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38. On a Ceremonial Mask and Dress from the Upper Zambesi, Now in the British Museum.

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On a Ceremonial Mask and Dress from the Upper Zambesi,
now in the British Museum. By T. A. Joyce, B.A.

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The appended photograph represents a ceremonial mask and dress collected by Mr. F. Schindler from the *Valovale* of the Upper Zambesi, South Africa.

The mask appears to be made of bark cloth stretched over a wicker frame and covered with a thick layer of black vegetable gum. There are holes for the eyes and mouth, and the teeth are represented by a small piece of pale wood with a jagged edge. The face is ornamented by strips of red felt and a pale paper-like material. At either side of the head is a short curved piece of bark to represent a horn, and from the top of the head rises a thin curved projection bound with felt; the chin is fringed with a beard of white goat's hair. The dress is composed of grass-string net, coloured red, white, and black, and so woven that the colours form a pattern of stripes and concentric triangles. It is in four pieces, viz., a neck-piece, to which is attached the mask, a vest with long sleeves, and two stockings reaching the entire length of the leg. The dress is held together by means of a string lacing. In front is fastened an apron of leopard skin, behind a similar apron of lynx skin. According to information supplied by Mr. Schindler, it is the dress of a supposed resurrected spirit, worn by the men who attend the boys in the initiation camps. Initiation, accompanied by circumcision, takes place at any age between six and fourteen, always in the dry season. The boys remain from four to seven months in these camps, at first entirely naked, later on clad in a grass kilt, at which time they are occasionally allowed out. When they finally return home they are dressed in all the finery they can command. The camps are strictly private, and all paths leading thither are marked off by small heaps of dry wood; any woman trespassing near the camp would be severely beaten. There are four or five different masks worn at each initiation, and each has its own particular name; the title of the specimen represented is *Chizaluke* (the fool).

From time to time the masked men appear in the villages and the women collect and dance round them. The dress and mask are now in the British Museum.

T. A. JOYCE.