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Charles Dundas

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HISTORY OF KITUI.

BY THE HON. CHARLES DUNDAS.

THE last of the Highlands of the East African Protectorate end in a tableland called the Yatta Plateau, and beyond this there is a very gradual slope which, roughly speaking, extends for some 200 miles to the coast. A great part of this huge tract of land lying between the Rivers Athi and Tana is officially known as the District of Kitui. The name as far as the whole country is concerned is not a native one, but is taken from the name of the Government station Kitui, which lies some 20 miles east of the Yatta Plateau. The station lies at an altitude of some 3,750 feet, but east of that again for a few miles there is a steep drop down to a level of about 2,000 feet, and then comes a seemingly endless plain which is the final slope down to the coast; north and south of the station the land also falls to an altitude of about 2,000 feet, though the descent is less abrupt. The greater part of this country is uninhabited, the populated area forms a comparatively narrow strip scarcely 50 miles broad, stretching north and south of the station from the Tana to the Athi River, a distance of about 160 miles; the most easterly settlements lie about 35 miles from the station, and mark the boundary of a vast stretch of bush country uninhabited except for a few Wanderobbo.

Wherever the land has not been cleared for cultivation the whole country is thickly overgrown with thorn bush, but despite the density of the bush it is exceedingly dry. Permanent running water is not found except in the Rivers Athi and Tana or "Kiloluma" as it is called by the Akamba, and in the dry season scarcity of water is often a serious problem to the natives, particularly as the water obtained by digging is often too salty for human consumption. The soil, too, is unfertile, and this coupled with the frequent failure of rains results in periodical famines. Such famines have in the past harassed the Akamba more than any other adversity, all Akamba can tell of seven famines, some of many more, and it is certain that the population has been largely held in check by these disasters.

It is probable that there have been of late a series of dry years. Many of the older inhabitants speak of times when there was running water in parts which are now waterless and uninhabited. Large river beds may be seen which are now quite dry and overgrown; some of these might scarcely be recognized as river beds but for their names, still retained by the natives. Thus the River Nziu forms a broad watercourse, but the bush and small trees in it show that it has not been

running for many years, and one may dig twenty and thirty feet in the sand without coming upon water. These facts make it probable that there was a time not so long ago when the country was more richly watered. Minerals or other natural riches have not as yet been found. The climate is unhealthy, particularly in the lower lying parts where there is much fever, and on the whole, therefore, Kitui does not so far appear to be a country suited for Europeans.

The inhabitants of this country are all Akamba excepting for the Theraka, who occupy a small district in the north on the Tana River. Of the past history of the latter people practically nothing is known, and that of the Akamba is very vague, nor does it seem to present much of interest except as a guide to the study of the people.

According to native accounts all Akamba came from Ulu in Machakos District. All those of Kitui maintain this; elsewhere it is said, I believe, that they came from Teita, but it seems more probable that the Wateita are an offshoot of the Akamba. Not so long ago, probably not more than a century ago, there was an immigration from Machakos across the Athi River into what is now called Kitui; curiously enough the Akamba of Machakos called and still name this country "Thaiishu," which is a country north of the Tana River. According to native legend they had for long tried to cross the Athi, which they say was unfordable in those days, being very narrow and running very strongly. It is not impossible that there may be some truth in this, for if the supposition of a greater rainfall at some earlier time is correct the river would naturally be deeper. That this migration, whatever its details may have been, did take place seems almost certain, for many old men state that their fathers came from Machakos, and the story is too well known to be entirely doubted, but whether it was a general migration at one time or whether it took place gradually through years is not to be ascertained. Neither can we know why it took place unless it was that the Akamba tried to escape the raiding Masai. Following upon this there seems to have been a gradual spreading of the Akamba over the whole country from around the east side of the Yatta, about five hours from the present station, where it is said that there was a large settlement of them. They now spread up to within 20 miles of the Tana, and are particularly numerous in that part which is called Mumoni. The latter place was uninhabited until about fifteen years ago, indeed, the natives assure one that very few of the older boys even have been born in Mumoni. Despite the fact that these movements cannot have been so very long ago, there are fairly distinct differences between the people of various parts. There are at least two well-defined branches which are recognized by the Akamba themselves, and are to be distinguished by the manner after which they cut the teeth. In Machakos the six front top teeth are cut to extremely fine points, in Kitui to the west of the station and in its immediate surroundings four teeth are cut to blunter V shapes, while in Mumoni and in the whole of the eastern and southern parts only the two front teeth are cut so as to leave an inverted V-shaped space; at Ikutha in the south there is a slight variation of this in that the outer

edges are also slightly cut, which gives them somewhat of a crescent shape, but in the main the practice is the same as that followed by the people of Mumoni as against those of Kitui, who more nearly approach the Akamba of Machakos in this respect. In dialect, too, there are differences, that of Kitui is most nearly related to the Machakos dialect. I am not able to say how much variation there is between the dialects of Kitui and Ikutha, but at Mumoni and in the east the difference is most marked. The latter has a distinct tendency towards the Kikuyu language, the "r" is very pronounced, a sound which the Kitui native finds most difficult to learn; names such as Nzellu become Nzerru in the north; other words are used such as "Thoba" (behind), instead of "Etina" as at Kitui (Kikuyu, "Thotha").

It thus seems likely that the Akamba settled around the foot of the Yatta, and spreading from thence took up other customs and differences of speech as they left their original country. Even those nearest to Machakos show such variations, and the Machakos Akamba appear to look down upon those of Kitui, regarding them as people almost destitute of good customs, though apparently it is not uncommon for the Kitui people to refer matters in question regarding recognized customs to elders of Machakos.

The question is now what might have brought about these variations in one and the same tribe. There is a legend among the Akamba that formerly there were two men, one called Ngoli and the other Ekulli. Neither of them had cattle or sheep, but one day Ngai (god) told them to leave their villages open that night. Ngoli did so, but Ekulli disregarded the injunction. In the night both were awakened by bellowings and bleatings and Ngoli going out of his village saw numbers of cattle, sheep and goats coming out of an anthep. All these ran into his open village but Ekulli got none because his village was closed. Thus while Ngoli became rich Ekulli remained poor. Now to this day certain people are called Ngoli and others Ekulli. The latter seem generally to be poor, though, of course, circumstances have done much to alter this now, but there appear to be two classes, of which Ngoli are more or less the Kamba aristocracy. It is further said that when the Akamba came to Kitui they found there an aboriginal race which spoke Kikamba or a dialect of this language. These people, they say, were very poor and had no cattle but subsisted largely on the honey which they collected. The name Ekulli may have been derived from the word Ikuli, a monkey, from the practice of climbing trees to collect honey. Now whither this aboriginal race has gone one cannot say, but the following may throw some light on the question, or it may only be a mere surmise. In the north live the Theraka, where they were until lately separated from the Akamba by a broad expanse of uninhabited bush country. Compared with the Akamba they are a poor people; honey collecting is largely practised among them, even more so than among the Akamba. They themselves state that they came from the other side of the Tana, but at the same time they say that they sprang from the Mkamba tribe, while their language is a strange mixture of Kikuyu and Kikamba. Nearer to the former in language and half way between

the two in customs, they are a somewhat puzzling section. If they came from the other side of the Tana it seems strange that they should claim descent from the Akamba, and that honey gathering should be such a common practice with them, which it is not among the Akikuyu. I have thought it possible that the Theraka might be representatives of the aboriginal tribe of Kitui spoken of above. Presuming that the Akamba spreading from the Yatta mixed with these people we could account for the variations of dialects, and in particular the tendency towards Kikuyu, also the Akamba might have picked up from them certain customs and dropped others of their own. Such a fusion need not be supposed to have taken place peaceably, it might and probably would have come about by warfare and force, in which the Akamba subdued and swallowed up the aboriginals or drove them northwards as they advanced. Both may have been the case, and thus a certain number may have remained with the Akamba and merged into them while others fled across the Tana River from whence they later returned to their original country as far as the Akamba would let them.

Another presumption is possible. We see here the Akamba and Akikuyu gradually merging into each other, at Mumoni there is a real convergence until in Theraka we find people who can be said to be neither the one nor the other. All around the base of Kenya and along the banks of the Tana are people such as the Waembe, the Wameru, Waambu and Suka who are apparently of Kikuyu stock, but the relationship between them and the Theraka and these and the Akamba might really mean that they all sprang from an original stock now separated into different tribes, of which the Akamba and Akikuyu are the most distinct.

So much for the people who live in Kitui District. As regards their past history there is a certain amount to be said of the Akamba since their migration into Kitui, which should be of interest.

At the Yatta settlement around Maviani hill there lived a chief called Kivoi who is said to have been the sole chief of the Akamba of that time. His authority was such that he levied taxes from some Masai who had settled in that neighbourhood. When Dr. Krapf came to Kitui in about 1850, Kivoi volunteered to take him through on a journey northwards, but on the way they were attacked and Kivoi was killed; Dr. Krapf escaped and returned, but met with a very poor welcome on account of Kivoi's death. Although Kivoi is spoken of as a chief this is probably not a correct description of his position. The Akamba do not appear to have ever had recognized chiefs, but rather leaders, who in time of war ruled supreme as did the Dictators of Rome. Naturally, however, such a man would always command considerable influence and no doubt his authority bound the people more or less together. At that time the Galla inhabited Kitui as far west as the Mutito hills. The Akamba made uninterrupted war against them and they were gradually driven back and robbed of their cattle until they seem to have retired into their own country, whither the Akamba say they would have followed them but for the Europeans. The Galla were weak in numbers but they were fierce and warlike, so that it is evident that although the Akamba outnumbered

them they must have been considerably more combined at that time than they are now. The Galla are to this day hated by the Akamba by reason of their habit of mutilating the bodies of their fallen enemies. All over their traces are to be found still, particularly in the stock of the Akamba, which is largely Galla; at Endau they are said to be entirely Galla cattle. Near Mai hill there is a large rock on top of which there is a big excavation which is said to have been made by the Galla for the purpose of storing rainwater. Besides wars with these people the Akamba of Mumoni had continual fights with the Theraka and Meru people, from whom they took much stock. How far back these dated I cannot say but those which took place since the Government was established were more in the form of raids, in which the Akamba had very much the upper hand, mainly, it must be admitted, owing to the fact that they had quite a number of Snider rifles, which were subsequently confiscated by us. Meantime, after the death of Kivoi, the Akamba seem all to have drifted apart without any leaders or chiefs and a deplorable state of affairs resulted. If they came to Kitui originally to escape the Masai they found no better luck here, for the Masai raided them continuously, robbing enormous quantities of stock. Mostly these attacks seem to have taken place at night when the unsuspecting village was surprised and the cattle driven away, often, too, the inhabitants were killed. Despite this it is certain that the raiders were frequently themselves worsted, but the Masai were always daring and, as a rule, successful. Most of them came from Kilima Mbogo and Gai, where the Mumoni natives then lived, which was a favourite ground for their attacks; it was this that drove the Akamba further north and eastwards. Thus while they were persecuted and robbed by the Masai, they in their turn fell upon the Galla and Meru people, and this may account for the legend that tells of three brothers, Galla, Masai, and Mkamba, who lived together in peace until Masai stole the cattle of Mkamba, who robbed Galla of his wives. It seems that the time of the raids was worst after Kivoi died, when the Galla only still remained in the north. Those who drove the latter completely back were the Akamba of Mumoni, who appear to have held together more than any others, as in fact they do still, and it is probable that they made a good stand against the Masai.

It is not surprising that the Masai found the Akamba an easy prey at this time, for there was not only a total lack of combination among them but uninterrupted bloodshed among themselves, so much so that the Akamba now declare that none of their enemies killed half the number that were killed among each other. I know a man in Mumoni who had six sons, four of these were killed in fights with their fellow countrymen and two died of starvation in the famine. This is by no means an isolated case; but it is rather a typical instance of what took place at that time. I asked him what had led to his sons being killed and he said, "We used to go to fight the Meru and Galla and came back with cattle, but when it came to dividing these, the people began to fight and often more died than were killed by the enemy. Other times the cattle would be fairly divided, but afterwards others claimed more and collected to rob a few. Often the Anake would be dancing and

others came and demanded one of the girls and then a fight began. In this way I lost my sons." Here at least there was some combination to begin with, but around Kitui and in the south there was nothing of the sort, every little dispute, every claim led to bloodshed and this increased to feuds between individuals, villages, and districts. In those days a man is said never to have left his village to go far alone, no one could go a few miles without encountering others who were looking for someone to rob or slay, and hence it is that the average native of Kitui knows nothing of the country except in his immediate neighbourhood. Where the Masai did not raid the internal warfare was fiercer than anywhere, thus at Mutha the raiders are said never to have come, but this place is reputed as the worst part for fighting in former times.

Thus it was that the Akamba had no chance against the Masai, in Machakos, on the other hand, the natives successfully withstood and defeated them, and yet in no country did the Masai stand a poorer chance than in Kitui; here the dense bush afforded every advantage to those armed with the bow and poisoned arrow and great hindrances to the enemy whose weapon was the spear. The Theraka admit that the Akamba were dangerous people to tackle in the bush, but then the Theraka had to deal with the Akamba combined against them. Nothing helped the Masai but the extraordinary divisions among their victims, it seems, in fact, to have gone so far that in many cases one village was inwardly pleased to hear of the annihilation of a neighbouring village, seeing in this an old score paid off. I think it is also not to be doubted that but for this state of affairs we should have had a hard fight to subdue the country.

Thus there was fierce fighting for long in Kitui, and in addition to this there were armed Arab caravans which carried off slaves and ivory unhindered. The end to all this came in 1898, when the Government station was built. It did not take long then to put a stop to the fighting and warfare, though here and there similar outbreaks would occur, the last known raid having been made on the Galla by the people of Ndatani about 1906; there is a Galla girl taken in this raid still living in the place.

No sooner had law and order been more or less established than a severe famine broke out, which became the more fatal as it was accompanied by a violent epidemic of small-pox. During this time thousands must have died of starvation and disease. Numbers wandered into Kikuyu, where many of them have remained, but the largest migration was to the coast where the Rabai Akamba are mostly such as left Kitui to escape the famine. In the outlying parts of the district unlimited lawlessness reigned and the claims for cattle and women dating from that time are numberless.

The foregoing turbulent period is now past, and there is no less warlike African than the Mkamba of to-day, but the troublesome times are of too recent date to allow of their traces being entirely obliterated and therefore hostile feeling is still very prevalent. I have heard Akamba say that they dislike all foreigners, but they hate each other. There are so many old scores left unpaid,

so many know of cattle and women which were theirs being now in the hands of others; the man whose four sons were killed knows those who killed them or their relations, which is all one, and he will not easily forget his grievances. Villages which fifteen or twenty years ago were deadly enemies will not easily harmonize now, and hence it is that natives living quite close to each other remain as perfect strangers, not necessarily because they have an old account to settle, but because from old habit the Mkamba has nothing to do with "strangers." I have known this to be the case with villages not half an hour apart. And being now unable to settle his old grievances, the Mkamba turns to litigation and perseveringly adheres to some old claim to foster his hostile inclinations. Thus despite Government and order the Akamba of Kitui continue to live as isolated as they can, caring nothing for the fate and fortune of most of their neighbours and utterly opposed to undertaking anything in common.

This short review of past times in Kitui can hardly be called historical in its detail, but what I have been able to record I have mentioned because it is so evident that those times have left deep rooted traces on the people, and, without knowing the cause, one cannot appreciate the fact that immense adversities have done much to form the character of the Akamba. It should also be remarked that totally different circumstances have been at work here, compared to the past of the Machakos section, and, therefore, what holds good for the one district must not be necessarily applicable to the other. There is also another point to be considered before closing this. The people have only lately emerged from remarkably turbulent times, but these times are presumably not of very ancient date, and, therefore, their traces may not be very lasting. The Mkamba may be recovering now, and under altered circumstances we may, in time, get to know the Mkamba as he really is; anyone knowing these people, and forgetting this, might despair of them altogether, but I think that it is no exaggeration to say that a tribe with the characteristics of the Kitui Akamba could scarcely in former times have continued as a tribe for long. There may, therefore, be in the Mkamba traits which have not yet come to light. But as he is to-day, thus he concerns us for the present, and before entering upon this subject it was necessary to consider the influences which had been at work to form the Kitui Mkamba.

CHARACTER OF THE AKAMBA.

In the study of a tribe it is absolutely necessary to make an estimate of their character. Laws, customs, acts and ideas are all either cause or result of this. To arrive at such an estimate is, however, not easy, for in our eyes the most prominent traits will always be such as are continental characteristics, but that there are differences between African tribes as great as between European nations becomes obvious when we compare, for instance, the Akamba with the Masai. National character may, however, easily be overlooked and lost in the continental

stamp; but even if the two are not confounded, there are other points to be borne in mind. In the first place we may misjudge by laying too much stress upon the attitude of natives towards ourselves. It should be remembered that on the one hand we are intruders in their country, and on the other hand we form an element entirely foreign and well-nigh incomprehensible to them, which bewilders the primitive mind. A more correct rule to follow will therefore be to observe their attitude towards each other, but even so, we must be careful lest we ourselves have influenced this. As an instance of what is here indicated, I can quote the following case: The people of a certain district decided upon committing a breach of a local law, and the whole population took a very binding oath (Muma) whereby it was provided that the oath should not be disclosed, and further that if the offence became known to the Government they should one and all confess to it. When, however, two men were arrested in consequence of the offence committed, they not only at once disclosed the oath, but, contrary to its conditions, all the rest denied it. Thus the fact that a number of Akamba could combine even to the extent of binding themselves by oath did not show a very unanimous spirit among them after all. And this is a very common experience with the Akamba, no matter how sacred an act may be to them, despite all supernatural terrors which one would suppose sufficient to bind them to a common interest, the discordant spirit is yet stronger, and nothing lacks more in their composition than a unanimous feeling. My short review of their past has already dealt with this, they never could submit to a common chief, or join to oppose a common enemy. Above all the Mkamba prizes his independence, to be subject to anyone or bound by anything beyond mere family ties is hateful to him. Often small settlements are found in isolated places where water is scarce, where their fields are constantly destroyed by wild beasts, just where we should expect to find the villages close together, but it is just in such places that we find them farthest apart and entirely strange to each other. When for any reason it has become necessary for a settlement to move elsewhere, one would suppose that they would all move together to one place, but quite the contrary is the rule, as if tired of being together, and fearing that they risk becoming dependent on each other, they will disperse all over the country. Anybody outside the family is a stranger and anyone in authority an enemy. "He is not my father," is often heard in reference to a chief, by which is implied that nothing obliges the speaker to acknowledge him or heed his orders. I remember a Mkamba refusing to go to a village half an hour's walk from his own, the only village too that was not several hours' distance away, on the plea that the people there were strangers to him. If a Mkamba meets another on the road he has nothing to say to him, and will probably look away, for he is a stranger and does not concern him. This attitude has often been put down to surliness, but I hold that this is not correct—it is much more due to his desire for independence closely connected with another characteristic. The Mkamba is much too mistrustful and suspicious to make it possible for him ever to work to any extent in combination with others. His mind runs along dark and complicated lines, with a distinct

inclination for things mysterious and distorted. They have perhaps least of any tribe reason to suspect Europeans of evil designs, yet, reasoning after their own inclinations, they seem to regard it as impossible that we should have come to their country with anything but a hideous purpose, which they always expect to see revealed. Thus it is that terrible stories of horrible intentions on our part are constantly current. It is typical of the Mkamba that such suspicions are most easily dispersed by recounting to him all that the Europeans could do if they liked. Nothing gives his mind more peace, I think, than to know that he is entirely in the hands of stronger forces, for then he will cease to bother about it and sees the absurdity of his attitude. Yet, despite all this, when a Mkamba is called upon to give evidence in a dispute, or to speak his mind in regard to two men, he seems to take into consideration only one point, namely, which of the two lives nearest to him—the nearer to him a man lives the stronger will be his support of him against the other, and family and clannish feeling are extraordinarily strong in him.

