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ANTHROPOLOGICAL NOTES ON THE BANGALA
OF THE UPPER CONGO RIVER.

(PART III.)

BY THE REV. JOHN H. WEEKS.

XLI. COVENANTS, OATHS, AND ORDEALS.

Covenants.—A great and constantly recurring quarrel between families and towns of equal strength is settled by the important persons on each side entering into a covenant of blood-brotherhood. The mode of procedure is as follows :—A *Molekaleku* or go-between is appointed and approved by both parties. As a rule he is an outsider of importance who has the *entrée* to the villages concerned. He selects an island or some other convenient spot as a neutral meeting place for the contracting parties, and he is pledged that the meeting shall take place without a renewal of hostilities by either party. This *Molekaleku* also arranges the terms of peace, *i.e.*, whether captives are to be retained or given up, and also whether goods, etc., taken should be returned or not. All the preliminaries having been settled the parties meet at the place and time appointed; and then a stick called *ndeko* is procured and carefully scraped, and these scrapings are mixed with salt. The contracting parties clasp each other's right hand with the *ndeko* between the palms; then some incisions are made on the arms and the mixture of *ndeko* scrapings and salt is rubbed on the cuts; each then puts his mouth to the incisions on the other's arm and sucks for a few moments, after which one of the contracting parties takes the *ndeko* stick and strikes the wrists and knees of the other, saying: "If ever I break this covenant may I be cursed by having my nose rot off." Then the other takes the *ndeko* stick, and performing the same ceremony calls down the same curse on himself should he ever break the covenant. These rites are accompanied by the drinking of much sugar-cane wine. The whole of this ceremony is called *Tena ndeko* = to cut the *ndeko* stick.

After making blood-brotherhood between the headmen of two towns there is a ceremony called *Bakia Lolelembe*, which is as follows: A *nganga* takes a palm frond, splits it and puts one-half of the split frond across the path between the two towns that have entered into the above contract of friendship. This is not only a sign that all past palavers are finished, but is also a fetish to punish anyone who breaks the treaty. It is firmly believed that the side that renews the quarrel will get the worst of it by wounds and death.

Blood-brotherhood is also practised when two persons are always quarrelling and neither is strong enough to gain an advantage over the other ; so to establish good feeling between them their friends persuade them to *Tena ndeko*.

As already stated a disease (probably lupus) of the nose is the punishment for faithlessness in observing the oath of blood-brotherhood ; but for breaking a simple oath or promise there is no retribution, but public opinion condemns such double dealings, and one who is noted for falseness will have his name put into an impromptu song at the village dances—this is much feared and has a deterrent effect.

Tena ndanga = to cut a token. This is done by two ordinary combatants, or disputants. A piece of stick, tin, or anything handy is cut and each takes a part as a token that all matters of dispute are finished between them, and he who again starts one of the old quarrels calls down a curse upon himself.

This *tena ndanga* is also used by the party who loses a case. He gives the cut token as an earnest of payment of the fine imposed by those who judged the case.

Oaths were very freely used by the Boloki in their conversation, and such liars were they that they felt it necessary to back their statements with *ndai* = I swear it. The commonest form of oath was *Tena Nkingu* = cut my throat, and this was always accompanied by the speaker wetting his finger and drawing it across his throat *Nta Mama*=(by my mother), and *Nta Tata* (by my father) were very strong oaths and were felt to be binding on the user of them, otherwise disaster would follow if the statement to which they were attached was not true, or the promise which they strengthened was not fulfilled. *Bwele unko Mama* = (true certainly by my mother), and *Bwele unko Tata* = (true certainly by my father), are oaths not regarded as being so strong as the other two, but inferred that the speaker pledged himself that his words were true, otherwise his mother, father, or relative would suffer. *Ngambu* was a word used in calling on the "ordeal" to work and cause your fall if guilty, or on the fetish to work you harm if you are guilty of breaking its laws, or on spears and knives to wound and kill you if you have not right on your side. I heard this word used on many and various occasions and it was generally equivalent to "let me be accursed," if I have done this wrong.

There is nothing resembling an oath administered to witnesses, and there is no means of punishing a false witness, hence witnesses are rarely called upon to give evidence in a case, for no one on the opposite side, and no judge would accept their statements. In ordinary cases the judges must decide the palaver on their own knowledge of the affair, for they are fully in touch with all local matters, and only local cases are laid before them. In complicated cases they resort to the ordeals, which are as follows :—1. *Nka* (Lower Congo *Nkasa*) which among the Boloki is the outer reddish skin of the rootlet of a certain tree carefully scraped off. The mode of administering is the following (extract from *Folklore*, Vol. XIX, pp. 94 to 97) :—

VI. A few days ago¹ I had the opportunity of seeing a rather complicated

¹ Written in 1894.

discussion and cross-accusation settled to the satisfaction of all the natives present by the parties concerned drinking, or rather eating, the ordeal.

The trial took place on neutral ground, *i.e.*, in a section of the town midway between the sections in which lived the parties concerned. The court house was a wide-spreading wild fig-tree that cast a shade over the whole gathered crowd, which formed an oblong figure. The plaintiff stood at one end with his supporters, the defendant at the other with his, and the two sides were occupied by neutrals and sympathisers. The case was as follows:—The plaintiff had two slaves who ran away and after some days he heard that these slaves had gone away in a canoe belonging to the defendant, so he accused the latter of aiding and abetting their escape, and wanted him to pay him for them. The defendant, on the other hand, wanted the plaintiff to pay him back a canoe or the price of it, as he said it had been stolen by the plaintiff's slaves. For three hours they discussed the matter and tried to arrange an amicable compromise. This, however, was impossible, as each wished to get the best of the bargain. From the nature of the case it was impossible to call witnesses, although many persons spoke on either side. At last it was decided that the parties should take the *nka* (ordeal drug). Each was so confident of the righteousness of his claims that he was willing and eager to eat a portion of the poisonous drug to support it. The plaintiff was a short, thick-set young man troubled with elephantiasis, and from that and his apparent nervousness he was greatly handicapped in the trial. The defendant was a tall, thin, wiry man about fifty years of age, who had, I think, often taken the *nka* before, and was inured to it.

The *nka* is the outer skin of the rootlets of a tree that grows up the Lulanga River—a tributary that enters the Congo River on the south some forty miles below the Monsembe district. It is very fluffy, and of a deep scarlet colour. Two *ngangas* prepared equal portions of the *nka*. There was about a dessert-spoonful in each portion. The accused had first choice, after which each doctor with the portion of *nka* in the palm of his hand took up his position by the side of his client, and at a given signal the portions of *nka* were simultaneously held to the mouth of the two opponents, and at the same moment they began to chew the drug. After chewing for a few moments each washed it down with gulps of sugar-cane wine.

After taking the ordeal, the men are allowed neither to sit down nor to lean against anything, nor even to touch anything with their hands. The *nka* given in the above quantity blurs the vision, distorting and enlarging all objects, makes the legs tremble, the head giddy, and gives a choking sensation in the throat and chest. In fact it gives all the symptoms of intoxication and a few more besides. The one who first becomes intoxicated and falls down is the loser, and the one who resists the effects of the drug and controls himself the longest is the winner.

About five minutes after they had taken the ordeal, a native doctor stepped into the centre with a plantain stalk in his hand, about 2 feet 6 inches long and 3 inches to 4 inches diameter. He flourished this stalk about a little, and then placed it in front of the plaintiff for him to step over. He went forward boldly, stepped over it, and returned to his place. This was repeated six times

without his feet once touching the stalk. The defendant had then to go through the same test, which he did laughingly, throwing his arms and legs about in all directions. This was done occasionally for the next thirty minutes, and the plaintiff (the accuser) began to show signs of intoxication. His steps faltered, his eyes brightened and glared, and it was with difficulty that he raised his feet over the stalk. Then the "doctor" began to mock him, pretending to put the stalk close to his feet and tantalizingly drawing it back. Forty minutes after taking the *nka* the climax came. The "doctor" threw the stalk to the defendant (the accused), who caught it in his hands and carried it to the centre, where firmly fixing his feet on the ground, he stooped forward and placed the stalk with both his hands in a straight line, then raising himself he went back to his place. The plaintiff then went to pick it up, but no sooner did he lean forward than a spasm of pain seized him, and he would have fallen had not a man, who for the last twenty minutes had followed him closely, caught him in his arms and quickly carried him to his house.

No sooner did the crowd of neutrals see the fall of one of the opponents than with a bound they jumped to their feet; and with spears and knives raised in the air they danced, shouted, and sang around the winner. Some rubbed dirt, others ashes, and others red-camwood powder on the fellow's face—a sign that he had won the case. They then hoisted him on the back of a friend and carried him home. He distributed four hundred brass rods among the crowd of his admirers, who said they had helped him to win his cause. He sat outside his hut all the rest of the day with his face smeared, so that all could see he had won, and could congratulate him. The plaintiff had to pay him two slaves and a canoe as damages.

The next day both accused and accuser were walking about the town, and seemed none the worse for drinking so powerful and dangerous a narcotic. They apparently had no enmity towards each other, but chatted freely and laughingly over the events of the previous day.

When one remembers the amount of corruption and bribery among these people; that the most familiar words on their lips are "lie," "liar," and that the most frequent question is, "Is it true?" and the answer, "It is true or cut my throat,"—the wonder is that they can settle a palaver in any way.

To drink the ordeal and be either right or wrong according to its action settles the affair once for all, ends all possible deadly feuds and bloodshed, and saves many a man from what is worse than death, viz., an ever-present anxious fear of what his enemy or enemies may do to him. If a man accuses another of giving him a disease or of causing the death of his wife by witchcraft, how can the accused disprove such a charge? Not by talking, no matter how much he may swear that he is innocent. If he calls the chiefs and headmen together he knows the verdict will be given in favour of the one who pays the most; if he runs away he will soon be captured by some other town and probably sold to furnish a cannibal feast; if he runs to a friendly town he will lose caste, he will be treated with contempt as a coward, and his life be rendered miserable. So he boldly steps forth and takes the *nka* and the affair is settled. Is the ordeal in his favour? Then he claims and gets heavy

damages. Does the ordeal go against him? Then he pays the damages, if wealthy enough; or, if poor, sells himself; or, if a slave, his master pays for him. But whatever be the result, that palaver is decided once for all.

No stigma attaches to a man who is found guilty, for "one can have witchcraft without knowing it." Moreover, no one lightly brings a charge of witchcraft against another, for, if the ordeal test goes against the accuser, the damages are so very heavy as to deter frivolous accusations.

2. *Epomi*. 3. *Mokungu* are both trees. The juice from the bark of these trees is pressed out and dropped into the eye of the accused, and if the sight is destroyed the accused is guilty. The *epomi* juice is more powerful than the *mokungu*. The *nka* and *epomi* are for witchcraft and serious charges of theft and adultery, and the *mokungu* is used only in more trivial charges. In each case the accused can refuse to submit to the ordeal unless the accuser takes it with him, hence the two latter are rarely employed, but the *nka* is frequently employed by the accused and the accuser. When a *nganga* accuses a man of being a witch, the accused cannot demand that the *nganga* should take the ordeal with him.

4. Another test is as follows: Three boys are accused of thieving, which charge they indignantly repudiate; three young plantains are cut—one to represent each boy—and the juice of the *mokungu* is pressed into the centre of each plantain stump left in the ground. Now when a plantain is cut it will in a few hours send up from its centre the beginnings of a fresh growth, but if one of the three plantain stumps does not begin to sprout afresh by the next morning the lad represented by that plantain is the guilty one, if two do not sprout then there are two thieves, and if neither sprout then all three lads are regarded as guilty. On the other hand if all three sprout they are proved to be innocent of the accusation. The *mokungu* juice destroys the eye, so in mercy the "eyes" of the plantain are used as a substitute for the eyes of the lad, and it is probable that the juice when well pressed in retards the sprouting of the plantain.

5. *Lingola* is a word denoting the giving of the *nka* to a medium (*moyengwa*), and after a certain time, when the ordeal begins to work, the name of a man who is supposed to be the witch is called out, and if the medium stumbles over the plantain stalk put in his path, while this name is "on the card," the owner of that name is guilty; but if the medium does not stumble the man is innocent, and another name is called and the process is repeated until the witch is found or the effects of the drug have passed away from the medium.

6. *Mai ma mungunga* = water of the bell. This is used by a witch-doctor called *Nganga ya mungunga*. A person is very ill and charges his family with bewitching him. They deny the accusation, and he thereupon challenges them to drink the water dipped in the *nganga's* bell, which will not hurt them if they are innocent, but will kill them if they are guilty of the charge. Anyone who refuses to drink from the bell is regarded as guilty.

By frequently drinking the *nka* one becomes immune from its effects, and I have noticed that old people, who had taken it many times, never fell intoxicated.

by it, but young people fell quickly, from its effects on their system. I have no doubt that the administrators of the various ordeals were open to bribery and other influences, and could and would dilute the ordeal for one in whom they were interested.

By the ceremony of *tena ndeko* the contracting parties did not become blood brothers in the ordinary sense, but simply declared peace and a wiping out of all old palavers up to date. I have known the blood-brothers fight over new quarrels that arose later.

XLII. TABU.

The ramifications of tabu are to be found in every part of the life and thought of the Boloki native. They touch every kind of food, every place, and every action. There is not a single article of food that is not tabu to some one, there is not a place that has not been tabued at some time or the other, and there is not a possible action that has not been or is not affected by tabu. The tabus are many and various, but most of them will fall under the following heads :—

1. The totem tabu or *mokumbu*. This is not so evident to the casual observer among the Boloki people as it is in other parts of the world. One family that I knew could not eat a certain snake, and another could not eat fowls. If the men of these families killed or ate their totems they would become thin and weak, and the women would not only become thin but sterile, and a pregnant woman who broke the totem tabu would be delivered of a weak child who would remain thin and undersized all his days. To another family the *mwenge* (tree with small edible fruit) was a totem. The tree could not be cut down, nor the fruit eaten, and if by any mistake a woman of this family burnt it while pregnant she had carefully to save the ashes (*i.e.*, instead of throwing them away she had to put them in a special place), or her child would be born thin and weakly. After puberty the youths of the family could not eat the *mwenge* fruit. Another family had the *nkungu* (plant with large red leaves) as a totem. When a woman of this family became pregnant for the first time a *nkungu* was planted near the hearth (in the open air) and it was never destroyed, otherwise the child would be born weak, thin, and remain very small all its life. The healthy life of the children and the family was bound up with the healthiness and life of the totem as respected and preserved by the family. The killing of a fowl by a member of a snake family did not affect the members of the fowl family, and so on in the different totems.

A woman brought her totem with her when she married, and observed her own totem and that of her husband. A child born to them took the totems of both parents until there was a council of both families, the paternal and maternal branches, and then it was generally arranged that the child should take its father's totem.

Connected with some of the totems there is a spirit called *boweya*, and this *boweya* is common to these totems and presides over the interests and health of all the members of the families that respect these particular totems. In such families there is a dance on the fifth day after confinement, when the ceremony of piercing

the ear takes place. On the fifth day the women of the village gather and rub camwood powder on themselves, decorate their body with leaves, and tie on sashes of *nkokolemba* (creeper with small leaves), and dance for a considerable time to the sound of drums, then the lobe of the right ear of the child is pierced if it is a boy, and the left ear if it is a girl—the left is always a token of inferiority. This ceremony takes place always during the morning, and is a sign to the *boweya* spirit that that child belongs to a family in whose totem he is specially interested. The pierced ear indicates to the spirit that the owner has a claim on its help and protection.

2. *Ngili* or permanent tabu. This is a tabu that is put on any kind of food, as, "You must not eat goat's flesh"; or an interdiction not to go to a certain place, as, "You must not go across the river to a particular island"; or a prohibition not to perform a certain action, as, "You must not drink native wine except through a reed, and never straight out of a vessel of any kind." This tabu must be carefully observed by the person under it as long as he lives or dire consequences will follow the breaking of it, such as a return of the sickness from which the person suffered when placed under the tabu, or a loss of property and life, or the sickness and death of a child. Every kind of food is *ngili* to some one, and it was no uncommon sound to hear a person going through a town crying out: "Exchange for a piece of antelope." That meant that some one had come into possession of a piece of antelope to whom that animal was *ngili*, so he was trying to exchange it for fish or something else that was not *ngili* to him, with some one to whom antelope was not *ngili*. There was, whether through tabu or not, a very strong aversion to milk and raw eggs. To drink milk or eat a raw egg rendered the person unclean for several days, and he was not allowed to eat with his family until the uncleanness or *bosoto* had passed away. They could and did eat well-cooked eggs no matter how savoury through age they might be at the time.

Very frequently this *ngili* becomes an inherited tabu. A man has, say, elephantiasis, and the medicine-man says he is not to eat either elephant or hippopotamus meat, and he will pass this *ngili* on to his sons, who will carefully observe it lest their legs become swollen like an elephant's.

3. *Mungilu* or temporary tabu. The *mungilu* covers a large number of different circumstances that call for a tabu, according to the views of life taken by the native. During pregnancy a woman is placed under a tabu, generally that she is not to eat a certain kind of food—not the same article of food to every woman—and this she observes until the *nganga* removes it either on the birth of the child, or when it is weaned, or the first time it has its hair cut. Some pregnant women were told not to throw the ashes of their fires away until their child reached the age of 12 or 14. The ashes were always carefully gathered into a heap and put into a special place. These, however, belonged to families who had trees or shrubs for totems, and for fear of scattering the ashes of their totem trees, inadvertently burnt, they had to put all the ashes of their fires in a special place, honouring all ashes to avert being disrespectful to the ash of their totem tree.

Men engaged in making fishing and hunting traps were under a tabu not to have sexual intercourse until they had been successful in catching something and eating it. (*See* notes on fishing and hunting in *J.R.A.I.*, xxxix, p. 459.) Those undergoing the rites of circumcision must not eat either the heads or tails of fish until they are quite healed.

Sometimes a man in a rage will put himself under a tabu. A wife by her conduct has irritated him beyond endurance, and at last he strikes on the ground with a stick (*bete mobondo*) and says: "May I be cursed if ever I eat food cooked by you." He is now under a *mungilu* not to eat food from that woman's hands. This as a rule brings the woman to her senses, and after a time she prevails on her husband to remove the tabu. Men and women, to exhibit sympathy with their sick parents or near relatives, will make a vow saying, "I will not eat fowls," or, "I will not go to *Lulanga* until my father is better." Should the said father die then the person who made the self-imposed *mungilu* must not eat any more fowls, or must never go to *Lulanga*.

Again, a *nganga* may say that on account of a certain sickness the patient is not to eat such and such food, and the food he may eat must be prepared in a particular way. This is called *Kila mungilu* = to prohibit, tabu, etc. However, when the man is better a feast is made (*lamba epunza*) and then all kinds of food are prepared in the ordinary way, including the interdicted articles, and the patient who was under the *mungilu* partakes of them, and this is *kilola mungilu* = to reverse, or remove the prohibitions.

There is a custom that almost amounts to a tabu. A man who has killed another in a fight must not reply to a greeting until he has received a *Bonkani* = a congratulatory present for his bravery, etc., in the fight. At a drinking bout others may not receive their bumpers of sugar-cane wine until after the brave warrior has received his share of the drink.

A person may therefore be under four tabus, viz., 1. The totem tabu. 2. The *ngili* tabu because he has had a serious illness and desires to avoid a relapse. 3. The inherited tabu to avoid a complaint from which his father suffered; and 4. The *Mungilu* tabu.

A woman never had sexual relations with her husband from about three months before confinement until the child was weaned, *i.e.*, from twelve to eighteen months. It was believed that if this prohibition were not observed the child would sicken and die. Men never ate with women, as it was considered beneath their dignity to do so, and it was regarded as very immodest for women to eat in the presence of men. They always took their share of the food round the corner of a house out of sight of the men folk.

Bokilo means mother —, daughter —, brother —, father-in-law, sisters of mother-in-law, brothers of father-in-law, wives of wife's brother, and in fact any relation-in-law. *Bokilo* is a noun derived from *kila* = to prohibit, tabu, etc., and indicates that all bearing the relationship of *Bokilo* can have no intimate relationship with one another. It is highly probable that at one time they were

not allowed to speak to each other. It is certainly regarded now as incest for any persons bearing the relationship of *Bokilo* to cohabit with one another. A son-in-law may not look at a mother-in-law, and a daughter-in-law must not look at a father-in-law. When absolutely necessary they may sit a little apart with their backs to each other and talk. Some have told me that this is to guard against all possibility of them coming together, "For a person you never look at you never desire." Others have said: "Well, don't you see, my wife came from her womb." I am strongly inclined to think that the former is the real reason. Sicknesses, misfortunes, etc., are regarded either as the result of bewitchment or through breaking knowingly or unknowingly some tabu.

The names of the dead are freely mentioned a few weeks after death, and such names are even passed on to children if there is any likeness of the child to the deceased, and some natives have a misty idea of the possibility of the re-birth of the deceased in the child who bears his likeness.

