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CULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT : CULTURAL DIFFERENCES AMONG
THE VARIOUS BRANCHES OF THE BATETELA.

By E. TORDAY.

THE slow and steady changes a people undergoes in the course of its cultural development are now and then interrupted and driven into new channels by a catastrophic event in its history. Two occurrences are more often than not the cause of such a new course : conquest and migration. It matters little if the people concerned are the conquerors, or the conquered, if they intrude among strange tribes or are intruded upon : the association with another tribe will impress its mark upon their culture. Should migration bring them into a country of a different physical configuration, the change will be all the more rapid and fundamental. The less the difference in culture of the two tribes thus brought into contact is, the more rapidly will an amalgamation ensue. When the difference is very considerable, it often happens that such contact is disastrous to the tribe and to the individual.

It would be difficult to find a people in Africa which would illustrate the effect of such events better than the Batetela. Leaving their ancestral home, some settled down in the grass-land of the Lubefu, others in the forest of the Lukenye. Some came into contact with the relatively cultured Basonge and Isambo, others with the primitive Bankutu ; some were influenced by the Baluba coming from the south, others by the Akela, immigrants from the north. Some were conquered by the Arabs and lived for years under their influence, others became soldiers of the white man and benefited by his education. These two latter groups, being of less interest to the anthropologist than to the colonial administrator, may be dismissed in a few words. What the Batetela auxiliaries of the Arabs were like is described by Captain Hinde, and is of common knowledge. It was they who did all the dirty work for their masters and surpassed them in cruelty and savagery. The Batetela soldiers of the Congo State, when they freed themselves (by murder) of their officers, became the terror of the country and continued so for several years. Allied to the Portuguese slave traders of Angola, they practically depopulated large tracts in the south of the Congo State and practised on the natives such wanton cruelty as is probably unknown in history. It may be said that contact with the white man and the Arab has brought out in the Batetela all the savagery of their prehistoric ancestors. Not so when they came into touch with other tribes of their own race : then they changed too ; many of their ways underwent considerable alteration, but still they continued a

peaceful life and stuck to the moral rules that are common to most Bantu peoples. The existence of the tribe, the influence of the chief, remained, consequently the restraining influence of common responsibility persisted and kept them on the straight path.

The Batetela are a warrior people who extend over a large expanse of territory ; their southern limit is a trifle to the north of 5° S., where they are in touch with the Basonge, part of whose territory they have conquered ; in the north they extend approximately to 3° 30' S. Their eastern boundary runs diagonally from about 23° E. in the north to about 23° 30' E. on the south ; their western limit corresponds approximately with the course of the Lomami. Their neighbours in the north and north-west are the Akela, a people hailing from the upper Congo ; on the west, proceeding southwards, the Bankutu (a forest tribe), the Isambo (a sub-tribe of the Bushongo), and the Basonge (a Baluba tribe originating from the middle course of the Lomami).

The Batetela are divided into various tribes, which in former times were governed by independent chiefs. Many of these chieftainships have disappeared ; some were destroyed by the Arabs, some by the Europeans, while others were absorbed in new chieftainships founded by adventurers like the notorious Lupaka. Starting from the south, and reading from west to east, the chief tribes are the Ihunga, Sungu, Dikonda, Malela ; northwards from the last are the Tusanga, Ohamba, and Samba, living near the Lomami ; west of these and north of the Sungu, are the Saka, Koy, and Mondja, and to the north-west of the last, the Sanga. North of all these, between the headwaters of the Lukenye and the Lomami, are the people of Lupaka, a mixture of many of them, the result of Arab slave-raids, the majority being Ohamba. Farther west, on the south bank of the Lukenye, as far as its tributary the Loachi, are the Olemba, whose manners and customs may be taken as more or less typical of all the Batetela tribes inhabiting the Lukenye banks. North of the Lukenye, to the north and east of Kalufei, is a large and important section of primitive Batetela ; the tribes, reading from west to east along the river bank, are as follows : the Luchimbi, between Kalufei, the Lonya river and the lower Lufeye ; the Lupimbi, from the latter to the Okito river ; the Nambilo, from the last to the Osale river ; and the Yenge, from the Osale river to the Lunya river. Between the Luchimba and Lohale rivers, in a north-easterly direction from the former, are the Pieté ; in the triangle formed by the Lohale river and the Loando river are the Vungi ; the last two tribes, on their western borders, march with the Bankutu ; north of the Lupimbi are the Kulumbi ; and east of the last, and north of the Nambilo and Yenge, are the Kudi-Losa. Between the Luchimba, Kulumbi, Kudi-Losa, and Lupimbi is a body of Malela who have been settled there by the Arabs. North-east of the Vungi are the Omona, who are in touch on the north-west with the Alanga, in the north with the Okale and the Lukinde-Jofu, on the north-east with the Shikondo, and in the east with the Utunguala ; north of the last named and extending across the Dompila river are the Djimbo. The last-mentioned row of tribes is in contact

with the Akela to the north, with whom they deny all relationship, and who seem to belong to a different stock, although, so far as culture is concerned, there is no line of sharp demarcation between them.