Like all Africans the Mkamba is strictly conservative, he can brook no change or alteration. Here I would point out that if we remark many fallings off from old customs, these nearly always can be traced to our own influence. It must, however, be admitted that the Mkamba is more averse to improvements than to other changes; he will often maintain that it is impossible for him to forget his traditions and customs, yet he seems easily to overcome the difficulty when the old habits imposed restrictions upon him, as, for instance, the exclusive right of only the oldest men to drink honey beer. Particularly opposed to improvements and new-fangled ideas are the women, who are, on the whole, far more intractable and stubborn than the men. Her wishes do not go far, but what a woman wants she will have, and I have known not a few cases where women have committed suicide when forcibly restrained from getting their own way. Otherwise she is patient, industrious, and serenely indifferent to all going on around her. It is no uncommon sight to see a Mkamba run for life at the sight of a European, while his wife will be found sitting by the roadside undisturbed, and looking as if nothing could induce her to run.

On the whole the Mkamba woman cannot be called faithful as a wife, any time she may prefer another man and then she will run away and if she is brought back by force she will repeat this time after time; there is only one way of keeping her and that is to retain her children, but on the first occasion she is sure to run away again and will probably take the children with her. The truth is that the women rather cling to their position in life, which is that of a worker or a piece of goods and thus in no wise contaminable by dishonour or bound to fidelity. Morality is altogether at a low stage among the Akamba, as many of their customs show, but most deplorable is the low value set upon any virtues and the indifference to all imputations cast upon them. Thus courage, hardihood, and strength are not prized at all; to a Mkamba it is best to be cunning and deceitful, his weapons, the bow and poisoned arrow, are typical of such a character. When upbraiding them on this or any other account one might expect to find fervent denials on their

side, but as a matter of fact one is almost certain to meet with frank admissions, and indeed a Mkamba is much given to further elaborating upon his failings and bringing to light more than one was prepared to lay to his charge. A missionary once reproached some natives for their repulsive habits, but his abuse of them only met with their entire approbation; exasperated, he said, "But are you not like hyænas?" "Yes," they said, "we are hyænas." There is nothing admirable about all this but at the root of it we find one of the most curious ingredients of the Mkamba character. It is a particular pride, a pride in self-sufficiency which asserts a superiority equal to their demands and which scorns improvements. This trait is and will be one of our greatest difficulties in advancing them, but it should be reckoned with because if once turned in another direction it may become a great help.

As I have said before and as I hope to show later the Akamba are great litigants, so much so that one might call it a pastime for them. Their devotion to this may easily be misunderstood and therefore it should be noted that here also there is a deeper-lying reason. Nothing which is owing can ever be remitted, it matters not how long ago a claim arose or whether the original parties in such a case are dead and gone, for debts, claims and property are all inheritable from one generation to another. To hear two men enter upon an endless dispute regarding some paltry article which was owed by one of their grandsires to the other takes one's breath away. This gives the Mkamba the appearance of a grasping nature but I do not think this is entirely so. He will never forget the smallest item due to him but he does not bother much about that to which he has no claim. I cannot recollect any case of downright theft committed by a Mkamba, practically always the stealing was really the taking of something to which the culprit thought he had a claim. Of course the temptation may make the thief's imagination somewhat elastic in such cases, but nevertheless without any such thought it has always seemed quite clear that the theft would not have been committed. I do not speak here of the Mkamba represented by young unmarried men who for lack of any occupation are sadly given to purloining whatever comes in their way, I refer here to the average respectable native. In the same way a Mkamba will never cease to hanker after something that he has lost, whether it be the calf of a cow which he owned long ago or blood money for a relation long dead. I remember a man coming to me to sue another for blood money on the grounds that he had accused his father of murder and, before the culprit could be tried, he had died in prison. He made no pretence that his father had not been justly accused, but when I explained that his claim could not be entertained he said, "Well, what is to be done?" It was a sore problem to him and he had evidently surmized what my answer would be, yet he had lost a relation by what seemed to him an unnatural death, therefore he was entitled to compensation and since he could not get it, "What was to be done?" I have no doubt that as long as he lives he will continue cogitating on the matter. Thus I think that when the Mkamba appears grasping it is really due to a keen sense of justice, but justice to him means not merely the prevention of injustice but chiefly

the upholding of the demands of justice; he will never admit that justice has been done so long as a genuine claim is not admitted for lack of evidence, nothing horrifies his sense of justice more than this. So also a Mkamba rarely bears a grudge to one who has punished him, no matter how hardly so long as he has not been unjustly punished.

To strangers, although the Mkamba does not like them, he is hospitable, in his own way too he is polite though not servile. Towards his children he is remarkably kind and tender, nor are the women subjected to rough treatment from an African point of view. When given charge of an intelligent animal such as a European dog or a horse he will be extremely careful of it.

In respect to intelligence the Akamba are very much in advance of other tribes. If educated they learn quickly, and for manual labour requiring a little intelligence such as machine work, they are preferred by many. An extraordinary handiness and skill is displayed in their ornaments, arrows, and other articles of use. They have also a great liking for music, and are capable of remembering and following light tunes. Very little use has been made of the Akamba for labour, partly owing to their inability to stick to any work, but more so owing to their inborn indolence. Work is to the Mkamba nothing short of a misfortune; when he does take to it a very little discomfort, such as he would otherwise not notice, will completely incapacitate him, while he has then the appearance of undergoing the deepest misery. It is a matter of great regret that the present generation seems to be increasing in indolence, and even when food is short there are hundreds of young men capable of becoming useful workers who would sooner starve than take to employment. There is little doubt that one cause of this increasing indolence is the general tendency to drunkenness. There being no warfare now, and therefore no demand for hardiness, the sole occupation of the young men having also thereby ceased, they have degenerated and usurped the rights of the elders. I have myself seen whole villages in a state of intoxication down to half-grown boys. Following upon this comes of course a growing disregard for the elders and all good custom and since this was the only form of authority known to the Akamba in former times, the result is a total lack of respect for authority, and the young men are thus becoming a mere lawless rabble of unemployed.

The general habit of drinking has had its effect too upon the physique of the people, I think. In this respect the Akamba of Kitui have nothing of which they can boast; out of any ten or twelve young men perhaps six or eight will be found to have unsound lungs or hearts. I remember that out of thirteen young men picked for their build only four were found to be constitutionally fit for service in the police force. There is a marked difference between the build of people in Machakos and Kitui, those within the vicinity of the latter station being particularly weedy and stunted in growth. There is little doubt that it is just in this part that the regard for custom is at its lowest, and therefore the drinking at its highest. Possibly, too, during hostile times there was much inbreeding, which brought its results. But if the men are unfit for hard work, the women are exceedingly tough and hardy, and

whereas a man can rarely carry more than a 45-lb. load, most women will easily shoulder 60 lbs. I have seen women carrying as much as 140 lbs. At an early age also the men become useless for work, while the women will continue to labour up to a great age.

I am afraid that there is very little to be said in praise of the Akamba; they are unattractive in manner and do not improve on acquaintance, neither do they impress one as interesting people. For these reasons they have few, if any, friends among Europeans, but already a few have discovered that if they can employ a Mkamba they may have an exceptionally useful man. To be fair to him he has the makings of a most useful native in him, besides certain traits which cannot but be of real value one day; perhaps much that we find lacking in him lies inert awaiting a proper chance to come to light. We have to save him from falling into utter uselessness through degeneration, and what we must bear in mind is that this degeneration to a large extent came and will increase through our influence. Talking to him is useless, and worse than useless, for talking is his own forte and method of hoodwinking, at which he is a past master. Suspicious as he is by nature, the more persuasive one appears to be, the more he suspects that you are trying to talk him over to your own ends, and the less he will be inclined to conform to your wishes. I do not mean to convey the idea that no advance is to be expected from these people, but the signs of such advance are few, while the advance noticeable is not very marked. Personally, I am persuaded that the older men are incapable of progressing, the ideas and views natural to them and instilled in rough times from birth are too irreconcilable to advance, and too rooted in their minds to allow of room for other ideas. What progress we expect must therefore come from the younger men, who would not be difficult to advance could they be drawn away somewhat from the allurements of their present habits of life. In dealing with them I have always found the young men much more tractable and amenable than the elders, although the latter frequently themselves complain about their sons. It seems to me, therefore, that while we look to the elders for the upholding and preservation of old customs and traditions, those who wish to create a progressive spirit among the Akamba should devote their attention mainly to the young men and their training.

In dealing with the Mkamba it is a great mistake to reckon on outwitting him, for he is not easily duped, although he may appear to be so. Nor can he easily be frightened, for he will obstinately sit down and await what may come; then, but not till then, he will be frightened, for what is impending he loves to disregard, and nothing makes one more helpless against him than his discovery that your threat was an empty one. Deceitful as he is, I have always found it the best policy to trust a Mkamba, for then he may not fail you, while, when he sees distrust, his curiously perverse mind seems to start meditating on what it can hatch. In the same way it pays to be frank and straightforward with him; he will easily make up his mind if he sees that you have made up yours, but once given a choice his evasions will be endless.

THE VILLAGE.

The most favourite sites for villages are underneath the hills, here and there they are found on the hills, and formerly, the hill tops were favoured, of which fact the remains of old villages and fields, overgrown paths, broken earthenware pots and hollowed stones for grinding corn, found on most hills, give ample proof. It is said that the Akamba built on the hills for protection from the Masai, and that only latterly have they taken to the low-lying country. But even now the village is rarely placed so as to be easily detected, it is never near the main road, and is generally, if not in the thick bush at least behind some rising ground.

What we must speak of as a village is really the abode of a family numbering as many huts as there are married women. Frequently each hut is partitioned off by a thorn hedge, but more frequently the wives of one man have their huts together in one enclosure. Adjoining these are generally the huts of married sons also with their enclosures, other members of the family, brothers and cousins may add their huts, but beyond those the village rarely extends; strangers are not often found in the family settlement, though latterly I seem to have noticed some change in this respect. All these huts lie more or less in a circle and the whole is surrounded by a large hedge sometimes made of poles up to 10 feet in height, sometimes consisting merely of thorn branches laid closely together. Each division has its outlet made of stout poles which is closed by a large thorn branch when the owner is not at home. Occasionally the hedge is dispensed with, but this is not often the case, and will always mean that the village has no stock. The village is thus a very limited settlement, and may count only one or two huts, the largest I have seen counted twenty-nine huts, and, therefore, when speaking of a Mkamba village, one must not imagine it to be like other native villages, with streets and market places, indeed, if the family could contrive to live in one hut there would be no villages at all, but single huts dotted all over the country.

The living huts are conical shaped, 6 to 7 feet in diameter. They are made of a framework of sticks, bound together with bark string, and at times supported by a pole in the centre. The whole is thatched with grass simply tied into bundles, and attached to the framework. The hut is so simply made that its construction takes no more than a day's work, and I have often seen the grass taken off in a few minutes and the framework carried bodily away to another site.

The doorway, like the entrance to the village, is extremely low so that it can only be entered by bending the body low, it is closed by a frame of grass or reeds. Inside there is usually one bed which consists of four uprights and four horizontal poles between which is stretched a skin, or failing that a number of sticks are laid across. If there are two women in the hut, each has her bed, or, if there is a grown daughter, she will also have her bed. Very often there is another bed for the small children. In such case there is not room for more furniture, but as a

matter of fact, the Mkamba has none, though in every hut there will be found an endless litter of bowls, gourds, earthenware pots and stools. In the centre are the three stones used for cooking. As there is no smoke outlet, and the interior is completely dark, and the flooring is rarely swept, the atmosphere inside is scarcely savoury, the more so as the poultry and goats are kept there in the night time, and the calves during the day. Flooring is not provided, but from the droppings of the goats a hard surface is formed which serves as a floor.

Outside the hut is a space where the cattle are kept at night, this also is never cleared, and consequently in the rains it forms a mire inches deep, so much so that the natives themselves often have to lay down beams to secure a safe passage. Otherwise the village is not dirty, at least there is nothing offensive thrown in its vicinity.

Behind the hut are the food stores which are raised some 2 feet above the ground. They are really only platforms which hold a huge bottle-shaped grass basket called "Kinga," in which the grain is kept, and over these there is a grass roof. These baskets are very well made and to keep out the weevils and rats are plastered over with mud or cow dung and sealed at the mouth in the same way.

Outside the enclosure is an open space, generally shaded by a tree. This place, called "Thome," is one of great importance. The natives are very fond of sitting here for a few hours after dark by a large fire, for which there is always a stack of wood, and it therefore becomes a great place for gossip and talk; it is also the workshop of the village. The Thome marks the boundary of the village, strangers may come here, but may not enter the enclosure; it is here that the many long discussions regarding marriage dowries and legal claims are conducted, especially if it be at the village of a more important elder, such as is now usually a Government chief. But the Thome is also more than the assembly place of its village, for where there are several villages more or less closely situated together they use one and the same Thome, and altogether they form what is termed a "Thome" in which one of the elders is its head (*Mtumia ma Thome*). The members of a Thome hang very closely together and form almost a little State by themselves, perhaps the only form of State known to the Mkamba. In this sense then a Mkamba village may be very large but there is no continuous group of huts and many of the villages belonging to a Thome may not be within sight of each other. In the Thome will generally be found the *Mtumia*, the father of the family. He is the father, elder and despot of the family, and the true Mkamba knows no authority beyond his. To him belong all the cattle and goats, none of his sons possess anything, even their wives are bought with his property, all the dowries paid for daughters of the village, and blood moneys for members of the family who have been killed, go to increase the father's stock. Meanwhile the father is not expected to use the cattle as he likes, for he is essentially the head of the family, and as such he is the sole owner of its wealth. If a son leaves the village he will get what would be his portion of the stock, but so long as he stays with his father

there is only one common ownership, represented by the father. If the Mtumia enjoys the privileges due to him by custom his orders will suffice for any member of the village; none of the others will even sit beside him. As marks of his position he carries the forked stick and three-legged stool. The geometrical designs with which these stools are decorated in Machakos are not seen in Kitui except as importations; if they have any decoration it is usually of a very rough sort. They differ from the stools used by the women, being only about 3 inches in height, while those of the women stand 10 to 15 inches off the ground. An exchange of stools between men and women is not permitted, and a breach of this rule entails a fine of one goat. With regard to the position of the Mtumia it must be admitted that he does not often enjoy the privileges due to him. Young men will frequently be seen carrying the same stools and using the forked sticks; particularly in the way of beer drinking, which formerly was the exclusive right of only the oldest men, there is now practically no difference between them and the youngest men. At least every married man now indulges in honey beer and most of the unmarried ones do likewise. It is said that this change came about in a curious way. Formerly, when the young men climbed the trees to get the honey they received a portion of the honey, but in time they began to demand some of the beer made from it, and the elders being unable to climb the trees were not in a position to refuse this demand. This may have been the cause in part, but obviously the deeper-lying reason is the loss of respect for custom and their betters on the part of the young men. In spite of all this it must be admitted that to the average Mkamba the behests of his father are sufficient for him, and when it is not found to be so it is a sure sign of a marked falling off of all native morality, for if he does not respect his father he will respect no authority.

Next to the Mtumia (pl. Atumia) comes the "Nthele"; these are men who might be called middle-aged; as a rule reference is made to them as those who do not dance any longer. The reason for this is that the young men or "Anake" frequently continue to take part in the dances for some years after they are married. Nthele and Anake can therefore not be taken to mean married and unmarried men. The male members of the family take a very small share in the work of the village, but of all of them the Anake are the most indolent and are to be regarded very much as the drones of the Mkamba hive. Practically their sole occupation and only amusement is dancing and they are therefore always to be distinguished by their abundance of ornaments. They lead very unstable lives and many of them have no real habitation but live at different villages; they have no huts and sleep in the food stores; formerly, however, this was not so and quite latterly a few have begun to build their huts again.

A more useful class are the "Waelti," or unmarried girls. As a rule they help the women to carry the daily supply of water for the village, and they also help in the fields. They are, however, allowed much liberty and devote considerable time to dancing. If, however, they are allowed a certain amount of licence they can hardly be grudging this, for later on they will be required to work hard enough.

Without doubt the most admirable figure in the village is the "Kiveti," the married woman. Stolid and apparently serenely indifferent to all that goes on around her she will always be found occupied one way or another. She milks the cows, tills the fields, threshes, pounds, and grinds the corn, fetches water, cuts and carries the firewood, besides many other duties which the men consider beneath their dignity to perform. Latterly when there has been no work in the fields the women have often been required to herd the cattle. It is said that if the women had the choosing of village sites all the settlements would be on the river banks, unfortunately for them they have not the choice and so the Kiveti has often long distances to go to get the water; in the dry season she may frequently have two or three hours to go; I have seen settlements where the nearest water supply was seven hours' march distant. This is her first task in the morning and when she has tilled the fields it is usually about sunset before she is to be met trudging home with a large load of wood on her back, rarely lacking the inevitable baby mounted on top and in her hand the eternal "Chondo," a string basket which she makes as she goes. There seems to be no age at which the women are excused from work. I have seen some who must have been well over seventy years of age working in the fields as untiringly as the youngest girls; often a woman lives alone with her son, a sturdy young loafer who is tired of his very indolence, but she is the one who keeps the wolf from the door. Yet the Kiveti never grumbles or seems to meditate upon the division of labour, so long as she has time for it all she is content to do it and although I have heard all sorts of complaints from women, I have never heard them object to their work. Apart from her labours, however, the woman has not much at which to grumble, indeed, it is often a question whether she is not the master in the long run, for her husband has very little control over her when she is obstreperous and finally, if exasperated, she will run away and the husband has to be content if he can recover what he has paid for her. The Kiveti is a strong-minded person, and will assert her rights with vigour. Thus I remember a man who had left a district in which he had a "Ithembo" (a place of sacrifice). On his departure there was no one to make the necessary sacrifices and ill-luck was therefore boding to the people. Neither chiefs, councils, nor any authority could bring him back, but when I advised the women to go in a body he returned straightway. By custom a man may not strike his wife in the field or if he does so he must sacrifice a goat on the spot. If he fails to do this the women arise in truly amazonian fury to demand the goat. They perform a dance for three days and then armed with sticks set forth to search for the culprit. All the men then hide, for anyone who comes in their way, excepting the very oldest men, is unmercifully beaten; finally they storm the offender's village, tear it down and destroy everything, and in the end take the goat by force to sacrifice at the spot where the woman was beaten, after which they retire peaceably leaving the men to eat the meat. It is beyond doubt, too, that the women have a strong influence in the village, as they could scarcely fail to have, being its main support. Latterly a great effort has been made to induce the Akamba to take to iron hoes in place of the wooden Mue sticks, but they have obstinately

refused to be induced to make such a change. The reason I think for this is that it is unlucky to use iron for tilling the soil and while it would not be difficult to persuade the men to abandon this belief, it is not they but the women who would have to use the hoes; the women, however, are most conservative, and if they decry the iron implements as harmful modern inventions the men will not, in fact cannot, oblige them to use these. On the whole one seems to notice that the excessive usefulness of the woman engenders in the man a regard for her which is rather pleasing, his attitude is one that implies great helplessness without her, and indeed the Mkamba without a woman to look after him is quite lost. He often talks of their sex as creatures of no account, but experience will tell you that if one wants anything it is always good to solicit the help of the Kiveti; even her lord's small store of cash is given into her keeping and she usually hides it away somewhere where he himself cannot get at it, consequently when the husband wants any money he frequently has to run to the field to get it from his wife. The duties of the boys are particularly the herding of the goats and calves. The young Mkamba has, however, much besides to learn. The use of the knife, in which they are very skilful, the making of ornaments and other articles, but in particular the use of the bow and arrow, are all necessary parts of his training and as intellectual learning there is all the law and custom of his tribe to be acquired. A regrettable part of his education is the instruction given at the second circumcision in the art of stealing and much else that is corrupt and depraved.