XLIII. RELIGION.

Mongoli is the name given to a disembodied spirit, and *Elimo* is the name of the embodied spirit; but directly the *Elimo* leaves the body it becomes a *mongoli*, and in the following paragraphs this distinction must be borne in mind. Immediately after burial the *mongoli* visits *longa*,¹ the nether regions, and after an indefinite period it returns above ground, and if it is the spirit of a man whose family originally came from the bush, then the *mongoli* haunts the forests, the bush, and the farms; but if it belongs to a member of a riverine tribe then the spirit haunts the river, creeks, islands, etc. The bush folk are buried in mats; but the riverine people are buried in coffins made of old canoes. Is it because their spirits go to live in the water? The Boloki folk are a riverine tribe and are proud of it, and scorned those who trace their origin to the "bush." These *mingoli* (plural) look after the *liboma* (see section on reproduction) to keep them supplied with children, and at times they take upon themselves various forms, as that of a crocodile, hippopotamus, etc.—the latter being the more common form, and as such it visits the town and eats and drinks what has been placed ready by its family. Sometimes these *mingoli* can be heard as spirits walking through the forests, the noise they make is called *bie-bie*, and at times they visit the towns and cause a rustling in the grass roofs as though "searching for a place through which to drive their spears." The land and water are full of *mingoli*, hence the timorous folk are afraid to travel at night. Certain *nganga* can see these *mingoli*, and, if they are mischievous, they pretend to capture them and confine them in saucepans and calabashes. Men also become the mediums for these *mingoli* to make communications to the living, generally to the advantage of the medium.

These *mingoli* sometimes take possession of a hippopotamus, and visit the towns on the river's bank, and when that occurs the family to whom the *mongoli* is supposed

¹ In Sec. XL of a previous article in the *Journal*, vol. xxxix, p. 449, *Longo* should be *Longa*.

to belong puts a small saucepan of sugar-cane wine and a little food for its refreshment on its nightly visits ; and as the food and wine are both gone in the morning (there are plenty of dogs about), the natives assure me that the *mongoli* in the animal has partaken of them. On one occasion a hippopotamus came off our beach for a few nights. I could only hear it as it was too dark to see it, but on the chance of hitting it fatally I fired in the direction of the sound. I fired on two successive nights, and during the next day some natives came and told me that that particular hippopotamus was possessed by the *mongoli* of a member of such and such a family, and that the said *mongoli* had sent a message to the head of the family telling him that he was to inform me that I should only waste my bullets, as it was impossible to kill a spirit-possessed hippopotamus, and asking him to request me not to fire again, as he (the hippopotamus) only wanted peaceably to visit the town for his offering of sugar-cane wine and food. I told them I would have another shot or two, but they assured me that I should not hit it. They did not doubt my marksmanship, as they had seen me bring down many birds on the wing, and I scarcely ever went to shoot monkeys and guinea fowls without bringing one or more back with me. They did not doubt my skill with the gun, but they doubted the power of a bullet to kill a spirit-possessed animal. The hippopotamus never came again, consequently I had no further opportunity of testing the point at issue.

These *mingoli* are supposed to speak sometimes through the members of their own family, not always in the language of the present day, but in the archaic language known only to the old people. When the medium was a youngish man, that is, one not familiar with the ancient language, he would then make his statements in the ordinary lingo, but with sufficient of the archaic to lend mystery to the communication. The medium worked himself into a frenzy ; he would shout, tremble all over, his muscles quivered, his body undulated, perspiration broke out on his forehead, and foam gathered about his mouth, and his eyes rolled. When thoroughly under the spell of the spirit he gave utterance to oracles which were implicitly believed by the people. The following case came under my own observation :—

Bololi, the headman of his family, died and was buried in the usual way. Some time after his younger brother, Mangumbe, became subject to frenzies, during which his brother Bololi spoke his oracles through him. Mangumbe admired and coveted the wives of a certain man in his town, and he tried to buy them, and failing that to exchange others for them, but their husband refused all offers. One day Mangumbe worked himself into a frenzy, and when he was supposed to be under the sway of his brother's *mongoli*, he said : That a certain man (giving the name of the man whose wives he coveted) must get rid of his wives or they would encompass his death by a serious and fatal illness. Then Mangumbe went to a friend and told him to treat with the husband for the wives, and the husband, thoroughly afraid now of his wives, was quite willing to sell them at a cheaper price than Mangumbe had previously offered for them. By this cunning trick he became the owner of the women he wanted. Once Mangumbe wanted to buy my

armchair. I told him the price as a bit of information, as I had no intention of selling the chair. He doubted my word. I told him he held communication with his brother's spirit, and if he wanted to know the price of things in England he had better tell his brother's spirit to go there, learn all it could, and come back and tell him the prices of various articles. Mangumbe shook his head sadly, and said:—"His spirit cannot travel so far, it keeps just around this district only."

The people firmly believed that Mangumbe held counsel with his brother's *mongoli*, and when he acted as a medium they were quite willing to believe all he said. Ordinarily he was little respected by the people; he was of mean appearance, and of petty, shabby ways, and had no command over even his own people, and yet when acting as a medium in a *séance*, he was feared, obeyed, and his word accepted without the slightest demur.

It is generally believed that the *mongoli* of a good man, good according to the native code of morals, remained in the *longa* or nether regions, but the *mongoli* of a bad person was punished in *longa* and driven out. Then if it belonged to a member of a bush tribe it would inhabit the forests, bush, etc., and unless properly appeased by gifts, or conquered by charms, it would turn aside animals from the hunting traps and try to counteract all hunting operations. If the *mongoli* belonged to a member of a riverine tribe, then, after being turned out of *longa*, it haunted the river, creeks, etc., and did its best to hinder all fishing operations. Hence it was no uncommon thing, when a village was unsuccessful in its fishing, for the inhabitants to join their brass rods together to buy an old man or old woman—old by preference, because cheap, and throw him (or her) into the river to appease these water spirits. Hence, also, all the care taken by a fisherman to conceal his name while fishing lest a *mongoli* enemy should hear it and divert all the fish from his traps and nets.

According to the native idea these *mingoli* dwell everywhere, and are ever ready to pounce on any living person, and either carry their captive away, or inflict a disease on him, or kill him; and their life is one long drawn out fear of what the *mingoli* may next do to them, and their religion is a series of ceremonies, by *nganga* and charm, to control, circumvent, and perhaps conquer the *mingoli*. Fortunately, these *mingoli* are limited in the area of their operations, and can be deceived. The *nganga* can cork them up in their calabashes, can cover them with saucepans, and when necessary, if the fee is large enough, can kill them, or rather, destroy them. A man I knew well, was sick for a long time with some internal complaint, and after other means had failed to cure him, he was told by a *nganga* that he was troubled by a bad *mongoli*, and advised to go right out of the district beyond the sphere of the said spirit's operations, and there to remain until he was better. The man had no friends to whom he might have safely gone, so he left his house at dead of night, taking only two of his wives with him, and telling no one of his destination lest the *mongoli* should hear of it, and he went as far as he safely could from his own town and donned a woman's dress and assumed a female voice, and pretended to be other than he was in order to deceive the *mongoli*. This failed

to cure him, and in time he returned to his town, but continued to act as a woman; and every time he ate or drank he first scattered a portion of his food or drink behind him for the spirits to eat, and eating he appeased. The food best liked by the *mingoli* is the heart of any animal boiled, minced, and mixed with cooked cassava.

The *nganga* can see the *mingoli*, and those persons who have *likundu* or occult powers can also see them. They are said to be like people in appearance, they come into view, pass, and are lost to sight like ordinary beings. They have quiet voices, and eat *muntondo* (monkey pepper, *amomum*), and drink sugar-cane wine; but if *likilikindi* and *eteko* (stems of the *amomum*) are put across a path the *mingoli* cannot pass over them. It is a curious exception that these spirits may eat the fruit of the monkey pepper, and yet cannot step over the stalks of the same plant.

Elimo is the word for an embodied spirit, *i.e.*, a spirit that possesses a human body. In dreams this *elimo* visits the scenes viewed in the dreams, and no matter how quickly a dreaming person is aroused the *elimo* can always return in time. With regard to dreams, some people believe them, and bad dreams are accepted as omens to warn them from going on journeys, and from fishing and hunting expeditions that would either be fruitless or disastrous. If a person faints or becomes unconscious, massage with water is used, and on the patient reviving it is thought that the *elimo* has returned.¹ The *elimo* travels about to bewitch people, and some of their charms are made on purpose to kill the *elimo* that wanders about as a *moloki* or witch. In careless speech the word *elimo* is used interchangeably for *moloki*, but the fuller and better form is *elimo ya moloki*, the spirit of the bewitcher. The *elimo* of a dying man escapes through the nostrils and mouth, hence these are plugged and tied immediately on death to keep the spirit in the body.

Elilingi is the third word, sometimes used as an equivalent for spirit. Its literal meaning is, shadow of person or thing, shade of tree or house, etc., reflection in water, or in a looking glass, etc., and more recently, a photograph. This word was often used interchangeably with *elimo* for soul. They would say that a dead person casts no shadow, so to say he had no *elilingi* was equal to saying he was dead, *i.e.*, he had no *elimo*. These two words were used frequently when speaking of the soul, and also of the shadow of a person, but *elimo* was never used of the shadow of a tree, animal, etc. They would speak of fallen houses and fallen trees as having no *elilingi*, *i.e.*, they cast no shadows—a sign that they were dead. If for some reason a man did not see his *elilingi* reflected when he looked into some water he thought some one had taken his spirit away, and that he would soon die. Even if at midday he did not see his shadow, he would go to a *nganga*, who would make medicine so that he might recover his *elimo*.

Thus we have *mongoli*, a disembodied soul, a bush or forest spirit, a water spirit, whom it is necessary to appease with offerings of food, of trade goods and of human beings.

Then we have *elimo*, an embodied soul that leaves the body during sleep, and

¹ Cf. vol. xxxix, p. 454.

travels, visits people, and places, and performs actions. This, I think, is the only word they have for soul. Lastly, there is the word *elilingi*, a shadow, shade, reflection, which is used in a restricted way as synonymous with *elimo*.

Women are regarded as having souls and they are buried in a style that accords with their status in the town. Natives believe that the soul of a bad person suffers in *longa*; by a bad person is meant a disagreeable, unsociable, unobliging, greedy, rude, discourteous person. His ghost—*mongoli*—will return to trouble his whilom neighbours; and it is against his disagreeable qualities as a man that they have to guard now he is a ghost. There are many stories told about the doings of *mingoli*—their tricks and their modes of revenge.

Longa, or the nether region, is supposed to be somewhere down below. From many natives I have received the same direction accompanied by the same action, viz., they have pointed with their hands to the ground and have said, "It is down underneath there." In *longa* the conditions of life are similar to those in their villages and towns, with this exception that a man may be too high in the social scale to be punished on earth, but he cannot escape punishment in *longa* for the disagreeable qualities he has exhibited on earth. Within a few hours of an unpopular headman's death I have heard the ordinary natives laughingly say to one another:—"He is being humbugged and punished now." Who allotted the punishment and saw to its infliction I could never ascertain. They had no overlords on earth and did not expect to find such in *longa*. Juries of headmen were used on earth to decide difficult cases, and it is probable that juries in *longa* sat on cases and allotted the necessary punishment.

The firing of guns, shouting, wailing, beating of drums, and such noises are heard in *longa* and give warning of the approach of another soul. The louder the noise the greater is the anticipation of those in *longa* of seeing a great man arrive. The souls of the departed wait about the entrance to *longa* to greet the one about whose departure for their *longa* so much fuss is being made. Occasionally male slaves were killed and sent with messages to the deceased head of the family. Such a slave generally requested that the headman should remove his anger from his family and allow them to enjoy health and prosperity. It was after much sickness and many misfortunes in a family that such a messenger was sent. Only wealthy families could afford such a luxury as this, and the whole affair would be talked about all over the district and the family be greatly respected for this proof of their wealth. No doubt such a slave before his execution would and did receive many messages from members of other families to deliver to their departed ones; and such messages were accompanied with presents of food and wine and the last few days of the poor wretch were filled with feasting. There are indications that the sight of the *mingoli* was defective, but their hearing was very keen, consequently a man's name was never mentioned while he was fishing for fear the *mingoli* would hear and deflect the fish from his nets and traps. One would think that if a *mongoli* could see and recognise a fish, it could also see and recognise the fisherman. There are frequent gaps in their logic. Human sacrifices were buried in the bush or on the

edge of the forest (if the spirit to be appeased was that of a bushman), or were thrown into the river (if the spirit to be appeased was that of a riverine man), to gain the goodwill of a father or grandfather, but there was no ancestral worship, as beyond the fourth generation the ancestors were forgotten or accounted ineffective in their anger. These sacrifices had no regularity, but were always made when other means had failed to avert a calamity, such as the flooding of the river, or to bring a positive good, such as a large catch of fish.

A homicide is not afraid of the *mongoli* of a man he has killed belonging to any of the neighbouring towns, as disembodied spirits travel in a very limited area only, but if he kills a man belonging to his own town he will be filled with fear lest the *mongoli* should work him some harm. There are no special rites that he can observe to free him from those fears, but he will *lebe* or mourn for the slain man as though he were a member of his own family. He will neglect his personal appearance, shave his head, fast for a certain period, and lament with much weeping.

Abnormal events are frequently placed to the credit of the *mongoli* of a man recently dead. A few hours after the death of a young man whom I knew, a furious storm broke on the town, blowing down plantain trees and working great havoc in the farms. It was stated in all seriousness by the old folk that the storm had been sent by the spirit of Mopembe—the lad's name. We had for dinner one day the shoulder of an antelope, the history of which will further illustrate the above statement. Three days before we had that piece of antelope for dinner Mumbamba, an old headman, died. After his death his relatives came from various towns to mourn at his grave. On that morning three canoes of men and women were coming up river, with the object of expressing their grief at the grave, when they happened upon a large antelope caught in the grass of an islet that had lodged against a fallen tree in the river. The mourners dragged the antelope into one of the canoes, and gave Mumbamba the credit of sending them an antelope as an expression of his favour; thus *mingoli* can send evil and also good upon those who are left on the earth.

The following four names are used for God: 1. *Libanza*; 2. *Nzakomba*; 3. *Kombu*; 4. *Njambe*. These by many natives are regarded as the several names of one deity; others, however, ascribe to the different names various powers and assert that they represent different deities, e.g., *Libanza* was the creator of all things; *Nzakomba* was the disposer of the hearts and thoughts of people, and even of animals, and was frequently used in a sense that could only be translated by the word *disposition*, and sometimes by the phrases, he has a good disposition, or, he has a bad disposition (*Nzakomba*); *Kombu* was supposed to be responsible for the creation of all semi-sane people, crooked sticks, deformed persons and animals, etc., a sort of apprentice deity who did not properly understand his business; *Njambe* was the destroyer, and all sicknesses and deaths, not due to witchcraft, were laid at the door of *Njambe*. The more common name is *Libanza*, and he enters into not a few of their folk stories. His name is never given to anyone, and neither are the other names by which he is known. It is very probable that the Boloki tribe in its many

wanderings has either absorbed other tribes and their ideas and names for God, or, in its contact with other tribes, has simply with generous broadmindedness accepted the names it found in use among them.

Nzakomba is the general name for God among the Lulanga people, who live about forty miles below Monsembe on the south, and between whom and the Boloki (Bangala) there was much intercommunication. Njambe in its form of Nyambi is the word for God among the Bobangi folk who, a couple of generations ago, lived on the southern bank of the Mobangi River at a point easily reached in shallow marsh canoes by the Boloki folk by means of the many creeks and streams that join the Mobangi to the Congo in that district. Njambe in its form of Nzambi is used throughout the whole of the lower Congo for God. Kombu is the name for God of another tribe, but among the Boloki branch of the Bangala tribe Libanza is known far and wide, and was used by us, rightly or wrongly, as the equivalent for God.

There are several folk stories that have crystallized for us their ideas concerning Libanza, and it is interesting to note that such stories are called *mabanza* (plural form of Libanza) and these contain a statement of some of the doings of Libanza, whereas their word for fable, parable, story, is *mokulu*. The common opinion is that Libanza lived on the earth, and was the first to go into the heavens. His origin, life and adventures, as told in their folk stories, are briefly as follows:—

Libanza's mother when pregnant (names of mother and father are not known) had a stomach that "reached from Monsembe to Mobeka," a distance of sixty miles, and when her time came she gave birth first to the elephants, and bush animals of various kinds, and to the different swarms of insects, and to the amphibia; then his mother told him to come out, but before doing so he told her to scrape her finger nails, and upon her so doing he threw out the spears, the shield, and chair covered with brass nails, and finally came out himself.

Libanza's father, according to a folk story, was trapped and killed while stealing some *nsafu* fruit for his wife; and he acquainted his wife of his death by causing a fetish horn he had left with her to overflow with blood. As soon as Libanza was born he enquired about his father and his manner of death, and set himself to punish the one who had killed him, which after a series of futile attempts he finally accomplished by slaying the one who killed his father.

This Libanza had a series of adventures. He changed himself into a lad covered with yaws, and permitted himself to be taken as a slave, and although he was laughed at for his smallness he killed more monkeys than his master, and thus commanded respect. After a time he started again with his sister on his journeys, when he and his sister were taken slaves on approaching a town. In the town they found the people pounding sugar-canes preparatory to pressing out the wine. Although ridiculed for being only a small boy, he asked and procured a pestle,¹

¹ These pestles are heavy clubs weighing from 25 lbs. to 30 lbs each, and are made of very hard wood.

and used it so vigorously that it broke, then taking a pestle in each hand he worked them with such force that they smashed, and thus he broke all the pestles until only one was left, and with that one he ran away.

Libanza and his sister Nsongo travelled together until Nsongo saw a man named Koloimoko whom she desired to marry, and refused to proceed with her brother. Nsongo showed herself to the man but he kept at a distance, and Libanza hid himself under a horn. After performing some tricks Libanza caught Koloimoko and brought him to his sister, but on a closer inspection Nsongo refused to have him.

They proceeded on their way and came across a bunch of ripe palm nuts, and Nsongo requested her brother to cut it down for her, but as he climbed the palm tree (to reach the bunch of nuts) the tree grew higher and higher until the crown of fronds was hidden in the sky, where Libanza at last arrived and alighted on the sky, leaving his sister on the earth below. Nsongo heard the thunder roll, and said, "That is my brother Libanza admonishing." Nsongo wished to ascend to her brother and sent for the *nganga muntontwa* (a clever bird), who told her to send for the Hawk and inform him that she desired to send a parcel to her brother, and then to tie herself into a parcel so that she might be carried up into the sky by the Hawk. She carefully followed the instructions, and at last arrived where her brother was living in the sky.

Libanza became a blacksmith. In the sky land there is a person who swallows folk daily and for this reason he was called *Enele Ngombe* or Ngombe the Swallower. When Libanza heard that Ngombe was a swallower of people he made an ingot of iron very hot by the aid of his bellows blower, *Nkumba* or tortoise, and when Ngombe was passing the smithy Libanza exasperated him by mimicking his voice. Ngombe asked, "Who dares to ridicule me?" and Libanza answered by saying:—"I am¹ *anjaka-njaka lokwala la lotungi Libanza* the brother of Nsongo." Ngombe went at him with wide extended mouth to swallow him, but Libanza heated the iron till it melted, and threw the liquid metal into the gaping mouth, and Ngombe fell dead.

It is not at all improbable that Libanza is the name of some great chief who delivered the people by his resource and courage from great peril and oppression, and around whose name have gathered many myths and to him is ascribed great magical power. In the original story much magic is performed to meet the various difficulties that arise, as changing himself into different shapes, making horns and saucepans move and speak, and resurrecting broken and dead animals. No moral qualities were ascribed to Libanza, but he was regarded as being very strong and very rich. When our steamer the *Peace* made her first journey up river, the Boloki of Monsembe told me that they thought it was "Libanza going to Stanley Falls (*singitingi*) to visit his sister Nsongo." They could hear the noise of engines, but as

¹ This is the full name of Libanza. It means: The one who makes things with force and noise and runs off with them, whose scraped finger-nails are tied with cane, he who is Libanza the brother of Nsongo.

they could see no paddles, they thought that "the river *mingoli* were pushing the steamer along." For some months after our arrival at Monsembe we were often spoken of, and called, Libanza.

The *Ba-likolo* was a tribe of folk who lived somewhere above, as their name indicated (*ba* = people and *likolo* = above), but up river and all the country east of them is also called *likolo*, and it is most probable that the word *likolo* in the above phrase had originally that meaning, and as they pushed their journeys higher and higher up river and heard of peoples like themselves still higher up they removed the *Ba-likolo* from a locality beyond their district to a place above them in the sky. The *Ba-likolo* folk are said to have tails, and are very fond of ripe plantain, and in the folk stories these *Ba-likolo* descend on the plantain farms solely to steal ripe plantain. There is also a legend that the Boloki people bought their first fire from the *Ba-likolo* in exchange for a young woman. Previously they cooked their food in the sun, or ate it quite raw. Besides the *Ba-likolo* there were mythical monsters called *bingenenge* (plural of *engenenge*) who inhabited the numerous islands, and had many heads but no bodies.

During the whole of my fifteen years among the Boloki people I only saw two small wooden images on the arm of one man, and those I easily bought for a few brass rods, showing he had no faith in them and no use for them. Consequently I would say that they had no idols among them. Nor did we find any form of prayer among them, no worship, and no sacrifices. Disease and death and misfortune were all caused by various spirits, and their *nganga* dealt with them in different ways according to the necessity of the case. (See Section "Magic and Magicians.")

Omens (called *yeto*, plur. *bieto*) were not the same to the different families. The landing of a hippopotamus in a town might be an omen of war for one family, and have no significance for another; a flood might be a sign of famine and trouble to one family and not affect another; a huge tree floating freely down river might be an augury to one town of sickness and many deaths, and be entirely disregarded by another town. To some if a snake during war time went in front towards the enemy it was a sign of the success that would attend their undertaking, but if the snake came towards them the omen was against them. To others, if the *muntontwa* (a small, lively bird with a long beak) flew towards the enemy the omen was in their favour, but if it flew from the direction of the enemy it was not to be disregarded or calamity would overtake them. To most natives it would be a bad sign if a man kicked his foot against anything in the road (*ta libaku*). Sometimes the strong-minded ones would laugh away the fears of those who were inclined to turn back if the omen were against them; but it more frequently happened that they turned *en masse*, glad of an excuse to postpone a fight, for I think very few possessed real, natural bravery. The persistent crowing of a cock at the wrong time was an indication of misfortune which could be averted by killing the cock. The *bieto* were many and various, and in addition to those already mentioned we must not forget that dreams were omens for good or evil as they were interpreted by the dreamer.