The Okale, Luchinde-Jofu and Djimbo are called by the other Batetela by the collective name of Bahamba, which seems to indicate that they are regarded rather as the sub-tribes of one tribe than as separate tribes. For the sake of convenience the Bahamba, Omona, Alanga, Shikondo, and Utungsala, who have a great similarity of culture, will be referred to as the northern Batetela. When speaking of the Sungu it must be kept in mind that the Ihunga and Dikonda share most of their manners and customs. The Olemba may be taken as more or less typical of all the Batetela tribes inhabiting the banks of the Lukenye river.

It seems practically certain that all the Batetela found at present in the Kasai District of the Belgian Congo come from a common home which was on the right bank of the River Lomami ; it is furthermore probable that they came from farther east, and that they are akin to, if not part of, the Bakusu, found in the Manyema ; but there are no traditions confirming the latter assumption, while the former finds ample confirmation in the folk-lore of all the tribes visited. A section of the Batetela is still living on the banks of the Lomami ; unfortunately, it has been to such an extent permeated with Arab and Wanyamwesi customs, that it differs probably more from the original stock than any other section of the tribe. As for the other sections, they must have left their ancestral home in successive waves, one moving south-west, the other north-west. The former migrated into the open plain and came into contact with the Basonge and later with the Arabs, the latter stayed in the forest and became the neighbour of the Bankutu and later of the Akela. It is difficult to say when those migrations took place, and controversial to fix an approximate date ; there can be, however, little doubt that at least a century had passed between the periods of the migrations and the time when I visited the tribes ; probably much more. Meanwhile environment had influenced the two distinct sections considerably, and I propose to deal with the cultural differences observed.

It takes a long time to influence the physical appearance of a people, yet the Batetela of the forest are distinctly of a lighter build than their fellow tribesmen of the plains. They have still preserved their tall stature, but the men of the north are decidedly more sinewy and skinny. Though the unity of the tribe is asserted by all most emphatically, the name Batetela is not in general use. The tribes on the right bank of the Lubefu speak of themselves as Akuchu, those on the left as Sungu, those on the Lomami Udyā, some northern tribes as Bahamba. The word Batetela itself is explained by the Sungu as a nickname given to them by the Arabs, "because we possessed little of what they regarded as the necessaries of life," but of course it was taught to the Arabs by the Malela, where they had passed first ; as a matter of fact, researches among the Olemba showed that it was derived from an eponymous god, called Motetela, a word which may mean either "he who laughs not"

or "he at whom one may not laugh." It is certainly remarkable that this name for the deity has disappeared in the vocabulary of the Sungu and neighbouring tribes, and has been replaced by "Winya," the same word as used for the sun, though all idea of sun-worship is emphatically denied by them.

The social organisation of all Batetela tribes is practically identical : a great chief, assisted by elders, governs through a prime minister. But whereas among the Sungu the order of succession is the following : son, brother's son, brother, sister's son, among the Olemba it is the eldest brother who succeeds first, and only when brothers fail does the son come in. In all sections the chief administers justice, and a great part of his revenue is derived from the fines he inflicts. Hospitality is everywhere considered a duty, but whereas a Sungu must shelter any man with whom he has broken bread, there is no such obligation among the northern tribes ; we are consequently justified in assuming that this custom is of Arab importation. Sexual morality is naturally laxer among the tribes which have been more influenced by the foreigner, for while the Sungu punish adultery with a fine, the Olemba used to inflict the capital penalty, and the outraged husband had the privilege of acting as executioner. Among the Sungu a thief is fined ; among the Olemba all his property is confiscated and he is sold as a slave to a foreign tribe. A murderer will be sold by the Sungu to a neighbouring tribe to be killed and eaten, but his relatives can redeem him ; the Olemba force the guilty man to hang himself publicly. The ordeal used to discover the guilt or the innocence of the accused is, among the Sungu, borrowed from the Arabs and consists in compelling the accused to pick a needle from a pot of boiling water ; the northern tribes resort to the old-fashioned ordeal by poison. Among the Sungu a man who makes himself a nuisance to the village or proves a coward is beaten, and may be sold as a slave ; the northern tribes do away with him by the administration of poison.

