119) has two children, a girl, Peta, born in May 1927, and a boy, Mwayungi, born in May 1931. Maarifa (132) has a baby son born in September 1933. Omlet (not on the chart, but see p. 181) has a son, Kiangi, born in April 1929; her first daughter, Loholi, was born in April 1932 and died on the day of Towegale's accession in September of the same year, since when she has presented him with another daughter, born in August 1933. Finally, Bleki

* *N.B.* the importance of the firstborn being a son, in view of the peculiar succession law.



ARIBA BINTI KIPOLERO (SECOND WIFE OF TOWEGALE) AND HER SON LINDU
(*p.* 336)



THE CHIEF'S WIVES AND CHILDREN
(*p.* 365)

(135), who has a boy by her first husband, bore a son to Towegale in March 1933.

Suckling continues for eighteen months to two years in the case of a healthy child, but if the mother thinks her child is delicate she will go on feeding it considerably longer, even till it is three years old. At eight or nine months it begins to take rice and rice gruel in addition to its mother's milk, and if there is plenty of food available, it soon acquires the astounding pot-belly which is a familiar sight among children in Africa!

The bond between mother and child is not easily or quickly broken when weaning takes place, and the child continues instinctively to turn to the breast for comfort and reassurance. When its mother picks it up, it will begin to suck though there is no longer any milk, simply as a matter of habit. This is especially noticeable if the child is frightened. Immediately it runs howling to be picked up by its mother, and once safely in her arms and with her nipple in its mouth, feeling secure from danger, it observes the world around with sidelong glances and may even suffer with equanimity the near approach of the alarming stranger from whom it fled in terror. Even quite big children, of five or six years, who have long lost the habit of sucking, seem to find comfort when frightened in physical contact with their mother's breasts, clutching them with their hands or burying their faces there.

Normally, weaning is accomplished very gradually and without recourse to any particular expedients, but if it proves difficult the mother sometimes puts a little pepper on her nipples to discourage the child. Afterwards the practice of sending children on visits to relatives helps to loosen the special tie between mother and child, but it is commonly acknowledged by the Wabena themselves that all through life a particularly close bond of sympathy and affection exists between them. The wanderer is drawn home by remembrance of his mother, not of his father; the girl whose husband wants to take her

away from her home thinks primarily of her mother's wishes and of obtaining her mother's consent; the secondary home in which children spend more time than in any other and to which their mother most gladly entrusts them is that of her parents. Children of both sexes remain always a little in awe of their father. Even when grown up, they are seldom quite at their ease with him or on terms of such comfortable intimacy as with mother or maternal uncle. The father, proud and fond of them as he may be, is something of a stranger as compared with those others, and a slight atmosphere of formality is perceptible in their relations, an absence of teasing and joking on the part of the child lest the father be angered by lack of respect. This is the more noticeable in that the Mbena is a great tease among those with whom he is thoroughly at his ease. The male relative whom the Wabena regard with most affection is, then, not their father but their mother's brother, on whom the boys in particular look as their best friend and counsellor. Here, however, a reservation must be made regarding those cases where the maternal and paternal relatives are of dissimilar social position; for when one side of the family is, say, of royal blood and the other of common birth, the rank and social influence of different relatives tends to carry greater weight than their actual relationship, and to be the deciding factor in determining the extent of their influence on the younger generation.

In whatever home they find themselves, the small children of both sexes up to about eight or nine years of age lead a happy-go-lucky life, allowed to do very much as they like. When the women of the village are going to the fields, one who is staying at home will often take charge of all the youngsters too big to be carried on their mothers' backs all day, but too young to be left to their own devices. They play and sprawl around her house and courtyard, and as she goes about her domestic tasks or sits making a mat she can keep an eye on the crêche. The men, too, who are usually very

fond of children, do their part in looking after them when they happen to be about, and the older girls from nine years or so onwards help in this as in other tasks. The young children have nothing to do but play, and both the small girl who goes to fill a water-pot at the river or helps weed the fields, and the little boy who accompanies the bigger lads herding goats or helps Father build a new house are really only enjoying a game of Being Grown Up. Work is not yet demanded of them; they have only to amuse themselves. Gradually they learn good manners and respect for authority, what behaviour is acceptable to society, what things are best left undone or unsaid. They learn far less from precept at this stage than from their own experience and from observation of their elders, who by their own lives are unconsciously training their children in beliefs about the supernatural and the standards, conventions, and practices of social life. What Rattray* calls "the great African educational principle, whereby children are expected to learn by noticing and copying their elders rather than by deliberate conscious instruction on the part of the latter" is at work all the time.

The children of both sexes mix freely and play games together, and always their eyes and ears are open to all that goes on around them in the extremely public life of the home and village. The little girls are shyer and more retiring than the boys, and stay more with their mothers. The boys roam the village as entranced spectators of everything that happens; linger on the outskirts of the crowd when anything unusual occurs, some argument is going on, or disputes are being settled; sit on the edge of the gathering round the fire at night, listening to the tales that are told and picking up scraps of knowledge about tribal beliefs and customs, history, and folklore, precept and practice. In the home, boys remain in the care of the women for four or five years after weaning, by

* R. S. Rattray, "The African Child in Proverb, Folklore, and Fact," *Africa*, vol. vi, No. 4, 1933, p. 461.

which time they are well enough versed in good manners to feed with the menfolk, and at about nine or ten years of age children of both sexes leave their mothers and go to sleep in separate quarters.

A few of the games they play in childhood, apart from merely imitating the dances and lives of adults, were watched by the writers at the first evening entertainment given by the new Wenyekongo.

1. There is one something like Oranges-and-Lemons, two people making an arch while the others form themselves into a line, holding on to each other. Their leader sings the words of the song, a mother lamenting her child; they supply the chorus.

Mwanga wangu
Child my

Chorus: *Hasa! Hasa!*

etólile
has taken

Hasa! Hasa!

lídege
big bird

Hasa! Hasa!

*díndira?**
what kind?

Hasa! Hasa!

Every now and then the line dashes through the arch, and the two forming it try to catch the hindmost in the line, who if caught falls out of the game. Shouts of delight from the onlookers and players greet failure to catch the prey, and

* The incidence of the accent in Bena songs depends entirely on how the words fit into the rhythm, and is not necessarily the same as in ordinary speech, e.g. in both *lídege* and *díndira* the accent normally falls on the penultimate syllable. Cf. also Chap. XVIII, "Song and Dance"; in *libeyu*, No. 3, we find *wéwemba*, which is ordinarily *wewémba* as in *libeyu*, No. 7.

when the last has been snared everybody joins in a rough-and-tumble.

2. All save three of the players sit on the ground, one behind the other. One, representing their mother, pretends to be hoeing a little to one side, and the remaining two, the villain and his bird, stand a little apart from the rest. Up comes the villain to the mother and asks for work and food, distracting her attention while his bird kidnaps the first child in the line. The others begin to cry out and the villain runs away home, while the mother goes to ask her children what is the matter. This is repeated with variations, and when the number of the kidnapped becomes fairly large they begin to echo the cries of their fellows, in melancholy tones. Eventually the mother's suspicions are aroused, and she will not listen to the villain when next he comes, but chases him away. So he comes in disguise, wearing an improvised grass hat or anything he finds handy, or sneaks round the back of the spectators and himself carries off a child. When only one remains, the mother takes it with her when she goes to hoe, and upon the arrival of the villain all the players rush upon him and nearly tear him in pieces in a furious scramble.

3. One player represents a lion, and the others form a circle round him, each holding his neighbour's wrist at arm's length. The lion hurls himself against their arms, now here, now there, roaring and calling out, "Where can I pass?" to which all reply, "The *magugu* [sharp swamp grass] will cut you." Those against whom he hurls himself try to knock him down with a jerk of their arms, and so it goes on till either he has got out or they have succeeded in throwing him down.

4. The girls and boys line up, facing one another, singing and clapping their hands, while individuals from both sides dance over to the opposite line and choose out a partner whom they lead back by the hand to their own side. This gives great scope for coy little flirtations and great amusement is caused by some of the choices.

5. The children line up as in No. 4 and advance towards each other till each player is so close to his or her opposite number that they are actually touching. In this position they dance with movements of obviously sexual import, singing, "Yesterday I took a wife and she cooked some fish for me, but she has eaten it all herself."

6. Lined up as above, the girls dance over to the boys, jumping along with both feet together and singing. They then turn round and dance back in the same fashion, closely followed by the boys. All turn and the boys lead the way back to their side, and so on. This dance is also often performed on the occasion of a girl's puberty ceremonies.

From the age of nine or so, the children separate more and more and become preoccupied with the affairs and occupations of their respective sexes. The boys begin to take part seriously in the activities of the men in the fields and village and on expeditions of all sorts. A fascinated youngster is even quite likely to be found crouching out of the way in the bottom of the hippo-hunter's canoe when it is going out to do battle. With ever-increasing interest they look on at, and listen to, all that goes on among the men, and in considering the influence of this it must be realised that the majority of disputes and a very large part of most conversations are concerned with relations of one kind or another between the sexes.

At the first manifestations of puberty, boys undergo an initiation ceremony during which they are given definite instruction regarding sexual intercourse. It is believed that if they do not go through these rites their virility will fail. As soon as a boy tells his elders that he has experienced a spontaneous ejaculation during sleep they consult a doctor from whom they obtain medicine for him to eat, and then he is driven down to the river by a crowd of men beating him with sticks. They dance round him at the river singing:

Kipoporo, kipoporo kivembie mdala,

The boy, the boy wants a woman,

before they all enter the water with him. Afterwards they proceed to instruct him, illustrating their words diagrammatically. A spear is stuck upright in the earth to represent the boy, and on the ground beside it, one on each side, they place two stones—his testes—with a stick lying between them—his penis. Near the end of the stick they sprinkle ashes to represent the semen, and at a little distance place a small pile of red earth which is menstrual blood, to be most scrupulously avoided. They further bid him not to commit adultery, though indeed this is a mere formality, and no one would be more surprised than they if he obeyed! As there is no circumcision and therefore no danger to the boy's life, no *tambiko* is held to enlist the aid of the spirits. After the ceremony the boy is presented with a spear as a sign that he has reached man's estate, and his short and simple initiation is over. When he marries for the first time and when the first of his wives becomes pregnant, he will receive further instruction, in conjunction with his wife, from his own and his wife's female relatives.

The girls begin working with and for their mothers in the house and fields at about nine years old, and at any convenient time after that and before puberty they go through the first two initiation ceremonies, of which there are four in all. Childhood is now past, a new stage has been entered in which they are schooled in the behaviour expected of a woman and all her domestic duties. They very soon become aware of an awakening interest in sex and the art of coquetry, and at puberty burst into full womanhood with astonishing suddenness, changing almost beyond recognition in the space of a few months, without the gawky awkward stage we associate with adolescence.

The women's rites and dances are classed together under

the general term *luungo*, but each of the four has its particular name, too. The first is called *kwálulwa* and may be held for several girls at a time. First of all their fathers *tambika* on their behalf so that they shall be protected by the power of the ancestral spirits and recover from the operation they are about to undergo. The children themselves are in ignorance of what is to happen to them and the women tell them they are all going to dance down at the river and look for a crab! As they go they sing,

Zavi koko, zavi koko, zavi ngadu, zavi ngadu.
Look for an insect, look for an insect, look for a crab, look for a crab.

Arrived at the river, the girls are stripped and made to lie down, their faces being covered with their clothes, while the women sing the following song:

O kisawule, O kisawule, kuya musawulege, kisawule.
O undo it (your dress), O undo it, altogether all of you undo, undo it.

The discarded clothes are never worn again.

The women tell the girls that if they cry out all their relatives will die and leave them quite friendless and alone, and then they proceed to cut off the *labia minora*, "to prevent them growing and blocking the entrance of the vagina." The severed pieces are wrapped in fresh grass and thrown away in the river. Afterwards the women perform a number of dances, whose songs or actions or both convey instruction to the girls, and then all go home. The new initiates live an ordinary life in their homes for two months while their wounds heal.

Two months after *kwálulwa* there is a second ceremony, *kwiwindi*, in which one of the writers has taken part when five girls were initiated. The youngest could not have been more than nine, the eldest had well-developed breasts and started her first menstruation a few days later. About eighty

women assembled to join in the fun. For all save the shivering candidates for initiation the event is a festive occasion, and correspondingly noisy.

Ululating and dancing, the women take the girls down to a sand-spit in the river early in the morning. They bring *togwa* (unfermented beer), flour, bush-peas, yams, and beans, and collect wild flowers and leaves on their way to the river. Young and old turn out, mothers with babies at the breast, others with young children of either sex up to three or four years of age, all laden with beer, maize cobs, bananas, sugar-cane, or other picnic fare to sustain them through the day. At any one time, only some of the party are paying any attention to the girls. The others laugh, chatter, romp in the sand, fight mock battles in the shallow water lapping the sand-spit, enter with zest into the noisy dances and games of make-believe designed to frighten the novices. Those with babies set up frames of reeds over which they fasten most of their clothing to provide shade for the children and for any women who are weary and want to rest.

First of all, two bunches of long grass are picked and placed in the necks of two tall, narrow-necked gourds of *togwa*. Each bunch is then divided into three parts and bent outwards, each "arm" being bound tightly with a sort of bindweed. The women then make many round pads of grass and bind them all over the body of each flask, forcing one over its neck to fit round its waist. Both gourds are then ceremonially buried up to their necks at the edge of the water.

The novices are next made to stand in line while the women undress them, singing, "*O kisawule*, etc.," dancing, shouting, and scolding. A woman stands in front of each girl and by pressing on her shoulders makes her bob in time to the song. The girls are presently forced rather roughly to sit down, close together in line, legs straight, heads bent, hands modestly covering their private parts. They may not speak, they may not look up. While arranging them thus, the women sing,

Kalipasi déndema,
Sit down, do not stand up,
pali kikoko, déndema,
there is an insect, do not stand up,
kilimuwano, déndema.
it hurts people, do not stand up.

The girl's legs are seized and bent and straightened in time to the song,

Tambalichi,
Stretch,
unge, vemblala,
play, little girl,
kwa nyoko siwaúngwegá.
with your mother you have not played.

All that follows may be divided into two categories, instruction and pranks designed to scare and impress the novices. Each "lesson" is followed by some alarming experience to fix it in the child's memory. The women themselves refer to the "lessons" as *work* and the intervening periods as *play*. The novices show every sign of terror. They tremble and sweat and cry bitterly because, as the women say, "they are here alone among all of us, neither their fathers nor their mothers* are here to protect them, they do not know what we are going to do to them or whether they will be beaten or otherwise hurt." It must be remembered that on their previous visit to the river they underwent a painful operation, and it is not surprising that they are in a state of alarm and apprehension. The continual noise, rough handling, scolding, and mocking are, indeed, enough to scare them. Through the whole morning they have only a few short periods of respite

* See p. 355 for taboos on mothers assisting at the initiation of their own children.

while the women refresh themselves with beer and food, of which the girls receive none, the only thing that is done for their comfort being the pouring of water over their heads every few minutes after the sun becomes very strong.

Each lesson has either a symbol to facilitate the task of remembering it, or else is explained by means of models or appropriate games of make-believe. The writer, who dared not take pencil and paper because of the atmosphere of constraint they tend to produce among all save those women who know her very well, found the symbols, models, and games of the greatest value as aids to memory when she returned to camp, and found that she, too, in recalling the ceremony worked from the symbol to the lesson it conveyed.

The principal teaching given is as follows, but in addition any woman gives any good advice that occurs to her, and if it is expressed with ribald wit, so much the better.

Lesson 1.—The division of goods, food, work, etc., in the household. Explained with small mugs and bowls of *togwa* in some way difficult to follow.

Lesson 2.—Healthy and unhealthy discharges in men. A little *togwa* representing semen is poured into a small vessel while they sing,

Chutu, chutu, filenga fyawangwa.
A little, a little, water scarce.

The vessel is then filled to overflowing to exemplify an unhealthy discharge and they sing,

Boyo, boyo, linyambende.
Much, much, it does not give children.

Lesson 3.—On various subjects, symbolised by different plants. The theme song of this lesson, and, indeed, of the whole ceremony, is,

Kumangi, mtumage muwunge, ngavalova. Walingonga
There are bush-peas, send the (new) initiate, all you who are present. They reply

nyavalova, "Weke simuwunge, ikovela yani," nyavalova.

all those present, "If she is uninitiated, she will dig up all of it," all those present.

Words from this song, such as *walingonga*, are picked out and thrown back and forth by soloist and chorus, or used as chorus to any words improvised by a soloist.

The plants used and the instruction they convey are as follows:

(*a*) Beans and bush-peas. "These vegetables which live in a house" (and other podded vegetables?) "must not be picked on the morning after you have slept with a man."

(*b*) A piece of spiky swamp-grass. "On whichever side you approach it, it pricks you. So, if you are with a man, whichever way you turn he will get you."

(*c*) An overblown mauve flower, representing an old man. "You must not mock him because his virility is gone."

(*d*) A twisted, desiccated plant, representing a person with deformed limbs. "You must not make fun of him; it is the will of Mulungu, and it might have happened to you."