Under the section on Death and Burial will be found an account of the means taken to purify mourners.

The religion of the Boloki has its basis in their fear of those numerous invisible spirits which surround them on every side, and are constantly trying to compass their sickness, misfortune, and death; and the Boloki's sole object in practising their religion is to cajole, or appease, cheat, or conquer and kill those spirits that trouble them—hence their *nganga*, their rites, their ceremonies and their charms. If there were no evil spirits to be circumvented there would be no need of their medicine men, and their charms.

The following notes on spirits may be placed very applicably under this general head of religion :—

1. *Bwete* (plur. *mēte*). Various serious sicknesses are supposed to be caused by the *mēte*, and each sickness has its own *bwete* or spirit, hence *lela*, or debility and anæmia; *yambaka*, or rheumatism; *yombi*, or sciatica; *luwa* and *makwata*, forms of sleeping sickness; *nyankili*, or ague fevers, are not only the names of diseases, but also of the *mēte* spirits responsible for sending them. They do not know from whence these spirits emanate, but the only way to get them out of the body is to set up for some of them an *etoli* stick and for others a saucepan of small sticks, and again for others a saucepan of medicine water. For *lela*, *yambaka*, *yombi*, and *nyankili* they erect an *etoli*—a stick about 4 feet long, peeled of its bark, shaped at one end and daubed with yellow pigment and marked with red and blue spots; for the *makwata bwete* they prepare a saucepan in which they put small sticks about the thickness of one's finger and 8 or 9 inches long; this was called *muntoka*, and the whole was spotted with yellow, red, and blue colours; for the *luwa bwete* a saucepan of bush water was placed, and the pot was ornamented with colours, and called *eboko*. These *etoli* and saucepans often had little shelters built over them which were coloured with various paints, and every time the owner ate he threw some of his food on the roof of his house for the spirits to eat. From time to time he poured some sugar-cane wine over the *etoli*, or into the saucepans. There was no idea of ancestral worship in this, but an appeasing of the spirits of the diseases. Not to make these offerings was to invite a return of the spirit or spirits back to the body of the owner, *i.e.*, to have a very bad relapse. I have known a man to have three or four of these *etoli* sticks and a saucepan. This either indicated that he had had several bad complaints or had had his one and only complaint diagnosed wrongly. Persons who had never suffered from these serious illnesses, and they were numerous, never troubled to prepare either a saucepan or an *etoli*. By some folk these *mēte* spirits were called *biwawa* (sing. *ewawa*).

2. *Mweta* (plur. *mieta*). When there was much sickness in a family, not confined to a single member but a kind of family epidemic, it was said to be caused by a *maweta* spirit, left, or sent, by a deceased relative as a punishment for failing to observe some fetish law, or for not showing due respect for the deceased when buried—not having a proper ceremony—or for not keeping his memory alive by

occasional mimic fights, and the gifts of brass rods and slaves to the spirit of the departed one. Sometimes it was sent maliciously. These *mieta* when they are troubling a family can be driven into animals by the *nganga ya bwaka* and killed by him, and as a proof of his prowess he will exhibit a bleeding head and assure the family that they need no longer worry as he has killed the animal which was possessed by the *mweta*, and the *mweta* is punished, killed, and will not bother them again. Sometimes the *nganga* will drive the *mweta* into a saucepan or calabash and there kill it, or imprison it.

3. *Elimo*, see above in this section.

4. *Mungoli* „ „ „ „

5. *Ejo*, the spirit of wealth. The following are some of the statements respecting *ejo*. A man who wants to become rich pays a large fee to *nganga ya bwaka*, who then uses his influence with *ejo* on behalf of his client, who must in all future gains set apart a portion for *ejo*, and should he fail to do so *ejo* has the power to punish him. *Ejo* can assume any shape and entice a person down to the river, where it returns suddenly to its proper form and jumps into the river with the enticed person. This person is then either killed by the *ejo* or ransomed for a slave or his equivalent. How the ransom is paid no one seems to know. The one enticed is he who has not paid his dues to *ejo*. When a person has received the *mono mwa ojo* (*ejo* medicine or charm), and has become wealthy by his luck-giving power, he takes the nail parings and hair cuttings¹ of a woman and makes medicine with them, and the woman soon dies and her spirit goes to *ejo* as an offering for its help. He is said to *lekia nkali* (to pass her on as a gift or sacrifice to *ejo*). If one man is saved when a canoe is swamped, and his companions are all drowned, he also is said to *lekia nkali* or has given them to *ejo* to save his own life. Should a man be successful in fishing or trading without any apparent cause, and shortly after his success his wife falls ill and dies, he is said to have *lekia nkali* his wife to the *ejo* as an acknowledgment of his increased wealth. The ordeal is often taken to disprove these accusations, and marvellous stories are told about the wealth-giving power of this *ejo* spirit.

6. The *embanda* is said to be a very short dwarf spirit, which when it takes possession of a man enables him to throw his enemy in wrestling and overcome those who try to hold him. It strengthens the legs of its owner and weakens by pain the legs of its owner's opponent. He who possesses the *embanda* spirit is always successful in capturing one or more prisoners in a fight, and can cause the death of many in any family he hates. The *embanda* is sometimes called *mopoto*.

7. *Jando ja nkoli* (spirit of a crocodile) and *jando ja nkoi* (spirit of a leopard). It is believed that persons can become possessed by one of these spirits, and are said to let themselves loose occasionally to prey on their neighbours. The word *jando* also stands for the peculiar characteristics of the animal to which it is

¹ For this reason a person always hides his or her nail parings and hair cuttings, as "powerful medicine" can be made with them to the disadvantage of the owner.

prefixed, *i.e.*, a man successful in fishing is said to have the peculiar qualities of a crocodile, and one swift and cunning in fight and flight has the qualities of a leopard. These qualities or spirits are not gained by eating either of the creatures, but are bought from a *nganga* by some occult intercourse with the crocodile and leopard.

8. *Nyandembe* is the name of a mythical person or spirit who is mentioned in the folk stories as having caused the death of Libanza's father, and was eventually done to death by Libanza as a punishment. He is thought to have been very strong and rich.

9. *Engenenge* is a mythical monster inhabiting the islands and is represented as having many heads and no body. He is greatly dreaded by those who have to camp on the islands during fishing and travelling, and they tell many stories of his visits to them.

10. *Elimimija* is a ghostly apparition, a spectre seen on the land in the twilight and moonlight. It may be a tree, or some leaves, etc.

11. *Esika*, same as number 10, but seen on the water.

12. *Bingbongbo* are the spirits of the unborn children in the *liboma*. They can make boys and girls thin and weak, and have to be appeased with feasts.

Perhaps under this head of religion is the best place to write about their dances, especially as they are more or less connected with their superstitious rites. There is a *boweya* dance in some families on the fifth day after confinement when the ceremony of piercing the ear of the new born child takes place. In these families, although their totems are different, yet they have a *boweya*, or spirit (see above), common to them, and the piercing of the ear is a sign to the *boweya*, or spirit, not to hurt them as they belong to the families under the patronage of the totems, and the pierced ear is a proof of their claim. On the fifth day, the women of the village gather and rub camwood powder on themselves, decorate their bodies with leaves, and tie on sashes of a special creeper. They dance to the sound of a drum. The lobe of the right ear of a male child, or the left ear of a female child is pierced—the left is always a sign of inferiority. This ceremony always takes place in the morning.

Jebola is only danced by Boloki women. It is supposed to be the result of obsession by a *mongoli* spirit. It is not confined to any particular class or family of the Boloki tribe. A woman comes under the influence of the *mongoli* and begins to dance, and the dancing continues for seven days, during which time she may not eat anything except powdered camwood, and a light clay called *emolo*, and sugar-canes. While the *jebola* is on her, she goes from village to village dancing, and receives large sums for her exhibitions. A headman will sometimes hire her for a day to dance before himself and friends; and if a man is mourning the recent death of his wife, he will engage her to dance in her honour, and I have known them to give nearly the price of a slave as payment. At the end of the seventh day the women who have previously been *jebola* will take her to the river and immerse her, and then she will return to ordinary life. The *nganga ya jebola* looks

after her and her interests during the seven days, and sits up with her at night, as she is not supposed to sleep during the time of her obsession.

Muntebe, from *ntembe* cassava stems. If a woman dies who has been held in much honour by the other women in the town as a good farmer, and one who has taught them about farming, and under whose leadership they have been successful in their operations, they will, a few days after her death, form a procession, decorate themselves with leaves and twigs and dance and chant her praises through the town, and will then go to the farm and hoe up and plant a large bed of cassava for the use of the deceased woman's family. The family supplies the dancers with sugar-cane wine for this festivity.

Mungwana is a dance for pleasure by men and women forming two lines opposite each other. The men flourish knives and spears.

Ebala.—Directly the man dies the family begins to order sugar-cane wine, which takes a few days to prepare in any large quantities. As soon as the wine is ready, a large hard wood drum (*likole*) is bought and beaten, and the men and women dance for three days and three nights, or as long after as the wine lasts. Lines are formed and a man leaves the line, advances, and a woman leaves the line opposite and advances to within a yard of the man, and there they wriggle, shuffle their feet, shake their buttocks for a few moments, and return to their places, and another couple advance, and thus all down the line over and over again. It is a regular wake accompanied by much drunkenness and immorality—the former openly, the latter secretly.

Bonkani.—After a fight, in which some of the enemy have been killed, the men only meet to engage in the *bonkani* dance. The men dance with their spears and knives, and any goats, sheep, dogs or fowls that approach the dancers are instantly speared, cooked and eaten by them. As a man beats the drum one after the other of the dancers advances and in a solo tells of his exploits in the late fight, which exploits are more in the imagination than on the field of battle; but they vie with one another in "drawing the long bow" on such occasions. This practice is not solely confined to the African savage.

The *Sumba* dance is mentioned in the next section under the *Nganga ya losumba*.

Luck in spears, etc.—When a man is under the sway of the *mingoli* (disembodied souls) he gets his spear, and tying some dried plantain leaves to it he holds it before him with his left hand, and as he trembles with the excitement of the spirits in him, the spear shakes and rustles the leaves until the *mingoli* go out of him into the spear and that spear then becomes *likongo ja ngidi* = a fetish spear, and his luck is bound up in it. This spear may not be touched by anyone but himself, and is carefully guarded by its owner, for to lose it is to fail in all his undertakings. These spirits are passed into hunting spears, fighting spears, and fish spears, and although they will be especially effectual in their own particular line, they will also have a general influence on the man's luck. It is also asserted that a rich man who has the *ejo* spirit passes that spirit into his canoe, and

this enables him to make successful trading expeditions and other journeys to his own advantage.

XLIV. MAGIC AND MAGICIANS.

There is not so great a variety of *nganga* among the Boloki as among the Ba-Kongo of the Lower Congo, nor is the *modus operandi* of bewitching people, and of removing the witchcraft so well defined.¹ Among the Boloki the *nganga* is much in evidence, but he is not regarded with much awe or respect. The office is hereditary, and it is difficult for a person to become a *nganga* who has not already a member of one or the other cult in his family. The old *nganga* teaches his son, free of all charges, the tricks of his trade, and when the novice is considered efficient he undergoes the following test:—Something is secretly hidden, and he has to find it, and having discovered the secreted article, he has then to perform some *nganga* ceremony, such as killing an animal possessed by a spirit—a trick he has easily learned from his father, and after that he blossoms out as a fully qualified *nganga*.

If a person in whose family there has been a *nganga* desires to join the profession, he goes to an old *nganga*, and on paying a fee he is taught as though he were a son, and has to pass the tests as above; but if a person in whose family there has never been a *nganga* wants to join the cult he is deterred from so doing by being told that he must first kill all the members of his family by witchcraft as offerings to the *mweta*² or spirit of the particular cult. This results in the man refusing to become a *nganga*, and even if he were so callous as to still wish it, his family would not allow him to proceed as they believe they would fall victims to his witchcraft. Thus the secrets of the profession are retained in a very few families; still I have known a slave belonging to a Boloki man become a great *nganga* by pretending to perform a wonderful feat, which was as follows:—

Mayeya, for that was the man's name, was a slave, and one day he went with a lad in a canoe across the river. By-and-by the lad returned without Mayeya, and on being asked where he was the lad replied: "Mayeya fell from the canoe into the river, and since then I have not seen him." Seven days after this Mayeya walked up from the river into the town dressed in his best cloth, etc. The people gathered around him asking him where he had been, and he solemnly informed them that he had been under the river for the whole of the seven days, consulting with the water spirits (*mingoli*), and that now he was a *nganga*. The people believed in him and flocked to him with cases from all the neighbouring districts, and by his many and large fees he became so wealthy that he was able to pay ten men and two women—one woman was equal in price to four men—for his ransom, and then became a slave owner himself and a man of wealth. One day I heard Mayeya boasting outside my house of the seven days he had spent under the

¹ See *Folklore* for 1910 for Lower Congo *nganga* and their black and white magic.

² See in this section for the meaning of *Mweta*, and also in the preceding section under *Mweta*, p. 377.

water in company with the water spirits; so going up to him, I said: "Mayeya, I hear you have lived under the river for seven days." "Yes," he said, "I have." "Well," I replied, "I will give you 5,000 brass rods"—the currency of that district—"if you will stay under the water here in front of my house while I count them." He replied: "I cannot do it just now, but I will return on another day and do it." Whenever I saw Mayeya after that I always reminded him of my offer. The people at last used to urge him to accept my challenge and offer of 5,000 brass rods. They argued with him saying: "You have remained under the water for seven days, surely you can stay under it while the white man counts 5,000, for you know he counts very quickly. Go and get your 5,000 rods and then you will be able to buy two more wives." He, however, put them off with first one excuse and then another, until at last they chaffed him about it, laughed at him, doubted whether he had stayed under the water half a day, much less seven whole days and nights. As he still made excuses the natives lost faith in him, his practice fell off, and the last I saw of Mayeya was his coming to borrow of me 100 brass rods, for he was in difficulties. I said: "No! you have imposed on many people, and done to death many a person by your false charges of witchcraft; I will not lend you a brass rod, but there are 5,000 waiting for you if you will only stay under the water while I count them."

There were some quasi *nganga*. Men and women who had recovered from some serious complaint would set up as quacks to cure that particular sickness. They used massage with hot or cold water, and no water at all, and simple herbs, and there was no doubt that they effected a considerable amount of good. There were female *nganga* who performed the same rites as the male *nganga*, such as *nganga ya bwaka*, *nganga ya libanda*, etc., but the *nganga ya balela* was always a woman and she was the one who made all the necessary medicine for pregnant women, attended at confinement, helped at the delivery of the child, and attended also many of the cases of sickness in men. Each *nganga* was more or less famous in his own line, and with one or two exceptions rarely went beyond his own limits.

The following is a list of the *nganga* so far as I have been able to ascertain them. It is possible that the list is not complete, but I think it is not far short of it.

1. *Nganga ya Mono*. (*Mono* = medicine, charm.) This *nganga* is a general practitioner and not a specialist as are the other *nganga*. He is regarded as knowing more than any of the other *nganga*, with the exception of the *nganga ya bwaka*. He uses all kinds of herbs, and prepares the various charms to ward off diseases, and cure divers complaints, but he never attempts to exorcise spirits or find witches. His fees are comparatively small, and he is consulted in the first stages of illness in the hope that he will be able to effect a cure, and consequently save the larger fees demanded by other *nganga*.

2. *Nganga ya Mbula* = rain. When rain threatens and is not desirable, for some reason or other, this *nganga* takes a small leaf and puts it on the closed fist of

his left hand, and after extending the arm towards the rain he waves it to and fro in a semicircle, and strikes the leaf with the open palm of the right hand, and should the leaf burst at the first smack the rain will stop in *Moluka Mwawi* = (one paddling (see section on "Time"), *i.e.*, about twenty minutes); if it does not burst at the first smack but at the second, then the rain will not stop for two paddlings, *i.e.*, forty minutes, and so on; but if the leaf does not burst at all after repeated slaps, then the rain will not stop for a very long time. When rain is threatening the above ceremony is performed in order to ascertain how long it will be before the rain will fall. If the leaf breaks at the first whack the rain will begin to fall in twenty minutes, and so on. They will start a journey or remain at home according to the indications of this performance.

Physical phenomena (as heavy storms) when taking place about the time that a person dies, or is being buried, are regarded as caused by the deceased person; hence when a storm threatens to break during the funeral festivities of a man, the people present will call the beloved child of the deceased and giving him a lighted ember from the hearth with a vine twined round it, they will ask him to stop the rain. The lad steps forward and waves the vine-encircled ember towards the horizon where the storm is rising, and says: "Father, let us have fine weather during your funeral ceremonies." The son, after this rite, must not drink water (he may drink sugar-cane wine), nor put his feet in water for one day. Should he not observe this custom the rain will at once fall.

To bring rain.—On the shelves in most of the houses are sticks with "medicine" tied round them. These are taken down and plunged into water with some *Malelembe* leaves (arrowroot), and then the rain will fall. It is rarely that they resort to this as the rains fall with great regularity all the year round. Throwing salt on the fire will cause a superabundance of rain to fall.

3. *Nganga ya Bwaka* = (mat).—When a family was troubled with much sickness or frequent deaths, they sent for this *nganga*, who, on arrival, put some stakes in the ground and tied a mat round them, making an enclosure in which he sat while performing his ceremonies. A string was tied from the roof of his clients' house to one of the stakes in his mat enclosure, and the end of the string dropped inside. From this string there dangled dried plantain leaves, twigs, etc. Outside the mat sat some lads with drums and horns, and various folk interested in the rites. When all was ready the *nganga* entered his enclosure and pulling the string shook the leaves; the lads beat their drums, and the men and women sitting around chanted a chorus in admirable time. Directly the leaves stopped the drummers and singers understood it as a sign for them to remain quiet; and then the *nganga* began to speak to the various *mieta* (spirits), and answered himself in assumed voices, pretending he was holding a conversation with them. As often as he was tired he shook the leaves and the drums were beaten and the folk chanted, and when he had recovered his breath he would start pseudo-conversations again. This would be maintained through one whole day (sometimes two and three days), but generally towards the afternoon of the second day he would come out of the

enclosure holding a bleeding head in his hand and assure the family that he had killed the animal in which the *mweta* or spirit was living, and now the family would no longer be troubled with sickness and death. To vary the ceremony the *nganga* sometimes rushed out of the enclosure and into a house, or behind a house, or into the near bush as though in chase of something, and come back with a bleeding head and say the *mweta* was slain.

It is this *nganga* who discovers the witch (*Moloki*) in the family of the deceased one. If a layman charges another with witchcraft the accused can demand that the accuser shall drink the ordeal with him; but if this *nganga* charges a person with witchcraft, the *nganga* will not drink the ordeal; he is not expected to do so, but the accused must drink the *nka*, and should he (or she) fall repeatedly the condemned is either left to die as a result of the large doses of *nka*, or is hung on a tree. The corpse is left unburied—it is the body of a witch—the most hated being in all Congo.

This *nganga ya bwaka*, in killing the *mweta* troubling a family, works hard and earns his money. After several hours a day having been spent in the mat discussing with the *mieta*, and trying to discover which one is menacing the family, he at last decides on one, and when the right moment arrives the *nganga* will make a terrific noise inside the mat as though he were fighting for his life. Shouts, screams, derisive laughter, whacks, thuds and smacks proceed from the interior of the mat, and at last the *nganga* rushes out, panting and sweating profusely, holding in his hand a bleeding head, and declaring that he has killed the animal that was possessed by the spirit that was troubling the family. He will rush with this head to the river and throw it far out into the water. The family is supposed now to recover its good health, and the *nganga* pulls down his mat, receives his fee and goes. What is the bleeding head? On one occasion some of our school lads chased a *nganga* who came from his mat with a bleeding head. He ran for the river, but they headed him off, and in desperation he ran to a pool of water and threw the head in. The boys went into the water and found it was a lizard's head. On another occasion it was a rat's head. Thus the family had paid a big fee to have a rat or lizard killed and the bleeding neck shown to them. Up to that time they had always believed that it was some mysterious animal which the *nganga* had dug up from the ground inside his mat, killed by his occult power, and thrown into the river so that it could never more harm them.

The *nganga ya bwaka* was the most feared and respected of all their *nganga*. It was generally believed that they could see the *mingoli* (disembodied spirits), the *bilimo* (embodied spirits), and the *mieta* (spirits of disease), and hold communication with them. They bottled in calabashes, or captured in saucepans, the local *mingoli* that would otherwise hinder hunters trapping their wild animals; they made the dogs good hunters by their medicines; they gave the reasons for the floods, and the best way to cause them to subside; and they also had close dealings with *Ejo* the spirit of wealth.

4. *Nganga ya libanda* = outside, in the open, *i.e.*, those *nganga* who practise their craft in the open before all the people and not enclosed in a mat.