Young children are carried by their mothers in leather bags on their backs. This bag is stored away and later made into a pair of sandals when the child has grown up.

Formerly the clothing used by the Akamba was of skins, such as may still be seen worn by most of the women in Machakos. These have now entirely given place to the ordinary European blanket for both sexes. As a matter of fact the Mkamba does not use much clothing, for in the fields it is discarded, as also in the village, so that the blanket is practically only worn when on a journey or when going anywhere. Poorer people wear only a loin cloth, this is generally not worn by men who have blankets. Of late, the young men have taken much to using a loin cloth and a small blue or bright coloured linen cloth over the shoulders, but it is by no means all who can afford this. The women also wear a short apron from the waist, about 6 inches in front and about a foot broad behind; of late I have noticed the introduction of short skirts made of pleated cloth, which, I am told, is a reappearance of an older custom. The aprons are thickly smeared with fat. Children rarely have any clothing excepting the girls who wear the same sort of aprons as are worn by the women. Head-dresses are really more to be regarded as decoration than clothing, they consist of monkey skins made into tall hats and caps of various hides, often with the hair left on them, so that they look more like wigs. Sandals are very often worn for travelling and are made of hides in double or treble thicknesses.

The ornaments worn by the Akamba are almost all made of beads and wire.

Of the former, necklaces are made of a single row of beads strung on a wire, and are worn by both sexes; a very favourite decoration for young men are broad collars of blue, green and yellow beads. Beads are otherwise mainly used by women and girls. A number of bead strings are worn round the hips; in the eastern parts a string of thick glass beads is worn, to which is attached behind a broad pad of bead work, holding a tail of chains, which is cut off when the girl marries, while the bead string is left. On the legs and above the elbows, bands of bead work are worn, while from the ankle to the knee the legs are often cased in a string of beads, the latter decoration is common, particularly in the eastern parts. The patterns into which the beads are worked are remarkably neat, and show a taste for colouring and regularity which is surprising. But more ingenious and finely worked are the many wire-made ornaments, particularly those worn by the Anake. The chains of brass, copper and iron wire which are worn in profusion are sometimes of such fine make that one could scarcely believe them to be of native work, those worn round the ankles and below the knees are sometimes so delicately made that at first sight they do not look like chains but bands of thin metal. Such chains are also worn hung in the ears or passed through the lobes and carried over the top of the ear. Round the body bands of spirally wound wire are worn. The small tweezers used for pulling out the eyelashes and eyebrows are usually bound round with thin wire or giraffe tail hair. Older men usually discard most of these decorations and retain only one or two necklaces and a few chains in the ears, a chain is also worn round the neck, from which hangs a pair of tweezers, used for pulling out the hairs of the beard, together with the never failing snuff box, which is made of horn, hollow reeds, palm nuts and a variety of other articles. Common to both sexes of all ages are the spiral brass bracelets worn on the arms: the Anake are very fond of wearing these so that they cover the whole arm and often become so tight on the limb that they have to be cut to relieve the pinching. The Anake are very particular about their ornaments and keep them clean and bright with fat and other means; if ever a Mwanake goes to work he will strip himself of all his decorations rather as if he were going into mourning, but as a matter of fact, it would be impossible for him to work much with it all on. The variety of ornaments is most astonishing as is also the wonderful use made of the most common European articles, such as metal parts of umbrellas. A most common ornament is a single ring of wire or brass, these are worn on all the fingers and thumbs; occasionally one sees long oval rings covering the whole length of the finger, they are said to be fighting rings but I think they are not of Mkamba origin. Coins hollowed out in the centre are also very commonly used as rings, both on the fingers and in the ears. Peculiar to the older men are rings of elephant hide worn above the elbow; it is said that formerly if a man had many of these he was much respected as they denoted that he was a great elephant hunter. Large rings of ivory neatly jointed with ebony rivets are also worn above the elbow, likewise heavy metal rings, but these are said not to be of Mkamba but Galla origin.

Occasionally one sees little brass spirals hung by a hook from the rim of the ear, these were apparently much used in former times as they are now by the Theraka. A distinct feature of the Akamba is the absence of large ear decorations. The ears are pierced to admit fine chains and may be drawn down slightly by the weight but they are never distended as among so many other tribes. Altogether the Mkamba uses very little disfigurement of the face and body.

Of such decorations to the body as are used the most distinctive is the cutting of the teeth; for doing this a small chisel is used; the operation is performed at a very early age and results in a very rapid decay of the teeth, particularly of those which are cut into very fine points. I have heard it said that the people of different parts have no fixed manner of cutting the teeth but affect whatever style suits them. I have, however, never heard this from people who have travelled much in the country, the three styles I have already mentioned are in my opinion most rigidly followed by the people of their respective districts and it is even not unusual to hear Kitui people speak of others as "men who cut two teeth." It is doubtful whether this custom is very old among the Akamba; they themselves say that it was not done in former times and I have seen a few very old men whose teeth were not cut and who laughed at the present-day habits, particularly on this account. I am told that the same is the case with some of the oldest men in Machakos. I was also told by an old man that formerly it was not the custom for men to shave their heads excepting after a certain age and that certainly the various "foolish" styles of hair dress of the present day were not seen in his time. To-day it is a very common practice for both sexes of all ages to shave the head completely, but there are also many fanciful styles of dressing the hair when that is not done. These styles change very rapidly so that I can recall several men whom I have seen on many occasions but scarcely ever with the same manner of wearing the hair. It seems that the Mwanake should leave a little tuft of hair on the crown but more often he now twists it into little pointed bunches all over the head.

The hairs of the face, including the eyelashes and eyebrows, are all pulled out. It is apparently considered ridiculous to leave these, but old men may be seen with short beards. The practice of pulling out the eyelashes accounts, I think, for so much eyesickness which one notices among the Akamba; according to them, however, it has the opposite effect and when a man has bad eyes he will at once pull out all the lashes should he not have done so before.

Tattooing of the body is done by burning and scarring the skin. The former is affected more by the men but not very frequently. The women often adorn themselves by cuts made in the skin which is pulled out for this purpose; this makes a large lump and these are carried in lines over the breasts and down the abdomen. Between the breasts thick lumps are raised by deep cuts into the flesh. These decorations are, however, not common to all Akamba, the majority perhaps have no adornment of their bodies at all, and I am not sure that such decorations harmonize with their ideas of beauty. The Mkamba's conceptions on this subject have

always seemed to me very free from anything distorted. If told to pick out the best-looking girl at a dance he will generally select one that a European would probably think the best looking, but the Mkamba is a remarkable connoisseur, for mere features of face will not suffice for him, he takes everything into consideration, features, build, quality of skin and colour. I remember a man once expressing his admiration for a girl, she was very beautiful in many ways, but, alas, her knees were all wrong!

The Mkamba is of course not to be compared to some tribes in looks, on the contrary he is rather plain and lacking in expression, such as there is has rather the tendency towards surliness but many of the younger men have quite good features and when induced to smile they have a very pleasant expression.

Of the occupations of the Akamba the most important is the cultivation of the land. They are, however, neither expert cultivators nor will they cultivate anything beyond what is required for their immediate use; despite the frequency of famines no Mkamba thinks of ever sowing more than is necessary to carry him on to the next rains. The fields are situated on the slopes of hills, very often just where there is no water and in fact the choice of the ground seems more to be decided by the quality of soil than from a point of view of moisture. The reason is, I think, that the crops are ripe shortly after the rains, so that unless these fail the supply of moisture will be sufficient, whereas down in the hollows the grain is too liable to be washed out; also, so far as the "Maweles," their chief source of food, is concerned, the soil seems to be a far more important consideration than the moisture. The ground is first cleared by firing the bush; this practice, which often lays waste miles of country where an acre or so is sufficient, is more or less necessary, as the labour of cutting it would be too much unless the ground were prepared a year in advance, a thing the Mkamba would, of course, never dream of doing. After burning it is cleared and the roots are dug up. For this work as well as for hoeing the "Mue" stave is used. This is a wooden stave made of various sorts of hard wood cut to a flat point. For sowing, an ordinary pointed pole is used, the person sowing strikes the pole into the ground and drops a few seeds into the hole thus made, covering it up again with the foot; smaller grain such as Maweles is sown by scraping the ground a little with the foot. The same patch of ground is used for about three years, and then it is left and another site chosen. In the same field all the different sorts of grain cultivated are sown; as a rule the Mkamba has two or more fields, a small one near his village, and another farther away, often a considerable distance from the village. The grain cultivated varies somewhat in the different districts, but the stock grain is always "Maweles" (Kikamba "Mwe"). Maize is grown in most parts but not always (Kikamba "Mbembe"). These two are sown during the autumn rains, called "Nthua," and in between them are sown beans. All these ripen very quickly and are harvested in February or late in January. This harvest time is an anxious one for the Akamba, for if the rains fail, not only their chief food supply is lost but the next crops are always even more uncertain.

Out of three spring rains (Kikamba "Uuaa") I have not seen one that did not fail, and only once the autumn crops have succeeded, and then only very meagrely.

Many are the destroyers and robbers to be guarded against in the fields. Antelopes of every sort, wild pig, even buffalo and elephant, but more than any of these the baboons and porcupines are feared. To protect the crops by day and by night, watchers are placed in the fields on platforms. They are usually boys, girls and young women, who keep up a continuous chorus of cries and drive away intruders with stones slung from a sling called "Kikutha." Very often a grass rope is carried from the platform crosswise over the field, to which are attached broken earthenware pots, gourds, etc., to make a jangling noise when the watcher pulls it.

In the spring rains the "Mbazi" (a kind of bean growing to about seven feet in height) is sown; it is reaped in September or early October.

The threshing of grain is done by the women. A piece of level ground is chosen and plastered over with a thin layer of cow dung. On this the stalks are heaped and the women, standing in a circle, beat it with sticks. This is done to continued cries and singing, the work being done in time to the singing; it must be admitted that the time occupied by the work bears no relation to the singing. Beans are husked in a similar manner, but with a short, heavy stick. Maize is removed from the cob by hand.

The daily food supply is taken from the stores and prepared by the women. The husking of the grain is done by pounding it in a wooden trough with a pole, after which it is poured from one bowl into another so that the husks are carried away by the wind; if fine flour is desired it is then pounded again, and after that it is ground in a hollow stone by another small stone.

Besides food stuffs, gourds are grown in the fields, but to nothing like the extent to which they are cultivated in Machakos.

Tobacco is also grown in small quantities for making into snuff. Most of the tobacco used comes, however, from Kikuyu. Snuffing is a universal habit among the Akamba, while smoking is not very commonly seen. As a rule the Mkamba takes a pinch of snuff between his fingers, but it is very common also to use a little brush made of goats' hair which is dipped into the snuff and inserted into the nostrils to be snuffed up; occasionally one also sees a little sort of flat spoon used for this purpose.

The land for cultivating a field, like the site for a village or the bush for cutting firewood, is free to everybody to use as they like. Between the different settlements there are always stretches of uninhabited country, so that disputes between the different settlements cannot easily arise, and within such settlements they rarely occur; for one thing, of course, the population is so thin that there is plenty of land for everybody. When, however, a man moves to a new district he is required to give a goat to the elders first. This is required for the taking of an oath between himself and the elders. The oath binds him to help every member to recover any lost property that he may know of, at least this is how it

was explained to me, but I surmise that it really binds him to be faithful to the settlement, and if so this may account for the fact that no Mkambo will ever give adverse evidence against a man of his own district in a case against another of a different settlement. The new-comer is then admitted into and regarded as a member of the settlement. The goat paid for this is called "Mathanzu."

All important in the village are the cattle. To a Mkamba his greatest pride and joy are his cattle, nothing else has the same value in his eyes; I fear even a wife is a second consideration to these, for after all she is only valued as a portion of the herd. But it is not the mere feeling of opulence that makes the Mkamba prize his cattle so highly. To part with a cow, excepting for the purchase of a wife, is grief and pain to him, and in fact the cattle paid for a wife can be regarded more in the light of a deposit, for if she leaves him he has the right to claim his own animals back. No sort of ownership by purchase or otherwise can persuade a Mkamba that another man has a right to the calf of a cow which is in his kraal: if the cow is his, then its calves should be with him. A native said to me once, "Every day I look at my cattle and I say these I inherited from my father, those are their increase, those were paid for my brother who was killed, and these I got for my daughters, but if I slaughter or sell them, who shall remind me of all this." It is also regarded as very unpraiseworthy to dispose of a cow received in payment for a daughter, for then all ties between her and the village of her father seem to be broken. I shall never forget the horror displayed by a native who complained that he was starving, when I suggested that he should slaughter a cow; such a thing is inconceivable to the Mkamba; bulls may on occasion be sacrificed, but cows never; neither will he ever think of selling a cow, even if he is on the verge of starvation. The manner in which a Mkamba regards his cattle is thus more in the light of family heirlooms, they also tell the position of the family and are a record of its past. It is conceivable, then, what a calamity cattle disease is to them. I know an old man whose cattle were dying of disease, and the sight was so heartrending to him that he could not stand it and went to stay elsewhere until the calamity should be past. As a matter of fact, Kitui was until quite lately very free of disease, but about twenty years ago tens of thousands died of Rinderpest, and the Akamba say that since then they are poor. This is, however, not the case: compared with many tribes they are very rich. It is difficult to say how many head a rich Mkamba will have, partly because he has no idea of their numbers himself, and partly because of the practice of keeping portions of the herd in various parts of the country. This is done largely because the water supply may be insufficient, but also because if any misfortune arises, such as sickness in the herd or raids by enemies, the whole herd cannot be lost. The welfare of the cattle is thus a matter of great concern to the Akamba, wherefore there are several rules to be regarded, to break which brings misfortune. Thus one of the strictest rules forbids a man to cohabit with a woman while the cattle are out grazing. They may also never be counted, and therefore the owner will merely cast his eye over the herd when it returns to the village, to detect if a beast

is missing. Branding of cattle is done in various patterns by burning, sometimes lines will be seen drawn from the eye along the flanks to the tail; many natives do not, however, use any brands at all.

The herding is not begun until the sun is well up and the dew dried off the grass. Many of the wealthier Akamba employ Akikuyu for this work as well as for field labour; such employees receive a goat per month in payment. The fact that the Akikuyu take employment from the Akamba accounts largely for the contempt the Akamba have for this tribe.

Milking is done only by the women; the milk is used for making ghee, and is largely drunk also.

For sickness of people a very favourite medicine is the blood of a cow, which is extracted from the jugular vein by shooting a small chisel-shaped arrow into the vein, which is tightly bound up with cord.

Less valuable than the cattle are, of course, the sheep and goats, of which about thirty are reckoned as equivalent to a cow. The Akamba are very rich in this kind of stock also, their main use is for presents and sacrifices. The skins are used for the making of sandals, sleeping mats, and other skin articles. But perhaps their main use to the Akamba nowadays is for trading. Large goats such as are required for many of the sacrifices are called "Masai"; the term is also applied to large bulls.

Poultry are kept in all the villages; the Akamba do not eat the eggs, but fowls are very often used for minor sacrifices and presents.

Honey gathering is generally practised among the Akamba. A certain amount is collected from the wild bees in tree trunks, but by far the greatest quantities are obtained from the honey hives, which are put into the trees. They are often kept at great distances from the village. Baobab trees are particularly selected for this purpose, and are climbed by means of stakes driven into the tree trunk. The hive is made of a section of a tree trunk hollowed out with a long chisel; at each end it is closed by a slab of wood. The honey is found ready after the rains, and the bees are then driven out at night by smoking them out. The honey-barrels are always marked with the mark of the clan (not of the family), and their possession is most sacred. Often they are further protected by a spell laid at the tree, which causes a thief to be bitten by snakes on descending from the tree. Formerly, if a man was caught three times stealing hives he was killed: to be found in the tree was regarded as equivalent to having committed the theft. It is only quite latterly that I have heard complaints of such thefts being committed. The combs taken from the hive are squeezed by hand to extract the honey. Formerly the wax was thrown away, but now it is sold, and forms an important article of trade for the natives. The honey is not used much for eating, but is destined almost entirely to be made into the much loved honey beer, "Njoki." But for this I am afraid that the Akamba would not bother much about the honey collecting. The honey is fermented by putting the Loofa fruit into it. The brew thus made has not an unpleasant taste, and would not be a very intoxicating.

liquor if it were not drunk in such remarkable quantities. When a Mkamba is about to have a beer-drink he will call a few select friends, and the drinking does not cease until all the beer is finished. Apart from the unceasing buzz of conversation proceeding from the hut, one can always tell when there is a beer-drink going on by the number of people seen sitting around the village: men from far and near get the news and come in the hopes of being offered a drink; I have known them to wait about in this happy expectation from sunrise to sunset. Mostly the beer-drinks end in everybody being wildly intoxicated, and then as often as not a fierce fight ensues, and it is on such occasions that perhaps 90 per cent. of the murders committed occur.

Other intoxicating drinks are made of sugar cane, palm sap, and bananas, or if none of these is to be had "Maweles" may be used. Sugar cane is not largely grown in Kitui, but where there is an unusually damp spot it is generally found.

Among the Akamba the smith does not appear to occupy the peculiar position he holds among certain other tribes. Here he is not required for the making of spears and swords and therefore his duties are not all important to the tribe. As a matter of fact most Akamba can do their own smith's work, but there are certain men called "Mutui" whose daily work it is to fashion knives, axes and other metal implements. A forge is made of a hollow in the ground in which charcoal is put; bellows are made of two leather bags which end in a wooden mouthpiece and this is introduced into a clay funnel leading into the forge. At the top the leather bags are fitted with wooden rims, and a man, or usually a boy, sitting on the ground, takes a bag in each hand, holding them by the rims, and lifting them up and down does the blowing.