(*e*) A white flower called "Naked Eyes." "If you meet a naked person, on no account may you stare at his or her private parts."

(*f*) A yam plant dug up with two tubers. "If both are cut away the plant will die, so you must only take one for food and then some more will grow."

(*g*) A large green leaf and a dry leaf tied together. "These mark the seasons: the wet weather when everything grows and you must cultivate your rice, and the dry weather when the sun dries everything up."

(*h*) Ripe tomato. "This represents us, who have come to teach you how to behave, giving our advice one at a time or in chorus, as we feel inclined."

(*i*) A large leaf, folded in two, or a sprig of leaves or even a piece of grass. A piece is bitten off the end as the song is sung.

"If you see a goat castrated or otherwise mutilated, do not cry out in astonishment that it will die. You, too, have been cut and you did not die."

Lesson 4.—Sexual intercourse and lactation. Crude models of men and women, a hen and chickens, are fashioned in the wet river-mud.

(*a*) A number of male figures, all save one representing a deformity or disease of the genital organs, are placed before the girls who are taught to choose the right one.

(*b*) By the use of a male and female figure the sexual act is illustrated.

(*c*) The private parts of the two figures used in (*b*) are covered with a piece of grass. This is forbidden, "you must be naked and you must see your man."

(*d*) The model of the hen (a lump of mud stuck all over with feathers) is shown to the girl together with the balls of mud representing her chicks. One woman drags the hen away, another makes the chicks follow her, while a third throws them a few grains of rice. "Women, goats, cows, wild animals all feed their young with their own milk, but hens and other birds have no milk. Their young eat rice, insects, and so on."

Lesson 5.—Domestic etiquette. A woman pretends to be cooking and eats some of the flour she is preparing. Others come and accuse her of it and she denies strenuously, but her face is smeared with flour, her guilt is obvious, and she is finally reduced to penitent snuffles. "Do not eat before your husband."

Lesson 6.—Sanctity of husband's belongings. A hole is torn in the side of a bundle of leaves, showing what must not be done to boxes belonging to a husband. This was explained as a recent addition to the lessons, necessitated by the fact that many husbands now work from time to time for Government, and may have Government property or business papers in their possession.

Lesson 7.—Choosing a husband. The girls have to choose a plain string ornament from among a number of bead necklaces. "Your man may bring you fine beads or a paltry string ornament; you must accept it whatever it is. So you must not object to lack of looks, position, or wealth in the man your people want you to marry."

Lesson 8.—Duty to mother. The women play a complicated game showing a wife trying to visit her sick mother, her husband sending her back to fetch his tobacco while he secretly examines what food she is taking, and so on. They also depict a bad daughter giving her sick mother rotten food; the mother spits it out, the rest of the dish is thrown away, the husband asks why this waste and receives the answer, "The sick woman has spat in it, no one else may touch it now." Then they show a good daughter and her mother's joy at receiving her gifts. The young girls learn from all this that "you must never ignore your mother's summons, and your husband has no right to prevent you going to her. Take her plenty of good food, but do not leave your husband short. He must still be fed, but your mother comes before everybody."

Between each lesson the novices are frightened by sudden noises behind them, by cuffings, scoldings, rough handling, mocking, uncouth posturing, and dancing, by water being suddenly poured violently over them and by women, in clothing dripping after bathing, rolling on the ground around them and over their legs and licking away their tears. In addition, the following pranks were played on them on the particular occasion when the writer took part.

(*a*) Between the second and third lessons three women drank some beer in front of the girls, stiffened, and fell down "dead," sprawled across the legs of the novices. Sobbing with terror, the girls were made to support the corpses, while an old woman "brought them to life" by making a noise in their ears with her mouth full of water.

(*b*) Between the third and fourth lessons the girls were pelted with small green tomatoes.

(*c*) Between the fourth and fifth lessons they were violently and repeatedly ducked in the river, each being forced to mount on the back of a woman who ran into the water and fell down in it, rolling her burden under. As soon as the child came up again, she was seized by another woman and the performance repeated.

(*d*) Between the sixth and seventh lessons some of the women, brandishing sticks and making a great noise, went into the bush to catch a fearsome reptile to eat the children. It consisted of two women bound together with cloth, the feet of the one to the head of the other. With much shouting, this horrid creature was carried out of the bush to the scene of action and deposited in front of the girls, who were simultaneously hastily dragged "into safety" by other women. The true nature of the reptile was then revealed. But following close behind it were two other horrors in the shape of two beggars, one with distorted face, upper lip caught back with string and gums blackened with mud, the other representing a man with a very large hydrocele which, consisting of a tin basin, small bowl, and clods of earth suspended in appropriate position in a cloth, swung clanking back and forth between "his" legs to the immense delight of the spectators. The girls had to refuse the importunities of the beggars, who thereupon "died" on top of them and had to be revived as above, except that this time the novices were made to spit water on them, too. The girls appeared almost paralysed with fright, and before they had time to get over this trick they were approached by four women staggering under the weight of an enormous "tusk." With this object, which in actual fact consisted of reeds and grass wrapped in cloth, they paraded round the girls, who shrank away in terror as they pretended to drop it on them, and finally they let it fall across their legs.

After the last lesson has been given, the girls take their new

names. Till then they have merely had baby names such as Mwira, Peta, Kimbongo, and the new names they receive are considered to be their real personal names. Later still, if and when the family elders think fit, they may be allowed to "inherit" what the Wabena call a tribal name, i.e. to call themselves after some notable member of their clan in an earlier generation. For instance, Towegale's senior wife (131), the most important "daughter" of Uhenge to-day, has "inherited" the name of the most famous Uhenge woman, Semukomi (34), the mother of Mtengera I. A woman is sometimes given yet another name by her husband, a sort of nickname which is then used by those around her almost to the exclusion of her real name. Such are the names of Towegale's wives as shown in brackets on the chart; three of them, his versions of *biscuit*, *brake*, and *omelet* (this last is not on the chart), are rather amusing.

Boys, too, have first a baby name such as Mwayungi, Lindu, and Kiangi, though the last may also be an adult's name. Their real names are given them just whenever their elders think fit and not at any particular ceremony or at any special age. Later, they too often "inherit" a tribal name. For example as a child Towegale was called Kiangi, then he was known as Tafute, and later the elders decided he should be known by the name of the hero of Mgodamtitu.

In these days a certain number of men and women have Moslem or Christian names in addition to those chosen for them by their elders, and the stranger is at times hopelessly confused by their habit of using now one and now another of all the names at their disposal!

But let us return to the girls taking their new names at the river. Together with the women, they ceremonially dig up the buried gourds of *togwa*. Two reeds are tied together and laid half in and half out of the water. Each girl in turn places one of the gourds on her head and, her arms outspread to balance her, walks slowly down these reeds into the water,

turns and walks up them again. As she returns, the women, singing, ask her name and she, shyly and almost inaudibly, replies, "My name is ——."

The ordeal is now over, and the new initiates go down for a final but this time playful ducking, and the whole party gathers its belongings together for the walk home to the village, singing and dancing and bearing the two gourds of *togwa*. The girls, clothed once more and for the moment veiled, are hidden in the crowd while the women sing,

Ndewulavelave, simuwone.
Even if you look, you do not see her.

The particular ceremony described here was at Utengule, and the women came back to the Mtema's house where the men were gathered. The women remained apart, while the Wenyekongo and then some of the men danced solo war dances, acclaimed by ululations and by women circling round them and beating the ground with the rims of their wicker trays. The new initiates, now unveiled, were set down in the middle of a semicircle of women, each leaning against the knees of an older woman who received the girl's gifts for her, and the fathers came over to present their daughters with clothes. Then the decorated gourds of *togwa* were ceremonially stripped, the grass bundles adorning them were all undone, and the fathers sat down to drink the beer. When they had finished, the girls, although almost overcome with embarrassment, were made to sing and ask for gifts, while men or women so inclined came over and threw them cloth or cents. In a little while the gathering quietly dispersed until the cool of the evening, when great festivities began and lasted half the night, the whole ceremony having taken about seven hours.

Later on, when a girl draws near the time of her first menstruation, her female relatives tell her what will happen to her and what she must do. They bring flour and some red and black earth with which they make three lines on her body

just above her genitals, explaining that the white is mucus, the red blood is "its servant," and the black represents the pubic hair which will very soon grow. When she sees all this, she must run into the bush by herself and call aloud till the women come to her.

In due course the time comes to follow their instructions and she sits in the bush crying, "Heee-e-e!" till they come out to see who calls. They ask her what is the matter, but she must not reply. After several inquiries she shows blood on her finger and they at once break into ululations to announce the glad news that she has grown up. Veiled, she returns with them to her mother's house, whither they bring roots of a plant called *msindu*. They pound up the roots to an accompaniment of singing and ululations by women inside and outside the house, and some they give her to drink while the rest they smear on her forehead and temples, between her breasts, and on her genitals. She remains in seclusion till her period is over, when she washes and comes out for her puberty dance. During this time she sits on some banana leaves in a corner, alone with one older woman. Her food is cooked by her attendant at a special fire and the two eat by themselves. Her companion must either be old or must, as they put it, "turn herself into an old woman," i.e. have nothing to do with men until the girl has returned to ordinary life. For it is feared that if at this critical time of change a girl has any contact with people who are having sexual relations she will never bear a child, and should these taboos be broken and thereafter her first pregnancy be long delayed, her doctor will order her to be put through her puberty ceremonies again. When she comes out of her seclusion her special fire is extinguished, the ashes swept away, and a new fire kindled.

With regard to the fire, it may be noted in passing that when a person is seriously ill the doctor will often order him or her a separate fire for cooking his or her food, for this is thought greatly to enhance the chances of a cure.

The dance which follows a girl's first menstruation is called *luungo ya kamwale* and, if she is already betrothed, constitutes her marriage ceremony. In that case, and if her husband is not already married, she sits in the centre with him while the women dance and sing to instruct them in the duties of married life. The bridegroom who has already been through this ceremony with another girl does not take part again with his new bride, but asks one of his married brothers or sisters to go and sit with her. If the girl is not betrothed, one of her female relatives, probably one of her "mothers," will keep her company. Her own mother cannot do so, for it is regarded as the grossest bad taste—to put it mildly—for a woman to take any part when her own child is being instructed in matters of sex. In so doing she would be revealing to the latter the intimate life of herself and the child's father, an idea which is extremely repugnant to Bena sensibilities.

When a girl who is past puberty is taken by a man as his first wife, the dance will be performed again for the benefit of the bridegroom, beside whom she will take her place in the circle, but if both bride and bridegroom have already been through these ceremonies there is no marriage rite at all, and she goes to his house without formalities other than those connected with her bride-wealth.

Men may attend the *luungo ya kamwale* and even join the dancers, but they take no part in instructing the young couple. One woman leads the singing and all the others take up her words in chorus, repeating the song over and over again *ad lib.*

The introductory procedure of stripping the girl and making her sit down is the same as at *kwiwindi*, with the songs "*O kisawule*," "*Kalipasi déndema*," and "*Tambalichi*," followed by "*Chutu, chutu*," and the demonstration associated with it.

The man is admonished never to sleep with his wife when she is menstruating and a maize-cob tinted red is tied round his waist to warn him against this, to the accompaniment of a song which runs,

Alanyanya ndogero.

He will sleep with a sick woman.

Advice is also given to the girl on looking after herself at such times, concealing her condition and taking care not to be caught unawares, one of the songs being,

Fika kwi, fika kwi, gongoda diwene?

Hide where, hide where, clothes of a woman?

The songs and dances—with or without instruction by demonstration—appropriate to the occasion are very numerous, the above being only the essential ones. Dancing goes on all night, and the leader chooses out song after song from the miscellaneous collection at her disposal. Some of them are particularly addressed to the girl, some to her bridegroom, some to both, and each of them of course hears the good advice given to the other. They learn that a wife must not refuse her husband's advances, must cook his food, must not put the salt into his food herself or she will make him ill, and in general receive much counsel about the relations of man and wife.

At the *luungo ya kamwale* of a girl who is going through the ceremony with her husband, the bride and bridegroom are taken at dawn to a hut which they enter, while female relatives sit outside. The man consummates the marriage by *coitus interruptus* and the women without then come into the hut to examine the girl. When they see the semen on her they rush out with piercing ululations to tell the world that all is well, the bridegroom is potent and the marriage has been consummated. Should the opposite be the case, a medicine-man is called to find out what is wrong. Obviously one of the spirits must be angered, and the parents of both bride and bridegroom *tambika* (with water only) to try to discover and placate the offended ancestor. Perhaps they omitted to tell all the spirits that they were brewing beer and preparing to hold

puberty ceremonies for the child who has now grown up, and spirits are apt to be peevish if their children forget to keep them posted in all such family news. Should all their efforts be unavailing, the women none the less begin to ululate, to make the neighbours think that the man is cured, "for," they say, "if we did not hide the truth, he would be very angry with us, and also he could never get another wife."

Many of the dances performed at this and the other initiation ceremonies are also danced on ordinary occasions without any special purpose, and the writers saw the following when the new Wenyekongo gave their first evening entertainment:

1. A small boy sat hunched in the middle of a ring of women. He was the girl at one of her initiation dances, and round him leaped and twirled the women in twos and threes singing, "Walk in the path, do as your husband tells you."

2. All danced round in a circle, each with his or her hands on the next person's shoulders, while a series of songs were sung containing precepts for the guidance of the young.

3. The women lined up opposite the men, and one or two of them tied a length of cloth round their waists in such a way that it made a "tail" behind. It was intended to be the old-fashioned form of dress still to be seen in outlying areas, where women wear nothing save a few folds of cloth hanging down in front and behind from a string round the waist. These dancers then crouched down on hands and feet, knees doubled up, their backs to the men, and began to jump their legs from side to side, causing their "tails" of cloth to flap wildly. The other women clapped and ululated and sang, "The woman who is not married is nobody." Presently two of the Wenyekongo donned "tails" and tried to imitate the dancers, amid much ribald mirth!

4. One or two of the women stood in the centre of the crowd and caused themselves to quiver like a jelly from head to foot, while the onlookers called out encouraging remarks. This appeared to be very popular with the onlookers, but the

performers were rather shy, and when some of the boys laughingly began to copy them they refused to continue.

5. A small boy sat in the centre with a maize-cob precariously balanced on his head. Everybody else danced round in a ring holding hands, and each in turn had to circle round the child without either letting go of his or her neighbours' hands or knocking off the maize-cob. If the neighbours jerked the dancer's arms at the wrong moment or did not give sufficiently to his (or her) pull towards the centre of the ring, the dancer might be knocked off his balance and fall headlong on the ground, to everybody's great delight; and at least he would probably knock down the maize-cob, whereupon everyone shouted at him, "Your mother is a witch."

Before we turn to look at family life in the home, let us see the husband and wife through the remaining initiation rites, *uwaha*, the dance at first pregnancy. Its name is the noun from the same root as *mwaha* = old. The couple, however young in years, are now old in that, with the birth of their child, they will no longer be the youngest generation, and they will then be fully experienced, fully initiated in the mysteries of life.

The gifts, *lisumiru*, sent by the husband to his wife's parents at her first pregnancy have already been described (pp. 326–7). The *togwa* is sent to the girl's mother in a covered pot, to be used for purposes of demonstration in the initiation dances. What remains should afterwards be drunk by the mother; but it is taboo for the drinker to have sexual intercourse thereafter until the girl's baby is born, so a mother who is still young and ardent will usually ask some elderly female relative to act as her substitute.

The rites are on the same lines as those performed at first menstruation, and again the husband does not take part with his wife if he has already been initiated with some other wife. His place is then taken as before by an initiated brother or sister. As at the *luungo ya kamwale* the instructresses are the female relatives of both husband and wife. The men come to

look on and be sociable, but are not concerned with any more serious business than sampling the beer and making merry.

First of all a demonstration is given with the beer, beginning with the song *Chutu, chutu, filenga fyawangwa* given above.* Then water is added till the vessel overflows, while the women sing,

> *Ueni, umemile wikwanga.*
> You have seen, you have been filled to repletion.

This is intended to convey two ideas to the girl, expressed by the Wabena themselves as follows:

1. "You have played till you were drunk with your playing, till you saw that you were with child."
2. "You must on no account mix this seed with the seed of another man, you are now full; to mix the seed is very bad and terribly dangerous."

Their ideas about fertilisation and the dangers of "mixing the seed" will be described presently.