A family suffering from much sickness has called in one *nganga* after another without relief, and they may have had *nganga ya bwaka* and felt no better after having paid him his large fee, so now they try again with *nganga ya libanda*. He arrives dressed in bits of monkey skins and bush cat skins, etc., and well decorated with charms. Men beat drums, sing chants, and choruses; the *nganga* dances about, working himself into a frenzy. He peers here, there, everywhere, looking for the *mweta* that is troubling the family. He sees it in a plantain tree, hurls his spear at it, but no, he misses it; he sees it on the roof of a house and away darts the spear, only to miss again. He prods his spear into different parts of the outside of the house, but he misses the elusive spirit every time; he is, however, working it towards the doorway. At last the spirit takes refuge in the house, the *nganga* springs forward, enters the house, darts his spear in all directions, yelling loudly and screaming terrifically; then a frightful cry is heard, and in a few moments the *nganga* comes out with the blade of his spear well smeared with blood. He has killed the *mweta*, or rather the animal possessed by the spirit. They always kill these spirits *in* the house; why? The son of one of these *nganga* told me that when his father wanted blood to smear over his spear-head, he dug his finger nail into his gum and procured from thence the blood for the purposes of this trick. On showing the spear thus stained with blood he asserted that he had killed the spirit that was causing all the trouble. He received his fee and went. The semi-darkness of a native hut made a trick of this kind possible.

5. *Nganga ya balela* (plural of *Lela* = a disease caused by a *Bwete* spirit called *Lela*).—The *bwete* spirit has a name according to the disease it gives, or rather the complaint takes its name from the *bwete* that is supposed to cause it. These *nganga* are always women, and are engaged by both men and women troubled by *Lela* or extreme debility. They dance, chant, and shake a rattle until the patient says he has the *bwete* spirit stirring in him, by the way he jerks and sways his body, and then the *nganga* prepares the *etoli* (which see) and invites the *bwete* spirit to go and live in it and not trouble the patient any more. These female *nganga* attend the women of certain totem families, whose children five days after birth have their ears pierced. Such families are supposed to be patronized by a *boweya bwete* (= parturition spirit), who will allow the child to grow strong, healthy, and fat, if its ears are pierced on the fifth day with the proper dance and ceremony, but will cause the child's death if the mother when pregnant does not use the proper medicines under the guidance of this *Balela nganga*, or does not have its ear pierced in the right way. This *nganga* makes all the necessary medicine for a pregnant woman, attends her at confinement, helps at the delivery of the child, and conducts the ear piercing on the fifth day after birth.

6. *Nganga ya likenge* (= saucepan).—A man who is troubled with sickness which has failed to yield to other means, or one in whose family there has been a death and who cannot afford to hire a witch finder, goes to this *nganga*, whose fee

is comparatively small. He on being hired brings out his fetish saucepan of water and placing it in a good position he then pours some sugar-cane wine by the side of it, as the *bilimo* (embodied spirits) are very fond of this wine; then he calls the *bilimo* by putting a leaf on the closed fist of the left hand and striking it with the palm of the right hand; thereupon the *bilimo* show themselves in the saucepan, into which only the *nganga* is allowed to look. A spirit appears, turns and shows his face, and shakes his head negatively when called upon to do so, and as the showing of the face is regarded as a proof that it belongs to an innocent person, it is told to pass on. By-and-by, a spirit appears that persistently refuses to show its face after being repeatedly ordered to do so by the *nganga*, and at last the *nganga* stabs the spirit with a splinter of bamboo, and the owner of that *elimo* who is the *moloki* (the witch) is supposed now to die very soon, and release the *nganga's* client from its malign influence. It is interesting to note that a person's soul can be called from him by a *nganga*, for *elimo* means an embodied soul, *i.e.*, the soul of a living person. It is also worthy of note that they expect more truthfulness in the soul of a person than in the person himself.

7. *Nganga ya Losinga* (from *singa*, to predict, foretell).—This *nganga* dances to the beat of drums, and chants, the chorus being taken up by those present. When he has worked himself and his audience up to a certain pitch of excitement, he looks into his fetish bag of medicine, and from what he sees there he foretells war, or the reverse, its success or failure, and other events as the success or non-success of a trading expedition, fishing and hunting parties, etc.

8. *Nganga ya Mumpoku*.—This *nganga* is the maker of love philtres. A woman takes the nail parings, hair cuttings, and chewed pith of the sugar-cane of the person whose love she desires, to this *nganga*, who makes them into a medicine, and well dries and pounds it into a powder which the woman blows over the object of her love while he is asleep. The man does the same with the nail parings and hair cuttings; but the medicine, instead of being blown over the sleeping object of his passion, is mixed in sugar-cane wine and given her to drink. A slave will use the same medicine to gain an easier time from his master or mistress. This *mumpoku* medicine is also used on persons to cause them to forget a wrong or grant a request.

9. *Nganga ya Ndemo* (vanishing, disappearance).—This *nganga* makes a charm which is rubbed on the body, or tied on the wrist or leg of his client, who, when thus protected, can walk right among his enemies, and if they catch him they find only his cloth, for the person in the cloth has vanished. This charm is used in times of war as the possessor can fight and kill without being seen by the enemy, and this charm is also in great favour with thieves. The charm consists of a yellow pigment rubbed on the temples, or "medicine" mixed with the pigment and fixed to brass wire and tied round the wrist, waist or leg.

10. *Nganga ya Likundu* (craftiness, smartness, skilfulness, witchcraft).—This *nganga* looks at the arteries in the stomach of a dead person to discover whether

the person died by his or her own witchcraft or by the witchcraft of someone else. (See *Awi na Likundu*, Section XL, vol. xxxix, p. 449.)

If there is smallpox in the district the nervous go to this *nganga*, who makes some small cuts in his client's body and sucks out some blood which he spits on to a leaf, and examines carefully. If some small threads are seen in the blood, the *nganga* points them out to others, and says, that as he has sucked out the *likundu* the person will not die even though he may become infected with smallpox. Should no threads be seen and by-and-by the person become ill with smallpox, his friends will tell him that he cannot recover unless he confesses to having bewitched one or more persons. Under pressure of constant nagging the patient will confess (and who among them has not desired the death of one or more enemies and acquaintances) to his mother, or father, or to a loved friend, that he has bewitched several persons, and will mention them by name, and after this confession he may become better. It is a very cute performance. The person's blood is sucked and the threads are shown, and if he does not have smallpox then the *nganga* has the credit of drawing the *likundu* out of him. If, however, he has smallpox then he has his own *likundu* in him and the only way to recover is to confess his guilt; this exonerates the *nganga*. If no threads are seen and the person has smallpox then his own *likundu* has given it, and he must confess, and here again the *nganga* is cleared. If a person has not been operated on by the *nganga*, and gets smallpox, he must confess to bewitching others, and should he recover, well, his confession cleared him, should he die then someone else bewitched him. If a person did not get smallpox then he was not bewitched by anyone and had no *likundu* himself. During an epidemic of smallpox at Monsembe in 1893 it was impossible to isolate the patients, for according to their beliefs regarding infectious diseases, as stated above,¹ there was no need for isolation. I have seen the hut of a patient literally crowded with women, lads, and girls, giving advice and showing sympathy with the sick. Many died from the horrible disease.

11. *Nganga ya Luwa* (sleeping sickness).—The patients go to this *nganga* who snicks their bodies with numerous small cuts, and then stands them in a semicircle about his saucepan of very hot water, with which he well sprinkles them and then very vigorously rubs pepper paste in the cuts, and puts a drop or two of pepper juice in each eye. There are many cases of debility, lack of energy and anæmia in which the symptoms are somewhat similar to sleeping sickness, such as drowsiness, no desire to move about, loss of appetite, etc. These cases are benefited by the massage of pepper and by the change of scene and life in the village of the *nganga*, and when they return to their own towns after three or five weeks' treatment much better and sometimes quite well, they are regarded as cured cases of sleeping sickness by the *nganga* and natives. The *nganga* puts various tabus on his patients both as to what they should eat, and how their food should be

¹ Vol. xxxix, p. 450.

cooked. The pepper in the eyes causes great agony but it keeps the patients awake and moving about with the pain.

12. *Nganga ya Mokalala* (madness).—This *nganga* has a saucepan of water in which some medicines have been mixed, and the patient immerses his face in it every day, and has some juices dropped into his eyes as a cure for his madness.

13. *Nganga ya Bingbongbo* (spirits of unborn babes).—It is believed by the natives that the spirits of unborn babes are preserved in the *liboma* (which see under section on "Reproduction") of each family, and while there these spirits are called *bingbongbo*. A lad is very thin and weakly, and his father kills a monkey, or buys a large piece of meat or a big fish, and then sends for this *nganga*, who shuts himself up in one of his client's houses and is heard to hold conversation with these spirits. After a time he comes out and tells his client that the *bingbongbo* complain because he has never given them a feast, and that if he desires to see his son improve in health he must at once make a feast for them. The father thereupon gives the monkey, fish or meat, he has bought ready for this demand, to be cooked, and the *nganga* takes the mess on a plate into the house, puts it down on the floor, and comes out and shuts the door. After a time he enters and brings the plate out and shows that the food has partly disappeared, and that the edge of the plate is smeared with the food. This is accepted as evidence that the *bingbongbo* have partaken of the feast, and the patient will get better as the offering has been accepted. The *nganga* gives the patient a new name—if a girl *Bolumbu*, and if a boy, *Loleka*.

14. *Nganga ya Losumba* (from *sumba*, to detect a witch).—A death has occurred and as the deceased was a prominent man and the *nganga ya likundu* has inspected his entrails and stated that he was bewitched to death, the *nganga ya losumba* is called in to detect the witch. The usual fee is one slave but, if he is a very famous *nganga*, he will demand and receive two slaves. He insists on receiving his fee before he begins operations as he may have to rush off with undignified haste directly he has pointed out the witch, because the accused person does not always take the charge quietly but will rush off for spear or gun to kill his accuser, hence the demand for the fee first. The people gather in a large circle and the *nganga*, dressed as a woman in skins and cloth fantastically arranged, and his face, legs, and arms decorated with pigments of various colours, takes his place in the centre, and dances throughout the whole of the first day to the beat of drums. Towards the end of the afternoon of the second day he points out the *moloki* or witch, and hurries to his waiting canoe. The accused must take the ordeal and abide by the result.

15. *Nganga ya Jebola*.—This is the *nganga* who looks after the *Jebola* dancer and dance (which see under dances). She feeds the woman with the camwood powder, clay, and sugar-cane; sits up with her at night, for she is supposed not to sleep during the seven days of her obsession, and looks after her interests generally and shares her takings. The *Jebola* can only be danced at intervals of from ten to fifteen months. It is a dance of pleasure.

16. *Nganga ya liboni* (= vision, dream).—These *nganga* are said to scrape their eyes with the sharp edge of the sugar-cane grass, which operation clears the vision and enables them to see the *moloki* or witch afar off and frustrate its evil designs. They pretend to see the *moloki* at night running off with the *elimo* (soul, spirit) of a person, and this *elimo* they rescue and restore to its owner, and the next day the *nganga* will go to the owner of the *elimo* and say: "Last night I saw a *moloki* running off with your *elimo*, and I stopped it or you would be dead by now," and then he demands a present, which is at once given through fear, for if they refuse to satisfy the *nganga* he will allow the *moloki* to escape another time with the *elimo*, and he will die.

17. *Nganga y' elembia* (to overawe, subdue, soothe).—A man who has many and powerful enemies, goes to a *nganga* of this cult and procures medicine from him to overawe or soothe his enemies so that they will no longer desire to work him any harm. They will become subject to his will and influence. This *nganga* also initiates his clients into various tricks for striking awe into the onlookers that they may fear their power and respect them accordingly.

18. *Nganga ya mungunga* (bell).—This *nganga* owns a fetish bell. A man is sick or has lost a relative by death and he accuses several members of his family of witchcraft. They of course deny the charge, so the accuser challenges them to drink the medicated water from the fetish bell. The person who refuses to drink from the bell is regarded as guilty of the witchcraft. If, however, they agree to drink from the bell, the *nganga* who owns one comes and gives a draught to each person from his bell, and it is firmly believed that the one guilty of witchcraft will soon die from the effects of the bell-medicine, whereas the innocent will suffer no inconvenience from it.

Bonganga is the general name for charm, amulet, talisman, mascot, etc., and it is also the word for the skill or art of the medicine man—that which constitutes a *nganga*, but it is difficult to decide whether this skill arises from his own inherent intuitions, or is imparted to him by his charm. The word *bonganga* favours both these views. The prefix *bo* can indicate the thing into which a *nganga* has put his power, hence a charm, amulet, etc., or it may denote a noun of quality equivalent to "ness," and thus point to the skill, art, etc., or that by which the *nganga* is able to perform his pretended wonders. I am inclined to the former meaning.

No sacrifices are offered to the *manganga* (plural of *bonganga*) and there is no mode of *refreshing* them as on the Lower Congo, but if a *bonganga* does not act as it should, the owner takes it back to the *nganga* to have some more medicine put into it, as it is thought that the old is ineffective from being played out. Images were not used as fetishes by the Boloki people. The whole time I was among them I only saw two in use and the owner readily sold them to me for a few brass rods—his readiness, and the low price he asked, showed they were not the objects of much superstitious regard. The charms belonging to the *nganga* have been handed down from time immemorial, and these *nganga* make the charms for the

people. The following is a fairly complete list of their charms and their various powers:—

1. *Eboko* is a fetish saucepan which is supposed to be the dwelling place of a spirit called *bwete bwa lwwa*, spirit of sleeping sickness. It is simply a decorated saucepan of bush water into which the *bwete* is driven by the *nganga*, and the person who owns it must spread a little food about it every time he has a meal, and occasionally pour a little sugar-cane wine into the saucepan, for the spirit is fond of this kind of wine. Unless he treats the *bwete* properly he will have a relapse. It is this saucepan that is used in the *bowa* ceremony (which see under Medicine). When a woman is badly treated by her husband she breaks this saucepan (see Section XXXV on Marriage, vol. xxxix, p. 442).

2. *Ekando* (hidden snag).—The owner of this charm can break the pursuing canoe of an enemy, and thus precipitate them into the water. In their trouble they will call on the *ejo* spirit or *ngubu* (hippopotamus), or *ngoli* (crocodile) to help them. The many snags and rocks in the river favour the belief in the powers of the *ekando* charm. In the excitement of a chase the paddlers do not always look where they are going and will run on a hidden snag or rock, and the impact will smash the canoe, and then the charm has the credit of it. I have been nearly thrown out of my canoe two or three times by running on a snag.

3. *Ekoko* (axe).—The possessor of the fetish axe, if hard pressed by his enemies, can take the *ekoko*, and beat an island with it, whereupon the island splits and he passes through the opening which at once closes behind him, and he is safe. The numerous creeks favour this superstition.

4. *Ekundu*.—If there is much sickness in a family the *nganga ya bwaka* is called, and after studying the matter, says:—"There is an *ekundu* in the family." He erects his mat to make an enclosure, and then goes through a ceremony of much drumming, chanting, etc., and by-and-by digs a hole inside his mat enclosure, and gets out the *ekundu*, which is a small saucepan containing animal and fish bones, and brass links. The pot and contents are said to be left by a *mweta*, an evil spirit of a deceased relative who desired to trouble the family. The links, one or more, represent the spirits of those who have been done to death by the *mweta* since the decease of the wicked relative. After removing the *ekundu* from the ground the *mweta* has no more power over the family. Sometimes the ceremony is performed in the open, but it needs more cunning to deceive the spectators.

5. *Etoli*.—A barked post shaped bluntly at one end, and painted yellow and spotted red and blue. It is about 4 feet long; 18 inches are put in the ground and the other 2 feet 6 inches stand out of the ground. It is erected near a house belonging to a man who has suffered one of the *mēte* complaints (which see under *bwete* in Section XLIII). The spirit of the complaint is driven out of the patient to reside in the *etoli*, where it is appeased with offerings of food and drink. The food is thrown on the roof for the *mēte* in the *bitoli* to eat, and sugar-cane wine is poured on the *bitoli* for the *mēte* to drink, and camwood powder is rubbed on the *bitoli* to soothe and appease the *mēte*. The *bitoli* are the resting

places of the *mête* and the nicer they are made the better satisfied will the *mête* be to reside in them instead of troubling the patients. The *mête* are the spirits that inflict certain diseases.

6. *Jeko*.—A charm put across a road to keep the *moloki* (witch) and *mingoli* (evil ghosts) from entering a town, or passing along any path on which the *jeko* is placed. It is made by a *nganga* of anything to hand.

7. *Jelo* (sandbank).—The owner of the *jelo* charm if hard pressed by his enemies can take a handful of sand and throw it towards them, and a sandbank will immediately form and stop their progress until the charm owner is far beyond their reach. The innumerable sandbanks in the river favour this belief.

8. *Moselo*.—This is a fetish ceremony for the discovery of a murderer, and is performed in two ways. (a) A relative takes the nail parings and hair of the murdered man to the *nganga*, who makes some medicine, after which he says that the man was murdered by someone in the village. A saucepan of water is then placed on the ground, and each person in the village has to hold his or her hand over it, and the one whose shadow is seen at the bottom of the saucepan is the murderer. (b) The nail parings and hair of the murdered man are rolled in the gossamer of the palm tree, tied and laid on the ground, as representing the murderer, in front of the *nganga*, who says:—"If this man eats, or drinks, or walks in this country again let him be cursed by this ceremony." Then the *nganga* brings his knife down and cuts the *moselo* in half. If shortly after this a person becomes suddenly ill of a serious complaint and dies, he is regarded as guilty of the murder, and it is taken as a proof that the spell has worked.

9. *Lambu* (*ta lambu*).—The *nganga ya bwaka* when he wants to invoke the *nieta* or the *mingoli*, spreads a leaf on the closed fist of his left hand, and strikes it with the palm of his right hand, and if the leaf bursts the spirits have heard and come at his bidding, but if the leaf does not burst after three slaps he desists, as the spirits are recalcitrant. When he wants a particular spirit he calls its name as he strikes the leaf.

This is also the mode of driving rain away, or discovering how long it will be in passing away. (See above under *nganga ya mbula*.)

10. *Likato*.—A saucepan of marsh or forest water is procured, and some medicine is put into it. The saucepan is placed on the fire, to which none but the operators have access, and then, after due time, they say to the *likato*: "Will they kill us in the fight?" If the water boils up and fills the saucepan some of them will be killed, so they abandon the war; but if the water keeps low, they ask:—"Shall we kill some of them in the fight?" Then if the water rises in the saucepan some of the enemy will be killed and the war is prosecuted; but if the water does not boil over, it shows that they will kill none of the enemy, consequently the fight is dropped. The test is put several times before they consider it satisfactory.

11. *Likenge*.—A saucepan for finding witches (see above under *nganga ya likenge* for mode of procedure).

12. *Likuku*.—Some spears are stuck in the ground and a mat is drawn round

them enclosing a space in which a saucepan of water is placed and in that the witches are revealed. It is used by the *nganga ya liboni* (see above) for finding witches, thieves, and discovering future events.

13. *Likunda*.—If a woman runs away, her husband gets out her nail parings and hair cuttings which he has gathered for this purpose, and takes them to a *nganga* who puts them into a skin and returns them to him. The husband *ta lambu* (which see), and says: "If my wife stops to eat at the place whence she has run let her die quickly." The same is done to get back a runaway slave or to punish some one with whom the owner of *likunda* has quarrelled. For this reason nail parings and hair cuttings are always destroyed if possible.

14. *Liloki* = 15. *Likundu* = 16. *Elembia* = 17. *Ndemo*. There are aspects of these charms which are all alike in that a man who possesses either of them can go into the midst of his enemies and escape although they desire to tie him up. *Liloki* because he bewitches them; *Likundu* because he is too clever and crafty for them; *Elembia* because he fascinates them and causes them to forget their hatred; *Ndemo* because he becomes invisible to them.¹

18. *Lingundu*.—A very long, broad-bladed knife with curved points made in the Libinza lake district. When this knife is striped with a yellow pigment, it is used as a charm to cause sickness to a thief; and when put near the door of a sick man it will kill the witch that tries to enter. It is used for cutting the *elimo* spirit in half by the *mweta* spirit of a *nganga* to effect the death of a person who is the enemy of his client.

19. *Linjombi*.—A charm of yellow pigment put on each temple to render a thief cunning in stealing.

20. *Losenjo*.—A charm that gives great success in fishing.

21. *Mantuka*.—A charm used to render the owner invulnerable to all weapons used in fights and quarrels.

22. *Mokando*.—A cross stick on uprights rubbed with camwood powder, and arranged with a noose to catch any witches that try to enter a house or village, and is thus regarded as a health preserver.

23. *Mokombe*.—A plantain stalk bound with medicine to keep the owner's canoe from being swamped in a storm. The *mokombe* need not be in the canoe as its powers can work through any distance of space.

24. *Montala*.—A bundle, horn, or hollow bamboo with medicine in it. Used to render the owner attractive to women, to slaves, and to folk generally and thus make him successful in all undertakings. Handsome, healthy, prosperous men are supposed to be what they are on account of the benefits bestowed by this charm.

25. *Mopoto*.—A charm derived from the *mopoto* spirit, which enables its owner always to take prisoners in a fight, and helps him to disappear with them if pursued by the enemy.

26. *Mpete*.—A charm to prevent the owner from being wounded in a fight.

¹ The man rubs medicine on the body and then walks right through his enemies, and when they catch hold of him they find they have only caught his cloth.

This name is given to the brass ornaments on a state officer's uniform as the natives thought they were worn for that purpose, and not as a sign of rank.

27. *Mumbamba*.—A man is very unsuccessful in spearing fish although his opportunities have been good. This lack of success, he believes, is due to a pregnant woman in his family who has not performed the *mumbamba* rites of having her stomach snicked and camwood and medicine rubbed into the cuts. When this ceremony is observed his luck will change, so he thinks. If apparently there is no pregnant woman in the family he will believe that there is one who is hiding the fact. This is often a way of covering one's ill success.