Most of the arrow heads, etc., are now made of European iron wire, and another great source for metal is the railway, from which quantities of iron parts are stolen and even bolts extracted from the lines. Formerly, however, and it may still be even now, iron was obtained from the hæmatite found in the dry river beds.

Some ornaments may require the work of a smith, but most are made by the wearers themselves or by men who do a small trade by selling them to others. The thinness of wire required for much of the finer work is not to be obtained from the traders, probably because it is too expensive for the native to buy. The Akamba, however, draw the wire fine themselves by hammering the end down and passing it through a fine hole in a small steel plate; the wire is passed round a tree and while one man pulls the one end the other draws the steel plate along the wire. For making the links of chains a most ingenious device is used. The wire is first wound into a long spiral. To do this a small block of wood or rhinoceros hide, attached to a stick at one end, has a peg passed through a hole at the other end. This clamps a straight bit of steel wire and the wire to be wound is passed through the same hole and likewise held by the peg. By holding this wire and turning the block round and round, the wire is twisted round the straight steel wire and thus a spiral is obtained. This is much used for wearing round the body, but to be made

into links it is cut into a number of parts each comprised of two twists. By then inserting a strong needle on each side and bending the twists outwards the link is complete and has only to be pinched with a pair of tweezers when making the chain. It is said that during the famine the Akamba used to obtain a load of food in Kikuyu for a chain.

The arrows are made triangle shaped with a barb on each side at the end of a short iron shaft. The head bears the owner's mark cut into the metal. The iron shaft is fitted into a short wooden socket and this is fitted on to the main shaft and bound round with the skin of porcupine quills. The object of this device is that, if an attempt is made to pull the arrow out of a wound, only the shaft will be pulled away while the head will remain in the wound. At the other end the arrow has a notch and is feathered with three feathers. This part as well as the tip of the shaft are generally bound with giraffe hair. As a rule each man has a particular length and weight of arrow which suits him. The accuracy with which a man will make a number of arrows each exactly like the other is remarkable, considering that he has only a knife to work with; to convert the knife into a simple sort of plane it is pierced through a thin piece of wood. To smooth the surface of the arrow a certain leaf is used, which, by reason of its roughness, acts as sandpaper. The bow is fashioned by the same simple means: it is chosen from several sorts of wood and to make it pliable it is soaked in fat and heated over a fire. For hunting big game a heavier bow and arrow are used. For shooting birds a small arrow with a barb like a nail is used. The bow is strung with cord made of sinew, for which the sinew taken from the leg of a giraffe is preferred; the sinew is well dried and then shredded into small threads which are twisted together; this gives an excessively strong cord.

The arrows are thickly covered with poison, not on the point so much as on the metal shaft. To preserve the poison and to protect the one carrying the arrows, they are bound round the poisoned part with fine goat skin strips. The poison is extremely virulent: it is made from the wood of the *Akokanthura Schimperii* tree: by boiling it down only a thick glutinous mass is left. When fresh it is said to kill a man almost instantaneously; it seems to have a paralysing effect upon the brain and for this reason I suppose it works more quickly on animals, whose life is very much dependent on the brain; thus I am told that if the poison kills an insect in five minutes it will kill a man in one minute; the natives also say that, for instance, a lion is rendered immediately powerless on being shot by a poisoned arrow. If, however, the poison is not very fresh, it is very much less effective, also there are different qualities of it, the best being that got from the coast; the poison is not found much in Kitui and most of it is imported. The native cure against it is to eat the poison, and I have heard of people being cured who did this, but I cannot say if it was due to the treatment entirely.

When not in use the arrows are carried in a quiver made of leather; occasionally one sees them made of hollowed branches of palm tree and I believe that formerly these were very commonly used.

A Mkamba can shoot an arrow up to about 300 yards, but his marksmanship even at a close distance is surprisingly poor: I have seen men who are reckoned to be good shots unable to hit a six inch mark at forty paces. The natives themselves say that formerly they used to be much better shots, and that all those who shoot are hunters only. This is possibly true, since they rarely have occasion to use their arms now, and the method of hunting does not necessitate good marksmanship.

The Akamba hunt very little for food, but formerly elephant hunting was a great occupation for the object of getting ivory. It is said that large caravans numbering several hundreds of Akamba used to go down to the coast with ivory to trade. Natives still know the roads these caravans used to follow to Kismayu and elsewhere, but they are now all overgrown.

When hunting elephant the Akamba go in large numbers, and if they come upon a herd they will kill every animal in it. In doing this they surround the herd, and one after the other they run up to within a short distance of the elephants, shooting their arrows and retiring quickly while others come up from another side. The arrow, being shot at a very short distance, penetrates deep into the flesh. I was told by an old hunter that he could shoot his arrow in up to the feathers; whether this is true I cannot say, but if shot by a powerful man the arrow certainly has a considerable velocity. In this way, therefore, there is no aim needed, the distance is nothing and the mark is big, for it does not matter where a poisoned arrow hits, the effect is the same.

Much as elephant hunting is a thing of the past, so also all fighting has ceased and the Mkamba of to-day is all else but capable or desirous of fighting. It seems that the Kikamba manner of fighting was never very desperate. The Theraka say that they were women in war, but very dangerous in thick bush; but among themselves warfare seems to have consisted largely of much rushing about and shouting until one side or the other was terrified and ran away. This also is told by a missionary who witnessed such warfare in former times. Natives have told me that certain people had medicine which they smeared between their thumb and forefinger, the merit of which was that it made it impossible for them to err in their aim, and that such people were often not allowed to go to war because of the destruction that they did. This somewhat comic view of warfare shows that the object of the fighting was not so much the destruction of the enemy, but when, despite this, it is certain that numbers were killed, this is only to be explained by the fact that the fighting went on continuously. When going out to fight, the Akamba used a short flute called "Ngoli," a small horn about three inches in length, which is blown much as we should blow into the hollow of a key. The Ngoli has a very shrill and discordant note, well suited for its purpose; it was also used, as it is now still, for collecting the people. Apparently it was very common for the women to go out to view the fighting from a distance.

Of arts, such as basket-making and decorating with dyes and colours, the Akamba appear to know nothing. A very fine red colour is obtained from certain

berries, and used sometimes to dye skins for knife sheaths. In their pottery and wood work one remarks a total absence of any suggestion of art. I have seen a few gourds ornamented with designs burned on them, but these are so very rare that I am inclined to think that they are not original Kikamba work. Peculiar to them are only the baskets, called "chondo," I think; they are made of string, which is obtained from baobab tree bark; for this only the young baobab trees are suited.

I have now spoken of the village and its inmates, together with their interests and occupations. As a human habitation the village has very little of which to boast, but it is essentially the Mkamba's castle. We at least see the village very much from the Thome only; of all that it contains and as to the Mkamba we do not know much. Yet this would be its most interesting side, for it takes the place of village and State: it is the birth and burial place of its inhabitants; their interests go practically not beyond its immediate surroundings. It is to be regretted that this side of primitive life is not more accessible to us, and whether it ever will be is much to be doubted, for when the native admits us to it he will himself try with semi-civilized superiority to forget it.

The old men and the women are always much attached to their village, and nothing but necessity will induce them to trek elsewhere. And yet most of the elders have moved their villages time out of number; I could count numberless villages which have moved within the last two years, in fact there is a constant moving about of the Akamba. But always there is a good reason: it may be lack of water, but more often the place has become unlucky: deaths in the family, sickness among them or their cattle, or absence of children; any of these misfortunes will induce the Mtumia to have recourse to the wisdom of the medicine man, and his verdict will generally be that his village is unlucky, the haunt, perhaps, of mischievous spirits, and then the family moves elsewhere. If they do not move far they will often take the grass and sticks of the old huts, or may even transport the frameworks whole, but if this is not done the entrance is closed, the village is left standing as it is, and in perhaps six months it is a mouldering heap of grass and sticks. After the next rains the bush begins to creep over it, and in a very short time it is lost out of sight. The only evidence of its existence is then a broken pot or a hollow grinding stone lying in the bush. Such evidences can be seen everywhere, and denote that parts which are now completely destitute of habitations were once well populated.

THE DANCE.

The dance (Kikamba "Wathi") is a never failing source of entertainment to the Anake and girls; as a rule when a European travels in Kitui he will be honoured at every camp with these, and very often I have seen young men and girls follow my caravan for days for this purpose; in fact some of the young men are said to simply wander round the country in search of dances. The amusement is a harmless one, excepting in so far as it affects the intellectual life of the Mkamba.

There are said to be five different kinds of dances; but only a trained eye, I think, could detect more than two main classes, one being a simple rhythmical movement of the body accompanied by drumming and singing, the other a wilder performance of which the main feature is the beating of time with strings of bells wound round the legs. The details, however, of the dance vary constantly and are very much subject to the whims of fashion. But in all dances the girl's part seems not to vary. This consists of a circular rolling of the shoulders in time with the dancing of the men. The formal procedure is simple and monotonous. The dance is begun by the young men standing in line while the girls approach and point to the particular one each one chooses as her partner; in doing this they must approach very slowly, any haste is a breach of good manners. This done, the girls stand in line, each one with her arms round her neighbour's waist, and the young men approach; previous to this some of them will be seen walking up and down singing boastful phrases such as "I am a lion," "I am a leopard," and so forth, whereby the girls are supposed to be impressed by their boldness and courage. Each man then standing before his partner rests his cheek against hers and the "Ngui" commences his song. This figure may last half an hour and when ended the drums strike up and the dancing commences, consisting of a rhythmical swaying of the body and shaking of the shoulders; the girls do not join in the singing. As a rule there are twice as many men as girls and those that have no partners stand behind and take part in the singing and dancing. The dancing grows furious at times, individual dancers perform capers of their own up and down the line, in which they show a remarkable capability for maintaining the general time of the dance. At intervals the dancers retire and the drummers advance, beating their drums furiously. The drummers often indulge in the most brazen flirtations to which their talent seems to entitle them. After a while all retire, partners are chosen again and the performance recommences; this goes on hour after hour with untiring vigour. In the eastern parts bells are almost always used. They are made of tin folded over and filled with bits of metal or stone. Two years ago only a few used to be worn round the ankles, but now the whole leg from the ankle to the thigh is covered with them; latterly I have noticed that whole biscuit or tea tins are attached to the string and filled with stones.

The drums used are hollowed tree trunks covered with thin skin, snake skins are particularly used; the drum is some four feet in length, but may be as much as six feet long; they are slung from the shoulder and held between the knees; the beating is done with one hand and with the other a leather strap is used. If the dancing goes on for long a fire is lit and the skins heated to tighten them and improve the tone.

The Wathi dress is both simple and elaborate, that is to say there is little covering and much decoration; for the girls it is very bad form to dance with a blanket. The young men hang about themselves every trinket and article they possess. The head is smeared with red earth and fat and cocks' feathers are stuck in the hair while the front of the head is adorned with a long streamer made of

several feathers spliced into one another. Of late, also, hats of Colibus monkey fur have come into fashion and whisks of the same fur. The latter are carried in their hands; small bows bound with giraffe hair and wire or throwing clubs decorated in the same way are also brought to the dance; failing any of these the men always have sticks or long thin wands. Unfortunately all this finery is often spoilt nowadays by tawdry European articles such as cheap umbrellas of the most gampish sort, as often as not made still more ludicrous by the addition of an ostrich feather fitted on to the point. Cheap mirrors, empty jam pots, or hats made of bits of paper are also much prized; I heard once of a man who was particularly proud of a Court Summons form which he had converted into a hat. In the eastern parts the girls wear bead collars, which apparently were used all over but have been dropped in many parts, according to the wearers, because they rub the shoulders sore. Formerly it was probably the custom to come to the dance fully armed: very often one now sees poisoned arrows carried by the Anake, a practice which is a very dangerous one, as in the general commotion accidents may easily occur which can result in death.

There is a very marked difference between the dances performed by the people around Kitui Station and those of the rest of the district. The former are even more monotonous and are made hideous by the form of song, which consists in a very unmelodious croaking in the throat.

The life and soul of the dance is the "Ngui." He is the solo singer and conductor of the dance, he directs the various movements of the dancers and above all he is the composer of the Wathi song. In consequence of these talents he is a person held much in esteem, and I have often noticed that if an "Ngui" is in a caravan he generally becomes the head man.

As a general rule the Ngui makes up a new song for every new moon and this lasts until the next moon. The favourite time for dancing is at night when there is a bright moon. It may, however, happen that particular circumstances give the composer material for a new song, thus the arrival of a European is generally an occasion for the Ngui to show his talent, and then the European may have the pleasure of hearing some peculiarity of his commented on in song for several hours together. The song is rarely very full of meaning and in fact often seems so void of meaning that it is difficult to appreciate. Thus I remember some old women singing for three hours together "the bowl is full": mostly, however, the songs give characteristic examples of native thought and ideas. I give here two which were sung in my camp, translated literally as they were sung:—

1.

The European has come and found much ivory;
He has seen that the Akamba are fools
And has taken all the ivory to the boma.
Jaheja Wakathuli.

2.

Wakathuli, wa Tsjombua, Musioka
I will not stand with the people of the "Office";
I will stand near like the "bas" at the station.
One bull will not drive away many bulls;
Run like elephants to the place where the girls stand.

Jaheja Wakathuli, wa Tsjombua, Musioka Wakathuli, wa Tsjombua, and Musioka were the names of some girls of the district and this refrain was the subject of the chorus.

The first song has reference to some ivory which was confiscated. In the second song "the people of the office" were some of my men, who probably on account of their clothing and superior position were attractive to the girls and therefore unwelcome in the dance to the men.

The "bas" means the train and is, I believe, a corruption of the word passenger (train). Now the Ngui had been to Nairobi and his comparison of himself to the train was, no doubt, a little conceit of superior knowledge. Anyone who sees a train come into a station may be struck with the impression it conveys of an immovable appearance, a moment ago so rapid and living: it stands there ponderous and seemingly rooted to the spot. This, at least, I fancy was what remained in the Ngui's memory and therefore when he wanted to express how immovably he would stand apart, the picture of the train recalled itself to his mind. Such a line of thought is typical of the Mkamba: he is very quick at noting anything characteristic, as is shown from the many quaint names given to Europeans.

The dance is by no means an invariable formality: particular fads come up and last their season, but the above description will give an idea of the general form of dance used.

A separate dance performed by the young men alone is often done as a side show, and in fact whenever a number of young men are together it will not be long before they start dancing.

The old women have a dance of their own which consists of drumming by one of them while the others engage in a competition of the most grotesque wriggling and twisting about. I have noticed that the older the women are the more vigorously they take part in this, and as the main object is to compete until one of them is tired out, I presume that their object is to show that "there is life in the old dog yet." A song is not wanting here either, as a rule the drummeress sings it while the rest join in the chorus, or a man will oblige them by doing the singing.

The old men also have a very stately sort of dance, but the "Nthele" seemed to be debarred from this form of amusement.

There are many other forms and occasions for dancing: it must be remembered that the natives can do no work without its aid; special dances are also used for medical and spiritual purposes, and all these are denoted as "Wathi."

As to the usefulness of the dance, it is of course conducive to an idle existence for the young men ; it has, however, this one advantage that, as I firmly believe, the more a young man dances the less he will be addicted to drinking. In a way it is a healthy amusement and preserves, as one might say, a childlike nature in the Mwanake which is always preferable to the roguish tendency which he is only too prone to follow. Conversing with some Anake one day, they said to me, " We who dance do not drink, it is only the Anake, who do not dance, who drink with their fathers."

KIKAMBA LAW.

The laws framed by the people with whom we are dealing form a subject so intimately connected with occurrences of their everyday lives and give such a clear insight into their natures that they should be studied by anyone who has to deal with them.

First of all as to those in whose hands the law lies, one might on first acquaintance with the Akamba think it impossible that there is any fixed law, or if there is, one might ask oneself of what account it is, since one could find no person such as a chief who could exercise it. The rulership of a chief has this advantage that it enforces great discipline, but it has the great drawback that it is left to one man who not only may abuse it but whose position is, in savage times, perhaps, always precarious. Very different to such a system is that of the Akamba. Here the administration of the law lies in the hands of a council whose members are those of the degree of " Nzama," or rather those eligible as members of the council are elders of Nzama. Originally the Nzama was not a " duly appointed " council which met regularly under any authority, but a man having a complaint to make would call together the elders of Nzama and lay his case before them, but naturally the elders within one district would meet pretty regularly and try the cases of their locality. How far they could extend their authority beyond a very limited district is doubtful now ; if there was hostility between the districts of accuser and accused legal proceedings would be useless, and on the other hand, doubtless many of the former feuds arose just where one party refused to acknowledge all legal authority ; in either case redress would be sought by force of arms.

The Nzama now usually meets in or near the village of a Government chief. The elders sit out of hearing of the parties and their witnesses, who appear separately before them. If the claim is for dowry or other debts the claimant will bring a bundle of sticks before the Nzama and explain his claim by signifying what each stick represents, after which he retires and the defendant appears and states by means of the same sticks what he admits. The sticks in regard to which there is no dispute are set aside and the elders then retain only those representing the property in dispute. Of the elders there is one chosen as the spokesman, and he conducts the trial, puts questions and explains the case to the other members. When all have then been fully heard, " Nzama " is pronounced and a certain number

of the elders go aside and discuss the matter; this is always done in low tones: wherefore the council is called "Nzama," which means a secret. On returning the elders give their decision; it will very rarely be an absolute decision, for unless it is a well-known claim the elders will not commit themselves by accepting the statements of any number of witnesses, knowing well that these are not to be depended upon, and therefore a very usual decision is that both parties shall submit to some minor ordeal or shall take the oath of "Kithito." Of the former there are several, of which the most usual is the licking of a heated knife blade; latterly, however, the elders have come to recognize that the judgment of this ordeal is not always above suspicion. The case may still not be settled by the minor ordeal, for if one party then demands resort to Kithito the elders will call upon the other to comply with the demand.

Strange to say this final ordeal is often put off to the very last, and may, in many cases be performed long after the original parties are dead and gone. The Kithito is an article endowed with mysterious powers whereby if a man swear falsely he will die in a given time. It varies very much in composition and effect; it may be a concoction of all sorts of odds and ends in which hyæna dung is very frequently found, or it may be simply an empty horn; it may kill the one who offends against it in a year, in a month, or in a few days; so also it may bring death to the offender alone or to his whole family; I am told that there are Kithitos which affect even the whole clan. This article is usually fatal to touch excepting to its owner. The manner of taking the oath is generally as follows: The person about to swear by it stands before it, the Kithito being surrounded with stones, seven to eleven in number. His heels must rest on two of the stones and in his hand he holds a twig. Facing the Kithito, he then says what he maintains to be the truth; as he speaks he taps the Kithito with the twig, and finally taps three times saying, "Listen well, if I tell a lie let the Kithito eat me." Upon this oath being taken nothing is decided in the case, for if the man dies the decision is thereby arrived at; if not, then nothing can be proved against him. Thus in the majority of cases the elders need give no decision excepting that the ordeal shall be undergone, or if one party refuse to do so he thereby admits himself to be in the wrong and the case is decided. One of the primary objects of the Nzama, as well as of Kithito, is to avoid laying the responsibility of a decision on anyone in particular. A Mkamba dreads being charged with any responsibility, which is perhaps a reminiscence of old days when no one knew how long existing institutions would last.

