

ISLAM IN THE WEST AND CENTRAL SUDAN¹

(See the accompanying map at the end of this article)

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I

GEOGRAPHICALLY the present investigation covers the territory extending from the Sahara and the Coast of Upper Guinea to Kamerun, and thence in a north-easterly line to the western border of Wadai; that is to say, the territory which has received its distinctive character from the political, economic, and religious expansion of the Mandingo and Hausa and the Fula peoples. East of Lake Chad, the Hausa and Fula influence is less marked, but even here the communications towards the west have been so active that it is scarcely possible to separate Bornu and Bagirmi from the states on their western borders.

Islam began to gain ground in the Sudan towards the end of the

tenth century. Its early spread was coincident with a movement of population from North Africa. Light-coloured pastoral tribes inhabiting North Africa and the Sahara advanced southwards, occasionally in political raids, but more often in peaceful penetration. They thus reached the land of the blacks, and having been allowed to settle among them and to intermarry, they soon gained social and political influence through their more highly developed intellectual powers and their state-building capacities. This movement and intermixture of races began long before the Mohammedan era in the Sudan. The kingdoms of Ghana, Melle, and Songhai owed their existence to it.

Three peoples became of decisive importance for the spread of Islam in the West and Central Sudan. These were the Mandingo in the west, the Hausa in the centre, and the Fula throughout the whole territory. The two first are of negro race, and their expansion has been peaceful and economic; the Fula, a light-coloured Hamite race, owe their influence chiefly to warlike action. Mandingo is a general term which includes the great mass of the indigenous population of the interior between the middle Senegal and the upper Volta, consisting of dark-skinned peoples with a partial intermixture of lighter coloured elements, and possessing a certain unity in spite of marked differences in language and cultural development. From early times the Mandingo have been distinguished for their industrial activity; in addition to a well-developed agriculture, such industries as weaving, dyeing, working in leather and in iron, are in a flourishing condition. They began also at an early period to take an energetic share in the commercial and political activities introduced from the north, and thus developed an open-mindedness and intellectual alertness. Along with other elements of the northern civilization, they also adopted its religion. At the present day the great majority of the Mandingo are Mohammedans. They have become the pioneers of Islam largely through obtaining an almost complete monopoly of the petty commerce of the Western Sudan. As merchants they traverse the entire territory from the Atlantic Coast to Northern Togo, Dahome, and Nigeria, and even as far as the oases of the Sahara.

A similar position to that of the Mandingo in the west is occupied in the Central Sudan by the wholly islamized Hausa people. They also are a negro race with some admixture of Hamite blood, which has had a decisive influence upon their language. Like the Mandingo,

the Hausa, on the foundation of agriculture which still forms the occupation of the majority of the population, have developed a variety of industries and a strong commercial instinct. In the political sphere their achievements have been less striking than those of the Mandingo, but on the other hand, their commercial expansion, and consequently their civilizing and religious influence, has been more far-reaching and penetrating. They have the advantage of possessing a common language, admirably adapted to serve as a medium of commerce. It is understood and spoken at the present day far beyond the bounds of the Hausa nation proper, probably by not less than twenty million human beings.

The Hausa and Mandingo, in spite of their higher culture, are in the eyes of the primitive negro peasant a benevolent and religiously tolerant aristocracy belonging to his own race, the benefits of whose civilization are welcomed and appropriated. The feeling towards the Fula is entirely different. Their lighter colour made them from the beginning appear foreigners to the negro, and wherever they obtained political power, their rule was strict and severe. Their energy and sternness, together with religious fanaticism and a certain restlessness which is quite alien to the easy-going negro temperament, made them almost universally hated. At what period they entered the Sudan cannot be settled with certainty. The immigration certainly took place before the close of the tenth century. Their presence in Senegambia at the beginning of the thirteenth century can be proved, and they were already at that time uncompromising Mohammedans. From Senegambia they extended eastwards over the whole Sudan as far as Bagirmi and Wadai, and individual groups penetrated into the Egyptian Sudan and the north-east Congo. The manner of their occupation of foreign territory is described in the literature of the sixteenth century in terms which apply exactly to the process at the present day. As unpretending herdsmen they seek from a heathen chief the favour of pasturing their cattle in his territory. In spite of their racial superiority, of which they are fully conscious, they do not hesitate to enter the service of well-to-do negro households as cowherds. They keep themselves separate, however, from the owners of the land and form a community of their own with their own civil and religious head. They soon find an opportunity of gaining an influence in the political life of their heathen environment, and of making their superior intelligence and will-power felt. They have thus taken a prominent part in the

political development of the whole Sudan from Futa Toro to Adamawa.

The first emissaries of Islam in the Western Sudan of whom there is any record were Berbers. The conversion of this people took place in the period between the eighth and twelfth centuries. From the ninth century onwards we hear of missionary undertakings among the Berber tribes, partly still heathen and partly lax Mohammedans, which overran the Sahara and north-western Sudan. The best-known of these missionaries is the Berber Abdallah ibn Yassin, who worked in this neighbourhood in the first half of the eleventh century, but with little result. With his disciples he founded a monastery on an island in the Senegal, and from this centre extended his missionary efforts. When these proved largely unsuccessful, he attacked the recalcitrant Berbers and compelled them to accept Islam, which became much more acceptable to them as the religion of a powerful general. The process of islamization now extended itself by means of Berber missionaries and conquerors into the Sudan proper, and went on continuously. When in 1076 the Berber tribe of the Senhadja made itself master of Ghana, Islam became the religion of the upper classes, and soon afterwards found an entrance among the common people. Contemporaneously in the eleventh century Arabs, or people with Arab blood in their veins, settled in the Sudan, and no doubt exerted a religious influence on their environment. A connexion between the islamized north and the still heathen southern countries, was also furnished by the active trade in gold, salt, and slaves, which can be shown to have existed from the ninth century.

In the second half of the eleventh century the new religion was so dominant in Gao, the capital of the kingdom of Songhai, that, in accordance with the provision made on the occasion of a particular accession, only a Moslem could be made king. It is probable that here also believers from the west of North Africa began the work of conversion. This does not, of course, exclude early influences from the side of Egypt, to which there was a trade route at that time.

The first Moslem king of Melle (Mali) is mentioned in 1213. Beginning from this time the chronicles contain frequent accounts of the magnificent pilgrimages of the Sudan kings to Mecca. In 1326, Mansa Musa, the most important of the rulers of the kingdom of Melle, undertook the Hadj with a large following, in the course of which he erected mosques in Gao and in Timbuktu.

In the progress of Islam in the Sudan, an important part was played by the kingdom of Songhai, which had its centre of gravity in the bend of the Niger ; here the first Mohammedan king reigned as early as the beginning of the eleventh century. The most powerful of these rulers was Mohammed Askia (fourteenth century), whose political energy was equalled by his intellectual culture and religious zeal. His numerous wars, which were intended to spread the true faith and at the same time to establish a great Mohammedan kingdom, were carried on chiefly in an easterly direction. Following the example of his predecessor, Sonni Ali, who in 1429 had undertaken an expedition to Gurma, Mohammed Askia in 1498 made an attack on the then important kingdom of Mossi, and demanded that its king and people should adopt Islam, but without success. After a partial devastation of the country, Askia withdrew without having accomplished anything important. Expeditions against Borgu and Agades were equally without important religious or political results.

The Arabic writers recognize that this negro chief, who called himself *Emir el Mumenin* and *Khalifa el Moslem*, ruled his subject peoples with justice, increased the prosperity of the country, and furthered the advance of Mohammedan religion and science. Like other monarchs he undertook a pilgrimage to Mecca with a large following. There he established a pious foundation for pilgrims from the Sudan, which shows the frequency of pilgrimages from the Western Sudan at that early period.

Although these military and partly religious undertakings of Mohammed Askia and other Sudan kings did not lead immediately to the conversion of large masses to the religion, they were none the less an important means of furthering the advance of Islam. Mohammedanism in this way presented itself to the heathen from the beginning as an imposing political power and a higher culture, and could not fail to impress them. In many instances a part of the Mohammedan army of conquest or some of the camp followers remained behind in the occupied territories as a permanent garrison, and so became a centre for the new religion. Their influence was all the greater since they belonged for the most part to the more highly civilized Mandingo tribes, which were superior to those among whom they settled. It is probable that Mandingo influences contributed to the rise of the kingdoms of Dagomba, Ashanti, and Gurma, situated in the neighbourhood of the Volta

river. In general, the eastward movements of the Mandingo, and especially their trade journeys in this direction from the time of the Songhai kingdom were a constant and important means of spreading the Islamic civilization and religion.