28. *Mai ma mungunga* (= bell water).—This is used by the *nganga ya mungunga* (= wizard of the bell). A person is very ill and he charges his family with bewitching him. They deny the charge, so he challenges them to drink the water dipped in the *nganga's* bell, which will not hurt them if they are innocent, but will kill the one who is guilty. Anyone who refuses to drink it is regarded as guilty of witchcraft.

29. *Muntoka*.—A decorated saucepan of small sticks placed under a shelter, and the saucepan is supposed to be the dwelling place of the *bwete* spirit of *makwata* (a form of sleeping sickness). (See *eboko* and *etoli*, Nos. 1 and 5.)

30. *Mutummu*.—A forked stick or cane carried by a man, who has had *yambaka* (rheumatism), as a charm against the return of the complaint. If the stick is touched or broken by anyone the man will have a bad relapse.

31. *Nguma* (python).—A charm used for protecting wealth and slaves. If either is lost the charm can quickly recover them.

32. *Njombo* (eel-like fish, *Protopterus Dolloi*).—A charm that imparts all the slipperiness of the *Njombo*. It is used for fighting, thieving and raiding, because it enables its owner always to escape even from the very clutches of his enemies.

33. *Nkinda*.—A charm ring for neck or wrist as a cure for and preventive of diarrhoea. Especially used for babies.

34. *Nseka*.—A charm tied to any object to preserve it from robbery or destruction. It is made of anything, according to the preference of the user, as shells, leaves, skins, etc. Such a charm is often carried through the town to notify that something has been stolen and to bring a curse on the thief—the *nseka* is then made partly of the same material as the thing stolen.

There is no distinct word for *evil eye*, but one person is supposed to *loka* or bewitch the farm of another so that the produce—sugar-cane, cassava, or maize—will not grow. To remove the effects of the *evil eye* the owner of the farm calls a *nganga*, who knocks a stake into the farm, and, if a person is bewitching the farm, the stake is supposed to enter that person, and she or he will soon die unless they desist from their bewitchment. If through this same witchcraft goats die off or will not breed, the owner will find some one who for a consideration will look after them, and will *pretend* to sell them to him, so that the one who has been bewitching them will stop his evil practices, as he thinks the goats no longer belong to his enemy, and it often happens that the goats being taken to new pastures become

more healthy and breed, and this is sufficient proof that someone was formerly bewitching them. If, however, the owner cannot find anyone who will look after his goats, he calls a *nganga*, who takes a young palm and splits it into two equal parts and lays one on each side of the road, and then if the witch comes that way, and passes between the pieces of palm, he will become diseased and die.

A father (or guardian) curses his child by words, and then the child will neither grow well, wise, or rich; but this is only resorted to upon great provocation. Should the child become penitent and apologise for his evil ways he takes a large fish, or monkey, or a goat to his father and begs him to remove the curse. The father accepts the present and then eats the stem of a *munsangasangu* and spits the pieces out on the palms of his child's hand and says: "What I said, I said in my anger and I now remove the curse." The child is comforted and the two are reconciled. A person curses an adult relative in the following way: He rubs his thighs and then turns his naked buttocks towards the one to be cursed and says: "Be accursed." Early morning is reckoned to be the best time for making this curse effective. This is also done in the face of an enemy as a curse on them.

When cassava roots are dug up from the farm they are put into a hole to soak for a few days until soft and the poison is extracted. Should a woman find that her roots are being stolen from the hole, she takes a piece of gum copal, and fixing it in the cleft of a split stick, she puts it on the side of her cassava hole, and at the same time calls down a curse on the thief. Should the thief be a man he will henceforth have no luck in fishing, and should it be a woman she will have no more success in farming.

A very common curse used on most occasions is to *bete mobondo* or strike on the ground with a stick, and to mention the person cursed, and the person thus cursed will have dysentery of a very bad form, and the curser may say: "May I be cursed if I do such and such a thing," thus the curser may become subject to the disease should he ever break his word, *e.g.*, a woman has constantly angered her husband, and he will *bete mobondo*, and say: "May I be cursed if I ever again eat food cooked by you." Such a mode of procedure will bring a woman to her senses, and she will beg her husband to remove the curse from himself, for undoubtedly the curse goes further than the mere non-eating of food cooked by her. It means that he has put a tabu on her and will have no more to do with her—she will be married but not a wife. Should he after a time relent, the curse is *removed from the woman* instead of from the man by the following ceremony, which is called *bondola mobondo* (to reverse or remove the curse). A trench is dug and the women sing: "*Bondola bondo mobondo bondo* (remove the curse, the curse of beating on the ground)." A spot of red camwood powder is rubbed on the middle of the chest, or as they say, "over the heart," and the curse is removed, and the two are reconciled.

There are other curses used by old and young during fits of passionate anger as: *Wa na likundu* (die by witchcraft), *Wa na lilanga* (die by euphorbia poison), *Lela nyongo* (cry for your mother, *i.e.*, may your mother die). The last is a curse

bitterly resented and is only used when a person is greatly exasperated. When a person is undergoing any ordeal test he repeatedly uses the word *ngambu*, which means: "If I am guilty let the ordeal work against me, but if I am innocent then let my accuser be accursed and die." The *ngambu* curse is much dreaded.

To reverse the effect or effects of accidentally kicking a person or touching them with the foot, which is equal to cursing them, the person must turn round and slightly kick again the person touched, otherwise bad luck, etc., will follow the one accidentally kicked. Where we should apologise they kick again, and this is called *bandola* (to reverse the effects of the first kick). They are exceedingly careful not to touch a person with the foot in passing—that brings bad luck—and not to step over a person—that is an insult.

When a son or daughter is about to leave home for another town, or to travel and trade, the father or grandfather chews the leaves of *nsansanga*, spits them out on a leaf, and mixes some camwood powder with it, and the son (or daughter) has to rub a little of this mixture on his body every day, otherwise he will not find favour with those among whom he may live or travel. A son will not travel without this *makako*.

If a man loses a relative or has an enemy he goes to *nganga ya likenge*, who calls up in his saucepan of water the spirits of various people whose images are visible in the water, and the client, who sits by watching the water, allows one reflection after another to pass until the reflection of his enemy is shown in the saucepan, and that reflection or *elimo* (soul) he pierces at once with a palm splinter as a substitute for a spear, and the one who owns that *elimo* will sicken and die. Sometimes a piece of wood or plantain stalk was roughly carved to represent the enemy, and wherever it was stuck or cut the enemy would feel intense pain, and to stick it in a vital part meant death.

Divination was practised in many ways besides that referred to under *nganga ya losinga*¹ and also under *likato*² and *lingola*.³ There is also divination by wood ash on the same principle as ours by tea leaves. Then again, there was another form thus: If it rains to-morrow then so and so will arrive on the third day, but if it does not rain that is a proof that he will not arrive for many days. A bundle of splinters is taken, one of which is longer or shorter than the others, and the person who draws that particular one has to do the thing agreed upon beforehand, or if he draws that one a certain event will happen, and if he does not draw it then it will not happen. These modes are all called *jonga*.

Konga is the name given to a ceremony at which there is much drumming and the *nganga* dances until he works himself into a frenzy, and then communicates with the *mweta* and other spirits by whose aid he predicts future events and discovers witches. *Konga* is the power to perform this divination and the medicine that gives the power. Folk were often guided by their dreams, and under WAR will be seen divination by the movements of birds, snakes, and striking a foot against an obstacle in the road.

The general belief is that only one in the family can bewitch a member of

¹ p. 386.

² p. 391.

³ p. 364.

the family, and who would go to the trouble of bewitching one of his own family unless he was to benefit by the death of the bewitched person? and who benefits by the death of a father or a brother? Why, the son or another brother. Consequently, when a father is ill, the son is regarded with suspicion, and after trying all means to drive out the sickness, the patient will, as a last resort, give his son the ordeal, but not enough to kill. If he vomits it he is innocent, that is proved beyond doubt and no harm is done; but if he does not vomit, but becomes dazed and stupid—well, he is simply the medium by which the occult powers are working on his relative, and the ordeal dose will clear such powers out of his system, and being no longer able to use him as a medium the father or brother will recover. The lad is carefully tended until the effects of the ordeal have passed away, then he is warned not to let his body be used for such purposes again, and he is set free, and is looked upon by his playmates in the village with as much curiosity as a schoolboy just out of hospital with a broken leg. The boy's excuse is, and it is readily accepted by all, that he was full of witchcraft and did not know it. I knew a case of a cheeky urchin who received a box on the ears from his uncle, and the youngster turned round and said: "I will bewitch you." Shortly afterwards the uncle fell sick, and in spite of remedies and *nganga* he continued ill, but at last he made the boy drink the ordeal, and not vomiting it he was considered guilty of bewitching his uncle, who had the boy well thrashed and demanded 200 brass rods of the boy's father to pay the *nganga* for administering the ordeal, and to teach the boy to let other folk alone. The uncle pulled up all his houses and went to live at the other end of the town to get beyond the lad's influence. This uncle married another wife who had a young brother who was in my school. One day the uncle came asking for this lad in order to give him the ordeal; I refused to give up the lad for such a purpose, and "Besides," I said, "he does not belong to your family." (I had not heard of the marriage.) The man replied: "Yes, he does; I have married his sister, and he is bewitching me through his sister who is my wife, and my nephew who took the ordeal some time ago says that he passed on the witchcraft to my young brother-in-law." It thus appears that a mischievous boy can say he has passed on his witchcraft to another lad and so get that youngster into trouble.

The *nganga's white art*, *i.e.*, those means used for curing the people of their many mental and bodily ailments may, to us, seem foolish and inadequate, but there is nothing to condemn in practising it except that it deceives the people. Whether the *nganga* deceives himself—believes in himself—is a question difficult to decide. Undoubtedly through generations of inherited knowledge concerning herbs, etc., they have remedies that do good to their patients, and there are many faith cures, the result of an implicit belief in their *nganga* and the means used. The system is founded on quackery, but, like quackery in Europe, the remedy sometimes meets the disease, and such successes are remembered and talked about, and the failures are forgotten. *Black art* is practised, but this is condemned by the natives in as strong language as any white man can use. Those who practise

it have to pursue it in secret, or the hatred of the whole country side would fall upon them.

XLV. MYTHOLOGY.

When first I went to reside among the Boloki I found it very difficult to collect their folk stories, and the manner in which I discovered that they had stories, and the way I collected them, together with a translation of some of the folk tales, I have already published in *Folklore*.¹ Other stories with notes I will publish later as an appendix to these papers. Under the section on RELIGION will be found some information on their ideas about God, spiritual beings, and monsters, and I would refer the interested reader to Section XLIII on RELIGION, and to the above-mentioned issues of *Folklore*. They have also many stories about men and animals, and to such morals are attached. The stories are told on moonless nights around the village fires when it is too dark to dance and play, or around the camp fires when travelling or fishing. The stories depict the cunning way in which some animals outwit others—generally the smaller ones outwitting the larger and more cumbersome, that the biter is himself bit, and the bully overwhelmed with ridicule. Many of the stories try to account for the peculiarities observed in nature, as why birds build their nests in certain ways, or have no nests at all; the enmity among the various animals; the presence of dogs and fowls in the towns; the cause of death, and the origin of fire. Some stories would well illustrate the text: "Be sure your sins will find you out," while others are absurdly comic, and many of them are dirty. A line from some of the stories is often used as a proverb, or to call up the situation described in the story as a warning to a person not to try to over-reach another or he himself may fall. No European element is to be found in them, as they were procured before we could talk very freely with the natives, and certainly before our teaching had in any way influenced their thoughts and modes of expression.

Many of the stories are told for amusement, but most of them are told as true, even the amusing ones, and undoubtedly they embody the wit, wisdom, and philosophy of life. The stories were sometimes told in their palavers to enforce a point and drive home a moral. There is a legend that the moon was once a python, and made a road for itself on the earth. Some adventurous hunters trapped it, but on noticing there was no more moonlight they let it go, whereupon it sprang into the sky and never again returned to the earth. Some say that the moon dies every month, but others say when there is no moon that it has gone on a long journey. There is much shouting and gesticulating on the appearance of a new moon. Those who enjoy good health ask for it to be continued through the coming month, and those who are sick lay their complaint down to the coming of the new moon, and ask it to take away their bad health and give them good health in its place. They thought the stars were a species of large fire-fly, that formerly existed on the earth, but now gone into space. An eclipse is caused by the

¹ Vol. xii, 1901, pp. 181, 458.

moon or sun hiding itself, and shooting stars and comets are supposed to signify the death of a great chief. I have not met with any legends regarding the origin of the sun, of man, or of a deluge, or of the destruction of the world. There are stories of folk with tails, but of no animal ancestors; of dwarfs, and frightful monstrosities, but not of giants. When the end of a rainbow touches a town a death is sure to occur there, and the bright red glow occasionally seen at sunset indicates the death of a great chief. In the story of Libanza (see the section on RELIGION) it will be noted that the last adventure is very similar to our Jack and the Bean Stalk—the palm grows higher and higher as Libanza ascends it, and at last he reaches the fronds and alights on a new world, and by his bravery he kills a being who was daily swallowing up the people.

There were misty ideas concerning the rebirth of a dead person, preferably an ancestor. A few years before Stanley descended the Congo there was a general belief extant among the Boloki that many of their ancestors would appear in another form, and yet would be recognisable by similarity of features to those whose *appearances* the spirits took. When the white men arrived this belief seemed to be confirmed by the fact that they often thought they saw a likeness in the features, walk, or gestures of some white men to dead men whom they knew. I have often myself been amused when a motion, a glance, or some little peculiarity among these folk has called vividly to mind some person I knew at home. When we came here in 1890 my colleague was thought to resemble a chief who had died some time before, and I was thought to be like another who had died. We found a prediction extant that white men would come, and some of them would be like the chiefs who had died, but this slight suspicion of a belief in reincarnation may, I think, be accounted for by rumours of the white men having filtered through from both coasts. The Boloki thirty years ago were a strong war-loving people who travelled far and wide on the river; and slaves were bought and exchanged from widely different parts, and of course carried with them the news and rumours, true and false, of their last residence. This factor in the disseminating of religious belief, and the interweaving of those beliefs into what is often a patchwork whole, has not been properly allowed for in dealing with the superstitions of African races.

XLVI. HISTORY.

Formerly, the term Bangala was applied only to those natives who lived at, and in the neighbourhood of Diboko (Nouvelles Anvers), but in a work published in Brussels, called *Les Bangala*, by M. Cyr. van Overbergh and M. de Jonghe, the term Bangala covers an area reaching far east of Bopoto and west of Equatorville, north of the Welle and south of the Congo. This includes a dozen different tribes, talking as many distinct languages, having various tribal marks, and having very different customs, etc., and among whom there is nothing in common but their black skins and backwardness in culture. In my first paper I used the word Bangala in its original and restricted sense, but since seeing the above book I have

preferred using Boloki as a more definite term, applying to inhabitants of certain towns on the main river, on the Mobangi River, and the Libinza Lake. Intermixed with the Boloki towns were some towns belonging to a hinterland people known well to us as the Bomuna folk.

The Bomuna people, about the middle of the nineteenth century, came from the bush towns lying in the forest between the Mobangi and Congo Rivers, and settled on the banks of the main river. Not being a riverine people, they had no knowledge of swimming, and possessed no canoes. I knew them as very timid in all matters relating to water and canoes. They worked their way along the river's bank from the Monsembe district up river until they came to the Ejeba stream, near the village of Nyoi, which stream they passed by means of a stout cane creeper they found that happened to stretch across the water. Many passed, and while others were working their way hand over hand along the cane creeper it broke and severed the communication between those on the opposite sides of the stream. Those that found themselves on the eastern side of the stream continued their journey and founded the settlements of Diboko or Iboko, now Nouvelles Anvers. Thus the ancient people of Diboko were Bomuna of the tribe of Bobanga, of whom Mata Bwika is the best known to fame, being the headman who encountered Stanley, and on whose land the Congo Free State built their station of Nouvelles Anvers.

About forty-five to fifty years ago some Libinza Lake people from Bosesela, of the tribe of Boloki, left their town under the leadership of Munyata, and working through a creek came out on the main river near to Moboko. They paddled down river to the Mungala creek, just above Monsembe, which at that time was well populated with Bomuna. There Munyata made blood brotherhood with Munkua, the chief of the Bomuna, and settled there with his people. The Bomuna at that time possessed no spears, but did their hunting and fighting with sharpened sticks, the points of which were hardened in the fire. Munyata presented Munkua with a spear and received a fine young woman as a return present.

Munyata, the Boloki chief, was apparently a very greedy man, and although he had many wives yet longed for more, and was always asking Munkua for one of his. For a time Munkua occasionally gave one, but Munyata let it be known that any woman who ran to him would be retained, and so much was the Boloki chief admired and feared that one after another of the wives of Munkua ran to him until at last only one, his *Nkundi* (favourite, principal wife), was left, and she was eventually taken from him by force by Munyata. Munkua was so exasperated by this treatment that, taking the first opportunity that offered, he speared Munyata to death.

On the murder of Munyata the Boloki folk came out in crowds to avenge the death of their chief, and so successful were they with their iron spears against the sharpened sticks of the Bomuna that, although more numerous, the latter gave way before them and at last took refuge in a high *Molondo* (Bombax) tree. The tree was surrounded by the Boloki, who threatened to starve their enemies to death

unless they submitted, and apparently after some palavering the captured people had the privilege of selecting their own future owners. Thus one would say : " I will take so and so as my master," and on his request being agreed to he would swing down from his branch and take his place among the followers of his new master. In this way they divided themselves among their conquerors, and it seems from all accounts they were well treated by their Boloki masters.

Other contingents of the Boloki came out on to the main river, and wrested sites from the Bomuna at Monsembe, Lobengu, Maleli, and Bokomela, and up river at Bombilinga. In the meantime the Diboko Bomuna had increased in numbers and had possessed themselves of canoes, and learned the way to manage them. Their number had also been greatly increased and their passions inflamed by those who fled from the Mungala creek during the fight caused by the death of Munyata. These Diboko Bomuna so fought and harassed the Mungala creek Boloki that the latter fled to Mobeka, at the mouth of the Mungala River, undoubtedly passing behind the islands to avoid their enemies at Diboko. When first we went to live at Monsembe a very high tree that stood on the bank at the bend of the river was pointed out to me as their post of observation when watching for the Diboko Bomuna.

The Boloki tribe in 1890 possessed the following towns on the north bank :— Mobeka, at the mouth of the Mungala River, Bombilinga, many towns in the Mungala creek, Mosembe, Lobengu, in the Mangala creek, Moleli, Bokomela, and Mungundu. On the south banks they owned the towns of Bokumbi, Libulula, and Bolombo. At some time or other in the past the people of Mungundu, Bokomela, Moleli, and Lobengu were called Mangala, and gave the name to the creek in which their principal town, Lobengu, was situated. Perhaps there was a powerful *ju* (family) called Mangala, and this has been corrupted into Bangala, or the Mungala River was supposed to be the original home of these people, and as *mu* meant place, locality, and *ba* meant people, it was easy to call these people the Bangala. I am rather inclined to the latter origin of the name.

Near to Mobeka are the Ngombe people, who are also called Bokumbi, and this tribe is now (1908) becoming mixed with the neighbouring tribes, and as they are absorbed into them they no longer call themselves Ngombe or Bokumbi, but take the names of the peoples whose languages they learn. The people behind Diboko (Nouvelles Anvers) belong to the Mo-Kulu tribe, and the Bomuna of Diboko belong to the Bobanga tribe ; others, in between the Boloki towns down to Bokomela, retain their old name of Bomuna. Below Bokomela is the Mbonji tribe, that came originally from the bush. The Baloi towns on the Mobangi River are Boloki from Lake Libinza. The Lulanga people at the mouth of the Lulongo River are of the tribe of Eleko, and they are supposed to come from a creek just above Equatorville.

The tribe near the river or lake always ridiculed the tribe behind it in the bush, as the Boloki laughed at the Bomuna, and the Bomuna at the Ndobo people further inland. The Boloki were proud of their origin, and neighbouring people

acknowledged their courage and endurance, and preferred their friendship to their enmity. The following is an instance of their bravery and the long distances the Boloki paddled on their raiding expeditions :—In the beginning of 1891 there was a big fight just in our vicinity, and on inquiry we learned that the cause of the fight between the Boloki towns was this : A year or two before our arrival, the Boloki of the Monsembe district had paddled about 300 miles up river and had raided the Bapoto riverine towns and carried off a quantity of loot and captives, and the unsatisfactory division of the spoil had culminated in the fight that cost some few lives.

About 1870 there lived at Mobeka a chief who styled himself Monoko mwa nkoi, or mouth of a leopard, for he boasted that, like that animal, he never let go anyone unfortunate enough to fall into his clutches. He was a terror to the district, and a message from him made a whole town quake with fear, and a demand from him was instantly obeyed for fear of the consequences. He was a man of war, a cruel warrior who held life cheap. He burnt down many a town, scattered the people, or took them as slaves. On one of his raids among the Bopoto towns (which district is 150 miles above Mobeka) he was mortally wounded and carried back to Mobeka where he died. About the time of his death a large comet appeared which is described by my informant as being “like a large star with a hat on it.” It was seen for three nights in succession, and was regarded as a sign of the greatness of Monoko mwa nkoi. Abnormal appearances in the sky were the evidences either of the death of some great chief, whom they did not know because he lived and died among a distant tribe, or were a proof of the greatness of a chief who died within the limits of their district. Emania of Diboko is the name of another fighter whose cruel exploits were the subject of talk around the evening fire.