The man is taught in the course of the dances, though not by any special song, that he may continue to cohabit with his wife up to the seventh or even eighth month of her pregnancy if she is willing, but he must be careful and considerate. The young couple also learn what taboos and customs they must both observe whenever the wife is with child. There is the custom already mentioned (p. 253) of assisting reapers and presenting a few ears to the owner of the field. Again, if a pregnant woman sees people hulling rice for beer, she must approach without speaking, take up a pestle to join in the work for a moment or two, and then spit on the pestle. On meeting a sick person, she must silently sprinkle water on his back, otherwise "his heart will stand still within him and his sickness will increase and he will die." The woman would be held responsible for a death which occurred in these circumstances and be liable to pay blood-money. When rain is about

* P. 347.

to fall, she must go indoors and hide under a blanket without speaking till it is over, otherwise there will be a fearful thunderstorm with, probably, a thunderbolt which will destroy the village. All these taboos and customs should also be observed by the husband, too, except that he is usually let off more lightly in the matter of silence, being allowed to speak in whispers when his wife must not say a word! Moreover, he is exempted from compliance with the last-named rule if he is in the middle of some important work, especially work of a public character. Towegale, in whose large household there is nearly always somebody with child, has decided to abandon this most inconvenient custom altogether! But for the most part he takes the rules seriously enough, and after an adventure with an angry hippo, the writers can vouch for his observance of the custom that when a prospective father is attacked by any dangerous creature he must fight it in silence, or at least without more than a few quiet words: excited shouts and noisy encouragement are not for him.

The morning after *uwaba* has been danced, the pregnant woman is taken into the bush by her female relatives, and there instructed about childbirth. It is, they tell her, a simple matter, not to be feared, and people will laugh at her if she is a coward, crying out and making a fuss. They also warn her against letting her husband come to her too often or too ardently during the period of her pregnancy.

Childbirth has already been described, but one point, the mother's confession to the old women of the names of her lovers, cannot be fully appreciated till we have considered life in the home from the point of view of husband and wife.

The boys and girls who pass puberty without being married are far from likely to live celibate. Amorous adventures of all sorts claim their attention, not acknowledged by, or supposed to be known to, their parents, but the latter can hardly be altogether unaware of the kind of lives their children are leading. After marriage freedom will be considerably curtailed,

but it must be said that most people make the best of their opportunities! The Wabena quite frankly regard sexual pleasures as the normal hobby of every normal man and woman, though in polite conversation they maintain a conventional standard which might leave the stranger with an impression of chaste women and faithful husbands.

Well aware as each one is of what other people's husbands and wives do, and also of his or her own secret life, it is yet customary for husband and wife not only to keep up appearances with each other, but to believe, or at least to pretend to believe, in the fiction. "If adultery is not brought to light there is no adultery, for what nobody sees does not exist," explained Towegale to the writers, with the air of one who explains something very obvious to a slow child. It seems impossible that a husband who knows by his own experience just how faithful other men's wives are to their husbands, should not be aware that his, too, most certainly have secret lovers, and vice versa. All of them must know in their heart of hearts, but they will seldom admit it; hardly, it would seem, even to themselves. Ignoring their own lives, they will display the most violent jealousy if the veil is injudiciously or inadvertently torn aside from that of their partners. The vials of a wrath which is far from simulated are opened on the head of the erring husband or of the guilty wife and her lover. The jealous wife stops short at nothing in her furious attack on her husband. The outraged husband deals with his unfaithful wife privately in his home, and brings the stealer of his rights to book before the courts. But here is no tragic intensity of emotion, no blighting of life and love, no bitter warping disillusionment. The anger is a transient outburst of temper, soon over and forgotten. The game of hoodwinking is ere long renewed, with determination on the part of the one recently caught out not to be so foolish and clumsy again. On the whole, it is only where there are aggravating circumstances that the wife is either repudiated or degraded to a lowly position in

the household. Cross-cousin wives of prominent members of the royal clan, women whose children may be of political importance, may be degraded to the position of junior wives, as were Salimbingo's (123) third wife (134) and Kiwanga II's (127) first wife (124). Propriety demands a conventional disapproval and disavowal of the adultery in which nearly all are indulging covertly, but when cronies meet, there is many a chuckle over the latest *affaire*, for in Bena villages no less than elsewhere, there are always neighbours with sharp eyes which miss little. Light-hearted promiscuity exists side by side with marital jealousy. "Do what you like, but keep quiet about it." That is the precept by which most lives are guided. "What I do not see, is not," says the Bena husband. How far he tries to see and how far he consciously allows himself to be hoodwinked is a matter about which one cannot generalise. Some men, after a few tempestuous years of fruitless struggle, decide that it is a sheer waste of time to try to keep under restraint women who are all in league together and outwit him every time. The polygynous household is not unknown where each wife's room, opening on to a passage running the length of the house, has its own little door in the outer wall of the passage. But the easy-going husband has his face to save before the world and before his wives. He alone knows how much he overlooks; it would never do to give explicit expression to his thoughts. Probably he is not very clear about them himself, being guided more by empirical considerations of what is conducive to a comfortable life than by any theoretical reasoning. He certainly cannot afford to let his wives know his tolerant views. They would construe his lack of jealousy as lack of interest; they would lose all respect for him, and he all authority over them. Moreover, the supposed necessity for concealment and subterfuge keeps them within reasonable bounds and ensures that they keep up appearances before the world at large. Sometimes it would seem that they cannot fail to marvel at his surprising lack of suspicion and

their extreme good fortune in having so few obstacles put in their path; perhaps they may even begin to have an inkling that he guesses more than they suppose. But so long as they do not *know* what he thinks and how much he sees and ignores, dignity and authority are not endangered. The fact that convention and etiquette demand the outward assumption of a certain moral standard and the maintenance of certain fictions thus averts embarrassment, preserves decent manners in the social relations of the sexes, and upholds that courtesy and order within the home without which family life would speedily crumble in chaotic confusion.

The following true story is typical of the tangled situations which arise and the way in which the Wabena reason about them.

Salimbingo had a house at a place called Idete, where he put two of his numerous wives, Binti Msimangira (134) and another. It is customary for the Mtema to have establishments in different parts of the country and to divide his wives among them. He visits them from time to time in the course of touring his kingdom, and relatives of his living near look after them—too well on occasions! At Idete were also living Mohamadi, the son of Kiwanga I's full brother, Semtitu, and an Mnyangutwa called Saulanga. Saulanga stole Binti Msimangira, and Mohamadi stole the other wife of his "brother" the Mtema.

Now Salimbingo had previously stolen one of the wives of Saulanga's father, who had refused to retain her in his household "because she has committed adultery with my 'child,' " and she had been handed over to his son Saulanga. The latter reasoned that he was but paying Salimbingo back in kind when he stole Binti Msimangira. Complications arose, however, for she got with child while her husband was away in Dar es Salaam. When he returned, it was suggested that he should cast her off, but he decided to keep her, merely degrading her from her position of third in his household, "for," said he,

"she has only slept with my 'brother' and the case is therefore quite different from that of the wife whom Saulanga's father repudiated because I, his 'son,' had slept with her." The whole affair was somewhat hushed up and the child Kiangi, afterwards a pretender to the Stool (see Chap. IV), was publicly known as "bin Salimbingo." But all the royal house knew the truth about his birth. Salimbingo was, of course, one of his "fathers," and in allowing the child the use of his name he was but following common practice where a woman's husband and lover are "brothers" (see p. 372). Saulanga was not prosecuted for adultery, the Mtema letting him off on account of their relationship and also, one may suppose, because of that other little affair with his father's wife. So the matter rested till Salimbingo's death, when as a matter of course Binti Msimangira was inherited by Saulanga because he was the father of her child.

To both sexes, then, variety and the pleasures of eating stolen fruit are the spice of life. Marriage is a prosaic affair of openly recognised social and economic rights and obligations; behind the scenes it is enlivened by the excitements and narrow escapes and scheming incidental to a secret life. Withal, there is extraordinarily little disease, largely because it is not treated as a shameful thing which the sufferer seeks to hide at all costs. Everyone knows who is ill and who has been ill, and can act accordingly. Moreover, the women seldom adventure outside a certain circle, their own "set," in which they know the history of all the men. Visitors who are well known to them may be accepted after due inquiries on both sides which are quite in accordance with etiquette and cause no embarrassment or offence. Strangers from the coast or from towns like Ifakara, on the other hand, are viewed with the gravest suspicion.

It may be said with reasonable assurance that syphilis is extremely rare and gonorrhoea not at all common, and with regard to the latter, native medicines appear to effect a rapid

and seemingly lasting cure.* There is no doubt that the population of Ubena is increasing fast. Sterility is comparatively rare, and this in itself testifies to the tribe's freedom from venereal disease, especially when it is remembered that chronic malaria is in all probability responsible for a fair number of the cases of barrenness among the women. The most greatly feared disease is one of magical origin, supposed to be produced by medicine bought in the highlands by jealous husbands, and either placed where their wives will walk over it or put in their food. Any men who steal them afterwards are reputed to die a few days later with most unpleasant symptoms. Mfalimbega (107), however, sadly admits that he has found the medicine quite ineffective on his handsome wives! It is, indeed, impossible to find anyone who has actually seen a case—"A friend of mine knew . . .", "I heard that in the next village a man . . ." But so potent is the belief in it among the men that a large number of them are extremely chary of women from areas where the medicine is thought to be frequently employed, notably parts of Masagati.

There is, on the whole, little sentiment about marriage in Ubena. Its social and economic aspects loom largest. The women appreciate husbands who feed and clothe them well; the men, wives who bear healthy children, work industriously in the fields, run their homes comfortably for them, and are amiable. There is, of course, no companionship as we know it, and though deep affection (apart from passion) does sometimes exist, the Wabena on the whole regard the parent-child, brother-sister, and maternal uncle-nephew relationships as more proper spheres for showing sentiment than marriage. It is the grossest breach of etiquette for husband and wife to show any sign of affection in public. The writers wanted a photograph of Towegale's wives and children,† but he said,

* See next chapter. It seems significant that one medicine (an infusion of the leaves of *mpingipingi* = Ximenia americana *L.*) is used as a cure both for gonorrhoea and for sterility in women.

† Plate III, facing p. 336.

"Let's have the children only, we don't want the women cluttering up the picture." He was, however, over-persuaded on account of practical difficulties arising from the tender ages of his offspring, a point which had not occurred to him. Again, he arrived at the Boma one day and was asked what wives he had brought with him this time. "None," said he, "I've left all the rubbish at home." Yet he is really very proud of his wives and well aware that some of the finest women in the country are in his household. The women adopt a correspondingly detached attitude, surveying the advantages and disadvantages of their position and the ways of their lord with a coolly appraising eye. It is extremely difficult to convey a fair impression of the atmosphere that prevails. The parties to the marriage contract normally like one another well enough, but not more than they like other people, and they would just as soon have married somebody else so far as their personal feelings are concerned. Life is much the same whatever woman a man takes to wife; it varies little for the woman in whatever household she finds herself. The heartbroken widow would be an object of curiosity; the widow mourns her husband in the prescribed manner with, it may be, genuine but very transient grief, and takes up life again just where she left it, but in the home of her next husband. The attitude of the majority of husbands and wives might perhaps be expressed thus. Every man wants a wife or wives, without whom he is socially and economically at a disadvantage: every woman seeks to avoid the reproach that no man came to court her, and is well aware that "the woman who is not married is nobody." Within reason, it is immaterial from the personal point of view what individual fills the bill, the two will settle down quite amiably together and probably continue to live their private lives much as before. On the other hand, in the other relationships mentioned above more personal and individualised feelings are involved.

Husband and wife do not necessarily continue to live

together after a while. Very often, after she has borne him the children he desires or shown herself incapable of doing so, they may live apart for months at a time and even, in these days when men can roam far afield, for years. She lives among her people, under the guardianship of a male relative, possibly in her own separate establishment with her young children, grows her food, flirts with her lovers, takes part in the social life of the village. She expects her husband to send her gifts of clothes or money from time to time, maybe only at very long intervals, and she is quite content to wait thus for a considerable time, though in the end she will perhaps seek a divorce because he ceases sending her anything or because she has a lover whom she would like to marry. We have already seen how the Mtema's wives with their children may be settled in different parts of the country, not in this case necessarily among their own people but in establishments belonging to their husband. Separations, as one would expect, chiefly occur in polygynous households where wives often spend a good part of the period of lactation among their own relatives, and it is no uncommon thing for a woman to say, "I have done my duty by you for years now and am going home to rest; you have the younger wives to look after you." As the husband is probably much more interested in the newer and more youthful additions to his household, he has no objections to offer.

The discontented woman is a person worthy of study, for she has much to teach us about Bena marriage and home life, on which the grounds of her discontent throw interesting sidelights. The discontented woman is not the grass-widow with plenty of friends and reasonably frequent gifts from her husband for herself and her children, the woman who is enjoying freedom from the restraints of married life. Nor is she the wife of the impotent man who is tactfully blind to his wives' doings. She is much more likely to be one of the following.

She is perhaps a young woman with good prospects of re-marriage, living with a disabled husband who can neither go to work to buy her fine clothes nor help her at home in her fields, who cannot, in fact, fulfil his side of the marriage contract. It is common to find women so situated, backed by their people, agitating till they are granted permission to leave their blinded or crippled husband to be cared for by his own relatives, and adopting what may seem to the stranger with a different view of marriage a very hard and callous attitude. Secondly, a woman may be discontented as described in the last chapter—because she is really ill-treated or because she wants to marry one of her lovers. Thirdly, she may be a grass-widow whose husband has not sent any word for several years and who is anxious to marry somebody more likely to fulfil the economic obligations of marriage. Fourthly, she may be the wife of an impotent but yet extremely jealous husband, so that she is sexually dissatisfied—a state of affairs no Bena woman will tolerate without protest. The generous but impotent man may have a contented household of fine women if he be diplomatic. There are such men whose wives speak of them as the best of husbands. But however generous he may be in material things, if he makes his house a prison, his domestic life will be one long wrangle with wives trying by fair means or foul to get a divorce. He may be quite sure that feminine guile will outwit him, no matter what precautions are taken. By hook or by crook the women will continue to slip out to their lovers under cover of one excuse or another, harbouring at the same time bitter resentment against him for the obstacles he puts in their way; and bad tempers with, possibly, threats of poisoning will keep his house in a state of turmoil. If he be not wise in time, his shame will be noised abroad by his wives clamouring for their freedom and he will presently find himself wifeless—a serious predicament economically and socially for a man of position.

Lastly, the discontented woman may be one who cannot

manage to settle down comfortably with the other wives and who is always at odds with them over something or other, both sides stirring up strife over the pettiest grievances. When a woman from a polygynous household seeks a divorce there is always the possibility that her desire to leave her husband has its roots in unsatisfactory relations not between man and wife but between wife and wife.

With this picture of Bena life in our minds, let us see what the Wabena think about the legitimacy of children and kindred subjects. It will be as well to confess at the outset that nearly every person the writers talked to on this subject seemed to expound a different theory and to overturn all the ideas they thought they had previously gleaned, so that they make no apology if their explanation is self-contradictory! The Wabena themselves are very hazy about it all. They always feel quite sure themselves of the paternity of any child, but they are often at a loss to say on what exactly their assurance is founded.

To begin with, we shall approach the subject of paternity in Bena society from the wrong angle altogether unless we first rid ourselves of the idea of "unwanted children." No child in Ubena is ever unwanted. It is the ambition of every man and woman to possess as many as possible. The wife who conceives in her husband's absence may produce a miscarriage for fear of his anger when he discovers what she has been doing, but when once a child is born it is always wanted by somebody. Consequently the idea of a man disowning a child and declaring it the offspring of another is preposterous. Eagerness to claim his child is the characteristic of the Bena lover, not eagerness to repudiate it. The Bena courts regard it as reasonable to assume that no man disowns his wife's baby if he can help it. If there is merely some uncertainty, he is much more likely to give himself the benefit of the doubt and to acknowledge the child than to hand over so precious a possession to another on mere suspicion.

We are not concerned here to criticise the grounds on

which the Wabena decide paternity, our object being merely to describe their ideas as far as we have been able to unravel them.

No matter how many men have lain with a woman about the time of conception, she is always supposed to know beyond any doubt which of them is the child's father. Other things being equal, she will probably attribute it to the first man with whom she slept after her last period; but there are other things she considers, too, notably the number of times she slept with each man, a point which naturally tends to weight the balance in favour of the husband in most cases. The woman knows—but will she tell? Society does its best to make her do so, though the information does not necessarily reach the ears of her husband.

Under pain of death in childbirth or at the very least the death of the child in infancy, every pregnant woman must confess to the female elders of the family the names of the lovers with whom she had relations about the time of conception and during pregnancy, and she must say to whom she believes she owes her child. The Wabena are convinced that terrible danger threatens the woman who has "mixed the seed." Her only way of escape from death is to confess to the old women who will be able to give her the medicine necessary to save her. If she is so bold as to keep silence, she will be seized with fainting-fits, to which she will be specially liable when drawing water or spreading flour to dry in the sun. The women and her husband see that she is sick with *mapinga* and pressure is brought to bear on her to tell the names of her lovers so that she may be cured. It is just possible, however, that the fits may have attacked her without cause, and if she persists in denying the existence of lovers they will let her be till her confinement. It is said that few dare risk concealment of that which they should confess, and this is probably true. Fear of the supernatural dangers surrounding childbirth and young children develops in the mind of the

Bena woman from earliest childhood, not only through what she is deliberately taught but through the ideas she unconsciously imbibes from her environment. Anxiety to take every possible precaution to forestall mishap is the preoccupation of every pregnant woman and nursing mother, and numerous charms bedeck mothers and babies to this end. But some few are apparently bold enough to make the attempt to keep silence, to try their luck. Their courage, however, will almost certainly fail them at the last fence, the confinement. When the mother is in her agony, the old women torment her with questions and play on her fear of imminent death till she tells them what they want to know.