The end of the kingdom of Songhai drew near when, towards the end of the sixteenth century, the rulers of Morocco began to turn their glances towards the countries of the Niger, and attempted to bring them and their valuable trade under their own control. In this endeavour they were successful after a prolonged struggle. In order to strengthen their hold on the new provinces so far separated from the mother-country, they adopted a policy of race assimilation. Mulai Ismail (1672) formed an army of Songhai warriors whom he intermarried with Moroccan women, and colonies of Moroccan soldiers and officials (*Ruma*) were settled in Songhai. These also intermarried with the natives, and naturally gave a fresh impulse to Islam.

A last reaction of heathenism against Islam, which was now gaining the upper hand in the whole of the Western Sudan, found expression in the political uprising of the Bambara, a tribe of the Mandingo which had remained heathen. Continued molestation by their Moslem fellow-tribesmen, the Mande Jula, and the Malinke, drove them at the end of the sixteenth century to combine and found the Bambara kingdom with Segou as its capital. With varying fortunes, in which civil war and pressure from external enemies (such as the Soninke and the Fula, who were gradually gaining strength) played a part, this heathen government, with an almost entirely heathen population, survived till the second half of the nineteenth century.

Among the crowd of political agitators and ambitious adventurers who knew how to clothe their aspirations in a religious dress and thereby gain support among the people, there arose in 1850 a personality of larger mould in Hadj Omar, a born soldier, who with a noble nature and genuine piety combined great energy and courage, tainted, however, by the ferocity characteristic of the Sudan. His ideal, like that of Mohammed Askia, was the foundation of a great Mohammedan theocracy. So far as his continuous wars allowed him leisure, he attempted to introduce a regular government in the conquered territories, to purify Islam and to spread the Mohammedan religion, pursuing the latter object by summary methods and in accordance with the principle *cujus regio ejus religio*. Even the Bambara were compelled by him to adopt Islam.

Omar's upheaval began among the Mandingos of Bambuk and the Tukulor on the Senegal, and with his enthusiastic followers he advanced thence to Futa Jallon, where a holy war was proclaimed in 1861. He reduced Segou, the ancient Bambara capital, and dethroned the king, Mari Jara, making his own son, Ahmadu, sultan in his stead. Hadj Omar next directed his steps in a north-easterly direction against the Fula of Massina, who were also conquered, and compelled to accept his nephew Tijani¹ as their ruler.

Hadj Omar's son Ahmadu of Segou was finally reduced to subjection by the French in the eighties. The latter restored the heathen Bambara king Mari Jara, whereupon a large part of the population who had been forcibly converted to Islam returned to their ancestral religion.

In the earlier political developments of the Western Sudan, the Fula are not very prominent. It is possible, though we have no exact information on the point, that the ruling families of the older kingdoms were partly of Fula origin, since at that time a considerable proportion of the population consisted of Fula, and wherever we come across this race in history we find that it invariably assumed a leading part. In the nineteenth century the Fula succeeded in bringing the Central and a considerable portion of the Western Sudan entirely under their own control. Their most important creation in the west was Massina, in the western part of the bend of the Niger. This kingdom was of special importance for the intellectual development of Islam, and became the centre of an advanced Islamic culture, which was almost wholly the work of the Fula. Massina gained greater political prominence through the rise of Malam Ahmed Lobbo, a Fula, who started in 1816 from Sifaua, near Gando in the east, with a Fula army filled with enthusiasm for religious conquests, and overran Massina, which, at any rate in the principal centres, was already thoroughly islamized. After prolonged conflicts with the Fula colonies which had already been established in this district, as well as with Arabs, Tuareg, and Bambara, he succeeded in erecting a kingdom under strict Moham-

¹ Tijani was eventually (1894) compelled to flee from the French. He is still living in Medina in Arabia and enjoys esteem as a scholar. There may be found in Arabia and Egypt a considerable number of Mohammedans of quality (chiefly Fula) from the Western and Central Sudan, to whom it is an intolerable thought that they should be in subjection to a European, that is to say, a Christian, power. These exiles are largely supported from the revenues of the Khedive.

medan rule.¹ The capital, founded at the beginning of the nineteenth century, was Hamdallahi ("God be praised").

Another focus of Islamic culture is the once famous trade centre Timbuktu, for the possession of which the Arabs, Tuareg, and Fula long contended, and thereby brought about its decay. The city has for centuries been a home of Islamic science. Famous teachers, chiefly Arabs and Fula, had their schools here and drew students from a wide area. Ibn Batuta, who visited Timbuktu in the middle of the fourteenth century, tells us that "unless one went very early to the mosque on Friday it was impossible to find a place, so crowded was the attendance."

In the small states further east, Islam, as has already been indicated, was introduced through the political and civilizing influences proceeding from the already islamized west and its larger kingdoms. Thus Kong, which has been famous from early times for the production of kola, was colonized from the west in the seventeenth century by Mande Jula. Towards the end of the eighteenth century, they became the rulers of the town of Kong and the surrounding district, which they then converted to Islam by peaceful means, so far as we know; the adoption of the new civilization led automatically to the acceptance of the new religion. The population of the town of Kong is at the present day wholly Mohammedan; the language of trade is Mande.

As the centre of a long-continued flourishing trade in gold, salt, kola, and cloth, and as the meeting-place of frequented trade routes, the gold country of Bonduku, lying south-east from Kong, possesses great importance. In the chief town, Kintampo, besides the natives, the Mandingo, the inhabitants of the Gold Coast and the Hausa have their own quarters. A place of equal importance is Salaga, the capital of the kingdom of Gonja, lying on the boundary between Togo and the Gold Coast, the inhabitants of which are also to a large extent Mandingo who immigrated at an early period. It is a meeting-place of traders from the whole of the Central Sudan. Occasional reference has already been made to the states of Dagomba, Mossi, Gurma, and Borgu, lying further east. They all came into existence centuries ago, mainly as the result of influence

¹ Where the Fula gained political preponderance, they frequently showed a tendency to regulate strictly the life of the population according to Mohammedan law. They enforced a regular attendance at the religious services, prohibited tobacco-smoking and alcohol, and even tried to suppress polygamy, and to introduce bigamy instead.

from the west, but they have nevertheless in essentials maintained their distinctive character and heathen religion. The distance between them and the political centres of Mohammedanism was too great for them to be absorbed by the latter. Even the Fula who, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, attempted to occupy Mossi, Borgu, and Gurma from the north, were unsuccessful in obtaining any permanent footing in the country.

The last great political convulsion in the Western Sudan was brought about by Samori, an ambitious and unscrupulous conqueror, who, by murder, fire, and slave-raiding, acquired a large kingdom. His domineering and reckless behaviour enabled him to secure followers wherever he came, but at the same time made him a terror to the peaceful population. Unlike Hadj Omar and Mohammed Askia, he was quite indifferent to Islam, although he occasionally made use of it to further his own ends. From 1874 he gave himself the title *Almami*, gathered a host of freebooters about him, and in a succession of bloodthirsty and cruel raids conquered the country on both sides of the Upper Niger as far as Sierra Leone.

The Central Sudan, that is, the country between the Niger and Lake Chad, received Islam to some extent from the north, but chiefly from Egypt.

According to Barth, the first Mohammedan king of Bornu was Hume (Hami ?), who adopted Islam towards the end of the eleventh century. Both he and his son and successor are said to have died in Egypt, while on the way to Mecca. At any rate this report points to relations with the east at an early period. When and in what way Islam found an entrance among the natives is uncertain. Since we hear of Mohammedan preachers in this neighbourhood at an early period, it may be supposed that they had a considerable share in the work of conversion. Besides this, the increasingly active trade relations with Tripoli and the invasion of Arab tribes must have also contributed to its spread. About the middle of the thirteenth century, according to Arabic sources, "the true faith was sown far and wide in Kanem."

In Bagirmi Islam did not begin to spread before the beginning of the seventeenth century. When the state was founded about the middle of the sixteenth century by a heathen chief, all its inhabitants were heathen. "Bagirmi rose out of the darkness of heathenism some years after the introduction of Islam into Wadai,"

that is, towards the end of the seventeenth century.¹ The nomad Arabs, who moved into the country before the close of the tenth century, and the Fula tribes, who had already settled there at an early period, appear to have exerted equally little influence on the religion of the natives.

When Malo, the eldest son of King Delubirni, ascended the throne in the second half of the seventeenth century, he became involved in a struggle with his younger brother, Abdallah, who claimed the throne on the ground of being a Mohammedan. Abdallah was ultimately victorious, and as king introduced Islam into the country. The fourth ruler in succession to Abdallah, Mohammed el Amin, had already acquired the title of Hadj. In his reign, about the end of the eighteenth century, the majority of his subjects were converted to Islam. About this time the kingdom was at the zenith of its power; before this it had paid tribute to Bornu, and in the nineteenth century it became dependent on Wadai. That Islam was not observed in any very strict fashion is evident from the fact that the successor and son of Mohammed el Amin married his own sister, so that the king of Wadai, Abd el Kerim Sabun, felt himself compelled to invade Bagirmi to punish this blasphemous crime.