XLVII. INITIATION CEREMONIES.

Among the Boloki there were no secret societies and no initiation ceremonies of any kind. The face was tatued, the hair plaited, and the teeth cut simply because it was fashionable, and men and women liked to see these evidences of fashion and what they regarded as signs of beauty in each other. However, it is interesting to note that unless the two upper incisors were cut, the uncut man or woman was not allowed to eat and drink with those who were cut. This may now be a remnant of some initiation rite, but the reason for the objection is lost, and the lads and lasses can have their teeth cut at any age they like. Some are nearly twenty before they have them cut, others undergo the operation at twelve or fourteen. It is a matter of summoning up sufficient courage.

XLVIII. CIRCUMCISION.

Circumcision is practised by all the males. The operation generally takes place between the ages of ten and fifteen, but it is sometimes done later in life.

Several lads in a village decide among themselves that they would like the operation performed on them, and thereupon they go to a person, not necessarily a *nganga*, who knows how to operate, and he, upon agreeing to do it, ascertains whether the parents are willing for their boys to be circumcised or not, and should their consent be given, the boys go on the appointed day to the operator, and on paying him two brass rods each he cuts them with an ordinary knife, and the blood is allowed to fall into a hole dug for the purpose and is covered with earth. The boys select any growing plantain, no matter to whom it may belong, and hang their foreskins among its leaves, and when the bunch of plantain is fully matured they cut it down, and with some meat or fish make a feast for themselves.

After the bleeding has stopped, the operator covers the wounds with leaves, and puts a tabu on the lads that they are not to eat the heads and tails of fish until their wounds are healed. During the time the wounds are healing the lads can stop in the house of the operator or return to their towns and stay in their own houses. On the healing of the wounds some parents make a feast, others do not; it is quite optional. Great shame is attached to being uncircumcised, and a person can be cut at any age. The only reason given is that women do not want them if they are uncircumcised.

XLIX. MUSIC.

The Boloki are very fond of music, and very quickly acquire a tune. Their voices, as a rule, are loud, clear, steady, and flexible; and they sing from the chest. There are harsh, strident voices among them, but they are the exception, and at certain ages their voices break and become falsetto. Their singing is mixed, *i.e.*, men and women sing together, and is generally accompanied by an instrument, or by the beating of a stick on a plank, or the clapping of hands to give the time. In some ceremonies the women sing by themselves, at other times the men by themselves, and very often the two sexes together, as when travelling in their canoes. The companies sing in unison, and recitative time. Many of their songs are a combination of solo and chorus. When paddling their canoes, either a small drum is beaten or a stick is struck rhythmically on the canoe's edge to give time to the stroke of their paddles, and to the rhythm of their songs, solos, and choruses. As a rule one sings a solo and the others take up the chorus, and both solo and chorus are recitative. Their songs are generally topical, and as they paddle up or down river they give all the latest information of interest to the villages they pass. I have often been amazed at the rapidity and accuracy with which news was spread in this way. A canoe leaving Nouvelles Anvers (Diboko), where the State had a station, would carry up or down river all the gossip of the doings and sayings of the white men of the Station, accounts of their punitive expeditions, judgments passed on captives and prisoners, their treatment of the natives who had taken the taxes there, what new white folk were expected and who was leaving for Europe, etc. This singing answered another purpose. It gave warning to the village that a

canoe was approaching and that the folk in it were friendly. A canoe of any size that approached a town without singing and drumming was regarded as an enemy's canoe and was treated as such, *i.e.*, spears and stones, etc., would be thrown at the occupants of it.

Occasionally a professional singer would visit our town and teach the young men a new tune. He charged two or three brass rods per person, but would not teach the tune unless he had enough pupils to pay him, and then would stay a day or two until they had perfectly learned the tune, and when once they had caught it properly they would set their own words to it. A few years ago I wrote as follows in my note book:—"A professional dancer and singer has recently visited the town, and like so many of his European brethren, he was marked by some eccentricity in dress. He wore a belt of red and blue baize about 18 inches wide (the usual width was 4 to 8 inches) which made him the observed of all observers. Our professional in walking about the town put on a swagger fully in keeping with his position and dignity—his bells tingled, and his monkey and wild cat skins dangled to and fro. He took a large fee from the mourners who engaged him to dance and sing in honour of their dead relatives."

Their songs may be divided into three classes:—(a) Topical as sung in canoes for distributing news. (b) Local songs in which the events of the daily life of the village are temporarily recorded, as the bravery, cowardice, unsociability, generosity, meanness, thievishness, impotence, etc., of the men and women of village or town. These local songs have a great effect on the people, for they crystallize the public opinion concerning an individual, and the African hates nothing so much as being sung against or ridiculed in a song. (c) Songs at funeral festivities when the praises of the dead are sung.

Only drums and rattles were to be found at Monsembe among the Boloki, and they had neither wind nor string instruments. The following are the names and shapes of their drums:—1. *Mbondo*, a long, circular drum about 5 feet high, with a skin over one end, beaten by the flat of the hand. 2. *Lokole*, a wooden drum of hard wood with a slit in it, the kind that is generally called a tom-tom. It is used also for signalling. 3. *Mokoto*, drum like *lokole*, but with handles at the side and a foot rest. It was made of softish wood, and like the *lokole* was beaten with a stick. 4. *Ngoma*, a long tapering drum beaten with a stick. 5. *Iiwanda*, a circular drum 2 feet long. 6. *Nkole-nkole*, similar to *lokole*. *Mgboko* is a rattle tied on a spear and shaken in the dance. *Mampala* a rattle made of seed pods well dried, threaded together and tied to the ankle of the dancer. *Mungenju*, a small hand rattle with wooden handle, and having small stones in a bent piece of tin. The same name was also given to a basket rattle that had in it anything that would tinkle. In more recent times the Lower Congo *biti* was introduced, and I have often heard English tunes played on it. I was able to buy an ivory nose trumpet, and the man who sold it to me played a very good tune on it. The man did not belong to our district, and the nose trumpet and the *munduli* (ivory trumpet) were introductions from other parts.

One drum, the *lokole*, was used for "talking." By it they could signal messages, they could abuse their enemies, and warn their friends. When I asked some lads how it was done, they took their sticks and imitated the syllables of some words and so went through a sentence. This would have given them unlimited scope for drum messages, but when I pointed out that the same sounds could be understood differently by various persons according to the syllables they thought they heard in the sounds, I then found that for an invitation to a drinking bout certain notes were struck. The people would know who was having sugar-cane wine made that day, or a lad would have gone in the morning with verbal invitations to some of the headmen, and when they heard the notes on the drum they would go at once to the drinking place. Warnings, threats, and abuse each had their own sets of sounds or notes, that were struck in various order. Urgency in warning, vehemence in threats, and fierceness in abuse were shown by the rapidity and strength of the beats.

Many of the *nganga* used much drumming and singing at their ceremonies, especially at the rites for frightening and exhorting evil spirits. Such sounds were supposed to exert a great influence over their patients, and over those spirits of disease that were affecting them. Drumming also soothed the patient, and made him amenable to the *nganga*, so that in answer to his questions he could properly diagnose the case. Their mourning was said to be musical, for while they admired one whose *crying* was in tune, they jeered at another who had no rhythm about her wailing, and imitated her unmusical weeping to the amusement of all present.

They borrowed tunes freely from other tribes, and soon learned to sing all the English tunes we cared to teach them; but I do not think that any sounds affected them like the rhythmical beat of their own drums. To that beat they would paddle vigorously for hours beneath the tropical sun; dance perspiringly through a long afternoon, or through a whole night; fight recklessly, and drink their sugar-cane wine until their stomachs were well distended.

L. GAMES.

Some little girls would take pieces of stick or cassava roots to represent dolls, or as they called them *bana* (babies), and would tie them on their backs with an old rag, and play with them as such. An English doll was too uncanny, too much like a human, for them to play with; they did not understand it, and would put it away, or their elders would take it away and sell it as a charm. Parents fond of their children made small paddles, baskets, and hoes in imitation of their own, and the youngsters played with them when they went with their mothers to the farms, or their fathers in the canoes. Toy hoes and baskets were only given to girls; toy fish traps to boys; but toy paddles to both boys and girls.

The boys of the village made basketwork shields about 3 feet long and 8 inches wide, and with stout water grass and young plantain stalks as spears they took sides, and amid much laughter and good humour fought a mimic battle until one side was driven from the field—the village street. The precision with which they threw their imitation spears was a fine exhibition of dexterity.

Besides mimic war, the youngsters have their make-believe games of marketing, cooking, feasting, and housekeeping. The more expert among the lads make toy steamers in imitation of those running on the river, and it was interesting to see two lads approaching from opposite directions pulling the toy steamers behind, as they passed they would whistle three times each as a salute to one another, then came a long whistle as a sign to stop, and the "steamers" were supposed to stop at a beach and the two boys who were acting as captains and wearing any old hat they could find for the occasion approached each other, raised their hats, bowed, shook hands and then jabbered for a few moments in bits of French and any of their own syllables that sounded like French to them; then came the ceremonies of parting, and the whistling of a pretended farewell from their toy steamers and the *shu ! shu ! shu !* of the working engines. The lad pulling the steamer was engine, whistle, pilot, steersman, captain all combined, and seemed to enjoy it. The best model had the largest crowd of followers after it.

The following is a list of the games¹ I have observed played by the Boloki boys and girls:—

1. *Ndangu* (Lower Congo *ta mbele* is slightly different). The players form two lines (*mabenge*) facing each other. The first player A faces the first of the opposition line B; A throws up both hands and brings them down with a clap (*esaku*), and then darts out one hand, B does the same—claps his hands and answers (*tambola*), and if B's hand meets A's hand, A is wounded (*ajwe mpota*), and if A receives three wounds (*mpota iatu*) he dies (*awe*); if, however, the hands do not meet the first time A passes on to the next, and the next, until he finishes all in B's line or is killed, then the next to A tries until he is either killed or has been down B's line. Those who are "dead" stand at the bottom of their line. Three wounds on either side is a death. After all the "men" in A's line have played, B's line starts, and should he lose any they are redeemed in the following way: A's line lost say, five, and B's line lost, say four, A counts four of his five as redeemed and B counts his four as redeemed, thus over the first bout B has lost none and A has lost one. The game proceeds until all on one side are killed. The sharpest players stand at the top of the line.

2. *Ta mbali*, or hockey (Lower Congo *ta mbadi*), is probably a recent introduction by steamer lads from the Lower Congo, as the Monsembe lads had no open spaces for such a game until they played on the cleared opening in front of our station. I found hockey played most vigorously at San Salvador du Congo when I arrived there in the early part of 1882.

3. *Nkeka*, or wheel. The root of a plantain is cut into a wheel, and the players arm themselves with long sharpened splinters (*mbenge*) of bamboos; they divide themselves into two parties, which station themselves at about 30 or 40 yards from each other. Party A throws the wheel (*kula nkeka*) along the ground towards party B at the other end (*nsuku*), and as the wheel rolls towards them the boys of B throw

¹ For Lower Congo games I would refer the interested reader to *Folklore*, vol. xx, 1909, page 457.

the splinters at it, and if all miss, the other end chants: "Thud, thud, thud, bad marksman, die like a gazelle" (*Ju, ju, ju, bamai babi, bawana na npambi*); if some hit and some miss, those who hit say: "We have sent our splinters right through the rim of the wheel—the most fatal part" (*Yeke, yeke, nakeke na ndende na mimpesa*); if two hit, they say "Brothers truly" (*Jimi be*); if they all hit, they say, "It is absolutely lost and done for, *i.e.* it is no good looking for slaves from this side" (*Mampasa malambasana*). To win: Should B party hit the wheel with three splinters then three of A party become slaves, *i.e.*, they stand out of the game until they are redeemed; but if on the return of the wheel to A party that party hits it with four splinters they thereby redeem their three slaves, and place one of the other side in slavery. This continues until one side is in total slavery. The game excites great enthusiasm and encourages precision in throwing.

4. *Ngenza*.—A game in which small bamboo arrows are flipped at the fleshy mid-rib of a plantain leaf. Sides are taken, and the side with the best marksmen wins.

5. *Epapunga*.—They make a sucking noise with the lower lip inside of the upper, and the one not able to do it with the others (*Lembwaka lokela*) is killed, *i.e.*, drops out until all are killed but one, who wins.

6. *Ntamba*.—A kind of battledore. A ball (*Lingendu*) of leaves is made and thrown up, and is kept in the air by beating it with the palms of the hands.

7. *Nkulu-Nkulu*.—Two lines of boys sit on the ground opposite each other; the first lad of each line is called *moloi* (husband), the rest are called *bali* (wives). Each wife on the playing side interlaces her fingers, thus forming a hollow with the palms of her hands. The "husband" takes a small article and, passing his hand rapidly up and down the line of hands, he drops the article into one of the arched hands. The opposition side has now to discover who has the article, and the following conversation takes place:—Opposition says: "*Bananga-bananga*" (You players). Players: "*Eh!*" Opp.: "*Bankutu bengi!*" (Name of some leaves). Pls.: "*Eh!*" Opp.: "*Ba nyango ya bilulu*" (They are bitter leaves). Pls.: "*Eh!*" Opp.: "*Obe na nkulu, abete mungita*" (He who has the hidden article make the sound of *mungita*). Pls.: "*Kilibi!*" Opp.: "*Bakunguika*" (Make it again). Pls.: "*Kilibi!*" Opp.: "*Motu yona*" (That person). If the person thus pointed out is the hider of the article he shows it, and his side loses, and the opposite side takes its turn; if he has not the article, then the one who has it says: "*Eh! nabuti mwana*" (Oh! I have a child), and shows the article. It then counts one game to them, called *mwana wawi* (one child).

8. *Liba*.—A game of fives (and this very often precedes *peke*, or backgammon). In *liba* they throw up a palm nut, and then before it falls they swoop up with the right hand as many palm nuts as they can, and put them down and catch the descending palm nut before it touches the ground. The one who picks up the most in an agreed number of throws wins.

9. *Peke* (backgammon).—A number of holes are made in a circle on the ground, and the players either take as many palm nuts as they can in so many

handfuls, or procure them as in *liba* (see game 8), and the one whose nuts pass the holes of the other's wins; if his nuts fall short of the others, he loses.

10. *Lobesi*, or the game of pitch and toss with six counters.—The counters are called *mbesi*; the light side of the counter is *nke*, the dark side is *mpili*. The stakes (*libeta*) are taken up when the counters in three throws either fall dark side up (*mpili*), or light side up (*nke*), or three of each (*miu matu* = three eyes). The person putting down the stakes is *mobeti wa libeta*, the place of playing is *ekali*, and the turn to play is *ngala*, and *pula* is to demand a second throw of the *mbesi*. In this game there is always a great amount of gambling for brass rods and anything else of value. I never knew it to be played except for gambling purposes.

11. *Nsoko*.—For this game it is necessary to make a table (*juku*) of four lengths of plantain stalks, two 3 feet long, and two 2 feet long, and these are placed to make an oblong, and the space is filled with earth or sand in a concave shape, and over this some pieces of plantain leaves are carefully spread. The teetotums are made from the large calabar (*nsoko*) beans, and a hole is bored through the middle of each bean, and through the hole is pushed a splinter of wood to form a peg $\frac{3}{4}$ inch long on the under side and about $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches on the upper. This is called the *mundindi*. The *juku* and the *nsoko* being prepared, the players, as many as can sit at the table, take their places, and one takes the *mundindi* between the extended palms of his hands, and rubbing it to and fro to give it momentum, he drops the teetotum on the table, where it spins rapidly. In the meantime another has done the same, and on the two revolving seeds colliding, one is often knocked out, and then becomes the property of the one whose teetotum is left on the "board." If both are knocked out they begin again. If one teetotum holds the "board" for a round, the owner of it is *monzo* (the best spinner). He who procures the most seeds or beans belonging to the others is the winner.

12. *Molangu* (hoop).—The lads take sides, each side having a town (*mboko*) about 30 yards apart, and each lad has a piece of string from 6 to 8 feet long weighted at the ends. All being ready the hoop is rolled along from town A towards town B, and as it approaches a lad steps out and throws one end of the string at the hoop and lets the string run freely from his hand. His object is to entangle his string about the hoop. When the hoop stops and falls he goes and picks up one end of his string, and swings the hoop round his head as he takes it back to the throwing side. If he succeeds he has repulsed the enemy, and it counts one game to his side. If he misses the hoop, then the enemy has entered his town, and it counts one game to the town A, and town B has to roll the hoop to town A. If the hoop comes off while being twirled, then the side of the twirler loses, and he has to take back the hoop to his own town, and throw to the town of the enemy. Each lad steps out in turn for a throw of the hoop, and for a throw at the hoop.

13. *Nka*, or cat's cradle, is well known to the lads and lasses, and many an

hour is spent in working out different designs on their fingers and toes. The following are the names of a few patterns:—1. *Moleki na nkusu*, snare for a parrot, because of its similarity to a snare; 2. *Mwana muntaka*, girl, because of its large oval shape; 3. *Mwana lele*, boy, because it has a small waist; 4. *Julututu*, spider; 5. *Nkungu*, a triangular pattern.

14. *Nsau ya mai*, or water games, of which the following three are specimens:—1. *Nkoli* (crocodile). An active boy represents a crocodile, and diving beneath the water tries to catch the feet of his comrades, and others try to catch him. 2. *Tasana* (to find one another). One dives and keeps quiet under the water, while another searches for him. 3. *Munteko* (game of touch in the water). If one lad fails to catch or touch another, the others sing: "*Otenda tendaka yau nzala ya nkabu*" (You will not grow, you eat greedily, but are always hungry). The boy becomes angry at this taunt, and renews his efforts to catch one of them. The Boloki are good swimmers, great divers, and can remain under the water for a long time, and undoubtedly these water games help them to attain this at-homeness in the river.

The elder lads often got out their thin, well-balanced fighting spears, and having selected a standing plantain with a stalk from 3 to 5 inches in diameter, they would stand at from 40 to 60 feet away and throw in turn at the stalk. I have seen them pierce the stalk right through again and again.

The young girls had an interesting little dance, in which they formed a circle around one of their number, who was on all fours in the centre. As the girls in the ring sang about different animals, as the leopard, the hippopotamus, the crocodile, the elephant, etc., the one in the middle imitated the movements of the animal, and received ridicule or praise according to her ability to imitate the movements of the animal whose name was mentioned.




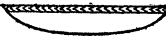





The men and women took very little part in any of the above games (except the men at Lobesi), but they took a large part in the dances that have already been described under previous sections, and in most of the dances the sexes were mixed. Wrestling of a rough and ready kind was occasionally indulged in by the lads, and round the fires of an evening stories were told with dramatic power, and conundrums (*lobulinginya*) were propounded and answered. Although Congo is a toyless land, and children are not catered for, yet from their loud laughter they seemed to get out of life a great amount of pleasure.

LI. SWIMMING.

All the Boloki are good swimmers and divers, and so much is this recognised that I have known it to be a proof that some men (under discussion) were not Boloki because they could not swim. The Boloki, living as they do near water, learn to swim at so early an age that it is regarded as much a natural action as walking. Infants of a few days are dipped and held under water several times twice a day—morning and evening. The hand over hand stroke is the most common, and they kick out with the legs, and tread water very well, but they


always dive feet first, never head first. They rarely if ever swim more than 20 yards from the beach, and I should not consider them long-distance swimmers. Through their water games (see Section L. GAMES), and through going under the water to set their fish traps, they have acquired the power of remaining under the water a very considerable time. The river varied in depth from 5 feet to 16 feet, according to the season of the year, and when the water was at its highest there was little or no fishing, consequently it was rarely they went into water above 10 feet deep. When a canoe was upset they were very dexterous in turning it over, bailing it out, and putting their possessions (such as were floating) back into the canoe, catching their paddles, and then climbing into their frail canoe again without upsetting it.


LII. NAVIGATION.

The canoes made and used by the Boloki are of two shapes. The first kind is used for travelling, trading, fishing, and fighting purposes. They are "dug"  out of solid trees, and measure from 10 feet to 50 feet in length, from 15 inches to 3 feet in width, and from 1 foot to 2 feet in depth. The larger the canoe the flatter the bottom, small canoes thus:—, and large ones thus:— the sides being slightly curved. The canoe's keel is thus:—. The outside top edge is generally ornamented in herringbone, chevrons, or parallel incised lines. The large canoes would safely carry forty paddlers and a quarter of a ton of gear. The canoes are made of cedar, mahogany, and other hard woods. The tree is felled and roughly shaped in the forest and then floated to the town of the maker. It is then drawn up out of the river and a rough shelter built over it to shade the worker and to keep the canoe from warping. A piece of *euphorbia candelabra* is tied to it, and the maker is not to drink water while he is working on the canoe, otherwise it will leak, and the charm keeps it from cracking and wards off evil influences. The maker chars as much off the outside and from the inside as possible; then he hews away with an axe of this shape  fixed in a handle.  Then he has a small adze that looks like a toy  beside ours, and  he has gouges in shape like an axe, only with a longer apex, thinner metal, and the sides turned thus:— near the bottom edge. The gouges are of various widths, and are tied to handles which are from 2 feet to 3 feet long, and are never struck with a mallet, but are driven by the force and weight of the whole body on the handle. The man puts the end of the handle against his shoulder, grasps it firmly with both hands, and then puts the whole of his weight and strength into the pressure. Canoe-makers are not confined to one class, but come from all classes—bond and free. Anyone who has a liking for the work gains skill in it by practice.