As among all Bantu peoples, all through the Batetela country land is vested in the chief for the benefit of the tribe. The right of women to hold property varies considerably in different sections : the farther north we go, the fewer rights do they possess. Thus among the Sungu they may own slaves and practically everything except weapons ; among the Olemba they cannot own slaves, and among the northern tribes no property can be held by women. If the father or both parents are slaves they transmit their status to their progeny among the Sungu ; among the Olemba if either parent is free the children are so, though in the northern tribes all children born in the village are free ; but whereas among the other tribes there are no restrictions as to marriage between the free and the slaves, the northern tribes do not permit the marriage of a male slave with a free woman. The fact that among the northern tribes all the slaves are foreigners explains their stricter regulations, for among the Sungu and the Olemba many Batetela tribesmen are in a state of slavery. These latter allow their slaves to redeem themselves, for slaves may own property everywhere, but the former do not permit such redemption. The northern Batetela will

eat their slaves, but as no one for whom the slave has worked may partake of the meal, it is usual to buy a slave specially for cannibalistic purposes and to kill him at once before he has worked for his new master.

The law of inheritance differs considerably among the various tribes of Batetela. Among the Sungu, the eldest son of a man, by any of his wives, is heir to his property ; in default of sons the following inherit in the order named : brother's son, brother, sister's son, the friends who bewail the deceased. Among the Olemba the property is equally divided among his brothers, or failing brothers, among his sons. Among the northern Batetela inheritance goes in the following order : eldest son, eldest brother, eldest brother's eldest son. With regard to the property of women, among the Sungu it passes to the father or eldest brother of the deceased, but the individual who inherits must supply the widower with a new wife, often the sister of the deceased. Among the Olemba the property of a married woman goes to her husband. Here we see the three distinctive phases of ownership clearly represented in the same tribe : the Sungu woman may own practically anything, and at her death her property returns to her own family ; the Olemba woman may own certain things, but at her death they revert to her husband ; and, finally, the northern Batetela woman cannot own at all. The widows themselves are treated on similar lines : among the Sungu they follow the property of their deceased husband, but can free themselves entirely by restoring the bride price ; among the Olemba they can choose a husband among the brothers of the deceased ; while the northern Batetela allow them no say whatever in the matter.

The Batetela, as has been mentioned by various travellers, especially by Captain Hinde, are experts in conveying news by means of gongs : they are excelled by no other tribesmen in the art of beating the gong ; as a matter of fact a " gong concert," so long as it is heard from some distance, is decidedly pleasing, even to the ear of the European. It is to be observed, however, that the instruments used by the various sections of the tribe to transmit signals differ entirely. The Sungu gong is of the well-known flat pattern, beautifully finished, and six different notes can be produced on it ; the mallets have their ends covered with rubber. The Okale gong is cylindrical and is roughly made of a tree trunk hollowed out ; the mallets are not covered with rubber. The Sungu gong hangs round the drummer's neck when beaten ; that of the Okale lies on the ground.

As to marriage customs, there are some differences to be noted among the various tribes. Marriage among blood relations is prohibited among all Batetela, but while a Sungu may marry his father's widow, an Olemba cannot do so. The Olemba alone are exogamous. Among the Sungu, who have been so long under Arab influence, marriage resembles very much a simple business transaction, but the consent of the bride cannot be dispensed with. Among the Olemba the bridegroom elopes with the girl, the mother conniving. The father then has to dun his son-in-law for a considerable time for the bride-price, which he extorts only in small instalments.

The son-in-law appoints a friend to deal with him, and this friend is remunerated according to his success in whittling the price down. Infant betrothal is found among the various sections of the tribe, but the habit of engaging a new-born female child to a small boy by throwing an iron bracelet into the water in which the baby has been first washed is only practised by Sungu mothers. Polygyny is general, but while among the Batetela who have been under Arab influence it is practised as a sign of rank and wealth (important chiefs have harems of hundreds of wives), the more primitive Batetela contents himself with a few spouses, even important chiefs being satisfied with a dozen or so. Prostitution is common among the Sungu, and meets with no disapproval; the northern Batetela tolerate it though they regret it, while the Olemba frankly condemn it. It is supposed that if a Sungu woman is unfaithful to her husband during pregnancy her child will die; this belief does not exist among the Olemba. In all tribes the husband has to abstain from intercourse with his wife during the period of pregnancy, but among the Sungu he can liberate himself from restriction by having intercourse on the day on which the child was born. The northern Batetela surround the hut of a woman who has just given birth to a child with a lofty fence of leaves, and she is kept secluded for some time.