It is probable that Islam was introduced into Bagirmi from the countries on its borders, that is, chiefly from Wadai, with which relations existed from early times, and to a lesser extent from Bornu, on which Bagirmi was politically dependent.

It was from Bornu also that Islam reached the Hausa countries. This at least is maintained by Hausa traditions, and there is every ground for supposing that the neighbouring kingdom of Bornu exerted a religious as well as a general civilizing influence on the less developed Hausa territories. The oldest traces of Islam here—in Gobir, Katsina, Kano—lead back to the first half of the fifteenth century. According to the *Tarikh-es-Sudan*, the grandfather of the famous Ahmed Baba, in the reign of Sonni Ali of Songhai (1464–92), on his return journey from Mecca, visited Kano and other towns of the Sudan, and delivered lectures to a large concourse of students. Whether and to what extent this account is based on actual facts, we do not know. An important part in the introduction of Islam was played by Maghili, a native of Algeria, who, about 1500, travelled in the Sudan and preached the faith in various towns, including Katsina and Kano.

¹ Islam had, however, a footing in Wadai since the eleventh century.

The first Mohammedan king of Katsina, Madji, probably reigned about the middle of the sixteenth century.

So far as can be ascertained, Islam found its way into the Hausa countries by peaceful methods; that is, by preachers from the east and north, by trade relations with North Africa, and by political influences emanating from Bornu and in the western province of Kebbi, also from Songhai. Kebbi was under the influence of Songhai from the sixteenth century, and its chiefs appear to have been Mohammedans from that time onwards. It is characteristic of the Hausa peoples, whose interest is centred on outward things, and who are but little susceptible to deep religious impressions, that after the partial success of Mohammedanism there should have been repeated lapses into heathenism. A struggle between the two religions was constantly going on in the majority of the Hausa States. Heathen and Mohammedan rulers appear to alternate until the occupation by the Fula. There are repeated complaints by the Hausa chroniclers that only the lower classes followed Islam, and that the religion was despised by the wealthy. It sometimes even happened that inconvenient preachers were put out of the way at the instigation of the worldly disposed kings.

In the "Hybrid Hausa States," that is, the countries in which the language and civilization of the Hausa have found an entrance, including, e.g. Nupe, Bauchi, and Zanfara, Islam found a footing much later—in Bauchi and Nupe, for example, not till the nineteenth century—and even in the Hausa States proper there are still heathen districts.

A complete political and religious revolution took place in the Hausa country at the beginning of the nineteenth century as the result of the conquests of the Fula Othman dan (i.e. the son of) Fodio. Individual groups of Fula from the east had settled in the Hausa country since the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and had spread even as far as Bornu and Bagirmi. They were often active in the propagation of Islam, but their small number and the political strength of those among whom they had settled prevented them from gaining any influence in the public life of their neighbourhood; they were allowed to remain on sufferance. This state of affairs, the ignominy of which was keenly felt by many orthodox Fula, was brought to an end by Othman dan Fodio. To his deeply religious nature, filled with zeal for the purity and supremacy of Islam, and enriched by a literary educa-

tion, the oppressed condition of his countrymen who were devoted adherents of their religion must have been as humiliating as the heathen conduct of the royal court at Gobir was offensive. The movement which arose under his leadership was thus at once national and religious; but the latter influence was probably predominant, for it was not long before many zealous Mohammedans from among the Hausa joined his cause.¹ After the youthful Fodio had completed his studies, he became a zealous preacher of Islam. He denounced the practice of prayers for the dead and the honour paid to departed saints; he also attacked the two prevailing sins of the Sudan, drunkenness and immorality. At the same time he sent letters to the kings of Bornu, Timbuktu, and other places, exhorting them to reform their lives and those of their subjects. As the tutor of a prince of Gobir he had many opportunities of securing rights for his countrymen and fellow-believers, effecting the emancipation of Moslem slaves, and in similar ways furthering the cause. The revolution, which was carefully prepared by an organization in which all the influential Fula sheikhs of neighbouring countries as far as Nupe, Ilorin, and Yoruba were included, began in the early years of the nineteenth century, and was directed, in the first instance, against the king of Gobir. From Gobir Othman turned his attention first towards the west and subdued the province of Kebbi, making its capital, Gando, his residence. Then he pressed forward into the heart of the Hausa country and established his headquarters in Sokoto. From this centre, with the help of his brother Abdallah, and especially of his son Bello, he conquered all the Hausa States and united them to the Sultanate of Sokoto under his own suzerainty. Next, the generals of Othman turned their arms against Fumbina, lying to the south-east, and conquered it under the leadership of the Malam Adama, after whom they named it, Adamawa. The western branch of the Fula starting from Gando poured themselves to the south. While they were unable to maintain themselves in Borgu, Malam Dodo made himself master of Nupe in the second quarter of the nineteenth century. The most southern Fula state in this western district is Ilorin in northern Yoruba, which was conquered as early as the beginning of the century, but was only to a small extent islamized.

¹ On the other hand, he knew no mercy towards those Hausa priests who did not join his party. The *Chronicle* informs us that when Othman found a Malam belonging to the party of the Hausa kings, he had him either executed at the stake or butchered like a sheep.

Othman dan Fodio died in 1817. His successors, among whom the most eminent was his son Bello, who like his father was an educated Moslem zealous for reform, were able, at any rate for a time, to maintain the conquests of their great predecessor, and even in some degree to extend them. But the short period of prosperity was followed by permanent decline. A magnificent court life with all its intrigues and luxury, and a rapid growth of somewhat unprofitable literary tendencies, succeeded the pure religious zeal and the unassuming military temper of the early years.

The conquests of the Fula in what is now Nigeria, and those in Adamawa extending as far as the Congo, marked both locally and historically the end of their political expansion. At the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century, the final occupation of the country by European powers took place, bringing the whole of the mighty Fula kingdom without any very great cost under Christian control.

A final disturbance, which falls only partially within the territory which we are considering, was that caused by Rabeh. Rabeh was an officer of the notorious slave-trader Zubeir, in the Eastern Sudan. He set out for the west with a troop of adventurers, and founded to the south of Wadai a large kingdom, which for a time included Bornu and Bagirmi. He had no interest in religion, but with the object of making his enterprises more acceptable in the eyes of pious Mohammedans, and of securing military support, he repeatedly attempted to establish relations with the Sheikh of the Senussiyya, who however declined to have anything to do with him. In the year 1900 Rabeh was decisively beaten by the French, and his capital captured. This was the end of the last Mohammedan state in the Sudan.

II

It is difficult to gain a clear idea of the territorial, and still more of the numerical, distribution of Islam in the Sudan. Exact figures are frequently lacking with regard to the number of the population in general, and naturally in a still greater degree with regard to the adherents of each religion. Besides this there is the difficulty in many instances of determining whether a particular people is to be regarded as Mohammedan or as still heathen. From the convinced and educated Mohammedans of Timbo or Kano to the bush negroes, whose practice of religion consists merely in an effort to assimilate

themselves to the more fashionable religious society in dress and in the repetition of a few prayer forms or by hanging their amulet in a different way, there are numerous intermediate stages of conversion. It may be taken as certain, however, that the future even of these purely external adherents of Islam lies with that religion and not with heathenism.

Owing to the fact that Islam was introduced from the north, it is in its northern half that the Sudan is most completely islamized. The population is Mohammedan, though not exclusively so, as far as the forest belt, and at many places Islam has broken through this belt and reached the coast by commercial expansion. Along the coast from Senegal to Kamerun there is hardly a single town of any importance which does not contain at least one mosque. The same is probably true of every place in the whole Sudan with more than from two to three thousand inhabitants. The purely Mohammedan peoples, in addition to the small number of Arabs, are the Moors, Fula, Tuareg, and Hausa. Accounts of heathen Fula appear from time to time, but they are probably based on defective information.