Confession is made to relatives of either wife or husband, and sometimes those of the latter give her away to her lord and master, especially, of course, if she says the child is not his. Usually, however, women are loyal to their own sex and keep such secrets safe.

Unless the husband has very good reason to suspect the contrary, he will usually accept his wife's assurance that the baby is his. But he believes that he can nearly always verify her words if necessary by close examination of the infant for resemblances or any peculiarities common to the family. Asked what marks he would look for in his offspring, Towegale said, "These fingers and the Manga nose." His hands are certainly slender-fingered and supple, though one would hardly have thought them so peculiar as to be recognisable in a new-born baby, but a rather Semitic-looking nose is strikingly characteristic of the Wakinimanga. Marked family likenesses are not altogether surprising in a clan whose mothers are for the most part cross-cousins. And supposing he found what he sought, how, he was asked, would he know that the child was not begotten by one of his brothers? He was a trifle taken aback for a moment, then, "I should know" was all he said.

As a last resort the husband who is still in doubt will

have recourse to divining, perhaps many times in different ways, till his mind is perfectly at rest and he is quite convincd that he is or is not the father.

Desirous as men are for children, it may be safely said that few are pronounced illegitimate, or indeed even seriously queried, when the husband can possibly claim them—that is, unless he was away at the time of conception. Even if he discovers that his wife had a lover and "mixed the seed," he probably claims the child and merely prosecutes the lover for adultery of what one might call the second degree. The first degree is simple adultery for which the lover has to pay Shs. 20/– as compensation to the man whose rights he stole. The second is adultery which "mixed the seed," and for this the compensation is raised to Shs. 30/–. The third is adultery which resulted in pregnancy, in which case another Shs. 10/– has to be paid for the child. Unless the lover pays this Shs. 10/– his child, which bears his name and follows his *tambiko* and taboos, belongs to its mother's husband and he, its father, has no rights over it. Few men have so little paternal pride that they are willing to forgo possession of their own child.

This transfer is sometimes considered unnecessary if the woman's husband and lover are "brothers," for then they have the same *tambiko*, the child calls them both "father" anyway, and it really does not matter which of them brings him up or which name he takes. Any man is quite at liberty to call himself "son of" one of his father's "brothers" (or "fathers") if it is convenient to him, and it is common practice when among strangers to label oneself by the name of a well-known "father" whose name means something to one's hearers. Thus, for instance, the son of one of Kiwanga I's brothers may announce himself as "bin Kiwanga," for that is a famous name and his hearers can place him at once, whereas to say "bin Mtetereka" or "bin Kasivita" would convey nothing. If they are interested enough to inquire further, he will explain the exact relationship. The native finds this very

useful: to others it is sometimes very much the reverse. The writers were at first entirely misled over the two wives of Madenge (90), for one was spoken of as Binti Mtengera and they accordingly wrote her down as a child of Mtengera. Long afterwards they discovered that she, like Madenge's other wife, was a daughter of Mfunga (60), Mtengera's brother—and, alas! a whole new chart had to be made.

We have already, in connection with the light they throw on the functions of bride-wealth, had occasion to mention the payments for the transfer of an unmarried mother's children to the care of their father. Such children suffer under no social disability, no stigma attaches to them at all. Nor is the unmarried mother in any way disgraced. There are cases where couples live together for years without the passage of any bride-wealth, accepted in society like any ordinary married pair. But neither, of course, has any claim on the other when differences arise, and the man has no legal rights over the children.

Considering the lives the Bena women lead and the number of them whose husbands are absent for long or short periods, surprisingly few appear to be caught out in misdoing through conceiving children which cannot possibly be those of their husbands. To them it is not surprising at all, for, they say, are there not infallible medicines for preventing conception or procuring abortion? Certainly they seem to have effective medicines for procuring abortion when they require, but it is very difficult to obtain information about their ingredients; while some of the contraceptive medicines in which they place unquestioning faith appear to be no more than charms. They take what they are given and follow their doctors' instructions with absolute trust and confidence, and have no idea at all what the medicine is. Some of their contraceptives are plainly magic amulets worn on a string round the waist so long as the woman does not wish to be fertilised. They are prepared by the medicine-men with proper ritual and consist

of little pieces of cloth or wood impregnated with menstrual blood. On the return of the husband such a charm must be carefully disposed of according to the doctor's orders or the woman will never bear another child. Other contraceptive medicines are taken internally. For instance, an irate husband produced in court a little bundle of sticks which were medicine his wife's lover had given her so that she should not conceive. Once a month or so she soaked it in water which she then drank. She had previously had two children and her husband, who greatly wanted a third, had grown suspicious when two years passed since they resumed marital relations and still she was not with child again. He had brought the wife and her lover to court not to prosecute the latter for his adultery, but to demand compensation for the dastardly trick played on him in depriving him of the children to which he was entitled.

Whatever the methods used, there is no doubt at all in the minds of the Wabena that they control conception perfectly, and that only those who neglect to take the proper precautions in the prescribed manner get with child when their husbands are away. Since, however, their methods of birth-control do not permit of discrimination between husband and lover, and the woman employing them will not conceive by anybody, their use when the husband is at home constitutes a serious breach of the matrimonial code. For it is the duty of every wife to bear children to her husband, and she who seeks to evade this obligation, either by preventing conception or by producing abortion, earns severe (and probably physically painful!) censure.

The woman who cannot conceive seeks the aid of the medicine-man no less than she who does not wish to do so, and wonderful are the tales told of the immediate effects produced by certain fertility medicines in which great faith is placed. Since miscarriages are the bane of many of the women, it is almost unnecessary to add that there are also

medicines to enable a woman liable to this misfortune to carry her next child its full time.

In striking contrast to their attitude towards their husbands, towards whom they often appear to have little sense of responsibility, is the extreme solicitude of the women for their small children, whose health and well-being is without exception their constant care, at least while they are still at the breast. Maternal fears for the safety of the babies find expression in the numerous amulets with which the mothers seek to protect them and which their husbands help them to procure with, at times, a patronisingly tolerant smile at the fearfulness and over-anxiety of the feminine heart. Among other things, every mother obtains from her doctor an amulet to ensure that her milk will agree with her child. She wears it on a string round her chest till weaning, after which it is tied round the child's waist to keep it in good health, until such time as the mother dons it once more for the sake of the next baby. The child, too, has a charm so that its mother's milk will make it strong, and this likewise is handed on from one child to another.

During the period of lactation a woman is not supposed to have sexual relations except ceremonially as described below. But in this, as in so many matters, there are well-known ways of evading the consequences; infallible medicine is forthcoming for the purpose! The mother is taught that her baby will die if she breaks this taboo, some saying that he will die of dysentery, and others that he will succumb on account of terrible sores on the top of his head. The taboo is, however, ceremonially broken when the baby is a few months old, "to make the child strong." After obtaining the sanction of their elders and receiving from them medicine for the child similar to that given to a girl at her first menstruation, husband and wife spend one or two nights together. They must then refrain again from sexual intercourse until the child is weaned. The women always say that they have no desire at this time,

and invariably refuse to listen to their husbands' proposals that they should get medicine and break the taboo, but it appears that in actual fact after a very few months the majority of husbands do persuade their wives to do this. This is more especially the case in the small household, but it is by no means unknown when there are a number of wives, unless the mother goes away to her own people.

As regards men other than her husband, it seems that the women are genuinely anxious to keep the taboo, so fearful are they of injuring the child, but there are cases where, after reassurance from her doctor that the medicine he has given her will safeguard the baby from all harm, a nursing mother permits the advances of a lover. This is, however, held to be terribly dangerous if done before the ceremonial intercourse with her husband has taken place.

Every woman has one particular doctor to whom she confides her secrets and who is her father confessor all through her life. She may live some distance from him and have to seek the assistance of a nearer practitioner from time to time when her need is urgent or she has not opportunity to go to her own, but she chiefly depends on the advice and help of the one. A man has no right to refuse his wife permission to go and visit her doctor, nor is she bound to tell him the real reason why she wants to go. The medicine-man's fees range from 20 cents for curing a slight attack of malaria to about Shs. 3/–, and the women, who can hardly ask their husbands for the money when, as so frequently happens, the visit to the doctor is the result of dalliance with their paramours, keep the money they receive now and then from their lovers specially for this purpose. It is carefully hidden under the hearthstones till needed.

The women of a household are usually on good terms with one another, for, as we have seen in the preceding chapter, people who are really discontented with their lot are usually able to change it. It is a point worthy of notice, in view of the

ideas held by some people about the debasing effect of polygyny on the status of women, that the women themselves usually prefer to enter a polygynous household, and the second wife as often as not enters the establishment at the express request of the first, who may even have marked down the girl she wants her husband to take! The women are not at a loss to give reasons for their preference. Briefly, the reasons are:

1. Social ambition. The polygamist is usually a man of some social importance, and his wives will be prominent figures in village society.

2. Companionship.

3. Mutual help and the division of labour. In a polygynous household the wives combine to hoodwink the master of the house, covering up one another's tracks. They will, for instance, take turns to hold the attention of the great man with lively and flattering conversation of an evening, while their fellows slip out unobserved to meet their lovers. They know all about one another's affairs, but it is a case of "honour among thieves." A new bride is at once instructed by the other wives in the system on which they run the establishment and is drawn into the conspiracy. The men often complain that their women are incurable chatterboxes and gossips, but there is no doubt that they can be as silent and close as anyone when they choose, with "poker faces" which give nothing away.

The economics of the Bena household have been described in previous chapters. Each wife works to support herself and her own children, and all combine to supply food for the master of the house and any young nieces and nephews of his who may be temporary members of the household. The support of young relatives of the wives naturally falls to the lot of the particular wife to whom they are related. There are, however, no hard-and-fast rules, for usually all are ready to help each other, and also it very often happens that visiting children are related to more than one member of the household.

Among the common people the seniority of the wives

usually follows the order in which they were married, but the cross-cousin wives of the Wakinimanga and other leading men take precedence according to their rank irrespective of when they were married. Thus Kiwanga I's second Kipolero wife (116), though married years after many of his other wives, became second in his house, even above her elder sister (115). Prominent men of the royal house usually know from their earliest youth that certain cross-cousins are marked down for them, and after they have duly taken them they are free to choose others for themselves. Towegale grew up knowing he was to marry Semukomi (131), Binti Lupogo (121), Ariba (120), Adija (130), Biskuti (119), and Zawadi (117)—two with Uhenge ancestry, two with Kipolero ancestry, and two with Manga mothers. The second is dead, and the others are his first, second, third, fifth, and tenth wives respectively. He actually married Biskuti first, but both of them knew that she would not be his senior wife. He went over to the border near Perondo when she was ready for her puberty-*cum*-marriage rites, and while he was there he heard that Semukomi had just reached puberty, too, so he finished the ceremonies with Biskuti and hurried back to marry Semukomi. Of the rest of his household, Amina (118) is a substitute for the dead wife, Binti Lupogo, Maarifa (132), and Omlet he chose, believing at the time that Omlet was not a cross-cousin. Kilauni (133), when she had not yet reached puberty, chose him! She decided that she would like to marry her cousin the Mtema, and though still a child she attached herself to him, carrying his lamp all round Ubena on one safari the writers made. She is a cross-cousin and Towegale was loath to offend her father; moreover, she is an attractive child, and so he allowed himself to be chosen. When she reached puberty at the beginning of 1933 she was duly married to him, and ere long she was an expectant mother. Bleki (135) is an inherited wife and a lady called Zanzibar comes at the bottom of the household because she is not a cross-cousin.

Unless relations between the wives happen to be rather strained, the women of a household lead a more or less communistic life, and do not bother to keep exact account of what is their due individually. Every wife is entitled to her own room and her own hearth, but in fact she seldom claims the latter, and it is not unknown for two to share a room. Communal cooking is, then, the normal practice, the wives bringing their share of the family's food to the common hearth. Only where disputes arise over the contributions, and one or another feels she is not having a fair deal, do they set up separate fires and cook each for her own section of the household. The husband never interferes in domestic affairs and the squabbles of his womenfolk, but leaves them to settle their own disputes, for he must at all costs avoid showing any favouritism in all his dealings with them. Indeed, if he angers them by showing any marked preference for one, more especially with regard to marital relations, the others will probably get divorces on the grounds of neglect.

The principal meal of the day is in the evening about sundown, and in lean times it is the only one. When there is plenty of food, however, another is eaten in the morning while "elevenses" of fruit or roast yams or maize-cobs are welcome at any time of day. Whenever her husband comes home from a journey, the dutiful wife hastens to place food and water before him with as little delay as possible, and when there are a number of visitors, she who is wise will put before them only a moderate dishful, not so little as to appear inhospitable, but not too extravagantly generous, and will keep back a supplementary dish to give her husband after the visitors have gone, so that he does not go hungry and yet they are not eaten out of house and home.

Table manners are simple and primitive, individual plates being a modern innovation favoured by the few who can afford to buy them at the Indian store, and fingers being the only implements save the big wooden spoons used to stir the

pot, and, when necessary, knives or spears for dividing out meat, etc. It is good manners to wash the hands before and after eating; to belch loudly and openly is a mark of appreciation of the food. Greediness and snatching titbits from the common dish meet with severe disapproval, and the child learns from his earliest years to let his seniors have first pick.

In the larger households, at any rate, the menfolk eat first and the women take what is left, cooking themselves some more if necessary, if perhaps an unexpected guest has upset their calculations. They explain that it would be most awkward if the men did not have their meal first, "for if we all fed together and then a wayfarer came seeking shelter, there would be nothing left for him. But if we have not yet had our meal, we can put some of that before him and easily cook some more for ourselves." Only on their wedding-day do man and wife in such a household partake of a meal together.

Meat is, of course, a great luxury in Ubena of the Rivers, since livestock is scarce and game meat a rare treat now. There are no particular rules regarding the division of the carcase, but it is etiquette to send something to the head of the village.

Methods of cooking and serving food are simple in the extreme, and though cooking belongs to the women's sphere of life, even man is necessarily familiar with the art and quite accustomed to preparing his food himself when away from home. It is perhaps worthy of mention that the Wabena have never discovered how to fry food. Meat is sometimes roasted on a stick by a fire, but for the most part food of all kinds is boiled and boiled until, to the more civilised palate, it is entirely lacking in savour and unappetising. Chickens and ducks are cooked thus till it is possible to eat the ends of the long-bones, throwing away only the shafts, while meat bones are, of course, broken open to obtain the marrow. Fat and oil, both comparatively scarce and therefore

precious, are only stirred into the boiled food when it is nearly ready, not employed in the actual process of cooking. In one pot the rice (or other grain for the main dish) is prepared, and in another the relish consisting of some kind of vegetable, fish, or meat, the liquid in which the relish has been cooked being used to moisten and flavour the stodgy dish of rice.

To partake of food together is at times a ceremonial act. We have already mentioned the meal shared by bride and bridegroom on their wedding-day. When two men swear blood-brotherhood, they not only take the blood but also share the liver of a chicken and some ginger. Then each of them strikes a piece of iron on some iron implement held by a third person, and swears the oath of brotherhood. Again, the reconciliation of enemies is also symbolised by partaking of food together after solemnly shaking hands.

The hearth fire, too, has a certain symbolic significance on occasions. When a village moves to a new site, fires are only lit out of doors during the process of building. Then the head of the village makes new fire which he doctors with medicine to ward off sickness, and the hearth fires in all the houses are lit by brands taken from the one thus ceremonially kindled. In Mtengera I's time, all fires in a conquered area were extinguished, and the Mtema kindled a new fire from which all the others were re-lit. Lastly, in the past, when an epidemic swept through the country, the Mtema would forbid all cohabitation for a specified period, at the end of which hearth fires were all put out. Each village headman made new fire and threw medicine into it, after which all his people had to drink medicine in turn from one vessel which the doctor finally threw over the headman's house, divining from the way it fell the success or failure of the rites so far as that village was concerned.

The last instance cited not only shows the use of new fire, but is yet another example of a taboo on sexual relations. Before we leave the subject of the home, let us review the

many cases in which such relations are in some way connected with supernatural forces.

1. After the birth of a child, its father is not supposed to sleep with a woman until the baby's umbilical cord has come away.

2. A girl at puberty must be carefully kept from contact with anyone who is having sexual relations.

3. The woman who drinks the ritual beer after the first pregnancy rites must live celibate until the young mother is delivered.

4. Adultery which "mixes the seed" is fraught with terrible danger.

5. Sexual relations during lactation will cause the death of the child unless proper measures are taken to protect it.

6. Ceremonial intercourse between the parents a few months after the birth of a child will make it strong and healthy.

7. Adultery on the part of a wife when her husband is away engaged in hunting or fishing or any perilous pursuit is liable to put him in grave danger or at least to deprive him of success.

8. Relatives of anyone who has died are debarred from sexual intercourse until the *ugimbi ya matapatapa* rites are over and the spirit safely arrived in the land of the shades.