Though the Malela are the tribe among the Batetela which has been most influenced and transformed by the Arabs, yet we find among them alone certain signs of moon worship which are undoubtedly a primitive form of their religion. When the moon appears, the whole village shouts a welcome, gongs and drums are beaten, guns are fired, and all work ceases till the close of the next day; on a journey a rest is made, and a war party, as far as possible, will avoid an engagement on this day. Washing is only performed in forest brooks, everyone puts on his best clothes and walks about with a green branch in his hand; it is considered a good day for magical operations and the most powerful medicines are made under its influence. The chief will stand on a pedestal composed of stakes, and the crowd of villagers will surround him, holding palm leaves stripped of the fronds nearly up to the tip. At a word from the chief the whole assembly will run round him, raising and lowering their bodies and holding their palm leaves high up in the air. The ceremony ends by a sham fight in which the participants throw their palm leaves at each other.

No trace of all this can be found among the Sungu; they have changed the name of the old tribal god and have adopted that of Winya, which means the sun. But though there is undoubtedly much confusion between the two, yet, so far as it is possible to get behind the minds of the natives, who are not accustomed to analyse their ideas, it seems that they consider divinity as quite distinct from the physical sun. Winya, the god, makes light and appoints the day when a man will have to die. He has created the world and it is he who makes living things reproduce their kind. The moon is regarded as the younger brother of the sun, that is to say his inferior; it is not credited with any special powers.

Mr. Joyce has suggested that it is not unreasonable to conjecture that when the Sungu emerged from the ancestral forest, the original home of the Batetela, into the plains full of beneficent sunlight, a confusion arose in their minds between their supreme god and the luminary which was to play a much more important part in their lives than before. Thus the old tribal god Matetela was replaced by Winya, the sun god.

As might be expected, there is little difference in magic among the various tribes; masks are the inevitable part of the paraphernalia of the witch or wizard, and are used to inspire the common crowd with awe. Of course, every section has adopted something from its new neighbours; thus the Tongo-tongo, which makes men invulnerable to the white man's bullets, is found among the Batetela, who are in contact with the Bankutu, and anthropomorphic fetishes have made their appearance among the Sungu, borrowed from the Baluba neighbours. The following practice was observed only among the Malela. At the entrance of their village there is a long line drawn in the sand, made by the strangers when entering it; when, on their departure, they cross this line, each man scratches a transverse line across it with his foot or stick. It appears that before the arrival of the foreigners in the country epidemic diseases were unknown; when the first Malela invaders arrived the inhabitants were attacked by a malady which appears, from the accounts given, to have exhibited the symptoms similar to those of cerebro-spinal meningitis. The mortality was heavy, but those individuals who survived for eleven days after the first attack were always cured. Then the white man came and the epidemic disappeared, to be replaced, however, by sleeping sickness. It is believed that there exist still among the Malela some wizards who have the power of letting loose the former epidemic, and those foreigners who do not put their mark on the line contract the disease and die.

There are very considerable differences in the treatment of the dead. The Sungu wash the corpse carefully, adorn it with clothes, and ornament its head with parrot feathers. After lying in state for three or four days it is buried in a sitting position, the legs straight, the forearms resting along the thighs with the fists clenched, in what the natives describe as a "nice place," though occasionally, at the wish of the deceased, in his hut. The grave is marked with a small mound, on which is erected a miniature hut, where food must be deposited daily by a relative, who, should he neglect this duty, will be haunted by the dead man in his dreams. If he does not mend his ways his wife and cattle will become sterile and his crops will fail. The deceased is bewailed by the whole village for a day, by near relatives for two, and by his nearest family for three. Widows and widowers must abstain from any particular food of which they may have partaken in the company of the deceased during the last days of his or her life. For example, if a husband and wife have eaten millet together and one died, the survivor would be obliged to confine himself to manioc as his staple food. This tabu is broken by the brother of the deceased, who gives a present to the mourner. At present widows paint the face

and body with white clay, but in former times they simply abstained from washing.

A dead Olemba is suspended by a rope in a shed and smoked for three or four months ; at the end of this period the body is cut down by the mother or the sister and buried resting on the elbows and knees, with the head turned towards the west. No mound is raised on the grave, and goats, fowls, etc., are sacrificed on it. All huts belonging to the deceased or his wives are burnt. The Olemba men smear their abdomens with soot as a sign of mourning, the women their cheeks.

Among the northern Batetela the dead are not smoked, but are simply buried in a reclining position in or near the village, and a hut is erected over the grave. These grave huts are rectangular with ridged roofs, and the height of their walls is about eight inches, that of the roof about fifteen ; the walls are of trellis work with open squares of about three inches. The doorway of the house in which the deceased lived is closed with strings and the building is allowed to fall into ruins.