For French West Africa, reference can be made to official estimates. According to these, there are, in the Province of Senegal, 78,500 Fula and 158,000 Tukulor (Tekrur), a mixed race formed by intermarriage between the Fula and the indigenous tribes. Both have equal pride of race and are equally strict Mohammedans. The largest part of the population is composed of the Wolof or Jolof, who are pure negroes, both physically and intellectually vigorous, and constitute the most valuable element in the colony. The large majority of them are Mohammedans, and heathenism is rapidly vanishing. On the other hand, the 190,000 Serer, formed by an intermixture of Fula and Jolof, have for the most part remained heathen to the present day. The Soninke, again, belonging to the Mandingo group, are entirely Mohammedan, and among the closely related Malinke there are very few heathen remaining. In French Guinea there are besides 670,000 Mohammedan Fula and 492,000 Malinke, who with the exception of an insignificant minority are also Mohammedan, about 385,000 Jallonke. The majority of these are still heathen, but according to the official French reports Islam is making rapid progress among them. The remaining inhabitants of the province, Temne, Mende, Nalu, Toma, Kissi, are predominantly or entirely heathen. The population of the Ivory Coast probably amounts to about two millions. Of these the Mande Jula, numbering

242,000, are Mohammedans. The Senufu, who also belong to the Mandingo, are for the most part heathen, while the remaining inhabitants are still almost untouched by Islam. The conditions in Dahome are equally favourable, where out of a population of 655,000, only 60,000 or 70,000 are Mohammedan. The Dendi, who live on the banks of the Niger, are all strict Mohammedans, and this is true also of the Fula who are settled throughout Barba beside the villages of the natives. Among the really indigenous population, Islam has taken little root. The province of the Upper Senegal and Niger includes the Bambara, who number 477,000, and have remained almost entirely heathen. There are less than 20,000 Mohammedans among them, but this number at the present time, when they have ceased to have a separate political existence, is increasing with considerable rapidity. The same is true of what was formerly the kingdom of Mossi, in which also Islam is likely to be the religion of the future, although the majority of the natives still have a preference for heathen customs. The population of the province of Upper Senegal and Niger amounts to about five or five and a half millions, and perhaps one and a half or two millions of these may be Mohammedans.

Hardly any particulars are available with regard to the number of Mohammedans in the English Colonies, and it is necessary to have recourse to individual expressions of opinion. Sierra Leone has 1,307,000 inhabitants, the great majority of whom are heathen. The few Fula in the north and the greater part of the Mandingo are Mohammedan, but the Temne and Mende are predominantly heathen, although the number of Mohammedans among them is actively increasing. Throughout the coast towns there is a strong Mohammedan population. Port Lokko, for example, was in 1903 almost entirely Mohammedan. In Freetown there are five Mohammedan schools, supported by the Government, with 760 scholars in a population of 34,000. Thus the situation in Sierre Leone is that Islam has penetrated from the interior to the coast, and has practically taken possession of the coast towns, while the village inhabitants near the coast within a narrow strip of territory have maintained their heathen religion. Of the 1,600,000 inhabitants of the Gold Coast, it is estimated that 358,000 live in the Northern Territories and 288,000 in Ashanti. Though still predominantly heathen, these are in great danger of becoming islamized. Almost every place of any importance possessing trade connexions has a mosque, a Mohammedan school, and a

Mohammedan population, which though composed partly of foreign traders is adding to itself in the Northern Territories a steadily increasing number of the resident population. In Tamale, the capital of the Northern Territories, out of a total population of 6000, about 1000 are Mohammedan. In Ashanti, and on the Gold Coast proper, Islam is also making progress, though this is principally due to the immigration of Hausa and Mandingo traders.¹ Mr. Rodger, in the *Journal of the African Society* for 1909, gives the number of Mohammedans on the whole Gold Coast as 100,000 and it would probably not be too high to put it at the present time at 150,000 or 180,000. The number of Mohammedans, especially in the north, is probably under-estimated. Thus Mamprusi, which at one time controlled the whole of Dagomba, is governed by the Imam in Gambaga, from which we may safely conclude that not only a considerable portion of his subjects is Mohammedan, but also that Islam is likely to spread.

In recent years Islam has probably made the most rapid progress in Nigeria, which has a population perhaps of sixteen millions, and especially in Southern Nigeria, which a few decades ago was almost entirely heathen. In Northern Nigeria, the country of the Hausa and the Fula invaders, Islam is throughout the dominant religion. The Hausa, Fula, and Kanuri are wholly Mohammedan, though in a number of places heathen tribes are living among them, for example, the Gwari and Kadara in the Hausa country. So also in the neighbourhood of Yola the population is mainly heathen, while the town itself is Mohammedan. The tribes south of the Niger and Benue and to the north and east of the Niger are predominantly heathen. Of the nine or ten million inhabitants of Northern Nigeria, possibly two or three millions are heathen, though in the face of the overwhelming superiority in numbers and civilization of the Mohammedans living in close contact with them, they are in danger of surrendering their heathenism within the next few decades. In Southern Nigeria, on the other hand, in spite of the fact that Islam has made quite remarkable progress in recent times, there are no exclusively Mohammedan communities. Islam has made its chief conquests in the large towns, and what it would mean if it were to become the dominant spiritual power in these towns is evident from the following figures showing their

¹ In Ashanti there was the nucleus of a Mohammedan population as early as 1750, so that the progress of Islam here during the past century and a half has not been considerable.

population—Ibadan, 342,000, Ilesha, 339,000, Abeokuta, 265,000, Oyo, 217,000, Lagos, 102,000. Each of these towns has its mosques; several of them have more than fifty. In Lagos, which is a centre of Christian missionary activity, about half the population is at the present day Mohammedan. In many of the other towns, including those of the eastern province and on the coast, Mohammedanism is increasing rapidly.

The small colony of Gambia, with a population of 16,000, has about 9,000 Mohammedans—Mandingo, Jolof, Fula.

Of the German Colonies, Togo is almost entirely heathen. With a total population of about one million, the number of native Mohammedans is given in the official report as only 14,000, which seems a rather low estimate. Mohammedans belonging to the indigenous population, with a disposition to proselytize, are to be found especially among the Dagomba and in the extreme north, in Mangu and its neighbourhood; while among the rest of the population, Mohammedans are limited to the immigrant Hausa and Fula.

Kamerun has in Adamawa and German Bornu an exclusively Mohammedan population, although everywhere a sprinkling of heathen is found. Besides the Fula, with their bondsmen and slaves, numbering in all about 320,000, the Kanuri, the Shua Arabs, the Kotoko, the northern Musgu, and a small portion of the Mandara (about 40,000 out of 310,000), are Mohammedans. Altogether from 600,000 to 800,000 of the two or three million inhabitants of Kamerun are probably Mohammedan.

In Liberia, the Kru, the Grebo, the Kpwesi, who inhabit the north-western and central interior, are predominantly heathen, while the Vai and Mandingo are Mohammedan.

III

That Islam represents for the African a higher stage of social organization than heathenism cannot be doubted by any one who has seriously studied the question on the spot. It is not accidental that the more highly endowed and intellectually alert tribes, such as the Hamite peoples of the Sudan, have adopted Mohammedanism, and at the present day all reports agree that it is the more intelligent part of the population which is favourably disposed towards Islam. The advantages of the new religion are so obvious to the negro, and so many factors in the history of the Sudan have smoothed the way for Islam, that one is almost inclined to wonder why the results

achieved in the course of ten centuries are not even greater than they are seen to be at the present day.

What are the means to which Islam owes its successes and its failures? The first very strong impression which one gets is that the expansion of Islam has taken place in the main automatically and without any direct effort. It seems indeed to be the undesigned and accidental by-product of other movements, whether political, social, or economic. Up to a certain point, however, it is true that the triumphant advance of Islam has been a spiritual and purely religious movement, the ultimate sources of which can hardly be traced, and which has availed itself of external circumstances as its vehicle.

As has been shown in the preceding section, the chief conquerors of the Sudan were Mohammedans. In their political enterprises it is difficult to distinguish between holy wars undertaken for the spread of the religion and those which were carried on for purely temporal ends. In the conquests of Samori, Rabeh, and thousands of their lesser compeers, religious motives played a negligible part. But the result was none the less a gain for Islam. The superior strength of the new religion was made evident to the heathen, and this sufficed to shake their confidence in their pagan divinities. The temptation to adopt Islam was especially great when conversion was sufficient to deliver them from the exactions of their masters, and to admit them as members of the class to which their conquerors belonged. According to Mohammedan law, a believer cannot be sold as a slave. Although in the early period this provision was certainly observed only in exceptional instances, it was nevertheless necessary that some regard should be paid to negro fellow-believers, and this fact was naturally a powerful attraction to the heathen to join the Mohammedan community. In the holy wars, genuine religious zeal, which sought to promote the glory of Allah and the extension of His kingdom, was undoubtedly sometimes an impelling motive. Even at the present day among the ruling races of the Sudan, the holy war, that is, subjugation by force, is regarded as the natural and normal means of conversion, and as more effective than preaching.¹ But

¹ Mungo Park gives us a message sent by the Moslem king of Futa Toro to his pagan neighbour: "With this knife Abd el Qader will condescend to shave the head of Damel if Damel will embrace the Mohammedan faith; and with this other knife Abd el Qader will cut the throat of Damel if Damel refuses to embrace it." These words find an echo in those with which a young Arab from Bornu addressed Captain Burton, in the palace of the king of Abeokuta: "Give those guns and powder to us, and we will soon islamize these dogs."

even where the holy war aimed at furthering truly religious ends, its missionary results were hardly greater than those of purely political conquests. Both tended to degenerate into extensive slave-raids, and it is difficult to avoid the suspicion that in the interest even of many pious rulers the capture of slaves held a foremost place. Slave-raiding was for both the larger and smaller of the Sudanic states an important source of income, and frequently the sole one. As there was no regular financial administration the trade in human beings was the only available means of supporting the army and defraying other expenses. As soon as any check was imposed on this trade, the state began to decay, and this drying-up of revenue was seldom long in beginning, since the governor of each province attempted to make himself as soon as possible independent of central control, in order that he might turn to his own account the profitable capture of slaves. Even the latest conquests of the Fula had as their object the opening up of new reservoirs of slaves. Under these circumstances, the conqueror could have no object in making the heathen adopt his religion, since this would impose restrictions on his exactions. On the other hand these slave-raids and the atrocities by which they were accompanied awakened among the heathen a profound hatred against Islam and its representatives. Even when they were compelled to accept the religion of their bitter enemies, they remained heathen at heart, and frequently only waited for an opportunity to return to their original faith. In other instances, especially where heathen tribes had developed a strong government, and in connexion with it a form of religion which transcended tribal limitations and found expression in a national system of worship, the violent propaganda of the Mohammedans had the effect of forcing on the heathen state a more closely knit unity and a more determined adherence to its own faith, as for example, in Mossi and Gurma, and among the Bambara.