The chief generally sits about the middle of the canoe, and the crew is so arranged that the stern is down level with the water, and the bows well out of the water. The steerer stands right on the extreme stern of the canoe, and often a

branch is fixed in the stern to keep the backwash of water from entering the canoe. A good deal of water enters through the stern being so low in the water, and a lad to bail out the water forms, as a rule, a part of the crew. The paddlers stand along each side of the canoe, sometimes with one foot on the edge of the canoe, and sometimes with both feet down in the canoe. After hours of paddling they will sit on the edge of the canoe when passing a stretch of forest, but directly they near a town they are up on their feet and paddling in fine and proper style.¹ They paddle from 15 to 20 minutes on one side and then carefully change over to the other side. (See section on TIME.)

The paddles used are shaped thus :—  and are ornamented with parallel incised lines down the blade, and the handle has often brass ribbon wound round it, and a brass knob on the top, or the last 6 inches covered with brass wire, or brass chair nails. For a large canoe there are two steering paddles of the same shape as the others, but with much longer handles. One is used by the principal steerer in the stern and the other by a man in the bows. The man in the bows is generally a person of experience and position. He gives the direction for steering, for he can see the course immediately in front of the canoe (which the back steerer cannot do), and if the canoe does not answer quickly to the back steering paddle, then the front steerer uses his paddle to assist it. The safety of the canoe depends on the quickness of eye, prompt directions, and sharp sane actions of the front steerer—the stupid steering of the stern steerer can be corrected without danger, but a foolish order or decision of the front steerer spells an upset. The front steerer called out “*Ebale*”² (river), and meant in steering to steer out into the river and away from the bank; and “*O nse*” (to the land), and that meant to steer towards the bank or land. Just in front of the bow steerer sat the boy whose duty it was to beat time on a wooden drum, or, failing a drum, on the edge of the canoe, to give time to the paddlers. Just behind the chief sat a lad or man with a skin covered drum who accompanied the singing of the paddlers (see under MUSIC for the character, etc., of this singing). I do not know a more pleasant native sight and sound than to see and hear a well-equipped canoe pass either up or down river; the rhythmical beat of the drums, the recitative chant of their songs in unison, the flashing of the wet paddles in the sunshine, and the swaying of the paddlers as they bend to dip their paddles in the water, all have a charm peculiarly their own.

The second kind of canoe is shaped thus :—  These run from 6 feet to 10 feet in length, are very shallow, only $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ inch thick, and are made of light wood but durable. They are about 2 feet wide and about 5 or 6 inches deep. They are used for crossing swamps, marshes, creeks, ponds, and puddles, that abound in this flat

¹ To scoop water up and throw it from the paddles when passing a town or person is regarded as an insult and will be resented.

² *Ebale* is the old word for river, the new word *loi* was often used, and *o loi* (to the river) was a steering order and meant the same as *ebale*.

district. They will run easily over 6 or 8 inches of water, and will take two persons and some cargo.

There was no ceremony at the launching of a canoe. If the canoe was small the owner simply called his own family to help him push it into the water, but if the canoe was a large one he called his neighbours and friends to assist him. Every canoe before being launched was struck repeatedly by the owner or maker on the stern with his axe "to take away the weight." At the launching and beaching of a large canoe the helpers sang in chorus: "*Eyajaka we na mwali, beka mwali akula bwatu*" (You have always eaten your food with your wife, call your wife now to push (or pull) the canoe). This is their way of asking for a feed or a drink for helping to launch or beach the canoe. The owner of such a canoe either prepares a feast for his helpers or buys a demijohn of sugar-cane wine to share among them. This is not peculiar to helping with a canoe, for the same custom is followed in helping a man to roof his house, etc.

Punting poles were used in creeks and ponds, and also in the main river at low water. Canoes, as a rule, belonged to individuals, but large ones were sometimes bought by three or four families joining their moneys, and even by a village. In the bows of the river canoes were holes, one in each bow, and sometimes the canoe was fastened to the landing-place by a stick being passed through the hole and pushed into the ground, sometimes a rope was tied from the hole to a tree, and sometimes the canoe was sunk in the river by the bank and a few stout poles were rammed in alongside the canoe to keep it from shifting in the storms. The smaller canoes and marsh canoes were drawn high up the beach. Canoes paddled by large crews must give warning of their approach to a town by drumming and singing, or they can be treated as enemies and attacked.

The following words may be of interest as showing what a large vocabulary they have relating to canoes, etc. :—

Bwatu, general name for canoe.

Ebe, shallow, marsh canoe.

Epamba and *Motenola*, canoes of a medium size.

Yanda and *Nsanjako*, large canoes.

Mwanda, large canoe to take from 30 to 50 paddlers.

Mbaka ya mokia, stern of canoe.

Mbaka ya bo, bows of canoe.

Njaki, canoe bailer.

Mbamba, bracket for spears in a canoe.

Mokoi, edge of canoe.

Nsanga, fenced space in canoe for storing.

Libonda, canoe in the rough.

Luka, to paddle, and to go a journey by water.

Loselebeta, landing place.

Mokenge, first canoe a person makes, generally given to his parents.

Ekoli, canoe gouge.

- Mongi*, skilled canoe-maker.
Ekunda, a large crew.
Libongo, place for making a canoe.
Ebolo, patch on canoe.
Mokondoko, shelter in canoe.
Nkenge, small size canoe.
Litanda, space or capacity of canoe.
Emeleng' emelenge, canoe with flat broad ends.
Libengi, canoe with platform fore and aft.
Koja, to beach a canoe.
Kula, to launch or beach a canoe.
Lokenye, track left by a canoe.
Njamba, a lift or ride in a canoe.
Ekanga, usable part of a broken canoe.
Nkai, paddle.
Libale, blade of paddle.
Losumba, steering paddle.
Mobala, shaft or handle of paddle.
Enda, to steer.
Mwendi, a steerer.
Ta mwiko bu, steer sharp round a corner.
Ekola, steer towards landing place.

These are a selection of the principal words, and their number could easily be doubled.

LIII. WAR.

One can hardly dignify the quarrels and fights among the Boloki and neighbouring tribes with the name of war. There was no army and no organisation, but all the men and lads took part in the fight that affected their family or their town. Their fights may be divided into three classes—the family fight, the town fight, and the district fight. The second and third often grew out of the first.

1. The family fight. If a family had a quarrel with another family in the town, neither guns, spears, nor knives were used in any fight that followed, but always sticks. I do not mean to say that no man ever drew his knife on another in a town quarrel, but that when two families in the same town deliberately fought each other they used only sticks. They had talked until they were tired; it was not a case for the ordeal; and the ordinary methods of judging a case had failed, so they resorted to sticks, and the party driven off the "field" by sheer weight of blows was the loser. The losing side would then pay up and the affair ended. The other families in the town scarcely ever took sides, but looked on and enjoyed the performance. If a family of one town had a fight with the family of another town then spears, knives, and guns were freely used. If family A of X town went to Z town to fight family B, then the other families in Z would stand ready armed to

assist their neighbours should they not be able to repulse the enemy ; and should the other families in Z town help the B family and drive out the A family then the other families in X town will help A family on its next venture into the enemy's town, and what was originally a family quarrel becomes a fight between towns. It may happen that B family has not the sympathy of the other families in Z town, and they will stand by and see that family driven out and their houses raided ; and it also happens that the A family has not the sympathy of the other families in X town and they will not join forces with it to fight the folk who have repulsed them. This is put to the test in the following way : The head of the defeated family puts a plantain leaf over his shoulder one evening and walks through his town calling out the reason for the fight, the family against whom he is fighting and asking volunteers to help him and begging such to meet him next morning outside his house ready armed to accompany him. Very often no one turns up, and the man has to consider whether his own family will have a chance of success if he continues the fight, or some other way be found for settling the affair. If the head of the family is an important man and of known bravery, and can command a large following of slaves and relatives, and there is every prospect of success, then a large number of volunteers will turn up the next morning. When the families in Z town see A family returning to the assault with so many volunteers they will at once go to the assistance of their hard-pressed neighbour, for the honour and safety of the town are at stake, and it now becomes

2. A town fight. The X town goes *en masse* to fight the enemy, leaving behind only the women, the children, the aged, and the sick. If X town is driven back by Z town and is unable to defend its town, then the women and children are carried off, the aged and sick killed, the town raided, everything portable is carried off, and the houses burnt to the ground ; but if X folk, although driven back, are able to defend their town, they will set sentries for the night, and next day send their biggest head-man with a plantain leaf over his shoulder to call up volunteers from the other towns with whom they are friendly, and then it becomes a war between district and district.

When men went to fight distant towns their wives were expected not to commit adultery with such men as were left in the town, or their husbands would receive spear wounds from the enemy. The sisters of the fighters would take every precaution to guard against the adultery of their brothers' wives while they were on the expedition.

Some put fetish "medicine" on their spears to give precision of aim ; others rubbed them with a vegetable poison made from the burnt ashes of *Munsansanga* leaves ; and others went to the *nganga ya ndemo* to render them invisible to the enemy. It is impossible to keep the arrangements for an attack secret. There are always friends and relatives who will inform their friends, etc., on the other side, and the drums are beaten and the fighters prepare for the attack. The head of the family whose quarrel it is arranges the fight and leads the van with his own family, slaves, etc. If necessary he takes counsel with the heads of the other

families helping him. I have never known them to make a night attack. They often lie in ambush, and will capture if possible those who fall into the trap, and will kill those who try to escape. Attacks were often made in the early morning soon after 3 o'clock. No scouts were used, but when necessary sentries were placed, and when they became sleepy they would arouse two of their comrades to take their places. The fighting could not be dignified with the name of battle, but was simply an affray, a *mêlée*, in which there was no order and no words of command. No truce was allowed, but when one side was tired of the fight or was getting the worst of it they sent a *Molekaleku* or go-between to arrange a meeting and the terms upon which blood brotherhood can be made. (See Section XLI. COVENANTS.) A man of conspicuous bravery who has killed a man receives congratulatory presents, and always has the first mug of wine served to him as long as he retains such pre-eminence, and he has no difficulty in procuring volunteers to aid him in any of his personal quarrels. When a man kills his opponent in a fight he cuts off the head and removes the lips, which he thoroughly dries in the sun, and then sticks in brass chair nails and wears them as an ornament with as much pride as the Victoria Cross is worn—it is the man's medal for bravery.

The Boloki when attacking a town will often divide into two parties, and one division will attack the place in front by water and the other by land. When chasing an enemy they throw their light, thin, fighting spears in the air, and these turn and come down head first and pierce the shoulders, and I have known some to enter the wrist and come out at the elbow, and others enter the top of the arm and come out also at the elbow. For warding off spears they have shields, and also 6-inch woven belts wound round and round the waist, and some have cuirasses of hippopotamus skin to cover the back. The cuirass fastens in front, and at the fastening there is generally a dagger in a sheath, which is easily drawn. There were a few flint-lock trade guns among them, but they relied on their light, thin spears and knives of various lengths and shapes. The Boloki, among the Congo people, are acknowledged to be the fiercest and bravest in a fight, and are greatly feared by the other tribes. Lads who could not obtain spears used sticks with sharpened points that had been hardened in the fire, and with these they harassed the enemy.

Prisoners taken are held to ransom, and if not ransomed they are retained and sold or killed according to the whim of the captor. The first prisoner taken by a man was given, as a first fruit, to the man's father, or failing him to his nearest relative. Women very often became the wives of their captors. The chief cause of quarrels and fights on the Congo is about women, and although the ostensible reason may be a drunken quarrel or a debt, yet if you will only push the matter far enough to its real origin you will find a woman at the bottom of it. Directly after blood brotherhood is made all may be friendly so far as seeming outward appearances may show, but I know from experience that the conquered are only awaiting their opportunity of revenge. (See Section XLIII. RELIGION, for omens about war.) Prisoners taken in war belong to their captors, and the same applies

to all kinds of spoil. The bodies of enemies are carried when possible from the field and eaten at a general feast. If the prisoners are not redeemed they become slaves, and while young ones may be amalgamated with their conquerors and eventually become part of the families of their owners, the elder ones who have their own tribal marks well defined take nothing but a servile position in the town of their new masters.

LIV. CUSTOMS.

Rudeness, discourtesy and lack of sociability are greatly condemned by the Boloki, and will be punished in *longa*, or the nether regions to which their spirits go after death; hence they are very punctilious about saluting each other whenever they meet, visit, or pass one another. The following are the morning salutations:—

Olongoi o! You are awake. Answer: *Nalongoi o!* I am awake.

Obimi o! You are out. Answer: *Nabimi o!* I am out.

Later in the day, when a man is passing another's house, he will say to the man sitting inside or outside his house:—

Ojali o! or *Ol' o moi o!* You are alive (exist or sit), or you are there.

Answer: *Najali o!* or *Na' oni o!* I am alive, or I am here.

If the townsman sees the visitor first he says:—

Oy' oni o! You have come here. Answer: *Nay' oni o!* I have come here.

If the visitor stays a little time chatting, he says on leaving:—

Nake o! I go. And the other responds: *Oke o!* You go.

If a man is ill he is greeted thus:—

Okeli Boti o! You are a little better (*bolau* is understood). After his illness the greeting is: *Okeli bolau o!* You are good, *i.e.*, you are better. And the answer to the first is *Nakeli boti o!* I am a little better; and to the second, *Nakeli bolau o!* I am well.

To leave out the *O!* is for the greeting and response to lack cordiality, and the emphasis on the *O!* and the tone in which it is uttered are indicative of the feeling those greeting one another have for each other. *Bwanda* is the word used in greeting a superior, and the answer is *Bika* (these words have lost their meaning); but a superior greets an equal with the same salutations as an inferior does an equal, *i.e.*, *Ojali o!* *Obimi o!* *Oy' oni o!* etc.

There is another salutation used by a person to an equal, the answer to which is very various, and in fact every person has his own reply according to his circumstances, and the way in which he thinks his neighbours regard him at the time. A man greets another by saying *Losako*, blessing on you; and he replies *Ngai nkumbaku*, I am the one who is cursed, *i.e.*, the people in the town are always cursing him, or he fancies they are. Or the reply may be *Bansina*, they hate me, *i.e.*, the folk in his town do not like him; or *Ngai nsu ya mai*, I am a fish, *i.e.*,

everybody likes me just as everybody likes fish; or *Nakalela bana ba ngai*, I am weeping for my children, said by one mourning over some great loss or bereavement. A vain person probably arrogates to himself a phrase indicative of his egotism, while a despondent one will use a sentence that does not truly reflect the attitude of his neighbours towards him, although in his humility he may think so. The word *tata* was expressive of respect, and as such was used by a slave to his master, and a son to his father; and I have also heard a father call his son, and a mother call her son, by the same word *tata*, hence I think that while *tata* may be translated sometimes as father it is a respectful way of addressing a person. A woman never called her husband by his title, if he had one, but by his ordinary name. There was a curious saying after one had sneezed, viz., *Ngai nya motu mosusu*, "It is not I, but someone else," and this was accompanied by a clapping of the hands expressive of astonishment. It meant, I am surprised that you want to call away my spirit (the spirit is supposed to escape from the nostrils), I am not the person you think I am.

Food is served first to elders, and if visitors are present they take precedence according to age; but in serving out sugar-cane wine and in walking on the road the chief or head of the family is first, and the others follow according to seniority; then the wives of the chief in any order, and the other women behind them. In dividing food, as meat and fish, the one who divides takes the portion left after all the others have taken their shares, and in this way they have a guarantee that the portions will be equal in size and quality. If a saucepan of fish and another of cassava are put before five or six persons for them to eat, and although there is no division, but all help themselves from the same saucepans, yet they will be careful not to eat more than a fair share. Any greediness is condemned, and if persisted in others will refuse to eat with the greedy one, and he will become an object of ridicule in the village. As a rule, members of a family were polite to each other, and any departure from their rules of courtesy was regarded with disapprobation. Guests were treated with hospitality, and were protected by the family they were visiting; and I never knew a guest to come to harm during a visit.

Women and children were treated with kindness—such kindness as they knew; and I have seen men and women go through the town with their arms round each other's waist, not once or twice but many times. There was little drunkenness among the women; but for a woman to become frequently drunk was not regarded with shame, but if she neglected her cooking through drunkenness she was condemned by all the women in the town. During fifteen years I knew of only one or two cases of drunkenness among women. It was not condemned in either men or women, but was looked upon with good-natured amusement. When a man went "on the drink," he pinned a leaf in his hair to show he was drinking, then if he abused anyone no notice was taken of it; and if he entered into a contract which he afterwards considered was to his disadvantage he need not ratify it, because he had a leaf in his hair—a sign of his fuddled condition. Chiefs and

headmen were addressed as *monanga* (chief, lord), or as *mata* (headman, and first born of the family).

The natives were fond of water, and bathed frequently during a hot day; and children were bathed regularly twice a day. They washed their mouths both before and after a meal, and generally carried a native tooth-brush about with them and applied it frequently during the day. The tooth-brush was a piece of cane three or four inches long, frayed at one end. Both men and women would occasionally pay a hairdresser to comb out their hair nicely and plait it into three plaits, two standing out at right angles to the temples and one standing out above the forehead. They also frequently rubbed their bodies with palm oil and camwood powder, and would sometimes blacken their eyebrows. During her periods a woman was considered unclean, and was not allowed to cook her husband's food, and had to make a wide detour to avoid passing near any group of men; neither was she permitted to touch any fetish belonging to anyone else or her menses would be very profuse. The women shaved off the pubic hair, and kept shaved until they reached an advanced age. Each woman shaved herself. Men and women did not eat together, as it was accounted immodest and indecent for a woman to eat with a man, and it was *infra dig.* for a man to eat with a woman. The women had a few words used only by them—just two or three swear words and oaths; and a few words used only by them for utensils, but when necessary they would use the ordinary or men's words without any hesitation. A woman is unclean for a month after confinement, and then she washes and is accounted clean, although she will have washed every day of the month. During this time no man will go near her, nor will a man eat anything she has cooked, but children who have not arrived at the age of puberty will visit her house freely.

LV. REPRODUCTION.

Boys and girls from an early age until puberty have free intercourse with each other, and I believe that later there is no public condemnation if the girls are not betrothed. It is only when money has been paid for the exclusive rights in her that adultery is condemned—it is an infringement of another person's rights. It is rarely that one sees an illegitimate child, either they have means of preventing pregnancy or of causing abortion. Then, again, likely young women marry at an early age, and should a child be born soon after the marriage, the husband has no particular objection. Among a people like the Boloki no registers of birth are kept, and in writing about their ages there is no pretension to accuracy. It is generally agreed among us that menstruation begins at twelve years of age, and girls marry at about sixteen to eighteen years of age. Premenstrual connection is desired by men because they like it, and also because they can indulge freely and there is no palaver, and it is not until the beginning of the periods that girls are guarded from promiscuous intercourse. It must be remembered that a man has to buy his

wife at a very heavy price, and if his family is not able to help him, he, unless exceptionally fortunate, cannot save enough to procure a wife until he is thirty or even older.

Enlargement of the breasts is the only sign accepted as a proof of pregnancy, and about three months before confinement the woman goes to a *nganga* (see Section XLIV. MAGIC), who puts certain pigments on the stomach, and from that time the husband has no further intercourse with her, or his luck in hunting, fishing, etc., will not be good. In childbirth the woman lies on her back, and when the child is delivered the "cord" is not cut until the placenta comes away. The midwife, who is an expert in her way, attends the patient and licks the child after birth to clean it. Labour is generally very short and easy, and in an hour or so the woman is walking about. Death during delivery is very infrequent, but should it occur no attempt is made to save the child—"If the mother dies the child dies." The period of suckling varies from six to eight months to fifteen to eighteen months, but never longer, and any woman may suckle another woman's child. During the suckling period the husband has no sexual relations with his wife, or the child will become thin, weak, and probably die.

Abortion was produced by the drinking of a bitter decoction made from boiling *kungubololo* leaves, which is said to be very bitter, like quinine. There are other modes of procuring the same results, but my informant was not acquainted accurately with them. Abortion was practised in order to avoid the trouble incurred by children and from hatred towards the husband whom the woman might desire to leave at any time, and if she had children by him her relationship to her husband was so complicated thereby that she could not easily leave him. Of late years—from 1898 until the present time—the maladministration of the Congo Free State has caused a tremendous decrease in the birth-rate: (1) From deporting the virile young men of the towns to act as soldiers, labourers, etc., leaving only the old men and boys in the towns. (2) Through the constant state of alarm in which the people lived; the daily expectation of their towns being burnt down if they failed to pay to the last portion the exorbitant and oppressive tax demanded of them every fortnight. The women refused to bear children, and if they became pregnant they caused abortion, for they said: "It is difficult enough to save ourselves when the State soldiers arrive, and how could we save our children?" There is no doubt that previously to 1898 the birth-rate exceeded the death-rate, for it will be seen under Section XLVI. on HISTORY, that the people had swarmed again and again like bees from one locality to another, and had wedged their way in between other peoples and established large, new towns.

The death-rate among children was very large, for the ignorance of proper treatment in illness, colds, fevers, etc., is such as to account for many deaths. It is truly a survival of the strongest; and this undoubtedly accounts for the absence of cripples, delicate persons, and feeble-minded folk. It is a struggle for life from birth upwards, and only the fittest survive in the fight. My carefully considered opinion is that on the Upper Congo polygamy did not tend to large families, but the reverse.

I have known a man with twenty-five wives have only one child really his own. Another man had eight wives and only five children, and they were all by one wife. Another had five wives, and he had four children by one wife and none by the others, but one had a child by another man, and he counted it as one of his own. I found the same state of things on the Lower Congo, viz., that polygamy meant small families, and the reason was not far to seek—a few old men owned most of the women and the strong young men were without wives, and this resulted in a great amount of adultery, and the women to screen their lovers prevented pregnancy or caused abortion. On this subject I wrote a long letter to the *West African Mail*, and it was published in the September or November number of 1908.