The Sungu, when meeting or parting, now shake hands, but in former times they pressed their lips together, as the northern Batetela do to this day ; the Olemba press noses.

The diet of the various Batetela has been greatly affected by their surroundings : the Olemba both use millet and manioc, but while the Sungu make the former their staple food, and only use the latter when millet is unobtainable, the Olemba consider millet rather a luxury and use mostly manioc, which grows better in the forest country. The northern Batetela have adopted the plantain as their main source for producing the flour for their bread, thus indulging in the typical diet of the forest dwellers. The Okale alone seem to ignore the art of preserving meat by smoking, consequently they will eat it in an almost putrid state so as to waste none. Crows are tabu among the Sungu and only wizards among them will eat hawks. Among the northern Batetela any man past the age of begetting children is allowed to eat these birds. The Sungu believe that a man who eats otters will become repugnant to women. Certain antelopes are tabu to Sungu chiefs, and indulgence in their meat will provoke a skin disease from which ordinary mortals are immune. The northern Batetela chiefs are debarred from eating the flesh of the leopard, because he is a chief himself. None of the northern Batetela may eat the ground-hornbill, *kubaka*, nor the dog, because the latter is a member of the family. Among all the sections women have to abstain from human flesh ; besides, there are the common restrictions of various animals. The Sungu alone manufacture oil from the ground-nut ; geophagy, practised by the Sungu and Olemba occasionally, is unknown among the northern Batetela. Cooking, always the task of women, is done by all Batetela in pots, except by the Vungi, who have adopted the Bankutu method of leaf cauldrons. They fill a pot with water and place it on the fire, and in the mouth of the pot is placed a large bundle of manioc-meal wrapped in leaves and supported by sticks which prevent it from

coming into actual contact with the water ; the steam from the pot cooks the meal. The Sungu cook in the hut, the other tribes on the verandah. Customs relative to meals vary. Among the Sungu, the food is first served to the husband and his friends, the children eat next and the wife last. Since the arrival of the Arabs the hands are usually washed before eating. Among the Olemba meals taken in the daytime are eaten outside the hut, the evening repast inside ; the women eat with the men and the host helps himself first. Among the northern Batetela the men eat first, and should they finish all the provisions which have been prepared, the woman will cook again for herself, but will offer a first taste of the new supply to her husband as a matter of form.

If one believes their own statements, the Batetela were ignorant of the art of producing fire before they came to their new home. The Sungu maintain that they have learned it from the Basongo Meno ; the Olemba to this day import their fire-sticks from the Bahamba. Both tribes aver that in former times perpetual fires were kept in all the villages. The northern Batetela employ the stick-and-groove method, which is that of some inhabitants on the banks of the Lomami, the Tophoke. As it is simply impossible to believe that as late as one or two centuries ago this tribe ignored the art of producing fire, we can only conclude that in their original home all the Batetela did use this, for Africa, exceptional method, and have only adopted the common one when they came into contact with their present neighbours. A confusion of ideas, the identification of an art with a new method, leads them now to believe in the humiliating error that they are indebted to their despised neighbours for this knowledge.

Hemp smoking has been introduced by the Arabs and is combated by the Belgians : we consequently find that among the Sungu, who first adopted it and spread it among the other Batetela, it has nearly disappeared, while the forest tribes, whither the white man's influence has only lately penetrated, still practise it on a considerable scale.

Hunting is naturally much affected by the nature of the country where it is practised. The Sungu live in grassy plains and each village has its hunting grounds strictly defined, though game, once wounded, may be pursued beyond their own territory. The game is driven by dogs towards the hunters, and firing of the bush is also resorted to. The northern Batetela construct hedges in the forest and drive the game into traps ; others pursue their prey single-handed, by preference an animal accompanied by its young. Springs constructed by means of a bent tree are also used for large animals.

Among the Sungu all work connected with agriculture is performed by women ; this is not so among the forest-dwelling northern Batetela, where the superior strength and skill of the men is necessary to remove the trees. It is difficult to explain how it is that a primitive form of hoe, with a wooden blade, was freely found among the Sungu, while it was not even known among the more primitive

northern Batetela. It is as curious as the fact that the Sungu have only recently introduced spears with iron blades (the common pattern is a straight branch sharpened at one end), while the Olemba and northern Batetela have had them in common use as far as they can remember. Another remarkable phenomenon is that though the Batetela come from a country where the native drink is "pombe" beer, and live now among people who freely indulge in palm wine, produced both from the elais and the raphia, yet they use no other beverage but water, and are ignorant of intoxicants. Clubs, now only worn just for the sake of carrying something, are only found among the northern Batetela.