An apparently opposite policy, which nevertheless was directed to the same end of opening up new sources of revenue, was pursued for a time by the Mohammedan rulers in Bambara. The conquering Tukulor attempted here to develop the exploitation of their subjects in a permanent and systematic way by annually sending out armed bands, including Marabouts, to convert the heathen to Islam, or if that failed, to lay waste their villages. The payment of the tithe was then imposed on the new converts, and in addition to this, an

annual tribute, both of which found their way, as often in the Sudan, into the treasury of the ruler

Wherever Islam appeared, not in the form of a temporary conquest or of annually repeated slave-raids, but of a permanent occupation and regular government, its intellectual and political superiority and its power of assimilation were so strong that the heathen inhabitants of the kingdom adopted the religion of their masters. This factor was decisive among the early Mandingo population and the inhabitants of Bornu and Bagirmi. If the Sudan had not fallen into the hands of European powers, this process would have been going on at the present day. The Bambara, and the still heathen population of the Sultanate of Sokoto, including Northern and a considerable part of Southern Nigeria and the country extending from Adamawa in a south-westerly direction as far as the forests, would in that case have become Mohammedan in a comparatively short period, whereas at the present day in a large part of this territory Islam is making no very marked progress.

It was only to be expected that the Mohammedan potentates who were dispossessed by the Europeans would not easily adapt themselves to the new order, and that many attempts would be made by them to regain their former influence. All the European colonies in the Sudan, and especially the French, have had experience of rebellions of this kind. These revolts are marked by the following features: (1) The religious motive is prominent; the leader of the revolt professes to have been commissioned by Allah to resist the unbelievers and convert the heathen, and is almost always a Marabout. (2) The movement is restricted within a comparatively small area. (3) Only a small part of the population, whether Mohammedan or heathen, declares itself actively on the side of the rebel leader, and as soon as he suffers a decisive defeat, he is deserted by his followers and his project is at an end. The leaders are frequently inspired by genuine enthusiasm, and the title of Mahdi, which they are fond of adopting, is taken quite seriously; they wish to serve Allah and his cause. In the great majority of cases, however, their motives are greed and ambition, their object being to increase their revenue and reputation, or to restore their political power. It is improbable that a really great Mahdi will ever arise in the Sudan and succeed in creating an effective organization against the European domination. Too many of the natives have come to understand the superior strength and the beneficial results of European government

to allow themselves to be made the instruments of an ambitious claimant, whose prospects of success are doubtful from the beginning and whose rule would bring no advantages to the majority of the inhabitants. Only circumstances of a wholly exceptional kind, moreover, could overcome the national differences, which are as marked among the Mohammedans as among the heathen, and unite the tribes under a single leader against the common enemy.

Among the political factors which have contributed to the spread of Islam may be reckoned also the peaceful invasion of heathen districts by Mohammedan tribes. The first influences towards the islamizing of the Western Sudan were of this nature. Immigrants from the north brought Islam with them and practised it in their new home within their own tribal community, thus making it appear a desirable possession in the eyes of the heathen. In a similar way the Arabs, the Tuareg, and the Fula were later intentionally or unintentionally the pioneers of Islam. The latter especially frequently exerted a direct missionary influence on their environment in the way that has been mentioned. The preponderance of these Mohammedan foreign communities became in many cases so great that it was difficult for a heathen chief to maintain his authority over his alien Mohammedan subjects, who naturally looked down on the Kafirs, and who continually threatened to become a state within a state. The one sure means of escaping this danger and of consolidating his power was for the chieftain to become a convert to Islam. This took place as a rule simultaneously with the conversion of his immediate following and the members of his household, and easily became the occasion of a general movement towards the new religion.

Far more important than political activity was the part played in the spread of Islam by social influences, although they cannot in the same degree as the former be described as direct means of propaganda. The social influence exerted by Islam was, except in a few instances, undesigned, but it was very far-reaching. Always and everywhere the religion of Mohammed presented itself to the negro as a higher civilization. Even from the racial standpoint, the representatives of Islam impressed the heathen negro as belonging to a superior order. They came on the scene as the possessors of large herds of cattle, horses, and camels. They were brave and warrior peoples, the leaders of large armies, the founders of powerful states. Many of them understood the wonderful art of reading and writing, others were far-travelled

merchants who were in direct relation with the countries of the white peoples, whose goods they introduced, and thereby secured for themselves a higher standard of living and prosperity. Their behaviour was that of an educated and self-confident aristocracy. In accordance with the methods of African commerce, the Mandingo and Hausa merchant who carries on trade with the heathen settles down among them. His superior manner of life, his richer clothing, his purer worship, are a daily sermon to the negro on the text, "This foreigner is a greater and nobler being than thyself." The clever trader, and still more the Malam who is able to write, by their knowledge of the world, their education, and their attitude of haughty exclusiveness or condescending patronage as the circumstances may demand, soon make themselves respected and welcome guests with the leading men and at the court of the chief. They know how to become useful and indispensable to heathen rulers, and take advantage of the favoured position which they thus acquire to secure privileges for their fellow-believers. The chief becomes gradually disinclined to practise his own religion in the presence of Mohammedans, and begins to be ashamed of it and to neglect it. It is only a step from this to sympathy with the new faith, and the step is made easier by the fact that the new religion is bound up with the new civilization, with which the heathen are, in the first instance, concerned. In adopting the civilization, it is natural to adopt the religion also. A beginning is made by putting on Mohammedan dress, and this is followed, as convenience may suggest, by the observance of individual precepts of the religion, such as the times of prayer, ablutions, and similar observances.

Where Mohammedans settle in the midst of a heathen population, intermarriage becomes inevitable, especially since the settlers and merchants do not as a rule bring their wives with them, and therefore form unions with heathen women. The requisition of heathen women was made on a large scale by the great Mohammedan princes, who, especially when they settled at a distance from Mohammedan centres, often maintained enormous harems with sometimes as many as two thousand inmates. These women, and above all their children, whether legitimate or illegitimate, become Mohammedans without exception. The system of household slavery and serfdom works in the same direction. In war, every soldier receives his share of the slave booty. A Mohammedan of position requires for the management of his household and farms a considerable

number of slaves, which sometimes amounts to several thousand in the case of leading men. The officers and higher officials in addition to this have a definite number of villages assigned to them by the sovereign, the labour and taxes of the inhabitants of which are entirely at their disposal. As is natural, all those who are thus directly dependent on Mohammedans rapidly adopt the religion of their masters. Passarge estimates that in Adamawa there are, in addition to the 50,000 or 100,000 Fula, 245,000 slaves and serfs of the latter, who have become Mohammedans.

Occasionally, however, Islam makes its appearance also in a benevolent guise, as the liberator of oppressed peoples. The division into the two classes of oppressors and oppressed in the Sudan is not due to Islam, but has existed from time immemorial. Wandering Mohammedan preachers have taken advantage of this condition of affairs, and when their message has been rejected by the upper classes, have turned to the oppressed masses. This was the case especially among the Jolof. Here the mass of the agricultural population was held down and exploited by its aristocratic masters. The Marabout preachers of Islam not only fostered in the name of religion the deep-rooted hatred of the lower classes against their oppressors, but united them in a determined resistance. A complete social revolution thus took place, in which the Marabouts became the leaders of the unprivileged but already islamized masses, who succeeded in extorting one right after another. So long as the heathen chiefs had the upper hand, they made no attempt to conceal their contempt for Islam, which was the religion of the poorer classes. Gradually, however, a change took place, and the influence of the new faith grew to such an extent that heathen potentates, unless they wished to see power slip from their grasp, had no choice but to adopt Islam, however humiliating such a step might be. Similar social effects of Islam are described in the Hausa chronicles, where the chiefs at first did not wish to have anything to do with the new religion, which imposed restrictions on their excesses, and the preachers therefore turned from them and attempted to win the lower classes. Motives of a similar kind also played a part in the revolt of Othman. That Islam, when it attained to power, should later have repudiated its original social connexions and have placed itself at the service of the upper classes can cause no surprise. History furnishes plenty of analogies to such a change of front.