If a woman does not give birth to a child, she will take her sister to her husband that he may have a child by her. This is called *boko loboja*; to give one in place of—. If a man has one child by a wife and no more, he thinks someone has bewitched his *liboma* by taking the family's stock of children from there and hiding them. It appears that every family has what is called a *liboma*, it may be a pool (*etema*) in the bush or forest, or on an island; it may be a creek (*mojiba*), or it may be a Bombax cotton tree (*molondo*). These places are the preserves for the unborn children of the family. The disembodied spirits (*mingoli*) of the deceased members of the family perform the duty of supplying these preserves with children to keep their families strong and numerous. They have misty ideas as to how these *liboma* are supplied with children (called *bingbongbo*), but I have a suspicion that underlying the *liboma* is some idea of reincarnation—some thought there was a rebirth of certain deceased members of the family, and others thought that the *mingoli* had spirit children, and such were sent to the *liboma* to be endowed in due time with bodies. (See *nganga ya bingbongbo* in Section XLIV. MAGIC, for the power these unborn spirits are supposed to have over the health of boys and girls.) If a man does not have a child by a wife, then she is simply barren (they always think it is the woman's fault), and there is nothing more to say; but if he has one child by her and not a second, then he thinks that the other members of his family have bewitched her so that she might not be able to get another child from the *liboma* that there may be more for themselves; but should none of the family bear more than one, or at most two, children by their wives, then some other family through hatred or jealousy has taken by witchcraft the children from their *liboma* and hidden them. Only the family to which the *liboma* belongs can give birth to the unborn spirits there.

If a man finds a snake called *mwaladi* (snake with red marks on it) lying by his side when he awakes, he takes it as a sign that he will have a child by his wife. If a woman is sitting or lying down and a *mwaladi* snake approaches her she remains perfectly still, and if it passes near her she thinks it is an omen that she will soon become pregnant. She sprinkles a little powdered camwood on the snake as it glides by her. The child born after an omen of this kind is not regarded with any special respect, nor is a special name given to it.

The afterbirth is always buried, but the umbilical cord is hung in a plantain

tree, and the fruit, when matured, is cut down and cooked with fish to make a feast for any friends and neighbours who care to partake of it. This plantain is called *likemba ja nkoko* (the umbilical cord plantain), and the original idea underlying the feast was that the cord imparted certain properties to the plantain that made them a counteractant to sterility. There was much sterility.

Twins were not frequent, but when they did come they had to be treated properly. Three days after the birth of twins (*masa*) the mother took them in her arms and danced in front of her house before the villagers, who joined in a chorus which they sung over and over: *masa e maolela*, the twins cry for you. The mother was decorated with leaves, sprays of leaves, and twigs, the same as for an ordinary birth. These were made into garlands for her head, stuck into her waistbelt, and fixed on her wherever it was possible. At this ceremony the names are given which are the same for all twins, and these names are retained through life. Other folk can change their names according to fancy, but twins never. The first born of twins is called *nkumu*, and the second *mpeya*. The first born is always carried on the right arm, and the second on the left arm. Whenever the mother replies to a salutation she must give two answers, one for each child; and should she greet anyone she must duplicate her greeting, that each of the twins may be recognised. She must carry the dual idea further than that, for she must eat not with one hand, but with both, that each child may be properly nourished. Presents must be given in duplicate, or the one not receiving a present will fret, become ill and die, for the sickness and death of either child arises from carelessness in the observance of these rules. The twins are expected to cry together, rejoice together, and should they fail in unanimity in these functions of joy and sorrow it is because one is sulky on account of the above rules not having been properly observed. When one of the twins dies the mother borrows a baby of the same age to put with the living one that it may not fret.

LVI. ABNORMALITIES.

There are rare cases of albinos (called *yeme*), and they are regarded with respect, and although they may marry, there are many women who, through fear, refuse to have them. The skin is a dirty white with a tint of pink in it. The hair is curly and very light, and the eyes are red and intolerant of the light. They are repulsive looking, and one is glad to turn the eyes quickly in another direction. Those I have seen were men, well developed and healthy looking, except that the skin had some rash on it, which may have been due to the strong rays of the sun on a delicate skin. They suffer considerably from the strong sun, probably as much as any white man would suffer who had to go about in tropical Africa in a nude condition. There are infrequent cases of auburn hair (*nswi ya so*), but the eyes are not different from those of other people.

With the exception of supernumerary toes and fingers, the deformities I have seen have been due to disease. People with a sore on the under part of the heel

often walked on the toes or side of the foot so long that at last they could not walk properly.

Umbilical hernia was very common, scrotal hernia was frequent, and hernia in the groin was occasionally seen. I also met with a few cases of elephantiasis, and a non-infectious form of leprosy—the back of the hand and up the arm nearly to the elbow was covered with hard, scaly, white skin.

LVII. ARTIFICIAL DEFORMITIES.

One artificial deformity has already been described, viz., the formation of the cock's comb (*likwala*), the tribal mark up the forehead. They have another—the cutting of the two upper front incisors to sharp points **UVVU**. I once said to a native: "Your teeth are like a dog's"; and he instantly replied: "White man, yours are like a bat's, and we don't like bat's teeth." They pay two brass rods for cutting the teeth, and two brass rods for every time they bite the operator. (See XLVII. INITIATION.)

The eyelashes are pulled out as a mark of beauty, and the eyebrows were sometimes shaved off.

LVIII. MEDICINE AND SURGERY.

The following is a list of the diseases, etc., from which the natives suffer. Perfection is not claimed for the list, but it is fairly complete:—

1. Scrotal hernia. *Liboke* denotes an early stage, and the word also means a parcel, a bundle; *benda* is a later stage, when the hernia is large; and *linkuku* the last stage, when the hernia reaches the knees. I have noticed two or three examples of this.
2. Paralysis from sickness, *boboku*. I never saw a case of this.
3. Small-pox, *kokotu*. We had an epidemic of this disease about 1893. Some died from it, and many others carry the marks to this day.
4. Bad diarrhœa, *bolete*, is supposed to be the result of being cursed.
5. Bleeding at the nose from any cause, *bololongo*.
6. Insanity, *bomwa*; and 6A, mild insanity, in which there is extreme foolishness, *lemanana*.
7. Madness of a violent nature, *mokalala*.
8. Idiocy, *bowewe* and *evelewete*.
9. Backache from sexual excess, *bongembe*.
10. Cough, *ekokôtu* and *yoko*. Coughs and colds were very common.
11. Crack in skin, *etena*. This was common and very troublesome, especially when on the sole of the foot. The hard skin would take months to heal.
12. Crippled limb, *etengumwi*. This was very rare, and resulted either from a wound received in a fight, or from a burn, or from walking

on the toes, heel, or side of the foot when there was a crack in the sole.

13. Nervous condition, *jita-jita-jita*, twitching.
14. Bad fever, *molungi juku juku*, heat or fire plenty plenty. Fevers were frequent among the natives, but yielded to simple treatment. The temperature often went very high.
15. Poor state of blood indicated by frequent crops of boils breaking out, *libembe*.
16. Great debility, *lela*.
17. Patches of pustular sores, *lifwanja*.
18. Sore throat, *lilele*.
19. Yaws, *lingala*, more often used in the plur., *mangala*.
20. Gonorrhœa, gleet, *lisabu*.
21. Puffy condition of the body, probably dropsy, *lontutu*.
22. Blindness, *lulanda*, not common.
23. Sleeping sickness, *luwa* and *yobi* and *makwata*.
24. Form of non-infectious leprosy in which the skin becomes a sickly white, indurated, cracked, and peeling. It is found generally on the hand and arm below the elbow, and is called *munkana*.
25. Very bad rheumatism, *yambaka*. Persons suffering from this complaint must not burn the wood of a certain tree called *lobaka*, or the pain will become more acute.
26. Deep seated ulcers of syphilitic origin, *mundongo*.
27. Intestinal worms, *munsobi* and *munsembe*.
28. Profuse menstruation, *mwajakongo*.
29. Dysentery with much blood, *mwajakongo*.
30. Ague fever, *nyankili*.
31. Chest complaints of all kinds, as pleurisy, pneumonia, etc., are called *ntulu*, chest; to feel or suffer from such is *oka ntulu*, hear, *i.e.*, feel the chest. They also called it *mobanji*, the side or ribs.
32. Elephantiasis, *mungita*. Not very common.
33. Abscesses and boils, *litunganaka*.
34. Umbilical hernia, *muntolu*.
35. Asthma, *likoko*, *i.e.*, wheezing of the chest.
36. Scabies, *mputu*.
37. Fits and convulsions, *bonsinga*.
38. Extreme debility and sciatica, *yombi*.
39. Boil, *ndala*, very frequent.
40. Mild form of rheumatism, *mokoko*.
41. Cataract of the eye, *elalei* and *molondo*. Common.
42. Blind in one eye, *muntelele*. Occasionally seen.
43. Ganglion on back of hand and wrist, *etai*.

In addition to the above, there were stomachache, toothache, soreness of gums, headache, sympathetic buboes, ulcers caused by chigoes (or jiggers), etc., etc.

The Boloki attribute diseases to several causes, such as broken tabus, witchcraft, certain evil spirits, as the *mingoli*, or disembodied spirits; the *mēte*, or spirits of diseases, *i.e.*, spirits that give individual complaints; *mieta*, or spirits that give family complaints and epidemics; and *Ejo*, the spirit of wealth, who frequently demands human sacrifice, and some people who have bad diseases and die are regarded as sacrifices to this spirit. Cursing is also considered as being able to cause complaints.

Mono is the general name for medicine, and may mean a daub of simple pigment on the affected place, or some complicated concoction that has taken some time to prepare, and much thought to arrange. From a study of their diseases it will be seen that they fall into two classes:—(1) Those whose symptoms are observable and easily diagnosed, as gleet, dysentery, insanity; and (2) those whose symptoms, while apparent, are difficult to diagnose because their causes are hidden, as those named *lela* (great debility) and *luwa* (sleeping sickness). The former are regarded as simple sicknesses, called *bokono*; but the latter are put to the credit of the *mēte* and other spirits, or to the evil influence of *moloki* or witch.

When the sickness is *bokono* herbs are used, medicines are made, and tabus inflicted; when the sickness is caused by the *mēte*, *bitoli* or stick charms are erected before the patient's house, and he is put under various tabus; and when the sickness is by the *moloki* or witch, the first object is to discover the witch, or failing that, by powerful charms to counteract and overcome their malign influence. There is another cause of disease, but it is not discoverable until after the patient's death, when the *nganga* holds a post-mortem examination on the corpse to find whether the man was bewitched to death, or in trying to bewitch someone else was conquered by the charms of his opponent and paid the penalty with his life, *i.e.*, A wants to kill B by witchcraft, but B's fetishes, charms, etc., are so strong that, in protecting their owner B, they also overcome the witchcraft of A and kill him. The *nganga's* verdict that the deceased died as the result of his own witchcraft has a very interesting and widespread effect on the people. It exonerates the *nganga* from all blame, for while he may drive out *mēte* or spirits, and deal with other spirits by his powerful charms, and while he may overcome the witchcraft used by someone else against his patient, if he is innocent of witchcraft himself, yet how can it be expected of him to save a patient who himself is full of *likundu* or witchcraft? Thus, to "save his own face," the *nganga* after his post-mortem examination declares in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred that the deceased died by his own witchcraft. The result of the verdict is that the corpse is buried and no one is accused of being a witch, and consequently no one has to take the ordeal. During my residence among the Boloki, although many took the ordeal for various reasons, I never heard of one taking it for bewitching a person to death. The verdict generally given was *awi na likundu*, or he died by his own witchcraft, and many a time I have heard the friends of the deceased protest

against this charge, for they considered it an insult to the memory of their departed friend, and insisted that he died by the act of God (*awi na lo la libanza*). Some sicknesses are especially regarded as the result of breaking a covenant, as dysentery or *bolele*, or the outcome of a broken treaty, as wounds and death in a fight, or the result of a wife's unfaithfulness while the husband was away at the fight, as wounds in a fight.

In cases of simple *bokono* medicines are made from herbs for inward or outward application, fomentations of leaves are applied, and massage is often beneficial, and in many cases charms and amulets are supplied to the patient. In cases of serious *bokono*, as small-pox, dropsy, etc., one who has recovered from the sickness very often sets up as a healer of the same, for who knows better how to cure an illness than one who has had it? These healers of specific diseases were not *nganga*, and were not regarded as such; and if they failed to cure, the patient was taken to a *nganga* as the last resort. The fees of the former were moderate, as a quack doctor's compared with the fees of the professional man. Of these healers there were a large number, and it would be impossible to give an outline of their practices, for each followed his or her own method, and tried to keep that method as secret as possible, and even when fomentations or herb decoctions were used, the names of the herbs were kept a profound secret. Simple massage was a favourite operation, and much enjoyed by the patient, and its curative qualities were not placed to the credit of friction, warmth, magnetism, but to the fetish power of the rubber. A more complicated kind of massage was practised by the *nganga*, during which he pretended to extract all kinds of things—palm nuts, stones, and bits of iron—from the patient.

Cupping, called *nyunya*, was often practised, and has already been mentioned under a previous section. Sometimes it was simple bleeding, and at other times it was cupping proper with horn and suction. The part to be benefited was snicked with a knife, and a horn which had at the upper end a hole was put over the cuts. The operator put a pill of clay or soft wax into his mouth, sucked at the hole, and with his tongue put the wax over it. This he repeated until the air in the horn was exhausted and then the blood ran freely. The clyster was used for relieving pains in the stomach. A small calabash was filled with water in which some herbs had been boiled. The patient laid on his stomach and the reed tube was inserted in the rectum and liquid from the calabash was poured into the reed; but sometimes they had a calabash with a very long neck, and this was inserted and the liquid allowed to gravitate into the bowels. Of late years the natives have imitated the white folk and have used soapy water. The native name for the clyster is *njanggo*.

As stated above, most of the diseases in the list are called *bokono*, sickness, illness, complaint, etc., and it was only when they did not yield to the ordinary simple treatment that they were regarded more seriously as the result of witchcraft, or obsession by a spirit called *bwete*, e.g., an ulcer would show itself and be treated with fomentations, etc., but if, as sometimes happened, the ulcer spread and drained

the strength of the patient a *nganga* would be called and the cause sought for either in witchcraft, the breaking of a tabu, or the action of a *bwete* or spirit. Those complaints numbered 16, 23, 25, 30, and 39 are supposed to originate in one of these ways, and it is the object of the *nganga* to discover which, in order to use the right means. The *nganga* beats his drum near the patient, talks excitedly, chants various phrases, the sense of which neither he nor the people very often understand, but the lilt of the metre together with the rhythm of the drum make the patient sway to and fro and have a hypnotic effect on him. When he is worked up to the right pitch, the *nganga* asks him, "Have you eaten anything (*i.e.*, have you broken a tabu)?" The patient takes no notice. "Have you done anything (*i.e.*, have you broken a covenant)?" The man takes no notice. "Are you bewitched?" or, "Are you bewitching anyone?" To these questions no answer is given. "Have you a *bwete*?" The patient jerks and twitches his body, beats his arms, and sways more vigorously, and thus it is known that the patient is obsessed by a spirit or spirits, and the next thing is to discover whether the *bwete* is *bwete bwa lela*, or *luwa*, or *yobi*, and so on, and that point being decided by the jerking of the patient's body the *nganga* proceeds to make the necessary charms and put the man under the proper tabus. This ceremony is called *mobalu*. There are modifications of this ceremony, in which only rattles are used, and not drums, and many women sing and shake rattles round the patient, who lies in the middle of the ring well anointed with oil, or there may be only a few present, and the drum is used, and the patient taken inside a mat enclosure with the *nganga*, but the principle is the same.

It will be noticed that the diseases originated by the *bwete*¹ (plur. *mête*) or spirit are not those that can be seen, as dysentery, dropsy, gleet, etc., but unseen diseases marked by weakness, debility, lack of energy, etc., and are caused by the *bwete* affecting the life springs, that is the soul of the individual.

The following are some of the methods used by the *nganga* in dealing with the more occult diseases of obsession by *bwete* :—

1. *Bowa*.—The patient lies on his back. The *nganga* has a saucepan of boiling water by his side. He kneels by the patient and shakes some leaves over him, dips his hand in the water and rubs the stomach of the sick person, and in a short time shows a palm nut as having come from the patient. This is repeated again and again, and each time a palm nut or a stone, or a piece of iron, is shown as having come from the patient, and these are taken as evidence that the *bwete* or spirit is being expelled.

2. *Kuya lela*.—A drum is beaten by the *nganga's* assistant. The *nganga* ties strings with many knots in them round the patient's wrists and neck. He then rubs him with a preparation of palm oil and camwood powder, puts a tabu on him, and makes and erects some *bitoli* sticks. The patient is told that whenever he eats he must throw some of his food over his shoulders (he must not look round) for the *bwete* or spirit to eat. *Kuya* means to turn over, and *lela* is a disease caused

¹ See Section XLIII, RELIGION, for an account of the *bwete* spirit also for the *mweta* and *ejo*.

by a *bwete*, or it is the name of the spirit that causes certain symptoms, hence *Kwya lela* is to turn over or conquer the evil spirit called *lela*, its full name being *bwete bwa lela*.

The following are some of the remedies used:—*Kuta* is to heal quickly the cuts of a badly wounded man by placing him on a shelf and lighting a fire under him so that the smoke enters the wounds. *Ngele* are leaves for drawing boils and abscesses to a head. *Moteba* leaves are boiled and rubbed on a patient suffering from sleeping sickness. *Longele* is brass rod. Some medicine is tied to a brass rod, and it is then worn to strengthen the arm or the feet. Some wear it for rheumatism. *Makulu matuki* leaves are good for sores and wounds, and the juice of the leaves is put into the eyes for sore eyes, and some eat the leaves to cause pregnancy. *Makalala* are small sticks of powerful "medicine" used for soothing the violently mad.

Ligatures are tied—one above the wound, and the other below the wound—for a snake bite, and some bitter plant (*Bololo*) is given to the bitten person to chew. The *nganga* also "scrapes the wound to get out the teeth left by the snake." There are persons and even families who handle snakes with impunity, and these are supposed to have snake medicine. Such a person is sent for if the patient is suffering badly from a snake's bite, and on his arrival he and the bitten person will clasp each other's right wrist, and the snake-man will beat the arm of the bitten person to drive the *ngenge* or poison from him into himself. I have never heard of a death from a snake bite, but I have seen nervous people very scared after being bitten by a snake.

There is a word *yengola*, which means to kill or drown a slave who is too ill to recover.

Natives endured the heat much better than the cold. The palm oil and camwood powder, used so freely as a cosmetic, protected their bodies from the direct rays of the sun, and I think the same cosmetic was a slight protection from the cold air; but in the cold they seem to crumple up and lose all energy. Wounds from knives and spears healed readily. Blood poisoning was very rare. Syphilis is to be found, but it is not common. I believe it came with white people and Zanzibaris. The interested reader should, in connection with this section, read the Section XLIII on RELIGION, especially that part dealing with the different spirits, and also Section XLIV, on MAGIC and MAGICIANS.

SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES TO PART II (*supra*, Vol. XXXIX, pp. 416–459).

Section XXX, p. 427. SLAVERY.

A slave badly treated by his master can run and break the *eboko*, or fetish saucepan, belonging to one of the *nganga*. Then the *nganga* will demand such a heavy price from the master (as he is responsible for the action of his slave) that he will prefer to leave the slave in the *nganga's* hands to paying the redemption price. Public opinion would be very pronounced against a slave who broke

the *eboko* for insufficient reasons. A female slave would not break the *eboko*, because she would be worth more than the compensation demanded, and on its payment she could be tied up by her former master and sold far away, after a bad flogging. She would run away and be done with it; but a male slave who did not want to leave the neighbourhood would break the *eboko* of a *nganga* of the neighbourhood and thus remain in the district and be better treated.

Section XXXV, p. 440. MARRIAGE.

Breaking the *eboko*, or fetish saucepan, is used for another purpose: a man's wife has been stolen from him, and all other means having failed to regain her he goes to the *nganga*, tears his cloth, and breaks the *eboko*. This action calls attention to the case and arouses widespread interest. The *nganga* must take up the case or he will lose his dignity as a *nganga*, and folk will lose their respect and fear for his *eboko*. So he places himself at the head of a movement to punish the wife stealer, and the men who would not have helped the husband volunteer to fight under the *nganga*, and when the woman is captured the husband has to pay heavy damages for tearing the cloth, breaking the *eboko*, and for the help of the *nganga* in the fight. He will try to recover all the damages from the stealer of his wife.

SUNDRY NOTES.

Bull-roarers were known and made; but the elders did not like the lads to play with them, and they gave as their reason, "You are calling the leopards." This was because the whirl of the bamboo made a sound like the growling of a leopard.

Spirit in trees.—When a person wanted to take the rootlets of the *nka* tree for ordeal purposes, he selected the tree and then spread a leaf on the closed fist of his left hand and struck it with the palm of his right hand, and if the leaves on *nka* tree trembled he knew that the tree was strong and fit for use; but if the leaves remained quiescent, it was a sign that the *nka* was weak and unfit for use so another and another tree was sought until he found one that responded to the striking of the leaf.

First teeth.—Boys and girls when their first teeth came out always carefully hid them, for if they were found by anyone no other teeth would come in their place; but an adult would throw his teeth anywhere, for no other teeth could take their place.

A funeral rite.—Members of the deceased one's family slept for two or three weeks on leaves; then they had a drinking bout of sugar-cane wine to which all the town was invited, and after that they returned to their ordinary sleeping mats.