9. General abstention may be ordered, as described above, when an epidemic is raging through the country.

10. Sexual relations are forbidden to anyone who is about to enter the *mahóngoli*, but small children who have not yet reached an age for such things can enter it at any time without running any risks.

It is doubtless unnecessary to point out that the Wabena have no idea why these things are so and, moreover, that they think of all these diverse cases singly and independently, each in its immediate context and not grouped as above as a series of similar customs. They do not perceive that these

examples have anything in common. But though they do not appreciate, and certainly cannot express, the relation between different instances of the same thing, their practices imply that some form of the ambivalent force *mulungu* is inherent in sexual relations, *mulungu* which lies dormant in ordinary circumstances but which is stirred into activity in times of crisis and danger, change and disturbance, or (as in No. 10) when one approaches objects in which reside exceptionally potent supernatural forces. For instance, they say it is *mulungu* which makes a person ill, they also say that the baby becomes ill because its mother has intercourse with a man; but they do not complete the argument and explicitly correlate the evil influence resulting from that sexual act with *mulungu*. In Nos. 6 and 9 we see the beneficent influence of *mulungu* called into action, and No. 6 stands out from all the other examples in that here sexual intercourse is prescribed instead of prohibited. In the majority of cases sexual relations have the opposite effect, setting *mulungu* to work in its malignant form and spelling disaster, though this may sometimes (e.g. Nos. 4 and 5) be averted by use of appropriate medicines.

In conclusion, it may be as well to sound a reminder which is relevant not only to this particular subject but to all our discussion of Bena custom. The only classification of custom the Wabena know is that which groups their practices round special events or occupations, e.g. birth, initiation, hunting, sickness, mourning, *tambiko*, war, agriculture, and so on. They learn the rules and taboos with the penalties and rewards attached to them, and being of an unquestioning turn of mind they leave it at that. They have never thought the matter out, analysed, speculated, or philosophised. "When this or that happens, I must be ritually blameless. I must do this, I must refrain from that. This will do good, that will bring calamity." That is as far as the Mbena gets. "Why? Oh, *jadi jangu*, the lore of my fathers." A man like Towegale may have occasional glimpses of something beyond; he seems

at times to be feeling out uncertainly towards principles of whose existence he is only very dimly aware. But he and his like are rare exceptions. When we classify custom on the basis of a common principle or idea, we are applying *our* modes of thought and *our* perception of principles or functions to *Bena* practices; we group together things which to the native appear quite unrelated and describe functions of which he has never dreamed.

CHAPTER XVII

MEDICINE

THE Bena word for a medicine is *mgoda* (pl. *mi-*)*, but let it not be thought that this term refers only to a medicine to cure or prevent disease. Charms and amulets, love potions, articles used for divination, etc., are all *migoda*; so also are the evil concoctions of the wizard. Whatever the Mbena's need or fear, the doctor has "just the thing" to help him. There is a medicine to do anything and to prevent everything else! In fact, *mgoda* may be defined as any object used to produce any effect by virtue of the supernatural power thought to reside within that object.

In the same way the word *uganga*, the art of the medicine-man, is a comprehensive term, including not only medicine in its narrow sense but also divination, the discovery of sorcerers, the administration of ordeals, the exorcism of evil spirits, certain forms of communication with the dead, and so on—practices which we would not call medicine at all. The Wabena consider the art of the occult as a whole: curing and preventing disease is only one aspect of that art, and they make no attempt to classify their practices except on moral grounds. Categories such as curative medicine, preventive medicine, divination, spiritualism, and so on, do not exist in the sense of professions based on different principles. They are all manifestations of the same power, connoting no more than specialisation and the division of knowledge and skill in applying one broad principle. One man cannot cover the whole field of *uganga*, but though his knowledge of root and ritual differs from that of his fellow over the way,

* *Mgoda* also means *tree*, but is, the Wabena say, only used in that sense by those who have a very intimate knowledge of the language, the common words for tree being *libiki* (pl. *mi-*) or *mwibiki* (pl. *mumibiki*). *Lugoda* (pl. *ngoda*) is one word for a stick.

he is well aware that the source of their power is one and the same.

Similarly *uhawi*, the anti-social exploitation of the supernatural, is in its working principle indistinguishable from *uganga*. The impassable gulf which divides the one from the other is created by a moral judgment. Morally, the difference between the two is fundamental. It is the difference between white and black, between good and evil. Both the medicine-man and the sorcerer employ medicines called *migoda*, both rely on the ambivalent supernatural force *mulungu*; but whereas the former plies his trade for the acknowledged good of the individual and the community, the latter employs the occult for sinister, nefarious purposes. The use of the one term *migoda* for both the medicines of the medicine-man and the concoctions of the wizard might be thought to indicate that the Wabena fail to distinguish between these two aspects of the supernatural, but in fact they can see no possibility of confusion. No one would ever call a professionally unimpeachable medicine-man *muhawi* or refer to black magic as *uganga*.

In Kiswahili, which the Wabena speak besides their own dialect, the word *dawa* is the equivalent of the Bena *mgoda*, and *dawa* also applies to both good and bad types of medicine. But here again we find that the distinction between *uganga* = medicine in the broad sense, and *uchawi* = witchcraft, is unmistakable and definite. The two are poles apart. Exactly the same idea, then, finds expression in Kiswahili as in the local dialect, confirming the view that the difference between the respective arts of the medicine-man and the sorcerer is essentially a moral one, founded on the tribesman's conception of right and wrong, the legitimate and the illegitimate use of the same supernatural forces.

A certain number of common "household" remedies are known to the uninitiated, but the true mysteries of *uganga* are closely and jealously guarded by the medicine-men, and the writers think themselves fortunate indeed to have gained

the friendship and confidence of one eminent tribal doctor, Mtema Towegale, to such an extent that of his own accord he revealed to them much of his lore. His one stipulation was that it should not be published in a language known to his people. Secretly he brought the writers leaves of the trees and plants from which he makes many of his medicines, and through the kindness of the Director of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, and of Professor Troup of the Imperial Forestry Institute, Oxford, many of these have been identified. Secretly, too, he brought to the writers a book in which he has recorded many of his prescriptions with instructions for their use, a book into which no Mbena may look but himself, and which is to be buried with him if he should die before handing on his knowledge to one of his sons. Much that he had not written in his book he expounded as occasion arose, including the uses of medicines which he procures from other practitioners without knowing from what trees or plants they are obtained. Every doctor is willing to sell his special remedies to another, but only to his pupils will he disclose where to find them and how to prepare them. An exhaustive study of the art of medicine in Ubena is therefore impossible without the confidence of a large number of medicine-men, not only Wabena but also Wandwewe, from whom the Wabena obtain many roots and herbs. The list of medicines appended below does not claim to do more than touch the fringe of the subject. It does not even profess to be all that Towegale can teach of the strange concoctions he prepares for every conceivable purpose. As he says, "There is a medicine for anything you want done, and we shall never come to the end of them."

It is, of course, extremely difficult to pass judgment on the efficacy of native medicines; but, on account of the multitude of charms and spells designed to ward off every evil and work every imaginable form of good, we are, the writers feel, far too prone to overlook the physiological reactions some of the

medicine-man's concoctions undoubtedly produce. The writers can personally vouch for the efficacy of at least one medicine in use in Ubena, a root bought from the Ndwewe doctors. Unfortunately Towegale does not know to what tree it belongs and its identification has been impossible.

While on safari in the hills of Masagati, one of the writers was severely stung by a poisonous insect which produced the most acute symptoms. Violent irritation of the skin was followed by painful swelling of the groin, hands, and face, vomiting, and eventually collapse with sweating, a very feeble pulse, and semi-unconsciousness. Fortunately, Towegale produced a root which, he said, Bena doctors use for snake-bite, wounds caused by poisoned arrows, and any poisons which affect the heart. A little of it was ground up and administered in water. It began to take effect almost instantaneously. The pulse grew stronger, the swelling began to subside, and full consciousness returned. The dose was repeated after half an hour. In an hour the patient was sitting up and drinking a cup of tea; in two hours he was walking about and next morning he felt quite normal except for external irritation, which persisted for some days. It need hardly be added that he now carries in his medicine-chest a piece of the root to which he owes his life!

This experience is by no means all the evidence available to support the contention that Bena medicine is not all baseless superstition.

The Wabena suffer frequently from a disease which would appear to be bilharzia. Bilharzia is caused, as the reader may know, by flukes whose intermediate hosts are certain species of fresh-water molluscs found in many African rivers. The fluke introduces itself into man through the skin, and it is therefore dangerous to bathe in, or even to wade through, rivers which are known to be infected. In spite of the facts that the Wabena are frequently wading through rivers and standing about in flooded rice fields and apparently suffer

from this disease, one seldom, if ever, sees a bilharzia patient at the local dispensaries. They regard it as a minor ailment whose cure is easily and rapidly effected by an infusion made from the roots of *mpingipingi* (Ximenia americana *L.*). In his *Tropical Diseases* Stitt says that the only effective remedy known to science is intravenous injections of antimony.*

Again, the Wabena claim to possess a number of medicines which will effect rapid and complete cures of gonorrhoea in both men and women. The writers cannot vouch for these, but the incidence of the disease certainly seems to be very slight. Moreover, those who are unfortunate enough to contract it think comparatively little of it and do undoubtedly appear to rid themselves of it. Certain surprising cures effected by the roots of *mkokosi* (Randia vestita *S. Moore*) have recently come to the notice of the writers, who have been able to place a large quantity of this root in the hands of one qualified to test and judge its efficacy. In view of the difficulties attending the cure of this disease, the claims of native remedies seem worthy at least of closer investigation.

Another practice which has greatly interested the writers is the artificial production of lactation. This is known to several tribes with whom the writers are acquainted, though the methods by which it is achieved vary. Attilio Gatti, in *Hidden Africa*,† describes it among the hill people of Northern Zululand, where he witnessed part of the drastic treatment whereby a young girl who had not yet borne a child was transformed, after twenty-four hours of agonising preparation, into a wet-nurse. The German writer, Bartels, he says (p. 68), has named the phenomenon *lactatio serotina*. Junod also refers to the practice: "a woman died shortly after the birth of her boy called Mayimbule; the grandmother, by name Mishidohi, who had an adult son and had had no other child since, prepared light beer and other appropriate food and succeeded

* E. R. Stitt, *Tropical Diseases*, 4th ed., London, 1922, p. 367.
† Attilio Gatti, *Hidden Africa*, London, 1933, ch. vii.

in secreting milk in her own breast; so the child was saved."* And to take an example from a very different part of the world, the Bella Coola Indians of British Columbia use the leaves of stonecrop (Sedum spathulifolium *Hook.*) before the plant flowers to make a medicine for the same purpose.†

In Ubena of the Rivers, cow's milk, as we already know, is to all intents and purposes unobtainable, and the tiny baby whose mother dies must follow her unless a foster-mother can be found. Very often the infant's maternal grandmother adopts it and suckles it, though she herself may not have borne a child for years. The Wabena declare that any woman who has once had a child and who is not past her menopause can "bring back her milk" by quite simple treatment. The same medicine (*mugaho* = that which brings out the milk) is also used by nursing mothers who want to increase their supply, and it can be given to cows to make them yield better.

The exact nature of the medicine has yet to be ascertained, and arrangements are being made for the writers to observe a case during treatment. Ginger, salt, and the barks of the wild fig and Pterocarpus bussei *Harms* all figure in preparing the infusion, which is both taken internally and also put hot and steaming into a mortar, so that the woman may apply the steam to her breasts. The ground-up roots of another plant are also rubbed into incisions made in her breasts. The child, which is kept alive on gruel and the juice of sugar-cane until the milk comes, is put to the breast to suck, and in some cases a watery fluid is present as early as the second day, followed shortly by the milk. The process may, however, take as long as ten days. Treatment is continued as required, but usually after a few more days the supply is well established and can

* H. A. Junod, *The Life of a South African Tribe*, 1st ed., 1912, vol. i, p. 49.

† H. I. Smith, *Materia Medica of the Bella Coola and Neighbouring Tribes of British Columbia*, Ottawa, 1929.

be maintained without further artificial stimulation. A few specific cases are cited below:

1. About August 1931 Kianja binti Seriketi, who was born just before the War, gave birth to a baby. She died the following February, and her mother, Binti Msage, took the child and suckled it until it reached the normal age for weaning about a year later. Binti Msage, who is the daughter of an Mzagira of Malinyi, had not conceived since 1917 when she had a child which died two years later.

2. Mbaya binti Mgalu, who lives in Utengule, appears to be about forty years of age and has not conceived again since the birth of a daughter who has grown up, married, and died. The daughter had a baby about 1929, but died fifteen days after it was born. Mbaya acted as wet-nurse for her grandchild, but it was delicate and died after one and a half months. Her milk was slow in coming, and ten days elapsed before she was able to begin suckling.

3. Sunti binti Kikungu, who lives in Masagati, had a younger half-sister (same mother) who died leaving a baby of three months old. Sunti was then about thirty years old and had not been pregnant for four years. She adopted her sister's baby and suckled it for two years. Her milk began to flow freely after three days. The child, Samweti binti Saulimbeli, would appear to be about eleven years old now (1933).

4. Mwanarusi binti Danda, also of Masagati, has been pregnant twice. The first time she had a miscarriage, and the second she bore a daughter Adija binti Selemani. Adija was married when she reached puberty in 1932 and died in childbirth in April 1933. Her mother, who looks about thirty-five, brought back her milk in three or four days and is rearing the motherless baby. The writers saw it in June 1933 when it seemed to be thriving. Mwanarusi said she had a little milk by the third day of treatment and sufficient by the fourth, but as the supply was not very plentiful, she was still drinking the

medicine. The writers actually watched the baby being fed, and the woman undoubtedly had milk.

While realising that there is a great deal more than mere superstition in certain Bena medicines, we must not forget the help many people derive from charms and the ideas of sympathetic magic. The amulet worn round the neck, the medicine on a string tied round the waist, the proper observation of ritual can work wonders on the highly suggestible African. It is common knowledge that the worker in Africa is frequently confronted with astonishing evidence of the power of auto-suggestion, of the mind over the body for good or ill. Faith and hope are potent forces in the struggle for existence, whether they spring from a belief in God, reliance on one's ancestral shades, or the possession of an amulet. Towegale, who does not believe in an objective power residing in *every* charm and amulet, is none the less in sympathy with the outlook of his people and understands their feelings. He says, "I think that charms and amulets are efficacious in many cases in that they keep fear at bay. My people are frightened of so many things. All charms help them to escape from their fear, giving them a sense of safety and a feeling of hope which is good for them and helps them." He himself firmly believes in some charms, and also in the necessity of observing all the prescribed ritual in preparing and administering medicines, in omens and oracles, and in many practices based on sympathetic magic. He only differs from his people on the question of the power in certain charms.

Let us for a moment consider disease from the viewpoint of the Mbena. Primarily he regards it as of supernatural origin. It would, however, be unfair to deny him the knowledge of anatomy he certainly possesses. He knows the principal bones, many of the arteries and veins, the action of the heart, the fact that the brain is the seat of mental processes, and so on. He understands something of the contagious nature of certain diseases, such as leprosy and smallpox, and the

necessity for segregating the sufferers, although contagion is to him largely if not wholly a magical process. Slight complaints, such as colds and coughs, headache, mild fever, and constipation, he views as normal occurrences, but serious illness and intractable diseases are different. He usually considers them to be misfortunes caused by evil influences of a supernatural nature, by some form of *mulungu*. His illness may be due to the power of a sorcerer, or perhaps he has offended one of the ancestral spirits by neglect, by failure to fulfil his obligations, or by breaking stringent taboos. Whatever it is, he goes to his *mnyamgoda* and asks him to divine the cause of the trouble. He is suffering by reason of a supernatural force and therefore he must first seek supernatural diagnosis and then a supernatural cure. Neither the doctor nor his patient believes that the remedy prescribed will cure as the result of its physiological action: both are convinced that it owes its efficacy rather to the supernatural power which it contains, a power which they know as *mulungu* and which is, as we have seen, capable both of curing and of inflicting disease.

The cure thus resolves itself into a battle on the supernatural plane between different manifestations of the same force *mulungu*, and the patient recovers or dies according to which is the stronger. Often, especially in very serious cases, the *mnyamgoda* advises his patient not only to undergo the treatment he prescribes but also to sacrifice to the ancestral spirits, to ensure their co-operation in furthering the cure. A *tambiko* is, of course, essential if the illness has been attributed to the displeasure of one of the ancestral spirits, for the doctor's medicine can be of little avail against such a powerful spell-binder as a *kithoka*. It is imperative to placate the offended spirit so that he will withdraw his evil influence. The cure is then a certainty. If, on the other hand, a wizard is thought to be the cause of the patient's misfortune, a *tambiko* is still of the greatest assistance, for it ensures that the most powerful

spiritual forces in a man's life will be active on his behalf in the ensuing struggle.

The following list of Bena medicines and the purposes for which they are used, together with a description of Temba-temba* actually at work on a case, will give the reader some idea of the medicine-man's methods and materials.