Religious activity in the sense of direct propaganda has been of

far less importance for the islamization of the Sudan than political and social influences. Where it has made its appearance it has always been isolated and entirely unsystematic. It is impossible to speak of an organized missionary activity in the Sudan. As in the earlier centuries, so at the present day it occasionally happens that a pious Moslem becomes a preacher of Islam from purely religious motives, but instances of this are exceptional. Before a Church can carry on regular organized missionary work, it must possess greater moral and religious forces than Islam has at its command. A better opportunity of bearing witness to the faith is found in private conversations, for which the ordinary and intimate intercourse of daily life and the interest of the negro in religious matters always provide occasions. Of course such opportunities for active propaganda are taken advantage of only by a few, and these chiefly Malams (Marabouts). The main points in the Mohammedan teaching on which emphasis is laid in such conversations with a view to winning the heathen, are the unity and omnipotence of God, the condemnation of idolatry, the hope of paradise, and above all, the promised and readily believed efficacy of amulets, which are sanctioned by Allah and His word, and the working of miracles. In these attempts at conversion, a vigorous use is also made of worldly arguments. The higher social position of Mohammedans, their far-reaching influence with the leading men of the country and with Europeans, the alleged superiority of the Mohammedans over the Christians in civilization and in political power, are painted in glowing colours, and when necessary, with the grossest misrepresentation of facts, before the eyes of the unsuspecting negro. Towards heathen customs, the attitude of the Mohammedan is, according to circumstances, one of good-humoured derision or of fanatical opposition, but it is always one of unmistakable contempt and disapproval. It is a modern, and up to the present quite rare, phenomenon for a Mohammedan preacher to come forward as the rival of the Christian missionary and to enter into a discussion with him when he is preaching to the heathen.

The Mohammedan propaganda experienced a remarkably powerful revival through the advent of European colonial enterprise in the Sudan. Although political methods of expansion have been suppressed, the social and religious means of propaganda can now be employed with an effectiveness hitherto unknown. The gulf which formerly existed between the rulers and the ruled, and which was

created chiefly by existing political relations, decreased with the abolition of political independence and the equal treatment of all classes of the population by the European. Its place has been taken by a growing mutual approximation which prepares the way for a peaceful propaganda. Still more advantageous for Islam is the economic activity of the colonial powers. Not only is most of the trade in the hands of Mohammedans, but these also form the more intelligent part of the population and that which is most ready to understand the measures of the Government and to take advantage of the opportunities created by it. They are thus regarded by the Government as the most valuable element of the population, and have all kinds of favours conceded to them. The heathen are of course not slow to mark this preference for Mohammedans, and it is only natural that those who are intellectually most alive should attach themselves by conversion to the favoured class. The heathen are further impressed by the fact that Islam is officially recognized and respected by the colonial Governments as a religious society, while heathenism is completely ignored. This is most marked in two institutions—the native army and the school. In most of the European colonies it is taken for granted that those who join the army thereby become Mohammedans. The majority of the colonial Governments maintain out of public funds schools in which the Mohammedan religion is officially assigned a place in the curriculum. Those who attend these schools, even if they are heathen, receive religious instruction in Islam, and naturally become Mohammedans.

IV

From what has been already said, it is evident that the chief impulse towards the adoption of Islam by the negro comes from social influences. In individual instances there may be associated with the conversion vague hopes of political emancipation and a desire to bring about the unification of the black races, but these do not at the present day play any important part. The dominant consideration is rather the desire through the adoption of Islam to obtain better conditions of life. This hope has always in the Sudan been the chief motive of conversion, and it has gained in strength since European colonization began. The latter has given rise among the inert mass of the negro population to a movement

which expresses itself in a consciousness of inferiority and a recognition of the necessity of learning if it is to maintain its place amid the new forces. One might naturally expect that the negro would seek to attach himself to the race which represents the new movement, that is, to the European. This is actually the case where European influence is active, and where Islam has not found a footing among the indigenous population. In the coast districts of Kamerun, Nigeria, Togo, and the Gold Coast, and to some extent also of Sierra Leone and Gambia, a strong movement towards Christianity is manifest, which has undoubtedly been furthered by the influence of colonial enterprise. In these districts the glory of Mohammedan civilization and religion is beginning to pale before that of the Christian. It is quite otherwise, however, in districts where Islam has already become an imposing power. The favour shown by many government officials towards Islam, and the maintenance of specifically Mohammedan institutions, such as schools, law-courts, and festivals, make the negro feel that Mohammedan civilization and religion are equal to those of the European. And above all, Islam presents itself to the African in an African garb. Even the Arabs in the Sudan, and of course still more the Mohammedan blacks, are immeasurably nearer to the negro in their manner of life than are the Europeans. When the negro adopts Islam, he at once becomes a member of the higher social class. He is admitted without any restrictions into the Mohammedan society.¹ He quickly gains self-confidence and self-respect, and feels that he is a member of a world-encircling organization. He enters into a clearly defined relationship with Europeans. The despised bush negro becomes a Mohammedan of position, whom even the European involuntarily treats with respect. It is quite otherwise when a heathen joins the Christian community. We Europeans remain foreigners to the African, and when he outwardly adopts our civilization, he does not really understand it. We have not yet fully learned, not even the missionaries, to comprehend the negro in his distinctive qualities. We have not taken sufficient trouble to understand his civilization and to ennoble it with the help of our own and of Christianity; instead of this we are destroying his civilization and seeking to substitute our own. We are thus exposed to the danger of turning the negro into a mere caricature of the European,

¹ "At the great Mohammedan festival Emir and slave kneel side by side; master and servant together prostrate themselves in one common act of devotion" (Orr).

while Islam makes him a self-respecting African. Moreover, the Europeanized negro never obtains among the whites that social equality to which Islam admits him readily. There are Europeans who take little pains to conceal the fact that the Christian "nigger" is as contemptible in their eyes as the bush negro, and they not seldom take every opportunity of expressing their preference for Mohammedans. This sufficiently explains the fact that recently even natives who have received a Christian education have become advocates of Islam. Since they need never expect a position of equality among their European fellow-believers, they are disposed to see in Islam the religion of the modern African.

The negro's conviction of the social superiority of Islam rests in the last resort on a religious basis, since he is unable to conceive of any striking exhibition of power as proceeding from other than a religious source. "The Mohammedans know more of God than we do," and "Their God is stronger than ours," are statements which express his deep and deliberate conviction. Now there is nothing strange to the negro in changing the object of his worship. When a village community hears of a powerful divinity belonging to a neighbouring tribe, it transplants by public resolution the new worship into its native village. Similarly whole village districts or individual family groups have not infrequently exchanged the worship of their god for that of Allah, because the latter promised them greater advantages.¹ The heathen is bound to his divinity by no inward attachment. If the god fails to render the services which have been expected, or if he works injury instead of blessing, he is easily given up. Besides this the heathen divinities are attached to particular localities; they have their regular places of worship where alone sacrifices and prayers can be offered to them. As a result of the European occupation, however, there has been a considerable movement of the population; the labourer, the artisan, the merchant, and the official leave their native village for months and years and even for life, and with it they leave their ancestral religious practices. It is hardly likely ever to occur to them that they could worship their ancestral deities in a distant place. But the mental life of the negro is so permeated by religion that, except in the few instances where his religious nature has been atrophied

¹ Childless women, instead of applying to heathen charms as they used to do, now frequently go to the Malam; as a condition of success the obligation is always imposed upon the mothers of bringing up their future children as Mohammedans.

through long intercourse with irreligious Europeans, he cannot live without religion. In adopting a new faith, he is likely, unless he limits himself to the scanty use of a few charms, to attach himself to the religion which predominates in his new environment, and this is far more frequently Islam than Christianity.