Despite the awful power of the Kithito, a man may as often as not swear falsely by it, but in such cases when he falls ill the only means to escape death is to return any property wrongly obtained in consequence of the oath being falsely taken. Thus if a man claims a cow and swears falsely that he has a right to it and thereby obtains the cow, he will, any time he falls sick, return the cow and request the owner to cure him. I have, however, heard the oath taken with the additional clause that if either party does fall sick the other shall not cure him, or if he does the bane of the Kithito shall fall upon him. When this is added, the oath, of

course, becomes a powerful means to bring the truth to light. The real power of the Kithito lies, of course, in the fact that as a rule a man will not risk the ordeal, and although to-day, particularly in the more enlightened parts, many have somewhat lost the fear of its vengeance, I am convinced that no man will lightly test its power.

Offences are dealt with under Kikamba law in the three following ways: (1) fine; (2) compensation; (3) sentence of death.

As regards the first, so far as I know it only applies to the offence of theft, for which a fine of seven times the value of the article stolen can be imposed. Whatever else may be demanded in payment is really for compensation or as a sacrifice.

At first sight, compensation might be thought to be reckoned haphazard according to the whim of the elders, but this is not the case. I asked some elders once what compensation would be required in the case of a man losing both legs by the act of another. They stated that they had never heard of such a case, but they were in no doubt as to what the offender should pay. They reasoned that a man who had lost both legs would be useless: he would cease to be a man as they said, and therefore the only proper compensation would be full blood money as it is in the case of mutilation. Other injuries, such as the loss of one leg, are reckoned at one bull and one cow, the same as in the case of the loss of one eye. Lesser injuries, as, for instance, loss of a finger, one bull and one goat; two fingers, two bulls and a goat, and so on. Accidental killing is compensated with seven cows and one bull for a man, and four cows and one bull for a woman, but other offences are compensated the same, whether done intentionally or not. Compensation for death or injuries done to children is the same as for adults, according to the sex. The bull or goat, which is always part of the compensation, is usually intended to be slaughtered as a sacrifice. The object of this will be most clearly understood from the manner in which blood money is paid. The compensation for murder of a man is thirteen cows, two bulls and one goat; for a woman, it is six cows, two bulls and one goat. Formerly it was eleven cows, and in Mumoni it is still only twelve. Of the animals thus paid, one cow, one bull and the goat are intended for the following ceremony. The three animals must be paid first and are taken to the village of the murdered man, where the elders collect. At about five o'clock in the evening the goat is killed, and from the throat fourteen pieces of meat are cut, of which seven are given to the deceased's wife and seven to his brother; they are put into their mouths by an elder, who picks the pieces of meat up by spitting them on a wooden pin. At about dark all the elders leave the village, and go some little distance away, while the woman and her brother-in-law go into the hut, where they must have connection. After this, they call the elders back, and the bull is then killed. Half the carcase of the bull and of the goat is given to the elders and half to the family of the deceased. The meat of both beasts must be eaten that night and nothing must be left nor may the bones be broken or cut.

In the same night the bones must be carried away by the elders and thrown far away in the bush. The skins likewise must not be left in the village, but are taken away by the elders and may be used by these for any purpose, provided that they are not elders of the same clan as the deceased. The cow is left in the village and becomes the property of the woman, but she may not dispose of it in any way.

When this ceremony has been performed, the murderer has to collect the balance of the blood money, which he will do by going round to various members of his clan and begging from them whatever he is unable to pay himself. Among the cattle brought there must be one bull, and when all are got together and brought to the village, the elders collect there; besides these come members of the family and clan, as also strangers from far and near. The bull is then slaughtered and eaten by the whole assembly; the skin is cut up into small strips of which each person takes one piece. After this comes the division of the cattle as follows: if there is a man of the same family present, he gets one cow and gives a bull in exchange; the village of the murdered man's mother gets a cow and gives a bull, likewise if there is a half-brother of the deceased who does not live at his village, he will get a cow and give a bull in exchange; if there is a village of the same clan close by they also are given a cow and return a bull. All these cows may not be sold or disposed of; should this be done, the owner has to pay another cow to the family.

The remainder of the cattle are the property of the brother and wife of the deceased.

It will be seen from this that the murder is regarded as no private offence against an individual: all the next of kin receive a portion of the blood money and the offence is, therefore, to be considered as one committed primarily against the family to compensate for the loss of one of its members.

The first ceremony spoken of is called "Etumo" and must be paid under all circumstances. If this is not done the peculiar consequence is that every member of the murderer's family, whenever he is embroiled in a fight, whether in warfare or in a slight quarrel, will kill his opponent, and on the other hand the members of the murdered man's family will under like circumstances be killed. So fatal is the non-observance of the Etumo ceremony that it must be performed whether the killing was done accidentally or not and, further, when a man's son was killed by strangers in a foreign country, even he had to kill a goat and perform a like ceremony to ward off evil. In former times, when a man was killed in a fight it came to be considered only fair that his brother should waylay the murderer or another member of that family and kill him. In such case the two deaths were regarded as equivalent to payment of compensation on both sides, but nevertheless the two families had to exchange the "Etumo" and had both to perform the above-mentioned ceremony. It will be seen how necessary the "Etumo" is to the safety of both families: without this "their hands are fierce," as they say. The feud is sure to continue and when hostilities break out again, there is on the one

side the fierce hand while the other will be weakhearted by reason of the fate which hangs over him, and it will not be surprising, therefore, if the baneful results of such non-observance of the rites are realized.

The observance of the Etumo shows that the crime of murder leaves the dregs of its evil behind it. Here vengeance such as hanging is of no avail: it is probably only adding evil to evil. Compensation would therefore be wrongly described as a fine imposed; it is an atonement and also a sacrifice which is necessary to remove the evil effects of the crime. It might seem strange that the effect of an omission in this respect should result in the evil abiding distinctly more with the aggrieved party than with the transgressors, but the idea is, I think, quite in accordance with the native mode of thought. There is left, so to speak, a death-dealing spirit, and it is quite a logical supposition that when nothing is done to curb this power it will continue as before, death-bringing to those with whom it began thus, and death-dealing by those who first caused death. Any other view could only spring from ideas of justice, but the Mkamba reckons on no justice from supernatural powers, and although the Mkamba may not ascribe the results to such powers or know from whence they come, it can hardly be doubted that the working of spirits is here surmised. It should be noted that in every payment of compensation there is a greater or lesser sacrifice included, and it may be assumed that what applies to the sacrifice in the case of murder applies in a lesser degree in regard to all offences.

With regard to the third punishment, that of death, this was inflicted only by public consent in the following cases: for habitual robbery or theft of honey barrels, for incorrigible witches, repeated murders and in fact in the case of a man who was recognized as a public danger. The punishment was called "Kingolle." If a number of persons brought complaints before the elders against one man and no redress could be obtained from him, the elders would debate as to how to act. If they decided for Kingolle they took no further part in the matter but called in elders of Nzama from other districts, if possible from remoter parts of the country, and laid the matter before them. These elders then went apart into the thickest bush to hear the complaints, whereupon if they considered them genuine they would require them to state their cases again on the oath of Kithito. This done the brother or father of the accused was called and asked if he agreed to the sentence of Kingolle being carried out against the offender. If he refused he was told to pay for all that his relative had done, and to swear by Kithito that he would not repeat his offences. If he agreed to the decision everybody in the district would arm themselves and set out in a body to hunt the offender down. When found, the first to attack him was his brother, who threw a little earth at him and then the rest attacked and killed him with any weapon they had. He was expected to defend himself, and if he killed anybody in so doing there was no claim upon his relations for blood money, nor could his relations claim anything from anyone for his death. Nowadays when a native council cannot settle a dispute and the case has to be referred to a District Court, the natives say it is Kingolle, because, as they say, it is no one's decision, it is the Government. Here, we see, again, that the

great aim is to remove the blame from the individual. The Kingolle was nobody's work: it was done by common consent, and no one could be blamed; if there was any responsibility it rested with the brother or father of the offender, who alone had the right to sentence him, because to them the blood money would be due. This crude form of a death sentence seems to be so ingeniously devised that one may scarcely credit it being as described, nor do I mean to say that it was always so carried out; in fact, the only case of Kingolle which has come within my experience was not; but nevertheless it is certain that, as above described, it was so intended to be inflicted by the Akamba, and so it would be in most cases, for an omission of the main requirements of the procedure would bring the responsibility of the act upon the slayers.

A modified form of the Kingolle existed in the case of a man refusing to share his father's property with his brothers. In such case the Kingolle contented itself with burning the offender's village and taking the cattle by force; as a warning they first sent a messenger with a fire stick, and if the man sent the cattle he was left unmolested.

Accidental death is called "Mbanga," the acts of lunatics, children, and persons under the influence of liquor are not reckoned as cases of Mbanga, but if such persons injure anybody of their family the compensation is generally reduced to the half. In the case of the former two of course the compensation has to be paid by their relatives and, on the whole, when a man is unable to pay, out of poverty for instance, his relatives are held liable for the payment. A debt is always held to be payable by the relatives of a man, no matter how long after his death. A man is apparently entitled to recover a claim by seizing his debtor's property; some say that he may take a wife and her children, but at a meeting of a Nzama it was most distinctly held that this could not be done. In any case, a man may not do anything until his claim has been made good before the elders. Frequently debts are settled by the creditor receiving a daughter from the debtor.

When claiming a debt the claimant nearly always has to pay something to obtain his property; often if he claims a cow he has to give one of the calves, and at least he will be expected to give presents of honey beer. This, curious as it may appear to us, is only justifiable for the following reason: a Mkamba is very fond of letting a debt stand over for an indefinite period, because during the whole of that time the responsibility in regard to such property rests with the debtor. Thus, if A owes B a cow, and this is paid after ten years, during all that time the cow might have died with A as well as with B, but eventually B has to pay it, and A is sure of his cow and its calves, or the number of calves which it would be expected to have despite cattle disease or any other risks, and consequently what A pays B in order to redeem his cow is, as it were, payment for the risks incurred by B. If, however, A places a cow with B, and that cow dies of a natural cause, B is absolved of all claim upon himself, provided he has returned A the skin and the meat; if he cannot return the meat he must give two goats in its place. This also can be done by a father if one of the cows paid to him in dowry for his daughter

should die, in which case he may either claim another cow or leave it, and in the event of his having to return the dowry he need not give another in place of the one which died. This latter provision emphasises the fact that dowry is to be regarded almost as a pledge for a daughter: the cattle should not be sold, and in every claim for dowry, strictly speaking, the claim concerns only the identical stock given by the husband, the daughter can always be returned and taken back in exchange for these cattle: she is not strictly taken as being equivalent to the value of the cattle, but pledged with the stock paid.

The view in which the Akamba regard offences is of course somewhat different to that held by us. The offences of rape and adultery are instances of this. If upon such an offence there is issue, the child goes to the father or husband of its mother, as the case may be, and the woman's seducer pays one bull and one goat, but should the child die at birth, the compensation is increased to two bulls and two goats; if the woman should die in childbirth, full blood money is required, excepting in Mumoni, where only the amount of the dowry given for the woman is paid. There is no difference made between adultery and rape, excepting that for the latter offence the bull and goat due must be large ones. A case came to my notice where a man had induced a married woman to go to his village for the purpose of having connection with her; the woman fell ill at his village and died there. The husband claimed full blood money from the man, and although finally this was reduced to compensation, as for accidental death, by the elders, opinions were very much divided on the point. In another case, a woman while going to fetch some honey beer for a man fell down and hurt herself; the man was fined two goats as compensation by a large council of elders. Thus, where we should see no offence committed, the Mkamba often holds a man responsible for results which were in no way intended by him. The real explanation of this is, I think, that the native law does not regard offences so much from a point of view of the intentions of the offender as from results to the other party. The essence of all offences under our laws is the intention, but by civil law we can claim damages irrespective of this, and if therefore we regard all native law as civil, which in fact it is, we find that the difference is not so great. The distinction, however, which we make between criminal and civil law often confuses them and clashes with their ideas.

The laws of inheritance are somewhat complicated, for one reason because the natives denote the eldest son as sole inheritor of his father's property, but as a matter of fact he is so only in name, for the stock falls to him to divide with his brothers. During his lifetime a man so divides his stock that he allots a portion to each of his wives. On his death the portion of each wife goes to her son or sons, but a small part of it also goes to the eldest son who, in addition, gets the whole of his mother's portion, which is of course larger than those of the other women, because she is the big wife. If the cattle left are not numerous enough to buy a wife for each son they are left with the eldest son until the increase suffices for the purchase of a wife for him. When the increase is again large enough it is given to the second son to buy a wife, and so on until each has a wife, after which it is divided in

proportion as if the whole stock and its increase had been originally left by the father ; if it is then found that the eldest son has got too little, the others owe him the balance. Until then the eldest son may not appropriate to his own use any of the stock. Wives are inherited by the eldest brother and son, the brother taking the older wives. They may not be sold to another man, but may be given to a man to live with, in which case, however, any children the woman may have are the property of the son or brother, as the case may be. Should, however, the woman of her own accord go to a third man, then dowry may be claimed from him. Illegitimate children are not regarded as a disgrace, but are taken into the family and regarded the same as other children with the same rights of inheritance.

Disputes regarding inheritances are not common. Often the whole family and members of the clan are called in to see fair play, and in the case of stock it is usual for an uncle at any rate to superintend the division. Very often, however, it is difficult for the sons themselves to say how the property should be divided, and in such case they will call in a number of elders to assist them, for which they are given a bull.

By far the most common disputes are those regarding marriage dowries when a father takes back his daughter, or she runs away. In such cases a man can take two courses : either he can claim back all dowry paid, with its increase, and also all presents made at the time of purchase, or he can drop his claim to this and retain the children, in which case he can also claim all children the woman may have by a later husband. In such a case it seems pretty clear that the woman is not regarded as legally married, or belonging to the man she has gone to, for if she dies at the latter's village, or if any of the children die there, the man has to pay full blood money to the first husband. The fact is, that so long as a woman is not properly bought she is not married, and thus it is that the husband, by refusing to accept payment for her, can prohibit her ever marrying again. These rules have been greatly neglected of late by the Akamba themselves, and husbands have only been awarded the actual number of cattle paid. If the old rules were upheld it would be a matter for greater consideration to take a wife away than it has become, for either the new husband will have to pay a very large dowry indeed, or he will not get the woman's children, which is such a serious objection that a man would rarely desire to have the woman. On the other hand, the claims in such cases become very complicated, because both the original stock and its increase may have got into the possession of other people, or some may have died, etc., etc., all of which will lead to never-ending litigation. In the ordinary course of events, when a woman leaves her husband it is merely a matter of return of dowry, but if she be pregnant at the time, no dowry is returned until she has given birth, for the following reasons. If the woman and child survive the birth the dowry is returned in full, but if the child should die at birth the husband pays the father of the woman one large bull and one goat, and receives dowry in full. If dowry was paid in full it is returned in full, even if the woman dies in childbirth, but if it was only paid in part the husband receives nothing excepting a calf or one of the cows, which he must beg of

the father with presents of honey beer. Murder is another subject for endless legal disputes, not that downright murder is often disputed, but because that which constitutes murder is so very vague. Whenever a man dies, a cause for his death is sought, and as often as not any little hurt done to him, no matter how long ago, will be held to be the cause; the possibility of getting blood money encourages his relations to convince themselves that such is the case, and then they enter upon endless disputes as to whether the injury was committed by so-and-so, who may by that time be dead, and if so, whether the injury was the cause of their relative's death. An entire lack of knowledge in such matters will often bring the elders to give a perfectly absurd judgment.

Barring such cases the elders are well capable of judging correctly: they know their own law and, as a rule, have a distinct knowledge that impartiality is required of them, though it must be admitted that when the case is between a man of their district against a stranger they are inclined to be influenced by the old antipathy to strangers.

As far as the law itself is concerned it has two weak points. The first is that it is too lenient. For instance, the punishment for murder is inadequate, because either a man is rich and will not feel the loss of fifteen head of cattle, or if he is poor he will beg the stock from his clan. Of course the law is as it was required to be. The Mkamba is neither grasping, cruel, nor hot tempered, thefts are pretty rare, and murders are nearly all committed in drunken broils. Again, in former times when people lived more isolated, they had not much chance of offending against each other, or if they did, litigation would mostly be a useless means to redress. Thus the law did not need to be harsher than it is. The second weak point is that the law lacked authority, where it failed would be when a man refused to submit to all authority; and then no one could enforce it excepting by Kingolle, and then indeed it became a very powerful authority that he had defied.

A class of offences which seems to have stood outside the law altogether was such as were committed by witchcraft: no man could obtain compensation; here it seems as if he had to content himself with the fact that he contended with higher powers, but in the end the witch, too, could fall under the sentence of Kingolle.

Offences against religion do not come within the law, for those who offend the spirits bring their own punishment upon themselves.

It will be seen that the Kikamba law deals in nothing inhuman or cruel: we can in fact only be struck with the remarkable justice of many of its provisions; even the Kingolle shows a sense of justice that is remarkable in such a primitive race.

Justice and humanity are the two most attractive sides of the Mkamba nature, which go far to make up for many of their shortcomings. It is to these, their best traits, that we must look in every endeavour to raise them to a higher level, and in doing so we should reflect that if we once let the Kikamba law disappear and be forgotten we have allowed them to lose the one creation of their own which they must respect.

OTHER CUSTOMS AND OBSERVANCES OF THE AKAMBA.

The following are miscellaneous customs, observances, or prohibitions among the Akamba ; others are inserted elsewhere where it seemed that they were suited to explain the subject with which they were connected.

Birth.—There is not much ceremony connected with the birth of a child. A goat is killed and sacrificed with prayers for the welfare of mother and child. The skin of this goat is not used, and may therefore often be seen hung up in a tree outside the village. Two days after the birth a feast is prepared of “Ogi” for the elders and “Ukali” for the women. On the fourth day the father hangs a chain or other necklace round the child’s neck, and that night the father and mother must have connection. The practice seems to vary slightly, in parts the giving of the necklace to the infant does not take place until the eighth day.

The naming of the child is the duty of the old women assisting at the birth. The choice of name is determined by any circumstance of the moment, such as the cry of an animal, the sound of dancing, the weather, etc. To this is added the father’s name, before which is inserted “wa” (of), thus: Mbuzia (rhinoceros) wa Wathi (dance). For this reason it is often said that the women give the first name and the men the second. Frequently the grandfather’s name is added too. If a man’s father dies while he is still young the son will often exchange the second name for that of his uncle. As a general rule all Akamba have two or more names. The birth of twins is very unlucky, and in former times one was thrown into the bush ; the natives, however, assure me that this practice ceased before the Government was established. When, however, a cow calves twins it is still more unlucky, and such a cow has to be slaughtered at once together with its calves otherwise nothing but sickness and death occurs in the village. The belief in this is still as strong as of old, and when a Mkamba kills his own cow and its calves one can imagine how dire is the fate he is thereby warding off. I am told that there are a very few people who know how to avoid doing this by the performance of certain rites, but I have not been able to find such a person as yet.