1. *Sores generally.*—Dry some leaves of *kitalufufu* (Waltheria americana *L.*) till they can be ground to powder, which apply to the sores.

2. *Any fresh wound.*—Pound up some leaves of *nyamugoha* (Hyptis pectinata *Poit.*), wrap the pulp in fresh grass and heat in the ashes of a fire. Apply as a hot compress to stop the bleeding.

3. *Yaws.*—(*a*) Dry some leaves of *kilutiluti dassi* (no specimen obtained, *dassi* = wild) in the ashes of a fire and then grind into powder for application to the sores.

(*b*) Pound some leaves of *nyangelegi* (Torenia parviflora *Benth.*) and cook like vegetables. Apply as hot as can be borne. "It only hurts a little!"

4. *Headache and fever.*—Burn the wood and leaves of *nyamugoha* (see No. 2) and rub the ashes into incisions in the patient's temples. "It only hurts a little!" Ground ginger can be rubbed in if preferred.

5. *Diarrhoea.*—Pound up the leaves of *munepa* (Royena sp.) and *mhehefa* (Allophylus africanus *P. Beauv.*) and the inner bark of *mhapi* (Bridelia micrantha *Baill.*). Pour the resulting juice into the patient's mouth through the stalk of a piece of the tall swamp grass, which acts as a filter. The piece of grass must then be placed on the roof of the patient's house.

6. *Stomachache.*—Pound up some leaves of *lisai* (Mimosa asperata *L.*) and make the patient drink the resulting juice.

7. *Worms.*—Boil ground pumpkin seeds together with the root of a certain plant (specimen indeterminable—Leguminosae?) and make the patient drink the infusion.

8. *Boils.*—(*a*) When a boil first begins to swell, the doctor

* See chapter on religion, pp. 117–119.

must gather some leaves of *mhehefa* (see No. 5) and *munepa* (see No. 5) very early in the morning, picking them with his mouth before he has washed. He must then spit a few of them on to the place that hurts. The rest he spits out on to his hands and squeezes the medicine in his hands before the fire till it is warm, when he applies it to the sore place.

(*b*) Cut the roots of *mugelengwa* (Rhus sp.) and *mugunga* (Acacia sp.) into small pieces which wrap in bark. Boil with a large quantity of water. Make some flour into a paste with a little of the infusion. Take a bunch of leaves of *mufungwa* (Kigelia africana *Benth.*) and *mfulu* (Vitex cienkowskii *Kotschy & Peyr.*) and use to sprinkle the hot infusion over the patient, who then eats the flour paste.

9. *Toothache.*—Apply to the tooth a little powdered root of *mitungruja* (Solanum acanthocalyx *Kl.*). Also put the end of a piece of the root into the fire till scorched and place hot against the tooth.

10. *Earache.*—Pound the leaves of cotton and *sungu* (Jatropha sp.?) and pour the resulting juice into the ear.

11. *Sore eyes.*—Pound the leaves and stalks of *kitamisugu* (Euphorbia hirta *L.*) and pour the juice into the eye. "Very few doctors know the name or the virtues of this plant."

12. *Aphrodisiacs.*—(*a*) Eat a dish of rice (preferably *msonga*)* or beans which have been boiled with the roots of *mpingipingi* (Ximenia americana *L.*), *mtumbati* (Pterocarpus bussei *Harms*), *mtogo* (Diplorrhynchus mossambicensis *Benth.*), *mtopi* (Annona senegalensis *Pers.*), and *mgogola* (Flacourtia hirtiuscula *Oliv.*).

(*b*) Eat the pounded bark of *mohonongengi* (no specimen obtained) or *mkufa* (no specimen obtained). Women are not allowed to take this because it is said to have too powerful an effect on them.

(*c*) Shred a piece of root of *mkokosi* (Randia vestita *S. Moore*) and steep in water about half an hour. Whisk till a froth gathers on the surface. Skim this off and drink it.

* Quick-growing rice, see Chap. XII.

13. *A fertility medicine for women.*—Drink an infusion of the leaves of *mpingipingi* (see No. 12 (*a*)).

14. *Gonorrhoea.*—(*a*) Boil the roots of *kitamisugu* (see No. 11) and the leaves of *mugelera* (Hydrostachys polymorpha *Klotzsch*) and make the patient drink the infusion.

(*b*) The patient should drink an infusion of the leaves of *mpingipingi* (see Nos. 12 (*a*) and 13).

(*c*) As 12 (*c*), taken night and morning.

15. *Snake-bite.*—Incise the place and rub in powdered root of Rytygynia microphylla *Robyns*. Give the patient some of the same powder to eat. This is only for the bite of small snakes.

16. *A disease which would appear to be bilharzia.*—Drink an infusion of the roots of *mpingipingi* (see Nos. 12 (*a*), 13, and 14 (*b*)).

17. *Hernia of the bowel.*—Boil the roots of *nyamugoha* (see Nos. 2 and 4) in water and make the patient sit over the pot. The steam brings great relief.

18. *To prevent a threatened miscarriage.*—(*a*) Tie a bunch of the long grass *likangaga* (Cyperus sp. near C. exaltatus *Retz.*) into a knot* and pound up with leaves of *lisai* (see No. 6). Make the patient drink the juice. Very few of the women know this remedy.

(*b*) If the woman feels "her womb is turning upside down," she should drink an infusion made from the leaves of *nyamugoha* (see Nos. 2, 4, and 17). It is very bitter and "makes her womb turn back again." Not very widely known.

19. "*Lukole.*"—This is a very painful swelling of the testicles; one drops and the other rises. Said by some to be caused by sexual intercourse with a menstruating woman. Burn *higeni* (Tragia sp.) and pig dung together and rub the ashes into incisions in the groin, the bottom of the scrotum, and the lower part of the back.

20. *Infantile Paralysis.*—Called *lidege* = a bird, because supposed to be caused by the weaver-bird flying over the house at night.

* Note the sympathetic magic of the knot.

(*a*) *Prevention.*—A naked man must collect bark and leaves of *mkongona ngendenge* (Ficus sp.) and *muyegeya* (Stereospermum sp.?), pound them and mix with flour and water. The child is then placed in a shallow basket or tray with the mixture and washed by the father or mother, who must be naked. This is done just after sundown. Still in the basket, it is then put in any dirty place such as an ash-heap or rubbish-heap, and the paste spread all over its body, right up to the neck. Then its parents jump over it, the father first, and after that it is taken back to the house and will be immune to *lidege.*

(*b*) *Cure.*—The child's mother must pound the leaves of *kitamisugu* (see Nos. 11 and 14) and *kifualafuala* (Biophytum sensitivum (*L.*) *DC.*) and mix them with flour and water. She must then place the child on the ground in the yard or in an ash-heap or in the grass and stand astride of it, herself quite naked. She fans it till it opens its eyes and then spreads the paste all over its body.

21. *Unduly prolonged menstruation.*—Boil the bark of *mtumbati* (see No. 12 (*a*)) and *mudamba* (Ficus sp. near F. dekdekena *A. Rich.*), mix the water with maize flour and make the patient eat the paste. Menstruation will cease within three days.

22. *Broken bones.*—Carefully cut away a piece of the root of *ligapa* (Landolphia florida *Benth.*). Incise the patient near the fracture, smear the blood on the root and some of the sap on the injured limb. Carefully replace the root and as it joins up again so the broken bone will mend!

23. "*Wuleka.*"—This is dysentery in an unweaned child, thought to be caused by its mother committing adultery before she has had ceremonial intercourse with her husband (see p. 375). Boil the roots of *kitamisugu* (see Nos. 11, 14, and 20 (*b*)) and *kitalufufu* (see No. 1) and allow the infusion to cool. Take a little grass from the roof either of the house where the sick child is or of the house in which the adultery was committed, set it alight and extinguish it in the medicine, which the child must then drink.

24. *Fish poison,* occasionally used as a drug, see pp. 76 and 81. Put the leaves of *muchamba* (Tephrosia Vogelii *Hook. f.*) in the water and small fish in the vicinity will be killed while large ones will be stupefied.

25. *Invisibility!*—There is a grown bird with speckled breast which nests on the ground and is extremely difficult to see till it rises from under one's feet. A medicine used to be made from this bird and its pinkish, speckled eggs to confer invisibility in war.

The following is a record of Tembatemba's* unsuccessful treatment of Zena, the wife of the writers' personal "boy," and Abdulla. She has been married to him for about six years has not had a child. The treatment was intended to give her one.

First Day.—Tembatemba arrived about 9 a.m. and sat down in the courtyard with Zena and Abdulla sitting facing him. He produced his divining beads and gazed intently at them for a while (cf. p. 121), finally saying, "You have a pain in your stomach," pointing to the region of the spleen. "At about 3 p.m. you feel cold and in the evening you suffer from lack of appetite. At other times for a couple of days you cannot eat." It was quite true that Zena had been suffering in this way for several weeks.

Tembatemba then went away to fetch medicine for her, returning presently with several bundles of roots. He said to Abdulla, "The *Bwana Shauri*† thinks I cannot make women bear children, I will prove to him that I can."

He then put some of the roots into a pot, filled it with water, and boiled the roots for about two hours. After this Zena was stripped to the waist and made to stand in front of him, and he proceeded to dip a bunch of leaves in the boiling liquid and shake them violently at her. The spray was scalding hot and he used altogether about one and a half gallons of the

* See Plate II, opposite p. 120.

† Administrative Officer. In this case, one of the writers.

liquid, by which time she was dripping wet and slightly scalded on the back. "This," he said, "is to improve her general constitution." As he shook the leaves he repeated an Ndwewe incantation which he said meant, "Mulungu drive him out."

After Zena had dressed again, he produced twenty-one small dried sticks strung on a string and made Abdulla clean the surface of a grinding-stone. Abdulla was then given the sticks and told to dip them in water and grind off a little of each on the stone. Tembatemba helped him. After each stick was used, Abdulla had to suck the end of it before taking the next one. Then Zena had to lick up the coarse paste which had collected on the grinding-stone. She was instructed, "Do not commit adultery, for it will ruin the medicine. When you are menstruating do not eat with strangers. The stranger may have committed adultery and that will spoil the medicine. Do not cross over cross-roads. When you come to one or to a fork-road, make a detour to avoid the junction."

Abdulla was told, "Do not commit adultery."

Second Day.—The spraying was repeated in the morning, and in the afternoon Zena was told to make incisions in her husband's skin. She said she could not, so Tembatemba performed the operation. He pinched up the skin and cut a row of small incisions on both shoulder-blades, the back of the neck, the base of the spine, and slightly behind both temples. Into these he rubbed a black oily substance which smarted acutely and of which Abdulla was made to eat a little, It was made of ground roots and simsim oil. The cuts bled profusely so Tembatemba applied a brown powder, also made from roots, and this instantly arrested the bleeding.

He then made Abdulla incise Zena on both shoulder-blades, the temples, and neck. He rubbed in the black medicine and applied the brown powder to stop the bleeding. Then he said, "If you dream, tell me."

Third Day.—The spraying was repeated. Then Tembatemba squeezed some wet leaves into a bowl of water. He tasted

the liquid first himself (he always tastes his medicines before giving them to his patients) and gave it to Abdulla and Zena to drink. This was the fertility medicine itself.

Then he said, "Last night I slept and I dreamed that Zena had borne two children. Mulungu, my tutelary spirit, told me this dream."

Zena said she, too, had dreamed. She had seen three frogs in a pot of water. Tembatemba said, "Good," and Abdulla laughed.

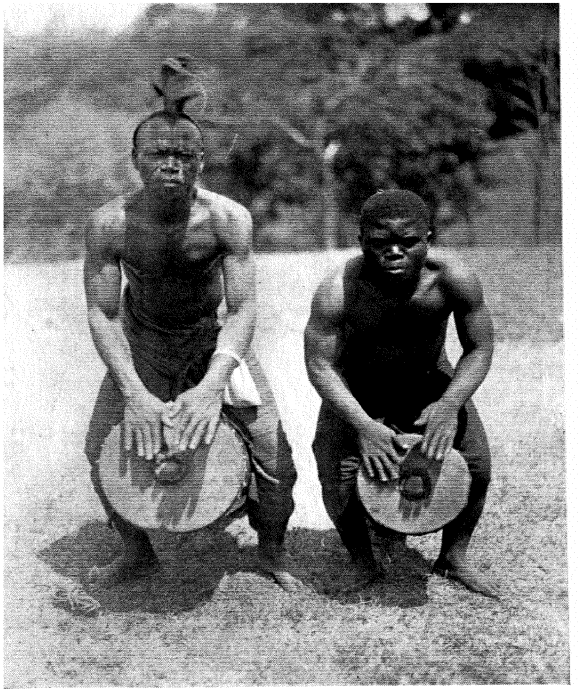
At 2 p.m. Zena was given a powerful purgative, a brownish powder stirred into some gruel. It took effect during the night, causing great prostration, slight giddiness, and vomiting. Abdulla also took some of it under orders in the evening and was duly purged.

Tembatemba explained, "The sickness in the region of the spleen is preventing you from having a child. This medicine will cure it. When a child starts forming in the womb, this sickness which gives you a pain near the spleen destroys it and it passes out as menstrual blood."

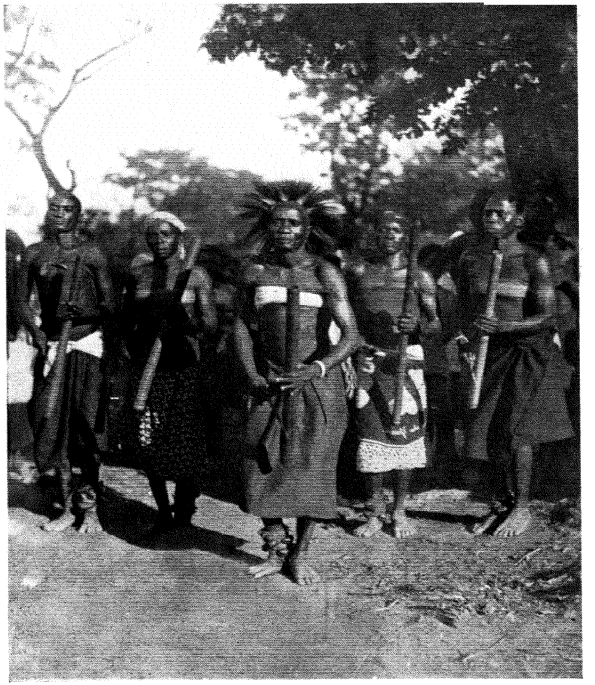
Fourth Day.—Zena told Tembatemba, "Last night I dreamed that I was feeding a girl child. I said to her, 'Go gently, don't hurt my breasts.'" Tembatemba said, "*I* dreamed you had a boy child."

The spraying with hot liquid was repeated in the morning and again at 4 p.m., and Zena had twice to eat the paste made from the twenty-one small sticks as described above. Tembatemba then said to her, "To-morrow morning you and Abdulla will go to the river. Take the bunch of leaves I have used for the spraying, bathe, and throw the leaves into the stream. I shall come from day to day to see how you are getting on. Every day you must take some of the fertility medicine. I will make you a little charm from roots and you must wear it at the base of your spine."

But alas! Eighteen months and more have passed, and still there is no baby!



DRUMMERS (LIPÁRA DANCE)
(*pp.* 401 *et seq.*)



LIPÁRA DANCERS
(*pp.* 401 *et seq.*)

CHAPTER XVIII

SONG AND DANCE

In many ways there is no more fascinating subject than the study of singing and dancing in a primitive African tribe. Inseparable companions, in Ubena of the Rivers they are the vehicles whereby the most diverse emotions may find expression. The Wabena will dance to welcome a distinguished visitor; they will dance to ask a boon; they will dance to mourn a death; they will dance on any festive occasion or just because they are full fed and happy; they will dance when they are afraid, to propitiate that which they fear; they will dance at any religious ceremony; and they would in the past dance before the Mtema to demand war, or the death of a transgressor. A restless impatience characterises the rhythms of their dances, an impatience which stirs the blood of the spectator and imparts itself to his feet, till they wellnigh begin dancing of themselves.

The special songs and dances associated with the instruction of the young in their duties, i.e. those performed at initiation, first menstruation and marriage, and first pregnancy are described elsewhere. Our concern in this chapter is with the public dances of the tribe.

Without doubt the most striking of these is *lipára*. A really good performance is a sight from which it is hard to tear oneself away, in spite of the appalling din which accompanies it. This dance is found at its best in the royal province of Utengule, but the number of first-class performers is small now and the days are gone where fifty or a hundred people would all be dancing it together.* To-day the crowd gathers not to dance but to throng round the troupe of experts and

* Towegale wants to encourage the dancing of *lipára* in preference to imported dances, and hopes that soon more people will be dancing it again.

their drummers; though some of the onlookers will join in now and then or at least assist vocally, while a few of the cheeky adolescent boys may begin a clownish performance outside the circle, caricaturing their elders.