One would do the negro an injustice, however, if one were to attribute his inclination towards Islam exclusively to the lower range of religious motives. The African knows a real longing for the living God. To many a thoughtful negro the impressive doctrine of the unity of God, the omnipotent Lord, comes as a revelation. From even the simplest and poorest place of Mohammedan prayer, his mind receives a powerful impression that worship is here being offered to the one invisible God. To this divine unity the whole of the religious outlook of Islam seems to him to correspond. It offers a unified system, comprehending the whole of life in its least as well as in its greatest manifestations, and clearly defined doctrines which give an exhaustive answer to all questions relating both to this life and to the next. These recommend themselves to his simple sense far more than the complicated system of the Europeans, with whom civilization and religion appear to be two quite different and independent entities. The question of the future life in particular plays a large part in the inner life of the negro, and it is dealt with by Islam in a manner that corresponds perfectly to his desires and is in striking contrast to the picture of hopeless terror which his own religion has impressed upon his soul. The conditions of entry into paradise are laid down with exactness, and conformity with them seems by no means a heavy burden, since they leave his favourite habits and his moral ideas and practices untouched.

V

To form an estimate of the effects produced by the spread of Islam is not easy. It is often perplexing to determine whether any particular advance in civilization is really due to religion or is to be regarded as the product of general development. This is especially true in the political sphere. The difference between the hopelessly divided and therefore politically weak heathen tribes and the barbarous kingdoms such as Ashanti and Dahome on the one hand, and the great Islamic States, such as Sokoto, Bornu, Segu, Massina, and Songhai on the other, is very marked.

The latter, judged even by European standards, were important formations comprising a large area of country, and possessing a real political and social organization, a division of the populace into social classes, an ordered central and provincial administration, a system of taxation, written laws, and a developed system of justice. It would be a mistake, however, to attribute these achievements exclusively to Islam. The determining factor was not the religious creed but the difference of race. The founders of the Sudan States were men of the light-coloured stronger peoples of the north. It must, of course, be admitted that the idea of a great Mohammedan theocratically governed state and the desire to win new adherents for the religion frequently gave a powerful impulse to political expansion. It would not be possible to imagine a Sonni Ali, Mohammed Askia, Hadj Omar, or even an Othman dan Fodio as anything but Mohammedan. But in the proper task of religion—in fostering the moral life of the states which had been welded together by bloody conquests, in bringing home to the rulers their responsibilities towards the conquered peoples, and in securing the victory of law and justice—Islam failed altogether. It is true that individual rulers manifested good intentions in these directions, and a real sympathy with their subjects, but as a rule in the holy wars the most atrocious cruelties were practised, bloodthirsty slave-raids were carried on, and a free rein was given to murder, burning, and plunder in the name of religion. Too frequently religion was made a cloak for exaction and extortion with the object of increasing political power.

It is sometimes made a charge against Islam that it tends to bring about an undesirable uniformity and to destroy national individuality. That in the creation of large states and as the result of a common religious creed and a common civilization many tribal peculiarities should disappear is inevitable. So far from being a loss, however, this represents rather an advance from tribal divisions to a more developed organization better adapted to the life of a nation and state. Indeed it may be said on the contrary that many peoples owe the preservation of their national character to Islam. The wandering Fula, and in many places the Hausa and Mandingo, would have been much more exposed to the danger of being absorbed by their environment if the difference of religion had not served as a protection. On the other hand, the influence of Islam on the peoples which adopted it has not been strong enough

to crush out their individuality or overcome national peculiarities. The national consciousness of the Sudanese is stronger than their religious attachment. The Hausa and Fula have lived for centuries side by side, but their relations continue to be entirely strained, while the Tuareg are on equally unfriendly terms with both.

Not only the political life but also the social tone and general culture of the Sudan owe a good deal to Islam. This fact will impress itself on any one who passes from a heathen to a Mohammedan district. The consciousness of membership in a world-wide religious society and the relations with North Africa, Egypt, and Arabia, widened the outlook, established trade connexions, and enriched the native civilization in many directions. Trade and industry were certainly not unknown in the Sudan before the advent of Islam ; but under the fettering restraints of animistic ideas and habits of thought, and without the influence of the larger world and richer variety introduced by Islam, they would never have made the advance and reached the higher level which entitles us at the present day to reckon these lands as semi-civilized. The Mohammedan is better dressed than the heathen, has finer houses, is more prosperous, has enjoyed some sort of education, is gentlemanly, dignified, and self-possessed in his manner, and betrays in his intercourse with Europeans not infrequently a noble and generous bearing.

Islam is also entitled to the honour of having introduced the art of reading and writing into the Sudan. Although hardly more than five or ten per cent. of the Mohammedan population are able to read and write, every town and settlement has its teacher, who gathers pupils about him and introduces them to the elements of religious knowledge through the medium of the Arabic language. The method employed is indeed purely mechanical, and the results are therefore correspondingly small. For the few pupils who wish to become familiar with Islamic learning there are high schools in the principal towns. Only a very few become students at the Azhar University in Cairo. Book-learning is the privilege of only a few who require it for the exercise of their profession. Nevertheless there have always been among the native Mohammedans of the Sudan men of comprehensive learning in the Arabic-Islamic sense, who have been active in the production of literature. The Fula especially have a decided inclination and aptitude for intellectual work and independent thinking. It is characteristic that Othman dan Fodio, the great

soldier, should have been at the same time the chief literary man of his nation and the author of eminent theological works, and that his son Bello, also a brave general, should have provided his people with a grammar of their own language. On the other hand it was the Fula who, on their occupation of the country, destroyed the greater part of the ancient Hausa writings on the ground that they contained too much that was heathen.

In the matter of morality, in so far as it finds expression in social institutions, there is little difference between Islam and heathenism. The position of women is no better among Mohammedans than among heathen. Where they are held in higher regard, this is due not to the religion but to national custom, as among the Tuareg and Fula, or to economic reasons, as among the Hausa and Mandingo. The woman is the property of the man to be used for labour or for sexual enjoyment. Only in exceptional cases is she his companion, a state of matters for which polygamy is responsible. Sexual excesses, introduced probably by the Arabs, are far more widespread among Mohammedans than among the heathen with their more natural instincts. The slave trade and system of slavery have degraded labour and labourers and made the possessor of slaves unaccustomed to work, and have thus since the abolition of slavery proved a hindrance to economic progress.

A beneficent effect of Islam, so far as West Africa is concerned, has been the suppression of the use of alcohol. Although complete success has not been everywhere attained, there is a marked difference in this matter between the Mohammedan and the heathen population, a fact of which Islam may justly be proud. Islam has also put an end to several other barbarous heathen customs, such as cannibalism, the putting to death of children and old people, death by means of ordeal, and blood revenge. It must, however, be observed that the prohibition of alcohol rests not on moral but on purely religious grounds. Its use is to be avoided not because it is injurious, but because Allah has forbidden it. The same thing is true with regard to the giving of alms, which is frequently practised on a liberal scale. The charity is bestowed not to help one's neighbour, but to carry out a command of Allah. In general, one may say that the Mohammedan of the Sudan receives from his religion hardly any moral duties, but only religious commands, which exert no influence on his inward disposition, and therefore are incapable of raising the standard of his inner life.

The religious organization created by Islam is simple. There is no such thing as a clergy, in the sense of persons definitely set apart for the discharge of religious functions by ordination or through appointment by a proper authority. The congregation is led by the Imam (*Limami*). The qualifications required for this office are a certain standard of literary education and a knowledge of the Koran. When a new congregation is formed, it chooses from its own members the person who is judged to be fittest for the office of Imam, or it requests the Imam of a neighbouring town to nominate some one. The duty of the Imam is to lead the prayers of the congregation and to deliver the *khutba*. In earlier times it was not infrequent for an Imam to be at the same time the secular ruler of his town or even of a state. There is no organization among the Imams, each being entirely independent of the others. An Imam often gathers pupils around him, and instructs them in the Koran or in the elements of theological science. The Imam—and likewise the Malam—is supported by free-will contributions of the members of the congregation and of his pupils or their parents. In almost every community of Moslems there is to be found besides the Imam a Malam or Marabout (also called *Alfa*, *Tjerno*, or *Karamoko*), that is, a teacher. He establishes a school in which, according to his capacity and fame, reading and writing or the higher Koranic sciences are taught. His chief income, however, and sometimes that of the Imam also, is derived from the writing, sewing together, and selling of Mohammedan amulets—pieces of paper written over with formulas of incantation, cabalistic signs and invocations of the deity, sewn on to leather and worn on the breast. Some Malams limit themselves to wandering through the country giving occasional lectures and living as parasites on the Mohammedan population on the ground of their sanctity. This is still more true of the Hadjs, who through their extremely arrogant behaviour often make themselves a regular pest.