Painting the body for the purpose of ornament is not practised by the Sungu, but further north it was once a universal custom to adorn the body with red camwood dust. This habit has now completely disappeared among the Olemba, though it is still preserved among the northern Batetela. The Sungu men do not cicatrize themselves; among the Olemba the fashion is on the wane, but the northern Batetela men still practise this method of adornment. The Olemba preserve occasionally, however, the tribal mark, which consists of a series of very broad scars on the shoulder. Among the Sungu women the cicatrization is very elaborate, and extends, roughly speaking, from the neck to the knee. The design is composed of a large number of scars of two varieties; of these the most obvious stand out in relief, the rest form slight depressions in the skin, and in certain lights are practically invisible. This fact, in connection with the elaborate nature of the designs, rendered the work of recording the tattoo patterns exceedingly laborious, but the late Mr. Hardy, who accompanied the expedition to the Batetela country, succeeded in copying not only the general patterns, but in reproducing faithfully the exact number of scars which composed them. The Batetela seem to have borrowed to some extent the designs of their cicatrization from the Baluba, and the idea of executing them in dots from the Tophoke, though, as stated above, instead of raising scars they produce depressions. This method, as far as is known, is only practised by them, though the curvilinear lines the Bena Lulua score on their faces (see *Man*, 1913, 2) are to some extent of the same character.

The cicatrization of women of the northern tribes is less elaborate. The method of tattooing with a vegetable decoction which first causes inflammation, then turns white and finally dead black, is of Arab introduction.

Tooth deformation is practised among all the Batetela tribes: the Sungu and Olemba extract the two middle incisors in the upper jaw, and the operation is performed upon boys and girls at the age of puberty. The northern Batetela do not extract any teeth, but file all incisors in both jaws in a peculiar way.

Though now replaced by all sorts of fancy patterns, the traditional hairdress of the Sungu consisted of a big bunch on the forepart of the head, twisted into tresses and ornamented with charms; women wore it in a kind of diadem.

The women now shave their heads completely. Olemba men shave the base of their skull on the back, but allow the hair to grow freely on the crown and forehead; the northern Batetela arrange it in the shape of a halo. The Sungu, probably under Arab influence, often let beard and moustaches grow; the Olemba and northern Batetela shave off the latter. All Batetela remove the body hair, women by plucking, men by shaving; the Olemba, moreover, shave the eyebrows and pull out the eyelashes. Sungu and Olemba of both sexes pierce their earlobes, the Sungu women the septum, the Olemba women one nostril; the northern Batetela not only do not practise either of these piercings, but consider them as shameful, as a sign that the owner was or had been a "*fumbe na Assambala*," a slave of the Arabs. This proves practically that the custom was of Arab introduction; as a matter of fact the holes made by men in the helix are said to have been made to provide receptacles for gun-caps.

No head or foot coverings are found among the Olemba and northern Batetela, but the Sungu possess both. Tradition among the latter avers that it was the custom for all Batetela to fasten the skin of a mongoose to their hair by means of a pin, so that the tail hung down the back, but this custom has become obsolete for a long time. A piece of cloth passed round the head in imitation of a turban, a straw hat in imitation of the white man's headgear, such are the modern substitutes. The Sungu wear in muddy weather sandals of a distinctly Arab pattern, they claim these as indigenous, but the fact that the other tribes never use them confirms their foreign origin.

As for dress, few native customs have been preserved by the Malela; anybody who can afford it wears the Arab Tamba-tamba and an imitation turban: those who cannot do so, dress according to their fancy. The Sungu scarcely ever use the native-made cloth, but dress in Manchester cotton-stuff. According to the wearer's wealth, two to ten yards of it are passed round the hips and tied. But one tribal characteristic has been preserved—over the dress, hanging over the buttocks, the skin of a cat or of a small civet is worn; this skin is ornamented with little bells, teeth, charms, etc. I have seen Batetela in complete European outfit wear this skin over their garments, and soldiers of this tribe, when going to war, always did so if their officer had intelligence enough to allow them. Farther north, European cloth becomes rarer, and it completely disappears among the northern Batetela. The Olemba wear loin cloth of palm fibre. The Omona pass a strip of palm fibre cloth about two feet long by seven inches wide between their legs and support it before and behind by the girdle; the Vungi dress exclusively in antelope or similar skins. The Alanga ornament their cloth with inwoven patterns, an art acquired probably from the Akela.