Lipára is primarily a dance for the men; that is, the men play the principal part, but there is nothing to prevent women joining in. They, however, merely jig round, with that peculiar flexibility of every part of the body which is characteristic of all their movements when dancing, except perhaps in *liheyu*. The music is provided by one low drum and one high drum,* bells on one leg of each performer, bamboo rasps (*mharáta*, pl. *mi-*) played by the dancers, and of course the human voice. Occasionally somebody improvises a song, but for the most part they are all too busy to do more than sing without any words. The rhythm is very fast, and though the main theme is straightforward, it is often very difficult to follow the intricate syncopated variations produced by the drums. As in all their tribal dances (as opposed to the less energetic imported ones), the men are usually half naked, while the leaders, including possibly the principal drummer, wear weird head-dresses of feathers and animal hair. Knees and hips bent, bodies twisting and quivering from head to foot, rasping furiously on their split bamboos, the performers leap and whirl, their weight on the leg which has no bells, while with the other foot they beat out a syncopated accompaniment to the drums. Naturally the dance cannot proceed at full speed without intermission; it waxes and wanes, led by the big drum. The drummer works the dances up to a fine frenzy for a few moments, bringing the bout to a close by the recognised signal of a change of rhythm, so that all will stop as one man at the correct beat. Sometimes he will ride his drum in among the dancers and finish with his arm round the neck of the

* The drums are made from hollowed, waisted logs with a skin stretched over one end, and the drummers stand astride them. In the centre of the drum-head there is a raw rubber ring.

principal performer. There follows a short period of rest, the drums muttering, the rasps chattering softly while the men take a breather, one or two of them singing in low tones or quietly beating out the time with their feet, till a crescendo from the drums calls them again to feverish activity. Then maybe all of them will renew the dance as before, or maybe one or two only will come forward to give a special performance, while their fellows dance less fiercely in the background. Occasionally a woman, too, will step forward and dance round opposite the soloists. The latter will sometimes dance more or less independently, executing the most grotesque antics which are greeted by the onlookers with bursts of delighted laughter; at other times two will dance together in a sort of mock fight, advancing, retreating, circling round one another; while yet again one man will seem to be making advances to the other, who is rejecting them. When the dance is being held in honour of a guest who is actually present watching it, the soloists and drummers (and now and then the whole troupe) often advance most threateningly and with deafening noise upon the guest of honour, and dance with great fury close in front of him. One such performance came to an abrupt end when the authors' fox-terrier (so-called) bitch, coming gallantly to rescue her mistress from the enemy, buried her fangs in the principal dancer's calf! But after the speedy application of First Aid to both wounded leg and wounded dignity he was dancing as lustily as ever.

The history of *lipára* is interesting, for actually the present dance is a comparatively recent development. Its forerunner was *lidánga*, which was danced without bells or big drums, the music being provided by bamboo flutes (*mbéta*, pl. *mbéeta*), small hand-drums (*ndengéra*, sing. or pl.) and singing. The word *lidánga* means the "jump-jump" of the skins the dancers wore in those days, now replaced by the loin-cloth, and when any words were sung they consisted simply of *ō, lídanga, lídanga!—ō lídanga, lídanga!* The hand-drums were made of

a very light wood which, in Ubena of the Rivers, is only found sporadically in Utemekwira. Small wonder, then, that these drums died out after the migration from the hills. The drummers took to wearing bells like the *liheyu* dancers (see below) and to beating out the rhythm on their chests with their hands, while the pipers apparently helped by beating their pipes with sticks instead of using them as wind instruments. Further developments soon took place, however, for the Wandamba, with whom the Wabena were now coming into close contact, were already acquainted with the big drum (see *lihári* below), and in the reign of Kiwanga I, *lipára* emerged with its big drums and its bells, while the bamboo pipes of the past gave place to notched and split bamboo rasps, by means of which more noise could be produced than by simply beating the pipes as above. *Lidánga* was dead: the new dance came to console those who mourned its passing, and so it was given the name of the payment made to a dead wife's sorrowing relatives.

While the Wabena regard *lipára* as having developed directly and solely out of *lidánga*, it is apparent to the spectator that it also contains features of both the Ndamba dance *lihári and mséli*, a simpler dance found among the Wabena of the Masagati province.

Lihári, which is popular among many of the Wabena as well as the Wandamba, can be briefly described as the ugliest dance in this part of Africa. Performed to the sound of big drums (which occasionally seem to lapse into the *lipára* rhythm) and to more or less wordless singing, it consists of ungainly strides and leaps, with the body doubled up and clumsy, clownish movements of the arms. Sometimes a few women enter the circle or group, even occasionally joining the leaders in the centre, where they stand quivering all over like jellies. The chief dancer may rest his hands on their shoulders to gain support which will enable him to perform yet more extravagant movements with his legs. Once in a while the

proceedings are varied by the whole troupe playing "Follow my leader" in and out among the onlookers, in single file with the women last. No bells are used in this dance, but on both legs the men wear rattles made of a fruit which, when dried, becomes a hard shell about the size of an apricot with the seeds loose inside. The shells are strung on sticks, three or four at a time, the sticks being either fixed vertically in jointed wooden frames or tied loosely together with string at top and bottom. These awkward contrivances tied round the legs of the performers just below the knee largely account for the ungainliness of the dance. Moreover, it is very difficult to fasten them securely, and one man after another drops out to repair his leg-wear, usually just when all are working up to a climax.

Mséli is a simple but rather fascinating dance with a very catchy rhythm which urgently summons the feet of the onlooker to join in the fun. Its principal feature is that the performers jump up and down with both feet together, or very nearly so, as opposed to jumping on one leg in *lipára* and striding about in *lihári*. The men wear bells on both legs and play bamboo rasps to the accompaniment of cheerful wordless singing, but there are no drums. This dance is peculiar to Masagati, but there it is confined neither to small numbers of experts nor to one sex. Some of the women may wear bells like the men and even play rasps and wear head-dresses like them, but as in other cases they do not dance so vigorously as the latter, nor do they jump energetically with both feet together. The men perform with considerable agility, even achieving a "double knees bend" and up again in time to the quick staccato of their rasps. Sometimes the leader will do various stunts in the centre of the ring, dancing maybe on his knees, or supporting himself face upwards on his hands and continuing to "jump" as before with his feet, so that his bells give out the same rhythm as those of his fellows dancing in the ordinary way. As with *lipára*, the dance waxes and wanes

to give the men a chance to recover their breath, and their endurance is remarkable, as any novice who tries to keep pace with them for a few minutes will very soon admit.

An interesting sidelight is thrown on tribal history by the fact that in Boma ya Lindi and Ifinga the only dance known is *lipúga*, derived from the Angoni *ligwámba*. There are no Bena dances in these former rebel provinces, whose people were for so many years in much closer contact with the Wangoni than with the rest of the Wabena. *Lipúga*, the dance of those Wangoni who came from Mbunga (i.e. of the present Wambunga), is danced in other parts of Ubena besides Boma ya Lindi and Ifinga, having been introduced by the Angoni off-shoots, usually from Mbunga, who have settled in Ubena from time to time and become subjects of the Manga chiefs. As a dance it is not interesting to watch; the performers, men and women, circle round the drums sauntering, swaggering, capering according to individual taste, singing the song if they know the words and just making a noise if they do not. Many of the men carry small hand rattles with which they emphasise the rhythm. These were formerly made of gourds with little stones in them, but nowadays small tins ("Ideal" milk tins are much sought after for this purpose) are more fashionable.

In addition to these dances, various distorted versions of dances from the coast are gaining favour at the present time. As performed in Ubena, they are no more entertaining to watch than *lipúga*, while the often ponderous beat of their drums lacks that impatient, insistent summons which is half the fascination of the true Bena dances. Sometimes, however, one meets an amusing "half-caste" song among these aliens, and we can hardly pass on without mention of one which the women sometimes sing in Malinyi:

Nafunga safari yangu,
I pack up my safari,

Naenda Dar es Salama.
I go to Dar es Salaam.

Navuta bangi,
I smoke hashish,

Nakula kungu,
I eat nutmeg,

Matushi kingereza, "Bladi fulu !!"
The English insult (is) "Bloody Fool!!"

The war dances of the Wabena (*ligúbo*) are by no means dead or forgotten. They are still performed on occasions, and the writers have three times watched some of them; on the day of Towegale's accession, after a lion-hunt, and at the entertainment given by the Wenyekongo. The following is an account of the dances seen on the first occasion. A very similar performance was given after the lion-hunt, except that the "chorus" was in that case composed of armed men drawn up in serried ranks, instead of a circle of weaponless spectators. The Wenyekongo gave a spirited and informal performance of the same dances. Certain war songs which are now connected solely with lion-hunting appear in Chap. VIII.

On the day of Towegale's accession the men of the royal family took up their position outside the door of his house in Malinyi, and a crowd gathered round in a wide circle. A few women were present, but all the royal ladies and most of the female population of the village were busy dancing *lihéyu* under a tree near by, Towegale's wives conspicuous by the flour thrown on their heads as a mark of great rejoicing.

A number of spears were produced and three fine shields, two adorned with the royal emblem, a piece of otter-skin. One of the royal shields was handed to one man after another, mostly old men who had taken part in actual fighting with spears and shields, in the Maji-Maji Rebellion in 1905–06 or against the Wahehe in the nineties. Each in his turn leaped

into the middle of the ring brandishing the shield and a spear. There each one made mock war, creeping cautiously through the imaginary bush to find his imaginary foe, rushing on him, stabbing, parrying, circling round him looking for a chance to get home in a vital spot, leaping, twisting, turning. From time to time he lunged furiously at the spectators, as often as not at Towegale himself, before whom stood a youth on guard with shield and spear, lest in the excitement of the dance such an onslaught should not be checked in time. Meanwhile the dancer was singing, or rather making rousing speeches in song, calling to mind former glories, bewailing lost lands, telling both of great achievements in battle and the chase and of old grievances, stirring the blood of his hearers and arousing their tribal pride. All his song was interspersed with responses from the onlookers. Now they would fling back answers to his questions, now repeat the last phrase of his song, now merely complete its rhythm with a short meaningless refrain, *Ah-aah!* In due course both the deposed Kiwanga II and the newly appointed Towegale took their turn in the ring, each being acclaimed by the crowd with great enthusiasm, though the former, it must be confessed, was a somewhat comic warrior in his loose, shabby khaki suit and enormous boots!

After a time, when everyone was becoming excited and enthusiastic, about twelve or fifteen men, including Towegale, stepped forward and made a smaller circle inside the ring of onlookers. Led by a soloist dancing wildly inside their circle, they began to sing another song, the refrain of which ran as follows:

Twingómo sarúmba, namajá.
We gather together to agree, all of us.

Meaning:

We have gathered to agree about going to war. Let the Mtema tell us when we shall go forth to fight.

The accompanying dance consisted of three steps forward into the circle and three steps back, in time with the three beats of the refrain, the performers stamping the foot on the third and pausing a beat. Each man danced slightly bent forward as though looking at the ground just in front of him and with rather exaggerated swinging of the arms.

Presently this dance broke up and the village turned its attention to slaughtering an ox the Mtema had provided for the festivities, while the women continued with *lihéyu*, and the drums muttered intermittently in anticipation of the evening revel. But alas! Long ere nightfall Towegale's little five months' old daughter had died, and rejoicing was turned into mourning.

And now we come to the last group of dances, *lihéyu*, with its many songs to suit all occasions, though the use of any given song is by no means confined to the particular occasion for which it may have been designed. Both sexes used to take part in this dance, but at the present day it is unusual to see men doing so except for an occasional buffoon performing antics in the middle of the circle.

In *lihéyu* the song is all-important and the dancing merely a matter of trotting round in time, the beats being marked by bells worn round their ankles by one or two of the leaders. The performers may be in a circle, i.e. if dancing in one place, or they may form themselves into a compact body five or six abreast and proceed thus along the road. They come out in this formation to greet a visitor, and at other times when they are tired of dancing in a circle they move up and down the village street for a change. Usually they carry light sticks, a practice which is *de rigueur* when they go to meet a guest, on which occasions they used also to wear colobus armlets. These are very rare now, but a few are still in existence in some of the remoter villages.

Lihéyu is danced all over Utengule and Malinyi and in northern Masagati, but as the traveller goes south through

the Masagati hills, he finds he leaves it behind and the women greet him with ululations only, till he reaches the southern provinces of Boma ya Lindi and Ifinga where no Bena dances are known at all.

A few of the refrains most commonly sung are given below. There is nearly always a soloist weaving a web of words round the refrain, and often a new chorus is improvised to suit the occasion; while from time to time some of the dancers almost drown the song with ululations.

1. This is the song usually sung first when the guest whom the women have gone out to meet appears in sight. They then accompany him into the village with this and other songs, and continue to entertain him thus for some time after his arrival.

Mfalingéra néke tuhúngire.
Great man when we are greeting.

Meaning:

We put on colobus armlets when we go out to meet an important visitor.

2. A noticeable feature of *lihéyu* is the popularity of songs about war, the great pastime of former days.

Ngóha ngóha lukíno.
War war (is) a game.

3. *Wéwemba wawánda, wéwemba.*
They shout the slaves, they shout.

Wéwemba wawánda, wéwemba, wéwemba.
They shout the slaves, they shout, they shout.

Meaning:

Send us to war, we are spoiling for a fight.

4. *Náni alíra liléndi ya dumwíkengómbo?*
Who will cry for *mlendi* (a vegetable) which is cut?

Meaning:

Who cares about agriculture when there are cattle to be taken from the enemy?

5. This is, or was, sung to ask any boon of the Mtema. It might indicate anything from the desire for a feast of free meat and beer to a demand for the execution of some transgressor or for the organisation of a raid.

*Usánjage, Mwána, nganíre.**
Divide, Chief, as you will.

6. *Ámuwembére, tawángu.*
He is shouting (continuously), the enemy.

7. A dirge.

Wána wewémba, "Mfalingéra."
The children cry, "The great man."

Wána wewémba, "Mfalingéra ahámile."
The children cry, "The great man has departed."

Wána wewémba, "Mfalingéra."
The children cry, "The great man."

It is quite common for several of the dances described in this chapter to be going on at once within a few yards of one another, and they may go on all day or all night, or both, when the spirit moves the people. Often porters will toil into camp, put up the tent, have a short rest and a large feed—and begin dancing as though they had not done a minute's work that day! The writers have been greeted at Utengule about midday with *lipára* and *lihéyu* and entertained thereby in camp for two or three hours, after which there was a pause till sundown when the dancing was resumed in the middle of the village and carried on far into the night. At Kiwambo in Masagati they have been welcomed in the middle of the

* Towegale translates *Mwána* as *Chief* in this song, though it is the ordinary Kibena word for *child*.

forenoon with *mséli* and *lihári* which were continued in camp and were presently joined by *lipúga*, while a little later the porters struck up *karangakóma* (an imported dance). These four went on with but the smallest pauses till late at night, and the valiant little group of *mséli* dancers resumed with unabated energy the moment the camp awoke about 4.30 next morning. *Lihári*, which had been adjourned for a short time in the late afternoon for rest and refreshment, was taken up again with tremendous enthusiasm after dusk under new leadership; and the frenzied howling barbarian in the forefront of the fray proved to be no other than one Manji, by day a sedate and respectable figure in khaki, Mtwa Mfalimbega's messenger!

CHAPTER XIX

QUO VADUNT?

THROUGHOUT this book our rôle has so far been that of observers only. We have endeavoured to the best of our ability to give a faithful description of tribal life in all its aspects; to describe its different institutions and their functions not as isolated phenomena but in their proper setting as inter-linked parts of one living whole; to portray not only its outward appearance but the spirit that pervades it; to convey some impression of the thoughts and emotions lying behind tribal practices; to show the standard reached as well as the standard set; in short, to present to the reader our friends the Wabena not as laboratory specimens but as living people, with human emotions and desires, qualities and failings, self-deceptions, inconsistencies, difficulties, hopes, and fears. And at the end the time comes to discard the rôle of mere observer and to face the question of values, in so far as it comes within the sphere of the Anthropologist. Matters of moral right and wrong belong to the domain of the Philosopher and it is outside the province of the Anthropologist to judge tribal life on such grounds. But there is one set of values by which he may rightly judge the phenomena he observes, and that is survival value; for although it is no business of his to ask, "Is this custom good or bad?" on moral grounds, he has a right, nay even a duty, to ask the same question based on a different standard, namely, the function of that custom in relation to survival. This system of values is essentially relative, dependent on environment, and in considering Bena custom from this point of view we must constantly bear in mind the type of environment in which it is found and the influences by which it is moulded. This seems an elementary point; yet how often is it

disregarded even by those who actually live amongst primitive peoples!

The chief physical dangers in savage society now are hunger and disease, and the preceding chapters have shown both how the Wabena deal with them and how they dealt in the past with a third peril which no longer exists—inter-tribal warfare. We need not elaborate the point here beyond stressing the fact that hunger and war have been the primary factors in moulding their tribal organisation.