Marriage.—The Mkamba wife is bought and sold, and may even be traded as a piece of goods. Often she is purchased while still a child, and as a general rule without much regard to her own wishes. Hence it is that she does not bind herself to any fidelity, nor is she expected to do so. It is a curious thing that if a girl is averse to a pre-arranged marriage she will, as a rule, not refuse to abide by it, but will go to her elected lord, and after a short time will run away from him. This is particularly the case with young girls married to old men, and nothing will induce them to return then : if force is used they will often take their own lives. There are, however, many cases in which not only is the girl consulted, but it is she who, in fact, commences the negotiations and decides the question. The fact is that at the dances, where it is the girl who chooses her partner, she has the opportunity of declaring her affections by always selecting the same young man,

and if he can pay what the father asks for her the matter is practically settled. In this case the man has first made the arrangements with the girl, after which he will broach the subject to the father by bringing him honey beer. The price of a wife varies from two to five cows besides one bull; a father will generally, of course, take as much as he can get, but three cows and a bull may be taken as an average price. The dowry may be paid at once or in part, or the man may even be allowed to get the girl before he has paid anything. In any case, however, he will be required to make many presents of blankets, knives, and honey beer to the father and other relations, who are, therefore, always bent on prolonging the negotiations as long as possible, always putting him off with hints that another present is desired, until finally he may steal her away at night. Later on the girl's family may regret their greed, for if ever she leaves the husband he will claim every present given, besides the price paid for her: every item has been carefully recorded by a little stick which is added to a bundle treasured up in the hut.

If at last the suitor has obtained the consent of the parents to take his bride, he goes to her village after dark and steals her more or less secretly away, although her parents may be perfectly aware of it. On arrival at his village the girl stands in the "Thome" and will not go farther; the man then calls out his father and mother and asks if there is any ill-luck in the village, and on their reply that there is none he tells the girl to go into the village. She will still refuse to move farther until he says that he has a cow which he will give her. On this she will enter the village and go into his mother's hut, but she will not sit down until the mother bids her do so and gives her a goat for her own. The girl then sits down in the hut and the mother anoints her with fat. The girl sleeps that night and the next in her mother-in-law's hut, but her husband may not cohabit with her. The third day she does the same and on this day her husband takes honey beer to her father; on the fourth day he takes her back to her mother, but returns with her to his own village the same day and may then cohabit with her.

After this there exists a rigid estrangement between the husband and his mother-in-law: they may never meet face to face, or enter a house by the same door; if by chance they meet on the road the son-in-law will pass by in the bush or turn his face away; on a breach of this rule a bull has to be sacrificed. Towards his father-in-law the husband seems to observe a subservient attitude: while the girl never seems to come entirely from under her father's control, the latter may even take her away again so long as he pays back the dowry. I remember rather an amusing case of an old man who did this so often that at last nobody would have his daughter at any price, and when he was once badly in need of property to pay a debt he could not find a suitor for his daughter.

The wife lives in the hut with her grown daughters and small children, the older sons may not sleep in the hut. If one of the daughters is grown up the father can only enter the hut after dark and he will leave it again in the early morning.

By custom every wife should have her own hut, but if a man takes a very

young wife he may put her in the hut of an older wife, usually with the big wife, who is the first woman he has bought; so also if a young man marries he will usually put his wife into the hut of his mother for some time. Unfortunately nowadays the hut tax has played havoc with the old custom and very often two or three women are found in one and the same hut.

A Mkamba may have as many wives as he can afford to buy. A large number of them are a sign of wealth and consequently they bring their husband respect and position: not a few invest all their riches in wives, considering them more profitable than cattle, for they are first and foremost workers, but also they bear him children who, in the case of girls, are valuable assets, and sons are much desired to strengthen the family. A wealthy man may have from six to ten wives, but Mutia of Mumoni, for instance, has nineteen and Kitili of Ikanga has forty-seven, of whom twenty live several days' journey away.

Excepting for the prohibition which forbids a man to marry a girl out of his own clan, there are no restrictions in the choice of a wife. A man is not even debarred from marrying his own father's wives after his death provided that he may not marry his own mother, and that he must obtain her from the elders, who perform the following ceremony. The wood of three trees, called "Movu," "Mulale" and "Mutemma," is pounded in water. The concoction thus made is called "Ngondu," and is used in many ceremonies. An elder carries the Ngondu in a bowl to the door of the woman's hut, followed by the man; here he spills a little on the ground and the man must tread on it with the left foot and rub his right foot with the left. The Ngondu is then carried to the bed in the hut where the woman is. A branch of a tree, called "Mutaa," is then dipped in the Ngondu and both are brushed about the loins with it. After this the two must have connection and they are then married to each other as if they had originally been husband and wife, but when this is not done the man will be stricken with "Makwa." A widowed woman is very rarely, excepting in the case of the big wife, left unmated. If the above marriage is not performed she will generally be given to some stranger to live with: very often women are thus lent to Akikuyu who work for their owners. Spinsters are, so far as I know, non-existent, and bachelors are very rare; I have, in fact, hitherto only heard of one or two in the whole country.

Death.—The ordinary manner of disposing of corpses is to throw them out into the bush; this is as a rule the duty of the elders of "Kisuka," mainly because among the elders they are generally the youngest and best able to carry the body; in deaths from an infectious disease the corpse is dragged out by a cord round the neck. For this work the elders are given a goat, and if the deceased's relatives are too poor or refuse to pay the fee the corpse cannot be disposed of at all, but will be left lying in the hut while the other members of the village will have to move elsewhere. Burial is not favoured and seems to be rather regarded as unlucky. There are, however, two exceptions to this, for the elder of a village, if he was a man of any importance, as also the big wife in the village, are always buried.

In the first case the grave is dug in the cattle kraal (inside the village). A large bull is slaughtered and one half is given to the man's clan while the other half goes to the elders. The grave is marked out by an elder of "Kjau" and those of Kisuka do the digging. The body is laid in the grave with the legs bent backwards from the knees and rests on the right side.

When the big wife of the village dies, her grave is made inside the village enclosure just before the gateway. While this is being done the woman's husband sits on one side of the body and on the other side another of his wives sits. The body is then laid in the grave in the same position as in the first case, but on the left side. The grave is then filled in and the husband must cohabit that night with the wife who sat beside the corpse with him; the same day also the elders are given a large goat, which they must eat without cutting or breaking the bones. On the ninth day the elders return for a feast at which all the daughters of the village who may be married elsewhere must eat with their father.

On every death there is the purification of the village to be observed. On the seventh day a brother of the deceased must cohabit with one of his widows. Within this period no one may have connection with any woman or he will be stricken with "Makwa." The village is then purified, but on the eleventh day the elders are given a sheep and honey beer, and until this is done a daughter of the village who is married at another village may not come to her paternal kraal. This purification takes place on the death of all male adults and on the death of the big wife; when other wives and small children have died, the period for purification required only lasts for three days.

On the death of a woman her hut is closed, for her spirit continues to dwell there; if, however, she has a grown daughter and children they may inhabit the hut. No huts are closed on the death of a husband, for the simple reason that a man has no hut. There is a belief among the Akamba that on the death of a woman her spirit comes at night to cohabit with her husband.

A young man may never sleep, or so much as put his foot, on his mother's bed: were he to do so he would be afflicted by "Makwa." On the death of his father, however, he may do so, but first the elders must have smeared the soles of his feet with Ngundu as well as the bed posts, while the bed itself is sprinkled with the same medicine. So also a man will be afflicted with Makwa if he takes honey out of his deceased father's hives before his uncle has done so; it is also necessary that the uncle should have connection with the widow of the father and the elders must be given beer made of the honey. After that, the hives are the inherited property of the son.

On the death of a child the father is prevented from going to the village of his wife's relatives. The day the child dies the father must have connection with the mother.

Circumcision.—Every Mkamba must be circumcised: there seems to be no explanation of this rite, nor do the natives seem to regard it as a sanitary measure. The operation is performed at various ages, for the ceremonies are held only every

three or four years before the autumn rains, and, therefore, if a boy misses one celebration because, perhaps, his father cannot pay the fees, or on account of sickness, he may be considerably older before another chance presents itself. The celebrations do not, however, take place in the same year all over the country, and, therefore, a boy may sometimes be sent to another district where they are to be held. There are two ages of boys, Kamwana and Kivitse; they do not signify particular ages, but as a general rule the Kamwana has been circumcised, while the Kivitse mostly has not yet undergone the operation. During the time of circumcision and recovery a youth must not be harmed in any way: a person who so much as strikes him with the hand must give a goat as a sacrifice. The celebration of these rites is called "Ndzaiko"; properly speaking there is, of course, only one circumcision, but the Akamba denote two other ceremonies as "Ndzaiko ya nehe" (the great circumcision) and "Ndzaiko ya aume" (circumcision of men).

The first named is a feast at which the youths and girls perform dances and are instructed by an old man and woman in the art of criminal cunning. The extent to which this is carried is almost inconceivable; thus I am told that a man who has not been through the Ndzaiko ya nene will not steal, seemingly because he is too unversed in such matters to have a right to steal even from a thief's point of view. It seems scarcely credible that such a celebration should be approved of by a tribe, but this is nothing compared to the absolute depravity of the Ndzaiko ya aume, the details of which are too repulsive to relate. In the main it is the forming of a fellowship among the men and it is said that those who belong to it are capable of forcing others to join.

The exact details of this celebration are not to be ascertained, for the whole is cloaked with so much secrecy that a man only asking about it is fined a bull, and the consternation shown by the elders when they heard that it had become known to Europeans was such that they boldly stated that if they knew who the informer was, they would not rest until they had taken his life. It seems that besides the revolting practices much cruelty and ill-treatment of the novices occurs: there are people who are said to have been thereby crippled for life. In former times, intruders at any of the circumcision rites were severely mishandled or even killed; this is, of course, not the case now, but it is certain that no native would dare to intrude upon the Ndzaiko ya nene, and the elders informed me that even a European would be attacked. Those who have gone through these rites are said to have a password by which they are known to each other; according to two missionaries this is true, but opinions differ as to whether there is only one such password or whether they have different ones in the various districts.

A man who has gone through all three circumcisions attains thereby much honour, and one such man told me that if a man lives with his father and the latter has not these qualifications he will possibly drive his father out of his own village. All this seems so in opposition to what one would expect of the Mkamba, that I have at times been inclined to discredit it.

The facts are, however, so positively corroborated, both by the natives and by missionaries who have a very long experience of the Akamba, that they are not to be doubted, and I can only explain the existence of such celebrations by the following. First the Mkamba, it must be admitted, has a distinct inclination for that which is depraved, and secondly, the natives assure us that these practices were introduced from the Wagiriana; the Ndzaiko ya nene does not extend beyond Kitui, it is unknown in Theraka and Machakos. The institution is therefore probably of quite recent date after degeneration had set in among the Akamba, and they had become very different from those who were capable of creating their laws, for instance.

The Ndzaiko ya nene is generally said to be bad, and causes the failure of rains; there is little doubt that it is not at all popular, and if despite this it continues the only reason can be that those already initiated are capable of forcing others to join.

Hunting.—The following customs concern the introduction of young hunters to the art, and were related to me by a hunter of great renown in Mumoni:—

(1) When a party of hunters go out it is the custom for the novices to bring presents of meat to the older hunters. If this is not done, a young man who has seen an elephant may not shoot it or tell the party that he has seen an elephant, he must say that he has seen a stone. One of the older members of the party then goes to see for himself, and if he sees the elephant he breaks a twig across his forehead and prays that they may find many more.

(2) If one of the party shoots a cow elephant and it is the first elephant he has killed in his life, one teat of the beast is cut off, together with a piece of the trunk, both of which are hidden in the bush. An older hunter then takes him by the wrist and tells him to cut meat, whereupon the man thrusts his knife into the carcase. After this he must cohabit with his wife and in future he will have good luck in his hunting.

(3) If the novice wounds an elephant and afterwards another man kills it, the former goes to the eldest hunter of the party, who carries him on his shoulders to where the elephant lies and tells him to shoot an arrow into the carcase from his shoulders. This done, he must pull out the arrow again. Subsequently he will lay a piece of the ivory or meat under his bed and have connection with his wife. This done, he will not fail another time to kill his elephant.

As hunting is an occupation which requires experience and that brings much respect to the experienced one, it is only natural that there are required certain observances to mark the initiating of the inexperienced.

Harvest.—Before and during the rains the oath of Kithito may not be taken unless a sacrifice is offered, otherwise the rains would fail. For the same reason "Mwe" may not be threshed until after the spring rains. In the spring, 1909, the natives were badly in need of food, but while they had plenty in their stores they were prohibited from using it until late in June, when it was threshed. In ignorance of this regulation a certain amount was threshed at the Government

station and shortly afterwards a large number of women came to demand a goat for a sacrifice to appease the spirits.

I have already mentioned that iron may not be used in the fields, for this would drive away the rains. Probably the same idea underlies the objection to the railway. I talked once to an old man on the subject, but got very little out of him, excepting a look, which plainly said that if I did not know that to lay an iron band all across the country was enough to drive all rain away, what did I know. Unfortunately, there have been a series of dry years for about the last ten years or more.

When the crops of Mbazi look poor, the following ceremony takes place. A number of people go out to catch some rock rabbits, called "Kinyoe"; they have also another name, "Kikila," and when about to be caught, the people speak of them only by this name, for if they are called "Kinyoe" they cannot be trapped. The whole party sleeps out in the bush, and they must catch these little animals alive; moreover, they must get one or two more than are required and set them at liberty again. The animals, which are often also called "sheep," are placed in a basket of twigs and carried by an elder, whom the rest surround, singing and dancing with branches of the "Mokikia" tree in their hands. The song on one occasion when I witnessed this performance ran as follows:—

"Mwei wa Mupiu tuevatu, Mweita wakwa ikimitwe na mbwewe."

(In the month of Mupiu we are angry, my mother has been shot by a cartridge.)

On returning, the whole party slept at the village of the principal elder and next morning the elders of "Ithembo" came and took the animals into the bush; here they were killed, after which the contents of the stomach were sprinkled over the fields. In the south this is done at any time to bring good rains, while in Machakos I am told that it is used for this purpose as well as for cattle medicine, particularly to give them a glossy skin; in the latter country only one of the animals need be caught.

On the occasion when I saw the Kikila being brought from the bush many of the people were also carrying poles to be made into "Mue" staves, and I think that there was some idea that it is lucky to cut these at the same time. The Mue staves are implements that seem to have a particular merit, and strictly speaking they should always be made by the village elder or father.

Hut Building.—There is no particular ceremony to be observed at the building of a hut; it is, however, necessary for the husband and wife to have connection when the hut is completed and a failure to observe this is followed with the direst misfortune in the way of sickness and deaths. Sometimes a very strong wind will carry the grass off a hut and leave very nearly only the framework. This is regarded as extremely unlucky, for it is supposed to be the work of an angry spirit and, therefore, when the grass is replaced it must be sprinkled with "Ngondu" by the elders. If a swarm of bees settles in or near a house it is a sign of very good luck.

Travelling.—When going along a road one frequently sees a firebrand and some leaves on the path near a place where natives have camped. This is because when setting out in the morning the first man carries a brand from the fire and throws it on the road, the next man lays some leaves over it and treads on them. This ensures good luck on the road. As a preventive against foot wounds it is considered good to rub the feet in dry hyæna dung.

Sneezing.—When a Mkamba sneezes he always makes some remark. I am told that those of Machakos say "Atcho," and on repetition "Kola" (an exclamation denoting joy). In Kitui, as one might almost expect, every man has his own particular exclamation. I have heard phrases such as "I am the greatest of my father and mother's clans," another repeated his father's name, as he said, to show that he was still young, another "Kutsya" (quiet). It seems that as a rule such exclamations have reference to the sneezer's father or grandfather.

Counting.—As I have already said, it is unlucky to count cattle, and this applies to all living creatures, but particularly to the counting of girls. All odd numbers are unlucky, but more than any seven is a bad number. A man will never herd cattle six days and rest the seventh: he must go on to the eighth day. This is called "Ndethia," and were a man to cease herding on the seventh day all the cattle would die; with other work this does not seem to be the case.

Blood Brotherhood.—As an introduction to blood brotherhood, friendship is usually made by the exchange of honey beer and a goat. Later the two meet, bringing honey beer in a bowl from which each takes a mouthful and spits it out into the bowl again, after which each drinks half of the beer. After a few days the two meet again, and each cuts the other with a knife very slightly on the back of the right hand and licks the blood off. The brotherhood thus established is most binding and if broken by either party will result in his death. The blood brotherhood passes on to their children after their deaths, but a fresh ceremony between the children is not required. In consequence of this the children of blood-brothers may never marry.

Weapons used in Murder.—Although I have dealt with the subject of murder at some length, there is still one point of which I must speak. Among many tribes the weapon used to inflict death upon anyone is in some way purified; among the Akikuyu it is blunted, and I believe some such observance is almost universal among African tribes. The performance of such acts originates in the idea that the weapon carries with it misfortune or fatality, and so it is with the Akamba. The weapon once used in murder continues to be a means of further destruction, but here there is no ceremony, no medicine or magic that can abate its fatal spirit: henceforth and for all time it will continue to kill by the hand of its owner, no matter what he does with it. Since there is no way of ridding oneself of this curse, the Mkamba has recourse to craft and cunning; he will lay the weapon on a path or place where a passer by is likely to see it. Once the finder has picked it up its bane falls upon him and the first owner is free from it. This belief is, I think, of special interest, because it speaks of the manner in which murder is regarded. We

have seen how necessary to the murderer is the Etumo : it takes the curse of murder off the aggrieved party as well as off the murderer, but the latter has still the fatality of the weapon upon him, a fatality which neither time nor art can erase. These facts almost remind us of ancient legends of persecuting fate which goes through generations, never to be appeased. If we consider this fully it will be apparent that the oft-repeated maxim that life among natives is cheap and murder of little account is absolutely a fallacy. With the Akamba murder is not a passing crime or light matter : it is a fearful deed, the curse of which pursues men from place to place ; the mark of Cain does not here die out with Cain : it is put into the world once and for all and therefore it is impossible to assume that the natives regard murder as a light matter ; those who realize this will understand why it is, perhaps, that downright murder is indeed rare among the Akamba, infinitely rarer than with Europeans, and personally I cannot recall a single case of what one might term murder with malice aforethought.

MEDICINE MEN AND WITCHES.

Among many tribes the medicine man is a person of importance second to none, or the chief medicine man may be practically the ruler of the tribe. Among the Akamba this is not so and it is not surprising, since the knowledge of the medicine art is not highly developed and much of the knowledge appertaining to it is shared with laymen ; but more particularly the medicine man's importance must suffer from the fact that many of what one would expect to be his most important duties are performed by the elders, such as the curing of Makwa and the offering of sacrifices.

Despite these circumstances the medicine man is much respected and frequently in demand because he has many ways of coping with the spirits and supernatural powers. In this capacity he is, perhaps, most sought for the making of charms.