The houses of the Sungu are of what is accepted to be the East African type: the circular base is constructed of wooden posts, covered with grass, and the thatched roof is conical. This type is, however, now gradually replaced by mud

buildings of European pattern. The Olemba huts are similar, but the inner part of the walls is covered with strips of bark. This use of bark is characteristic of the forest dwellers. Among the Vungi this becomes more extensive; the huts consist of a framework of posts, inside which are fastened strips of bark, usually horizontally, sometimes vertically. The houses themselves are of the West African rectangular pattern with a ridged roof, which is extended at one end to form a verandah in which the food is cooked. The huts of the Okale are similar in type, but they are built in series, with a common verandah, *i.e.* two huts are built with a single continuous roof, but with a space between their respective walls. The walls in some cases resemble those of the Vungi huts; in other cases they consist of palm leaves fastened to a diagonal lattice of palm-leaf ribs, or of palm-leaf ribs alone arranged vertically and in close contact. The roofs are made of leaves held down by poles at right angles to, and at either side of, the ridge; the threshold is level with the ground and the doorway is furnished with a door suspended by a cord. The leaf roof is, of course, typical of forest dwellers. As may be expected, a similar kind of house is found among the northern Batetela. Their villages, like those of the Okale, are built in the forest, and an artificial clearing is made for them; the Vungi and the southern tribes prefer natural glens for theirs.

The Batetela are not river people, and navigation, as far as it is indigenous, is in a very primitive stage. The Olemba construct rafts composed of three logs lashed together with creepers; the centre log is slighter and shorter than those on either side of it. A fourth log placed transversely across the other three serves as a seat for the paddler. The paddle usually consists of a rectangular slab of bark, fixed by lashing into the split end of a stick. The Sungu use canoes purchased from their more advanced neighbours.

There is no essential difference in the leather and basket work of the various tribes, though the Sungu and Malela have improved the latter by learning from their neighbours. The same may be stated of weaving, but here the northern Batetela show a decided advance on their fellow tribesmen. They produce cloth with inwoven patterns in black; their method is unusual and merits a description at length. The warp is composed of undyed fibre and the pattern is marked out beforehand by means of thin lease-rods, which are inserted in the warp to serve as guides to the shuttle when the black fibres forming the pattern are inserted. The pattern is produced by floating the weft, but no trace of it is seen on the reverse side of the fabric for the reason explained below. In this type of weaving, where the weft is not continuous, it is impossible to manufacture a fabric of very close texture, and the production of a design by floating the weft over three or four elements of warp at intervals would tend to weaken the fabric. This difficulty is met by inserting, with each black weft-element, an undyed element. This undyed element does not follow the same path as the black element, *i.e.* is not floated at the same time, but combines with the warp elements to form a regular and unbroken plain chequer

stitch. The result is precisely the same as if a plain piece of cloth had first been woven, composed entirely of undyed fibre, and the black weft had been inserted later by means of a needle. Two different patterns are always found on each man's dress, a smaller in front and a larger behind. The fringes are made up over a piece of palm-leaf rib, in a manner similar to that in which bag-pipe fringes are prepared, so that the depth is uniform. The black dye is obtained from swamp earth.

All the Batetela practise metallurgy: iron and copper are used, but only the former metal is produced at home. The method of smelting differs in the various tribes. The Sungu find the ore, which they call *Otendo*, in the ground, at a depth of 8 to 10 feet, the smithy is an open shed, and here the ore is mixed with charcoal, heated for several days, and beaten continually. Several shifts of men engage in the work, so that it may not be interrupted, and several pairs of bellows are used. This industry is rapidly disappearing, owing to the cheapness of European goods. The smelting furnace of the Olemba, who call iron ore *Boko*, is circular, and the ore is put at the bottom. Over it is spread a layer of wood, and over this a layer of charcoal. Bellows are employed, and the furnace is heated for one day and then allowed to cool for two. Finally the metal is cut up into the Ikunga currency. The northern Batetela smithy is more elaborate. It consists of a shed about 20 feet long, shaped like half a boat turned upside down and open at either end, the broader entrance being about 8 feet wide. At this end the floor is sunk about 2 feet 6 inches for the distance of half the length of the shed. The actual furnace consists of a circular shaft sunk at the fore end of that portion of the floor which is left untouched, and forms, as it were, a platform extending half the length of the hut. The bottom of the furnace is on a level with the sunk portion of the floor, and a hole is made at the base of the "platform" which communicates with the shaft. Into this hole the nozzle of the bellows is built with clay and the furnace is half filled with charcoal and the ore placed on the top. This method of smelting may have been acquired from the Akela, who obtain their metal in a similar way. All the Batetela use bellows of the West African "pot-pattern."

The Sungu construct suspension bridges of twined creepers over rivers. A kind of cable, about 9 inches in diameter, is fastened by means of creeper lashings to a tree on each bank; this is the footway. A hand-rope of smaller diameter is slung above it on either side, and is connected with it by means of a network of creeper, which would seem to render a fall impossible. As none of the other Batetela make similar bridges, it is probable that the Sungu have acquired this art from foreigners.