But physical dangers are not the only ones. During the Great War the daily Press devoted columns every day to articles designed to ward off what was then one of England's greatest dangers, loss of morale, a danger which threatens savage society far more frequently and more constantly than our own. The maintenance of good morale in a primitive society has in itself enormous survival value, and, as Dr. R. R. Marett often points out to his pupils, the feeling of being "full and good and glad" is essential if a primitive people is to flourish. Difficulties there may be, hardships too, and even great privations; but none of these is so dangerous, so liable to lead to extinction, as the loss of the will to live which sometimes spreads like a blight amongst people of low culture. Anyone who has come into contact with that awful mental death that quite frequently ends in the physical death of the African cannot under-rate the danger of loss of morale. Simple pleasures, such as feasting, beer-drinking, the taking of snuff, the smoking of tobacco, the gossipping with the neighbours, all in moderation, improve morale and therefore have a survival value. There is no healthier sign in a Bena village than a roaring fire and a frenzied mob of perspiring, gorged, and almost naked savages leaping about in the moonlight to the staccato beat of the drums. The tribe that dances does not die.

Greater, however, to the Mbena than all these pleasures is that of sex, on which subject his outlook is frankly natural

and unconstrained. It is a great interest, a good sport, a constant adventure, and it causes him no devastating moral conflicts.

The moral and religious issues involved in the vexed question of monogamy versus polygamy do not concern us here—indeed, being neither philosophers nor theologians we are incompetent to handle them—but the scientific implications of the problem are interesting and deserve mention.

In the first place, the percentage of men to women is seventy-seven! In England and Wales in 1931 it was ninety-two. The low figure for Ubena may in part be due to the effects of the Great War, but it is not wholly so, for we find that the percentage of boys to girls* is only eighty-three. It has often been suggested that the dangerous pursuits of the men in primitive society are apt to lead to a disproportion between the sexes, but this again is not sufficient to account for the present large excess of women over men. A man's work in these days is not particularly dangerous, and violent deaths only occur occasionally; moreover, this hypothesis still does not account for the excess of girls over boys.

The marked disproportion between the sexes is not peculiar to the Wabena of the Ulanga Valley. It also occurs amongst some of their neighbours as the following figures show:

PERCENTAGE OF MALES TO FEMALES (1931)

Tribe	Adults	Children	Total Population
Wabena of the Ulanga Valley	77	83	79
Wabena of Njombe and Iringa	68	91	76
Wahehe of Iringa	84	73	79
Wangoni (Mpepo's)	71	67	70
Wandamba	92	75	86

* Persons under the age of puberty, all of whom were of course born subsequent to 1918.

In taking a native census there is usually difficulty in drawing the line between adults and children, and this at least in part accounts for the discrepancies to be observed between the figures for adults and those for children. Tribal customs vary with regard to the transition from childhood to manhood and womanhood, and very often one sex goes through its puberty ceremonies at a slightly earlier age than the other, thereby weighting the figures for children in favour of the opposite sex and those for adults in favour of itself. This, however, does not alter the fact that amongst all these five peoples the females heavily outnumber the males.

Now it will be seen from our figures that if every man in Ubena of the Rivers was allowed only one wife, 23 per cent of the women would be unable to marry, whereas under present conditions practically all of them are absorbed owing to polygamy. Other things being equal, then, the adoption of monogamy throughout the tribe would result in a drop of 23 per cent in the birth-rate.

But serious as this is, it is not the only consideration. The foregoing chapters will have made it abundantly clear that there is no place for the single woman in Bena society as at present constituted. Economically and socially she cannot fit in, while the moral effects of monogamy are likely to be the very reverse of what the reformers would desire! Setting aside controversy on moral and religious issues, we cannot but realise that polygamy is an institution eminently suited to the environment under consideration, that its wholesale abandonment while that environment persists would cause serious dislocation of tribal life and that the feasibility, let alone the desirability, of monogamy is extremely questionable.

We have seen elsewhere how near the Wabena live to the level of mere subsistence and how acute is their material poverty as judged by more civilised standards. Under conditions such as these, when hunger (or even actual starvation) is a very real danger, the maintenance of public morale is

more than ever necessary. When, because your early maize has been broken down by baboons or eaten by locusts, your young rice drowned by untimely floods and your dry-season root crop ruined by pigs, you are living on water-lily seeds gathered in a crocodile-infested swamp, it needs courage to take up the struggle and start again. The first essential to morale in such adverse circumstances is a faith that in the end all will be well, a faith in the future, without which no man can succeed, for his efforts will be but half-hearted.

No one who has not lived in close contact with an agricultural people can fully appreciate how unavailing and futile human effort can appear under adverse natural conditions. The terrible disappointment that time and time again follows months of ceaseless toil, the lack of reserves from which to replace such losses, and the apparent hopelessness of the future are sufficient to break the spirit and destroy all self-confidence. Under these conditions a man requires a belief in some power higher than his own, to which he can appeal, or which in some way he can use to overcome circumstances that are beyond his control. The savage is constantly face to face with acute adversity of one kind or another due to the insecurity of his food supply, and his religion surrounds him with a host of supernatural powers on which he can rely when he is down, thus giving him the courage to carry on. It would indeed be difficult to overstress the survival value of religion in primitive society.

In Ubena of the Rivers the revival of tribal life consequent on the recent election to the office of Mtema of the man best qualified to become the religious head of the tribe demonstrates our point. His "coronation" day marked the beginning of a new era in tribal life. His people felt that the tribal *tambiko* was restored. It banished the doubts and fears engendered during the unfortunate though necessary interregnum of 1928–32, and brought new hope, new spirit, restored vitality. Men who had left Ubena began to return, agricultural effort

was increased all round, and the bumper rice harvest of 1933 assured the people that Towegale reigns with the full approval of the ancestral shades whose mandate he holds.

In times of real want, however, a man needs something more nourishing than faith and hope and the will to live. He must have food, and he must have it at once. In other words, he requires the help of his more fortunate relatives and friends till such time as his renewed efforts bear fruit, rewarding his faith and justifying his hope. Previous chapters have shown how this need is met in Ubena, and we need not therefore enlarge here on the subject except to stress the psychological value of the Bena system of mutual help. This system, in which religious, social, and economic ties all have a part to play, is the native's insurance policy against misfortune, and is one of the most valuable features of the whole tribal system. Without it there would be no security, life would become one long fear for the morrow. The effect of anxiety of this type is well known. A certain amount spurs a man on to greater effort, but an excess depresses the spirits and takes all joy out of life.

Religion is also of value to the tribe for other reasons. It is, in the mind of the tribesman, the source of all law and order. All custom is to him inspired. We have seen that there are very definite practical sanctions for most Bena customs, and that when custom is broken disaster is apt to overtake the offender for purely economic reasons, but the savage does not, of course, appreciate this. To him all custom, all law, all religion are one—the will of the ancestors, a phrase which raises the sum of tribal experience to the level of the sacred. This may sound purely theoretical, but it is of the greatest practical importance. It places custom beyond the debate of ordinary men and ensures that changes in tribal law are only made by the religious head of the tribe, the Mtema, who is himself unconsciously hedged about with safeguards to prevent misuse of his power. In this way religion does much

to avert unwise changes, and gives custom a healthy stability that it might not otherwise enjoy.

There is still in certain quarters a tendency to regard tribal custom and many tribal institutions as interesting but useless relics of the past, as things which must soon die away before the rationalising forces of Western civilisation. True, many old practices are passing. Custom is changing and will continue to change, but in the face of these changes let us not forget that it represents the summation of generations of tribal experience in a given environment, and must therefore have a value at least so long as that type of environment persists. It has, however, greater possibilities than that, for the mythical "dead cake of custom" stands revealed as a living thing, capable of growth and development. Tribal custom and tribal institutions are evolving to meet new needs, yet (and this is the really important point) without losing their essential qualities. Thus is continuity preserved. Judging by the last forty years, there seems no reason to suppose that this development in Ubena will either cease or fail to keep pace with the requirements of the people. The era of European influence has demonstrated the great plasticity, the surprising adaptability of tribal institutions, which in Ubena are in as strong a position as they ever were in the past. The leading men in the tribe are not blind to the changes taking place, but they do not deplore them. They welcome them and look forward confidently to the future, believing that the institutions founded by their ancestors are capable of evolving to meet modern needs and to take their place in the New Africa of To-morrow.

APPENDIX 1

THE DEATH OF MKWAWA

*PART of Feldwebel Merkl's report, taken from *Eine Deutsche Frau im Innern Deutsch-Ostafrikas*, M. v. Prince (3rd edition, Berlin, 1908):

"We reached Pavaga at midday on July 15, 1898, after a forced march of thirteen hours. We concealed ourselves in thick bush and disguised ourselves as Wahehe. . . . At 5 p.m. the Jumbe (Kisogrewe) came in with three of Mkwawa's 'boys' who had been captured. I learned from them that he intended going to Makubuta. Also that he carried a Model 71 rifle of which the muzzle had cracked a few days previously, a mishap which had greatly upset him, and his companion had a sporting rifle. I sent off the *ombasha* to Makibuta with five askaris and five Wahehe, and myself stayed where I was with the rest of the party. . . . On July 16, 1898, the wife of Mkawa's companion was caught about 4 a.m. She said Mkwawa had gone from the Ruaha to the southern part of Pavaga, whence he wanted to get back to the Uzungwa Mountains. She herself had run away and wandered about the whole night. At midday I received information that Mkwawa had stolen some maize and a sheep. I immediately set off in pursuit. Only the Wahehe could discern the trail, which led into the bush in a westerly direction, and about 5 p.m. even they lost it and were unable to pick it up again. . . . On the 18th the *ombasha* returned. On the 19th we went back along the left bank of the Ruaha towards Iringa to the spot where we had lost the trail on the 16th. From there we went through the bush to Humbwe. I reached it at midday with the *ombasha*, two askaris and the Hehe Mzagira Mtaki. We halted to wait for our safari to catch us up. Suddenly we saw a naked boy of about fifteen years coming towards us. He bolted the moment he noticed us, but was presently captured. After some vigorous persuasion he admitted that he was Mkwawa's fourth servant and had run away that morning. Mkwawa lay three hours away very sick and spitting blood. The previous evening he had shot his companion. We set off immediately. When we had been marching about half an hour, we heard a shot in a south-westerly direction.

* Quotation by kind permission of Verlag E. S. Mittler & Sohn.

By 2 p.m., according to the boy's statements, we were very close to Mkwawa. I then decided we must leave our packs and take off our shoes. I climbed a tree to take stock of the place. Walking without shoes was extremely painful, for the ground was very stony. We saw smoke rising a little way off. We had to wriggle along on our bellies for some 200 metres. Then we could approach no nearer without being heard. About twenty paces in front of us we saw two prostrate figures, apparently sleeping. The Jumbe pointed out one of them as Mkwawa. As the bush was very dense in the immediate vicinity and one bound would have sufficed to enable Mkwawa to escape from under our very noses, as he had so often succeeded in doing before, we fired on him. Our shots were unnecessary; Mkwawa had himself put an end to his life. Rigidity had not yet set in and he had killed himself with the shot which we had heard."

*Nigmann, in *Geschichte der Kaiserlichen Schutztruppe für Deutsch-Ostafrika* (Berlin, 1911), quotes from the same report:

"His rifle was significantly pointing towards his mouth and had been badly scorched in the fire beside him. Musigombo's body was already quite stiff. . . . Presently my safari came up; the Wahehe at once recognised Mkwawa, and stood for some little time in an oppressive silence."

* Quotation by kind permission of Verlag E. S. Mittler & Sohn.

APPENDIX II

NOTES ON RAINFALL

No series of figures are available for Ubena of the Rivers itself, but the following scanty records from Ifakara and Kiberege, where the climatic conditions are roughly comparable with those of the Valley as a whole, serve at least to show the erratic variations in the distribution of the rainfall from one year to another.

IFAKARA STATION*

Average Monthly Rainfall in Millimetres

Month	1926	1927	1928	Average for 2 Years
January ..	Unknown	267·2	66·6	166·9
February ..	Unknown	76·7	120·0	98·3
March ..	Unknown	185·7	321·0	253·3
April ..	Unknown	195·9	210·0	203·3
May.. ..	Unknown	92·8	90·8	91·8
June ..	Unknown	2·4	25·6	14·0
July.. ..	Unknown	4·8	Nil	2·4
August ..	Unknown	4·4	Unknown	4·4†
September ..	Unknown	2·1	Unknown	2·1†
October ..	3·6	3·7	Unknown	3·7
November ..	74·1	52·5	Unknown	63·3
December ..	199·5	153·5	Unknown	176·4
Totals ..	—	1,041·5	—	1,079·6

Telford estimates the average rainfall for the hills surrounding the Valley at approximately 60–80 inches, and that for the Kilombero plains as probably about 40 inches per annum.

* Obtained from A. M. Telford, *Report on the Development of the Rufiji and Kilombero Valleys*, Tanganyika Government, 1929.

† One year.

APPENDIX II

KIBEREGE STATION*

Average Monthly Rainfall in Millimetres

Month	1932	1933	1934	Average for 3 Years
January ..	44·9	181·6	223·7	150·1
February ..	127·4	210·7	108·5	148·9
March ..	455·5	263·8	277·6	332·3
April ..	331·4	297·7	288·7	305·9
May.. ..	97·4	112·3	330·2	180·0
June ..	13·7	8·6	79·6	34·0
July.. ..	48·1	16·2	45·8	36·7
August ..	29·4	65·2	5·1	33·2
September ..	27·0	4·5	0·0	10·5
October ..	35·2	20·7	15·1	23·7
November ..	24·4	22·4	53·2	33·3
December ..	79·1	64·0	293·4	145·5
Totals ..	1,313·5	1,267·7	1,720·9	1,434·1

A striking example of the erratic nature of the rainy season is recorded in the history of the Maji-Maji Rebellion of 1905, in which year the rains broke exceptionally early in the Kilombero Valley. A despatch from v. Hassel, who, after burying Kiwanga I at Mpanga, proceeded along the left bank of the rivers to Ifakara, reads as follows:†

"Since the 13th of November, when we crossed the Mgeta, it has rained day and night. Heavy thunderstorms have been experienced both in the Iringa hills and in the plains. The plains have been like a lake and the paths rushing streams. Several people have been drowned, while seven of the auxiliaries fell victims to the crocodiles. Continually wading in water, without a dry rag to their backs day or night, with the camp itself partly under water, my troops, and more especially my auxiliaries, suffered acutely from dysentery and inflammation of the lungs. The death-rate

* Obtained from the District Office, Kiberege.

† v. Götzen, op. cit., p. 140, by kind permission of Dietrich Reimer (Ernst Vohsen) Aktiengesellshaft.

increased appallingly after we reached Ifakara, so I decided to abandon the idea of going on northwards."

Again, that same season the Luwego River east of Mahenge was impassable by the 23rd of December, and v. Wangenheim lost time and valuable lives in unsuccessful attempts to cross it with rafts. And the Rufiji River rose so early and so suddenly that whereas his troops took only one day to cross it below the Pangani Rapids on the 16th of December, the return crossing three weeks later took them eight days. v. Götzen speaks* with some bitterness of "the Central African climate, so rich in surprises," which "had once more caused the intruders to suffer by its spiteful pranks and brought to nought their plan" to reach Mahenge from the east.

Turning to recent years, we find that in the season 1931–2 much rice was flooded out; in the following year rice flourished, but the cotton crop was seriously damaged by unsuitable distribution of the rainfall and untimely dry weather; and in 1934 heavy rain came unusually late, thereby saving the rice which had had to be replanted twice on account of locusts, but spoiling the first crop of cotton.

It is therefore obvious that the agricultural annual programme described in Chap. XII is subject to considerable alteration, according to the vagaries of the weather, and in any year, good or bad, there always seem to be some unfortunate people who have misread the signs and whose crops have suffered in consequence.

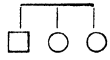
* Op. cit., p. 17, by kind permission of Dietrich Reimer (Ernst Vohsen) Aktiengesellschaft.

APPENDIX III

NOTES ON THE USE OF THE PEDIGREE CHART

1. Males are indicated by squares .. .. .. □
Females are indicated by circles .. .. .. ○

2. The relationship between siblings is indicated by joining them vertically to a horizontal *sibling coupling-bar*, which is always above the symbols



3. The marriage relationship is indicated by a horizontal *marriage coupling-bar* joined vertically to the base of the individual symbols



4. Particulars relating to wives are shown against the appropriate *marriage coupling-bar*. In this connection Roman numerals indicate the wife's position in the household, I being the chief wife; arabic numerals in brackets denote the order in which the various wives were married; H indicates an inherited wife.

5. A dotted vertical line indicates direct descent though the intervening generations are not known.

6. The numbers in the squares and circles are to facilitate references.

7. —·—·— shows the descent of the Manga Chiefs in the male line, ▪▪▪▪ the main line of the Uhenge clan, ⋀⋀⋀ the Kipolero clan. —o—o— shows the Queen-mothers and whence they derive their importance according to the rules of cross-cousin marriage.

8. The system followed in making this chart is based on that drawn up by Mrs. Seligman and revised and approved by the Sociological Research Committee of the Royal Anthropological Institute (see *Man*, 1932, **141**). It also incorporates suggestions made by A. T. Culwick in *Man*, 1932, **322**.

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