Whenever a man falls sick he will on recovery go to the Mundu Mue to obtain a charm for the purpose of protecting him from the evil. Most of these charms are little bits of wood with marks burned on them. I can discover no method in these markings, but the medicine man knows in each case in what manner they should be made. They are worn on the part of the body which was affected, as, for instance, on the wrist in the case of an affection of the hand or above the elbow where the wearer had suffered some damage or disease to the arm. Such charms are worn permanently by the owner and may never be dispensed with or the evil will at once return. There are, therefore, charms to protect against returning disease, etc., besides many other charms which are used to relieve pain or to assist in the speedy healing of a sore, etc.

Such charms are very often small horns filled with the proper medicine, or little bags containing it, and are worn slung from the belt or a chain and often artistically decorated with wire or giraffe hair, and when the wearer sustains any damage he will lay it against the injured part.

None of those charms need necessarily be made by the medicine man, but more generally they are constructed under his direction by the wearer. Much of the medicine art is not altogether the monopoly of the medicine man: most hunters, for instance, know how to concoct the medicine with which they are always provided for ensuring the snaring of game; the same medicine is often capable of procuring for the owner the good will of women. Many of these charms, like Kithitos, are inherited through generations and the owner may not know whence it originally came, but they appear in such case to be generally much prized charms. It is difficult to say where the definition of a charm begins and ends. For instance, I once tried to purchase some of the tweezers used for pulling out the eyelashes from a party of young men who were dancing in my camp and the result was an instant move to leave the place; on enquiry I found that the man whose tweezers I had purchased was supposed to be doomed to die by my hand. It seems strange that such a simple article, which is made by every boy and worn merely as an ornament, one would think, should be so vital to the owner's life, yet the belief is very strong and should be considered when natives appear unwilling to part with such articles. Another article worn, which seems more or less to act as a charm, is a strip of the skin which is taken from a sacrificial animal and worn all through life. These are nearly always worn when a sacrifice is offered of animals paid in compensation, and seem partly to aid in the cure of a hurt done and partly to ward off its evil effects, as, for instance, in the case of murder.

Thus charms are most variable articles and the most important of them are not always the work of magic. The subject of magic has led me to think that between this and the knowledge of how to please or ward off the spirits there is very little difference, if any at all, and that there is therefore no special art which can be called magic: it is simply the cult of the spirits.

The contrary of the making of charms to ward off evil is the construction of spells or curses for the purpose of bringing evil upon others. The art is closely allied to that of witchcraft, but that to which I refer here is not the practice of a person who is by nature a witch, but the supernatural aid invoked by an individual for the purpose of destroying a particular enemy or for the protection of property, that is to say, a form of taboo. For the former purpose a man may be instructed by a medicine man as to how to act, by laying a particular charm in the enemy's village or on a path where he will pass, or it may be by throwing earth at him, accompanied with wishes for his destruction; it may be noted that in Kingolle the brother of the victim throws earth at him, very possibly thereby cursing him and disclaiming the family ties. It is said that when cattle disease breaks out, a man who has lost his cattle will smear their blood on the path where he knows the cattle of another will pass, which is believed to carry the disease to them; this also is a form of spell casting for the object of bringing evil upon another. For the protection of property there are such spells as are laid at the trees in which honey barrels are kept; these are said to cause anyone who steals the hives to be bitten by snakes on descending the tree. I cannot say whether such spells are connected

with the clan mark of the hive or whether they are commonly used. A better example of such practices is what is called "Wathi" in Mumoni, and is a spell or curse laid upon the quivers which afflicts a man with a disease of sores if he opens the quiver of another. A young man told me how he gave his quiver to a medicine man for this purpose. The medicine man disappeared into the bush with the quiver and presently strange noises were heard simultaneously from various directions; after a while the medicine man reappeared and showed him how he must open the quiver, for the result of this operation is that it can only be opened in a particular manner without harm ensuing, and the protection lies in this that the owner alone knows the proper manner of opening his quiver. This practice is only known in Mumoni. There is in this district a man who is said to have a quiver that no one can open at all excepting himself. In these cases the spell is not represented by any article attached to the quiver, but it derives its merit from the peculiarities with which it is endowed by the medicine man.

The medicine man also makes charms and medicines for the public good. Of such there are gateways made of two sticks on either side of the road, connected by a strip of hide with a crow's feather hung from the centre. This is for protection from cattle disease, and the cattle passing through it leave their sickness at the gateway. Such a charm will generally be seen at either end of a belt of fly-area on the road to Mumoni.

Another means whereby a medicine man may direct the path of life for a Mkamba is by making little cuts in his skin and rubbing in a particular medicine for various purposes. This done to the tongue gives a man the power of great authority in his speech; the same treatment to the forehead and throat just above the breast bone ensures to a man the admiration of women, and applied to the chest or abdomen brings him great riches. Almost every Mkamba has one or more of these magic medicines about his body which serves him all through life, or if not, a reason for its failure is, of course, easily found. But not only the body may be thus endowed, inanimate things can likewise be doctored. A medicine man once put medicine on a cent coin for me, which he said I should never lose, for it would bring me great riches. This he did first by putting some curious black rubbery material into the hole in the centre of the coin, and by spitting on it three times. The next day, however, he appeared again and said that during the night a spirit had communicated to him the particular root which was suited for medicine in my case. This root he produced and having added a little to the mixture on the coin he gave me the rest, together with a piece of his hair, which, apparently, also was a very lucky trophy.

One of the commonest duties of the medicine man is the curing of sickness, but of course he has first to discover its nature and causes, and this is very commonly found to be the anger or possession of a spirit. To a similar cause barrenness in women may frequently be attributed by the medicine man. His cure may be quite simple: it may be the construction of another doorway to the village, presumably because the existing one harbours a malignant spirit, or he may even recommend

entire abandonment of the village. Frequently a sacrifice is offered and the names of many deceased members of the family are called until that of the particular spirit molesting the patient is mentioned, when the trouble will abate. But very frequently the medicine man recommends a dance to be performed, in which the drumming and singing are his duty. One such dance I saw was as follows. The medicine man drummed and sang in monotonous tones, while the patient was seized with strange convulsions and rolled about in the mud before him. Other women were similarly affected, but the men took no part in it. This performance was kept up for about six hours during four days. On the third and fourth day the patient was painted with red and white checks all over the body and stripes on the legs. This dance, I was told, came from Rabai, but there are others original to Kitui. Almost every case of sickness is ascribed to a spirit, in fact disease and spirits seem almost to be regarded as one and, therefore, possession by a spirit, disease and madness do not appear to be defined one from the other. The medicine man, therefore, has the power of expelling spirits.

Another branch of the medicine art is that of fortune telling and prophecy. This very frequently takes the form of dreams by the Mundu Mue. There are several well-known prophecies of former times regarding the coming of the white man, but I have not heard of remarkable events foretold in later times: mostly they refer to the approach of the rains. Most common, however, is fortune telling by counting berries and other odds and ends which the medicine man keeps in a gourd for this purpose. The art is very common among medicine women and the method is as follows. A quantity of the contents of the gourd is poured out on to a cat skin and counted in heaps of tens; from the remaining number under ten the medicine man knows the answer to the question asked him. I asked such a man once many questions to which some of his answers were true, and found that like European fortune tellers his oracular replies were either vaguely framed or they showed that he was possessed of a very shrewd mind which from obvious circumstances could deduce facts which the ordinary individual could not surmise. The future can also be divined from sacrifices, but one medicine man across whom I came had his own method, which I have never seen otherwise. He used a small dick dick horn with two holes bored into the base; into these he inserted two sticks weighted at the ends so that when he put the horn on his finger it balanced there and from the manner in which it swayed he divined past and future events as well as present occurrences afar off. This was the same man who doctored a cent coin for me, and the first medicine which he put on the coin was a little of the material with which the two sticks of his divining apparatus were weighted. Besides this he also knew a great deal regarding myself which he said his spirit revealed to him, but he also had a third method of foretelling the future. The dick dick horn which he used for balancing was laid between two little gourds of medicine and bending down with his mouth to the horn, I presume that he stuck it into his gums, for presently he got up and spat into his hand saliva and blood mixed, which latter he declared came from my body. The blood, he said, was

remarkably little, and therefore he knew that I should live long in safety, for had there been much blood it would have signified that my blood could easily be taken.

An important art of the medicine man is the detection of witches. These are a very prevalent curse and are found chiefly among the women. If a woman is a witch her daughter will be one too; they appear not to be able to desist from their evil practices and formerly they were often put to death by Kingolle as public dangers. Sometimes they are said to kill people by merely touching them, but there is little doubt that most deaths by witchcraft are nothing but cases of poisoning.

The evil results of bewitching a person are said always to appear on the seventh day, wherefore it is explained that seven is a bad number. Such persons can be cured of their evil propensities by certain medicine men, but none of those in Kitui are possessed of this knowledge. Witches are particularly numerous at the present time and in 1910 a medicine man was called from Machakos to deal with them. This man detected the witches, who fell down immediately on seeing him and he cured them by giving them water to drink; his cures were, however, not successful and a medicine man of greater renown was called from Rabai. This man did not apparently treat the witches, but gave the people medicine which made them immune to all witchcraft. His medicine not only protected those who took it, but had the curious effect that anyone who put witchcraft upon them was himself afflicted with its evil effects. The consequence of this was that a person taking the medicine could with impunity swear falsely by Kithito, and the person against whom he was taking the oath was doomed to die. So also such people could steal honey barrels without fear. Here the medicine had power over witchcraft, spells and the supernatural power of the Kithito, which shows how strangely and closely related all these are. The same medicine man left as a parting gift some medicine at a water hole, which was such a terror to the whole population that no one could get to the water until it was removed. The medicine was in a little basket and consisted of some bits of wood smeared with blood. It had to be removed by his son and all the natives kept a respectful distance from it. I was also told that no Mkamba would dare to swear falsely by it; this shows again that a Kithito may be any sort of medicine besides being a particular article only designed for purposes of taking the oath.

I have spoken of these arts of the "medicine man," using the term as a general one. It must, however, not be supposed that all are practised by one man, in fact it is rare that more than one single act in one of these branches is known to an individual. Thus he may be limited to drumming a single dance for a particular disease.

The medicine man or woman is to be recognized by the number of ornaments he or she wears at all ages. As a rule their peculiar calling manifests itself when they are young, but practically grown up. According to a native account the initiation takes places as follows: "A man goes for a walk and his spirit" meets

him and says "I will make a Mundu Mue of him." In the night the man dreams that somebody comes to him and gives him a plant, telling him that it will cure such and such a disease. In the morning he wakes up and finds the plant in his hand. This goes on until he knows all about his future calling. Then probably he will cure a disease or dream of some event to come, and the people will know that he is a medicine man. They speak of his spirit as if he had a familiar spirit working through his agency: apparently he can also commune with this spirit.

One might ask why others seeing the particular plant used by the medicine man cannot use it the same as he; so also in regard to charms, it would seem more simple to fit a child out with charms against all manner of evils instead of waiting until they have attacked him. But the medicine art is not so simple as this. For instance, every native has seen the ordeal of a heated knife administered many times, and anyone who has seen it done could repeat the performance, yet it must be done by a medicine man and with the particular knife he keeps for this purpose. Similarly it appears that the same charm will not do for two people afflicted with exactly the same misfortune. The person, the cause and the circumstances of the case all seem to be important factors determining the construction of the charm.

Medicine women are even more common than medicine men, but their practice is generally more in the petty arts, such as divining by counting. When the medicine man takes out his medicines he lays them out on a cat or leopard skin: if they touch the earth they lose virtue. Earth seems to be used often for cursing people and may be a contaminating element. The gourd in which the medicines are kept may also never be emptied for the same reason. If medicine is administered it is usually handed to the patient through an archway of branches, which often may be seen outside the village of Mundu Mue. Among the medicines are an extraordinary medley of articles such as pebbles, crocodiles' teeth, lions' claws, berries of various sorts, and, as a much prized addition, a loaded cartridge. The latter article gives one an idea of the meaning of these medicines: it is presumably the latent power of the cartridge which is valuable. The cartridge is lifeless yet full of strength, but so also there may be strength in the lion's claw and fruitfulness in berries.

The medicine art is without doubt a strange mixture of truth and fiction. How often the medicine man is aware of this I cannot say, but at times he is certainly guilty of intentional deception. Thus in the case of a man suffering from fever a medicine man placed a cartridge to his head and then showed him a stone which he said he had extracted from the head. A duty which many of the medicine men perform is the administering of the ordeal of licking a heated knife blade. This I have seen many times done in the following manner. The medicine man took a white powder which he smeared on the tongues of both the parties, on their hands he drew a line of it from the centre of the palm to the tip of the middle finger, and from the forehead a line was drawn down to the tip of the nose. The knife was then daubed with the same powder in patches on the blade, and the

parties each stated what they were prepared to maintain to be the truth. Previous to commencing, the knife had been wiped with some herbs which the medicine man had chewed. It was then heated for a considerable time, after which one of the men licked it copiously on both sides; it was then treated with the same medicine and heated again to be licked by the other party. The judgment varies according to whether one party's tongue has been burned. In one case I saw that neither had scorched their tongues, and the medicine man declared that both their statements were true, which apparently was a fact. According to the medicine man the powder is medicine to heal the burns should they be severe, but I am told that the white powder is nothing but diatomite: it was clearly some insulating material, but whether the medicine man knows this I cannot say; if he does he might distribute the powder so cunningly on the blade and the tongues that one party would escape scorching himself, and in such case he has considerable power in his hands. Latterly the native councils have refused this ordeal on the ground that it is not above suspicion. An old medicine woman treated a man for a pain in his side by rubbing on the affected part some fat, which she said was medicine, but it was perfectly obvious that what she was doing was simply massage, and she was doing it very well, too, with successful results. I am convinced that she herself thought that the whole secret of her art lay in the fat which she was using.

The above three instances show that the Mundu Mue may be a downright impostor, or one who uses means which he himself does not understand. It is certain, too, I think, that many herbs and natural medicines are known to these people which are of real use, also that they know of many most fatal poisons.

There is, however, another means through which the medicine man works, perhaps, more important than any other, and that is the mind. The native is a marvellously impressionable creature, as is often proved. Supposing a man has an enemy and he lays medicine outside his hut designed to make him mad, the owner of the hut will see it, or, if not, one may be sure that he will be told about it, and thenceforth even the most sceptical native's life is full of fears. For generations the evil power of the medicine has been known, and the fear preys on his mind until it is too much, and the medicine has done its work. This I have seen more than once, and the truth of it has often made me ask myself whether, if the medicine man's art can bring about this, it can also bring about the opposite effect. The Mkamba knows well how easily life is lost, and on the slightest sickness he will think himself dying, but on the other hand he knows that if he can be helped it will be through the medicine man, and therefore all his hopes rest in him. His hopes in the latter will therefore be as strong as his fear of death, and lightened with this hope his mind is in the best state to assist his cure; thus I think many a cure may at any rate be facilitated by the influence of the medicine man. There is only one person who cannot be either cured or aided by his charms, and that is the medicine man himself. Curiously enough, most medicine men evince a shyness and nervousness very often which may be so

pronounced at times that one would think them mentally deficient. As a matter of fact, such is often, I think, the case, and the natives regard them as nothing but imbeciles in ordinary matters. They are said to be extraordinarily absent-minded and thriftless, which accounts for the fact that they are generally poor, and the more proficient they are in their art the less sane are they held to be. I believe that in an account of the Congo people it is stated that a foolish person is supposed to be particularly favoured by God, wherefore such persons are much respected. Possibly something of the same sort underlies the opinion as to the medicine man's insanity, for, as one man said to me, "he has a spirit in his head like a madman."

Somewhat akin to medicine and magic, although really quite unconnected with it, is the belief in the evil eye. The evil does not, however, seem to be seated merely in the eye, but in the tongue also. If a person of this peculiarity (called Kjeni) sees an article or living creature and says, "this is good," or words to that effect, the object is doomed to perish; even a stone is said to split asunder from the evil power of the person. If a man with the evil eye and tongue expresses his admiration for a woman who is pregnant at the time, she is sure to die in child-birth. The person possessed of this power can, however, also effect a cure for the evil by spitting on the object or person affected. There is a whole clan, the Mba Mwanziu, of which every member, no matter where he was born, has the evil eye and tongue, and, curiously enough, they are often sought for the curing of small hurts, such as burns or bruises, which they do by spitting on the hurt. Why they should be able to do this I cannot say, unless it is that the hurt is thought very likely to have been caused by them in the first instance.

RELIGION OF THE AKAMBA.

Shy and reserved as the Akamba are it is naturally difficult to ascertain much on the subject of their religion. The following is no attempt to draw up a definite creed for these people, but rather to collect the few scattered elements of religious beliefs in the hopes of showing that primitive suggestions of religion are not wanting among them.

Those unacquainted with the Akamba might at first sight find many surprisingly developed ideas of religion. Of such would be the story of a first man who had three sons—Galla, Masai, and Mkamba (some add Mutzungu-European!); the saying that the medicine man was made on the fifth and the bird on the sixth day, or the tale of the chameleon which brought the news of death to mankind. So also the crude form of a week contained in the prohibition against the seventh day might be taken to hint at a legend of the Creation. But that there is no such story I have been assured by the answers given to repeated questions put to them on the subject. "How can a man know the origin of the earth and men?" they say; neither have they any ideas in regard to the sun or moon, though they think all this may be the work of the "God or Spirits."

It must be remembered how many people of different creeds have lived among and exercised an influence over these people, from whom snatches of legends may have been picked up. More clearly this will be seen from such ideas as are found with regard to a being referred to as God.

The Mkamba uses three words to denote God—"Muungu," "Ngai," and "Mulungu." The first of these is pure Kiswahili, the second is Masai, and the third is most probably a corruption of the first. When asked what God is, the Mkamba begins to speak of "Aiimu" (Spirits), interchanging it with the Kiswahili word "Sheitan" (Devil); but in the end all these words are collected in the one "Aiimu." It becomes clear, then, that there is no Mkamba word for God, neither do they know of any such being, but the various terms used are merely collective words meant to denote the plurality of the spiritual world. When I asked a man what he meant when he had referred to God in his prayer as "Mulungu," he answered, "Is it not the spirits?" strangely indifferent to his confusion of the individual with the plurality.

But if to the Mkamba the world contains no particular God, in spirits it abounds. What a spirit is he does not pretend to know; they say "We see a man's shadow, and we say perhaps that is his spirit," and for this reason the camera is still feared, because it robs men of their shadows. Yet no Mkamba knows positively that his shadow is his spirit, for even stones cast shadows, and whether they have spirits he would not like to say for certain. But every man has a spirit which lives on after the body is dead, though the nature of after-life is very vague; mostly the spirits are supposed to live as they did on earth, with cattle as their riches, and some are rich, others poor. Their haunts are trees, rocks, and hills, the volcanic veins in rocks are their paths. To the living they manifest themselves in many ways. Sometimes they enter animals, such as wild cats, which come into the villages; the unusual appearance of such an animal in their midst tells them that they are animals of no common sort, but are possessed with human spirits. Many sicknesses are put down to the spirits, particularly in the case of those who have offended against them and subsequently die. Sickness invariably denotes the anger of a spirit following upon some offence or neglect, and it is then often the medicine man who can detect the cause and prescribe the cure. Any ill-luck may, however, be due to the same cause. Thus, where a hunter had failed to find elephants, he declared that this was due to the fact that he had omitted to offer a sacrifice before starting, and before going out again a sheep was offered. The animal was killed at about sunset, a few pieces of the flesh from the throat were laid on the bare earth, next some of the blood was poured on the ground beside the meat, and finally a little water was poured next to the blood. Upon each of these acts the hunter offered a prayer for success coupled with other wishes. From a small patch of dry earth left by the water he divined that shortly he would find two cow elephants.