The bows of the Batetela are of the East African pattern, circular in section and tapering towards either end. They have, however, narrow servings of palm fibre to prevent the slipping of the cane bow-string. Among the Olemba and the northern Batetela this serving is surmounted by a knob of palm fibre woven "Turk's-head" fashion. This and the cane string belong to West African culture. In a Bahamba toy-bow the ends were furnished with a series of notches; the loop at the end of

the string was caught in one of these, and the string then passed over a notch cut in the end of the bow. Arrows exhibit considerable variety. The simplest consists of a plain slip of palm-rib with splinter-barbs at the point, and a feather inserted in a split at the other end; many are not nocked. This type is practically the only one found among the Sungu, and in some cases they are not feathered. The same type is found among the Olemba and the Batetela of the Lukenye, and among the former are usually not feathered. A second type consists of a palm-rib shaft, with a tanged wooden point splinter-barbed. The shaft is feathered with a leaf inserted in a split, and the nock is bound to prevent splitting; the nocks are usually deep. This type is found among the Olemba (often without feathers), the Bahamba and Vungi, as well as the Batetela of the Lukenye. Among the Vungi the points are sometimes double and triple. Socketed iron heads with irregular lozenge-shaped blades are found among the Olemba and northern Batetela. Among the Olemba the shafts are furnished with four feathers attached spirally; the shafts are of wood, and the blades are either ogee or flat-lozenge in section. Among the Omona and Vungi three feathers arranged vertically are found; the nocks are deep and well-bound, and the blades are usually ogee. Among the Bahamba both patterns are found, and also a third in which two feathers are bound tangentially to the shaft. Socketed iron heads furnished with a pair of bilateral barbs occur among the Olemba, Alanga, Bahamba, and Vungi. Among the Bahamba one specimen with a barbed shank was collected. The original Batetela spear was made of a piece of wood, sharpened at the end, but all the tribes have now adopted spears with iron blades, which resemble those used by their nearest neighbours. The Batetela shields, made of palm-ribs, used to be rectangular and V-shaped. Among the Sungu they have become obsolete, and in the north they have given place to arc-shaped ones.

Finally it must be mentioned that syphilis was unknown among the Batetela till introduced by the Arabs, and that sleeping-sickness reached the country within recent times only, from the west.

The collected facts thus show that the various branches of the Batetela have altered in their new environment to such an extent that they now have very little in common among themselves. They have borrowed from the west and from the north, from the dwellers of the grass-land and the inhabitants of the forest. We find the northern branches with a culture characteristic of the forest, the southern with such a one as is typical of the inhabitants of grassy plains. Yet, by deducting that which is obviously borrowed, and summarizing that which all, or at any rate the majority, have in common, we may conclude what the Batetela were like in their ancestral home.

They came from the east, originally much farther east than the shores of the Lomami, a tribe of sturdy warriors. They had a tribal god as well as moon worship, and a common chief. The inheritance was from brother to brother; brothers failing, the son succeeded. The chief was assisted by elders, and governed through a "vizier." The laws were stern: offenders were sold to another village, and there they were

killed and eaten. In case of doubt the poison ordeal was employed to establish guilt or innocence. Land was vested in the chief for the benefit of the tribe. Women could not possess. The slaves they owned were all foreigners, and could not redeem themselves. Their currency consisted in shells and iron blades. The Batetela were exogamous as far as villages were concerned. Infant betrothal was not unknown. Polygyny on a moderate scale was common, prostitution condemned. It is more difficult to decide what their original mode of burial was : the dead were probably buried in a reclining position. Their staple food was millet ; the only fat used was palm-oil. Intoxicating drinks were unknown. Fire was produced at first by the twirling method, though when settled on the Lomami the stick-and-groove method was adopted from the Tophoke. The use of tobacco was known. Men and women shared in the labours of agriculture, and wooden hoes were in use. Wooden spears and clubs, iron knives and axes, with bows and wooden-headed arrows, were the arms of offence ; V-shaped rectangular shields, made of palm-leaf ribs and strengthened with wood, were used for defence. Both men and women scarred their bodies. The men arranged their hair in the shape of a halo, the women in that of a diadem. Neither ears nor noses were pierced. The men wore a small animal skin in front and behind, and another on their head. Women wore a fringe of grass. The houses were round, with a conical roof and made of grass. The art of navigation and of building bridges was not familiar to the Batetela. They wove cloth of raphia fibre, and made baskets of various materials. They knew how to smelt iron and how to work it.

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