The majority of the Mohammedans in the Sudan belong to one or other of the religious orders, of which three are represented in the country—the Qadiriya, the Tijaniya, and the Senussiya. The Qadiriya spread to the Sudan from Southern Morocco or Tlemçen, probably as early as the fifteenth century. Its adherents are found in the Western Sudan as far as Sokoto; a large part of the Moors, Songhai, Tuareg, Fula as far as and including Sokoto, and of the population west of Timbuktu, belong to it. The Tijaniya traces its origin to the Algerian Sidi Ahmed et Tijani,

who died in 1800. It was spread in the Sudan principally by Hadj Omar, in whose former kingdom the earliest members of the order are to be found. From this centre it spread vigorously to the east and south, to some extent at the cost of the Qadiriya, e.g. in Nigeria and Adamawa. In the whole of the coast territory from Nigeria as far as the Gold Coast, the Tijaniya is completely dominant. The Central and a part of the Eastern Sudan are the province of the Senussiya order. Its foundation, or more strictly its separation from an existing North African order, was due to the jurist Ibn Ali es Senussi, who was born in 1792 in Tlemçen. The headquarters of the order were at first in the oasis Jaghbub, and later at different places further south in Borku. Its adherents are to be found apart from Tripoli, Tunis, Algeria, and Egypt, in Tibesti, Air, Borku, among the Tibu, in Wadai, Kanem, Bagirmi, and Bornu.

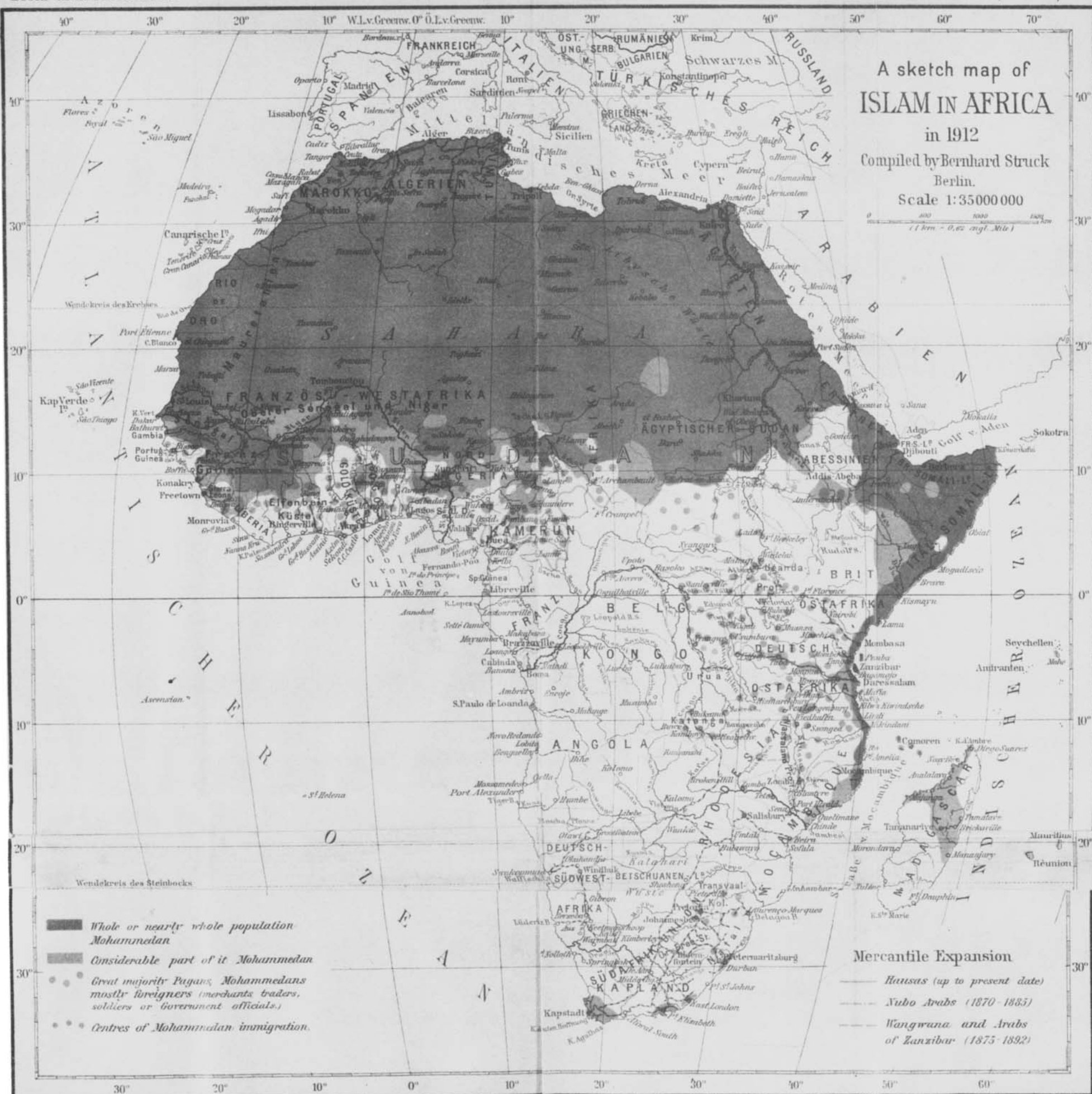
The objects sought by the foundation of orders are the reviva and deepening of religious life and the spread of the faith. The means employed are preaching, the erection of schools, political conquest, and the establishment of settlements by members of the order. The Senussiya order requires from its members a strict following of the precepts of the Koran. It forbids the offering of prayers to saints and pilgrimages to their graves, all mystical practices, intercourse with Christians and Jews, and the use of coffee and tobacco. The order has founded numerous settlements among both the Mohammedan and the heathen population, which through the industrial and agricultural aptitudes of its members have been a powerful colonizing influence. The achievements of the order in reviving the old Islamic spirit have been remarkable. It is certain also that several still heathen tribes of the Central and Eastern Sudan have received through its activities a decisive impulse towards Islam. The fact that the order possesses a single head (at present Sidi Ahmed esh Sherif), a compact membership to some extent at least in close relation with the administration of the order, and a certain anti-European tendency which finds expression in its programme, has made the order appear a peculiarly dangerous opponent of western penetration. Its influence, however, has probably been exaggerated. No European power has so far come into serious conflict with it, and the French administrators have repeatedly taken occasion to speak highly of its loyal attitude. Attention must also be called to the fact that in its propaganda no use has been made of force.

The Qadiriya owes its great influence on the intellectual life of the Western Sudan principally to its educational work. Most of the schools in the Western and Central Sudan have been founded by members of this order, and from these schools numerous religious leaders, jurists, and scholars have gone forth to settle among heathen and Mohammedans and to win new adherents for their order and religion. So far as we know, the order has never resorted to political methods of propaganda.

The same cannot be said of the Tijaniya. It is characteristic that its chief promoter in the Sudan should have been the conqueror Hadj Omar, and that Samori should also have been one of its members. Members of the Tijaniya have always readily drawn the sword for the spread of the faith and engaged in political intrigues. The majority of the revolts against European powers have sprung from the ranks of the Tijaniya. Its members have not, however, neglected peaceful missionary work, and teachers and preachers have followed the soldiers into conquered territories.

At the present day the Tijaniya and Qadiriya have to a large extent been broken up into a number of sub-divisions, some of which constitute quite independent orders, or even separate sects. In many instances, membership of an order consists merely in the recitation of the *zikr* without any knowledge of the source from which it comes or of the aims of the order. In some places the religious orders have assumed the character of social brotherhoods, which have taken the place of the previous totem unions; members of the order find a hospitable welcome from their fellow members even in a foreign country. The Qadiriya and Tijaniya gain a special importance from the fact that in several of their associations mysticism is practised. The order thus in many cases takes the place of the former heathen secret societies, and in it the features of heathen mysticism survive and flourish luxuriantly. It is true, however, that some seek in the order real spiritual satisfaction which they have failed to find in orthodox Islam.

How far Islam has on the whole succeeded in influencing the inner life of its adherents is still but little known. The African will not allow a stranger to see into his heart. Very frequently there is hardly any difference between Moslems and heathen. For both, magic is the religion of ordinary life. The benedictions and pilgrimages to the graves of saints, which find so much favour among the Mohammedans of the Sudan, as well as the use of amulets, are



simply a means of obtaining magic powers. Idolatrous practices, such as the invocation of heathen deities and the offering of sacrifices to them, are occasionally, though rarely employed even by Marabouts, especially in times of war, when it is important to find a powerful means of influencing the minds of the people. On the other hand, the Mohammedan is always and essentially distinguished from the heathen by the value which he sets on his religion and his unreserved allegiance to it, and by his self-confidence in religious matters. He has escaped from the narrowness and dissatisfaction of his ancestral religion, which he has seen succumb before the new civilization, and from the uncertainty with regard to a future life and the restlessness of soul which resulted from it. In his allegiance to the almighty Allah, in the possession of His revelation and His holy book, and in the sure expectation of everlasting life, he feels himself equal to all the emergencies of life. He observes the precepts of his religion, and thereafter has nothing further to do except to commit himself to the unalterable will of the All-Merciful. This extremely simple method of reckoning is apt, even with deeper natures, to mean the death of all personal inward life, and to create that self-confidence which proudly closes the door to every other influence.