The most common manifestation of the spirits is madness, temporary and permanent. The former is most usually seen during dances performed by women, and takes the form of a kind of trance but accompanied by convulsive movements

of the body; women in such a state often utter gruesome cries and shed copious tears. Such attacks do not seem to be feared, for the women always readily take part in the dances; it is explained by the natives that they do not avoid the dances, because the spirit would attack them in the field or village or anywhere else; curiously enough, however, I have never known this to be the case, whereas it is not uncommon to see out of thirty women at a dance ten of them thus possessed. The possession is supposed to abate by the application of ghee to the head and shoulders. Not all women are subject to such attacks, and it is said that if they do not show themselves while she is still a girl, a woman will be free from them all her life. It is very rare that a man is possessed by spirits; I have, in fact, only seen two cases of this, and it is said that a man so afflicted is always a medicine man or will become one.

Under the influence of the spirits women sometimes utter strange noises which are interpreted as prophecies. A missionary told me that in Ikutha some time ago there were many such cases in which the women uttered sounds which were apparently Arabic syllables, and the "r" was clearly pronounced, although this is a sound which is most difficult for the Southern Akamba to speak.

The instance here given in which a tendency to a foreign tongue was noticed is rather curious, because the appearance of foreign spirits is not uncommon. Particularly well known are a Swahili and a Masai spirit. The effects of possession of such particular spirits are much more violent and they generally seem to be foreign spirits. One spirit called "Kesho" is said to have come from Machakos, and under its influence people slash themselves with knives but are unable to injure their bodies. Persons possessed by this spirit are said not to be able to abide the sight of a hat; I saw one such patient who, at least, was mildly insane, and whenever I came near him his condition seemed to grow worse, though I cannot say whether it was the hat or the whole European which affected him. Quite lately another spirit is said to have come from Machakos which torments people most grievously; one of its peculiar symptoms is that the patient is not to be pacified until he has shaken hands with somebody. Four women in this condition once beset me while I was riding on a mule; and, despite the restlessness of the mule, they were not to be put off until they had succeeded in shaking hands with me. Frequently they are, however, not to be calmed at all, and if anyone starts abusing them or others near them they are said to die. I have not seen such extreme cases, but a porter of mine was one day so afflicted and no one dared to try to carry him lest he should get angry and die; in the same district I was told that six women had died of this cause.

Apparently the cause of such possession is that the spirit desires some object or other. When the Masai spirit attacks women a dance is performed in which the women carry spears and other arms to satisfy its demand. Here the demand is evidently for arms, and possibly when the more ordinary spirits afflict the women in the dances it is because they desire ghee, wherefore such persons are smeared with ghee as I said before. The spirit may, however, persist in its demands until

the woman's husband is tired of trying to appease it and then he will decide to expel it altogether. To this end a dance is performed for several days, and finally the medicine man goes with the dancers into the bush and there by some ceremony completely drives out the spirit. The latter part of this performance I have not seen, but on one occasion the dance previous to this final act was as follows: the patient was seated on the ground before the medicine man, who drummed and sang in monotonous tones, and shortly the woman was seized with strange convulsions, during which she rolled about in the mud, being apparently perfectly unconscious, while her eyes bore the peculiar glassy stare that one sees in somnambulists. Other women were similarly affected but the men standing about took no part. This went on for four days; on the third and fourth days the patient was painted with red and white checks all over the body and with stripes of the same colours on her legs. This dance, I was told, was not original to Kitui, but was learnt by the medicine man in Rabai; others very similar, or at least with the same object, are known and practised in Kitui. It will very often happen that none of these performances will get rid of the troublesome spirit, and then the only remedy is for the whole family to move elsewhere. It appears that the ordinary spirits are more or less bound to one locality, whereas those of foreign extraction appear in many distant parts.

Thus the spirits are mostly malignant, and either out of revenge or cupidity they plague people, particularly those of their own family. They constantly require appeasing, and they also require attention in order that their wrath should not be incurred. Attending to all these demands of theirs is the religious cult of the Mkamba and his religion is thus a spirit religion.

The above-mentioned modes of appeasing and pleasing the spirits are everyday cases affecting individuals of any sort; the treatment may also be undertaken by anyone up to a certain point, after which the aid of a medicine man is generally necessary. The regular service of the spirits is, however, not the duty of the medicine man but of the elders of Mathembo. The Ithembo is a place of sacrifice to the spirits; there are hundreds of these in Kitui, but how they originated is more than I can say. I know of one where it is said that a number of people are drowned, another is a large grove of trees on a hill side in which the spirits dwell, as indeed practically every large tree or grove is the abode of spirits and an Ithembo. It seems thus that an Ithembo is simply a place which, from its nature, is held to be an abode of the spirits as also a place which from a particular circumstance has become so. The elders of the Ithembo offer the sacrifices and are thus more or less the priests of the people; it is interesting to note that they are also the principal administrators of the law. The offerings may be laid on the bare ground, or they may be placed in a hut built on the spot, which is sometimes similarly constructed to the living huts, other times it is scarcely two feet high, though always of the same shape as the living huts. When goats are sacrificed the skin is usually laid over the roof of the hut; in one of them I saw a bowl of grain, a little tobacco, a green gourd, and honey beer, which seems to be the most necessary part of the

offering. It is generally said that the offerings ensure plentiful rains, and so far as I can learn some Mathembo are particularly important on this account, but whereas one might expect that such places would receive particular attention I have found that the reverse is the case. To the ordinary Mathembo offerings are taken regularly on appointed days, but at Mtonguni, where there is a large grove to whose spirits they particularly look for the bringing of rain, it was, in 1909, a whole year since any offerings had been taken there, and then only when the absence of rain threatened a serious shortage of food. At this Ithembo the offerings were brought by the women, and it appears to me that Mathembo of particular merit are often attended to by the women. The huts built at these places are often allowed to fall very much into dilapidation and are not restored until the spirits are thought to be angry. When a settlement leaves a district and tracks elsewhere they cannot, of course, take the whole Ithembo with them, but in such case the spirits are induced to follow them by profuse offerings, which are brought to some large tree or grove. Sometimes the spirits will not follow for a long time, but eventually they will go, lured thither by the abundance of food awaiting them.

The foregoing deals with particular manifestations of the spirits and their service. If we now look back into any of the previous chapters it will be seen that almost every subject either directly brings us to a question of religion or hints at the influence and presence of the spirits. The tilling of the fields, the building of a house, are practically acts of religion, the law is in the hands of those who more particularly are dedicated to the service of the spirits, and its provisions frequently are ultimately religious observances; in fact, compensation seems to be as much a religious observance as a legal requirement. The whole of the medicine art seems to be derived from, to merge into the religious sphere and to be largely dependent on the spirits. Makwa undoubtedly belongs to the same region, and thus, to sum up, religion enters into the most insignificant departments and acts of the Mkamba's life. So also the spirits are everywhere, in the hut of a dead wife, in the village and field, in trees, rocks and hills, and in all these places they may manifest themselves or have sacrifices made to them. Anyone can sacrifice to them in any place, and up to a certain limit everyone can exercise a certain influence over them.

All this should lead one to conclude that the whole of a Mkamba's life is closely dependent upon and influenced by the spirits, so that in dealing with him one must expect likewise to be largely dependent upon the same forces. I mean to say that much that seems absurd and inexplicable must nevertheless receive full consideration, because, to the Mkamba, it may be of vital importance. In conclusion I should like to give just one instance of that to which I here refer. An arrangement was made for each chief to send to the station one of his young men to do duty as a native policeman. When the housing of these men became necessary it was found impossible to induce them to take any part in the construction of their own huts. On the face of it this appeared due only to the incorrigible indolence of the Akamba, but I make no doubt that the real truth was that they were all unmarried men, in consequence of which if they constructed the huts the observance mentioned

earlier was not possible, and the omission could only be held to doom them to continual misfortunes.

CLANS AND DEGREES.

The whole Mkamba tribe is divided into clans and these into families. It is not possible to say how many clans there are, partly because without doubt many families have come to be regarded as clans, and partly because they have no particular or approximate localities. Despite the uncertainty that exists regarding the clans, the ties between their members are extremely close: they are bound to help one another in every way, as, for instance, in subscribing towards the payment of blood money; in such case the cattle borrowed do not remain as a debt against the murderer, for on the other hand, as is shown in the Etumo ceremony, the members of a clan also receive a part of the blood money, so that the death in the one case, as also the compensation in the other case, are the concern of the whole clan. It is said that formerly if a man was attacked by a party of enemies and it became known to one of the party that the man was one of his clan, he would step over to the enemy's side to defend him against his own party. So close is the relationship that members of the clan may not marry although they have not met for generations. These rules are most strictly observed to the present day, and a breach of them results in the death of all the offspring of such persons.

Although there are clan totems it does not appear that every clan has one; this may, however, well be because, as I have said before, many of the so-called clans were originally families. Strictly speaking a man should not kill his totem animal, but this is certainly not always observed.

Owing to the manner in which the clans have drifted apart it probably always will be difficult to learn much about them: I have never known a man who could tell much about his clan or knew its origin, but the families are better known, and often there are quaint stories told regarding their origins. They seem always to be called after their founders, others are of quite recent date and may even be offshoots of other families; apparently it happens that if a man drifts from his family while still young, so that he gets altogether out of touch with it, his descendants will call him the founder of their family. Occasionally one family lives in a particular district, but as a rule its members are very much dispersed all over the country, and most families in Kitui know of other members in Machakos and Rabai.

Every adult male Mkamba belongs to one degree or other into which he is admitted on payment of certain fees. When still quite young he pays his first goat and becomes a "Mwanake" until he has paid another goat, when he is called "Mwanake ya Ngoo." After this he may, by payment of another goat, become a member of "Kisuka." This degree is, in the northern and eastern parts, called "Kjau"; the duties of these men are the throwing away of the dead; they are often classed under "Atumia," but are not strictly speaking regarded as elders.

The payment of the next goat brings a man to the degree of "Mtumia ma Nzama." These are the elders of the lowest degree entitled to sit on the Nzama Council; it is not that they form the Council by themselves, but nobody of a lower degree may take part in it. It is not until a man has paid his seventh goat that he becomes a "Mwanake ya Ithembo," his position as such is much as a novice and his duties are to carry the sacrifices for the elders of Ithembo to the place of sacrifice. On payment of another goat the "Mwanake" becomes a "Mtumia ma Ithembo." These are not only the elders who offer the sacrifices at the "Ithembo," but they are the principal elders of the Nzama and form in fact the Government of the country. They are mostly old men, and to them are known all the customs of the people, so that a correct decision often requires their advice. As a rule each elder belongs to a particular Ithembo, but they may also belong to several Mathembo; for instance, in one district I found twenty-one elders of this degree and only fifteen Mathembo.

The fees paid to attain these various degrees are given to a member of a higher degree, thus a Mwanake pays his goat to a man of Nzama, who has paid two goats in his degree; to become a member of Ithembo the fee is paid to a Mwanake of Ithembo.

There are, however, degrees within these degrees, and to attain these the fees are paid to superior members of such a degree. The position of a man in respect to his degree is marked by the part of such goats which he may eat, the lowest getting the foreleg and the highest the kidneys, haunches, and they also are given the skin, the next highest is given the head. Should a man pay more fees than his senior, their positions are exchanged. There is nothing to prevent a man from belonging to any degree provided he pays the proper fees, but no half-grown young man would be admitted to "Nzama," and therefore he will not probably become the senior of his degree until he has grown older. The Ithembo is an exception to this, for a man cannot belong to this degree so long as his father or eldest uncle is alive, unless either of them is so old and infirm that he cannot attend to his duties at the Ithembo. Another exception is made in the case of a man who is the owner of an Ithembo. The ownership is inherited from father to son, and when a man dies his son must be an elder of that Ithembo, no matter how young he is or what other degrees he has not yet attained. He is not, however, on this account only admitted to all the other degrees.

From the foregoing it will be seen that before a man attains a high position as an elder of Ithembo, he will have paid many fees; I was told by one such man that he had paid over forty goats during his life. In consequence the elders of Ithembo are generally fairly wealthy men, and old men may be seen who are not even members of "Kisuka."

The only degree for women seems to be that of "Ithembo." They are usually the oldest women, and to be members they must make "Ogi" for the elders and give presents of bananas, which are divided among the elders and other women of Ithembo. Younger women seem, however, to occupy much the same position as the "Anake" of Ithembo.

Entirely apart from these degrees there is another class of elders called "Atumia ma Ukuu." These are, so to speak, the keepers and preservers of many peculiar customs; most elders of the Ithembo will be found to belong to Ukuu, but such is not always the case. The first condition for a man belonging to Ukuu is that he must have lost by death a near relative such as a son or brother. The learning of the elders of "Ukuu" is, however, not rapidly attained, on the following account. When a man has need of knowing a certain custom he will go to the elders for information, and each time he does so he is required to pay a goat, or if he be a rich man a bull. By degrees he thus learns all that is known to the Ukuu elders.

The customs are not only known to these elders but the ceremonies in connection with many of them must be performed by them, such as the purification of a village. Most important of their knowledge is the curing of "Makwa." Makwa, or Thabu, as it is called in parts, is a state of disease into which a man falls on a breach of certain customs, a few of which have already been mentioned. It manifests itself either in an outbreak of sores all over the body or by gradual wasting away of the body. I will not enter into a description of all the cures, but it should be noted that most of them include the use of "Ngondu," a mixture of water and certain kinds of woods. The use of Ngondu often seems to hint at the appeasing of spirits, as, for instance, the sprinkling of it over a house when the grass has been carried off it, which is regarded as the work of an angry spirit.

So far as I can learn, Makwa has not many causes, neither can it be put upon another by his enemy, nor does it afflict animals. The cures are not known to the medicine men, excepting such as are members of Ukuu, neither can it be got rid of by the use of ordinary charms or sacrifices.

The whole learning of the elders of Ukuu is a matter of great secrecy, and may only be imparted bit by bit to those who have the necessary qualification and who pay the fees. When I was instructed in certain matters by the elders, I had to pay a large fee for myself and a lesser fee for my interpreter, whom I had to bind over faithfully to keep secret what he had heard; elders were also stationed around to keep off listeners, and our conversation was carried on in low tones. All this explains why it is so difficult to obtain correct information regarding Kikamba customs, for either many of them will not be known to the man who is asked or if he is aware of them he is bound to secrecy.

THE THERAKA.

The Theraka, or Thaaka, as the Akamba call them, live on both sides of the Tana River. The land occupied by them, on the Kitui side of the river, is called Thagishu, and is a small strip of country, barely ten miles broad and about twenty miles in length.

Roughly speaking, it is bounded by the Katze River from the Mumoni hills up to where this runs into the Tana. Compared with the country of the Akamba,

it is well watered and famines are rarer here, which may account for the fact that on the whole the Theraka are better developed people than the Akamba, to whom they bear a striking contrast, both in character and appearance. In language and looks the Theraka resemble the Akikuyu very closely, in fact, when spoken to in Kikuyu, they generally seem to understand, but not many can understand Kikamba.

On the whole the Theraka compared to the Akamba are bold, manly people, and their quickness of temper contrasts very strongly with the lethargic character of their neighbours. Small as the tribe is, so jealously have they guarded their country, that the Masai never went there; and until quite lately they did not shrink from attacking armed Europeans.

It may be that the people were too poor to attract the Masai, but it is certain that had they come they would have been vigorously resisted, for the Theraka apparently never failed to combine against foreigners, although the different clans otherwise did not have much in common.

While the Theraka excluded all strangers from their country they appear never to have ventured out of the limited area occupied by them. A change in this respect is only now beginning to show itself, and the great majority still have a horror of leaving their country, beyond which they suppose all sorts of terrors to prevail. In consequence of this they are some of the most ignorant and primitive natives to be found in East Africa at the present day; besides this they have nothing like the intelligence of the Akamba.

As regards the origin of the Theraka, they state that they came from the Akamba, and with these in common they seem to denote the region about Ulu as their original home. According to the legend, a man called Theraka settled on the banks of the Tana River and there made acquaintance with a Kikuyu whose customs pleased him better than his own, so that in time he assumed those of the Kikuyu.

It seems inexplicable how the deadly enmity that in a way still exists between them and the Akamba arose, but one can scarcely imagine that these people are entirely mistaken as to their origin, and therefore it is perhaps not impossible, as I suggested before, that the Theraka are the aboriginal Mkamba race of Kitui, who possibly were driven over the Tana and subsequently returned to the Kitui side of the river.

At the present day there are four tribes of the Theraka living on this side of the Tana. Each clan has its head, and lives more or less within its own district, of which the head of the clan is the chief. The clans are divided into families, of which some are almost regarded as clans, but the original clan is well known to each man. The names of these four clans are: Anginna, Murruru, Utonga, and Mbua. Of these the last named seems to be the most respected, and claims a peculiar descent, of which the story goes as follows: One day a terrific thunder storm raged, and following a loud clap of thunder a huge cloud burst, from which fell a man called Mbua (rain). From him the clan is descended, and he brings the

rain every year, wherefore sacrifices are offered to him at the approach of the rains. Mbua originally lived in the sea, whence all mankind came, including the white race.

The Theraka villages are much after the style of those of the Akamba, but even more primitive; they are frequently situated on the hills. The number of huts greatly exceeds those of the Akamba, cooking huts, goat huts, and the huts for husbands are built; as a matter of fact, however, the same used to be the case with the Akamba. They are built of sticks, and thatched only on the roofs so that the body of the house is open. The best houses will often be found to be those of the goats, and many living huts are so rough that they consist practically only of stout sticks stuck in the ground with a flat top made of thorn branches; occasionally one may see a simple construction of tall reeds forming a shelter in the shape of a wigwam. Some of the poorer people have no village at all, but a single hut against which they lean dry thorn branches. The young men do not live in the village, but have their own hut in the bush some little distance away in which a number of them live together.

The fields are usually some distance away from the village. The chief food stuff is maweles, other sorts of grain are not cultivated much, and maize is scarcely ever seen. The grain is stored in the same way as with the Akamba.

Honey gathering is largely practised in the same way as in Ukamba, excepting that the hives are slung from trees by a rope or a stick passed through the barrel; they are marked with the mark of the clan. Beer is made both from honey and maweles, and is largely drunk apparently by men of all ages. This is, however, disputed by some of the Theraka, and a man who was by no means very young refused to pour away some honey beer, saying that if the fumes entered his nostrils he would die because he was not yet old enough to drink it.

The weapons of the Theraka are made by their own smiths, called "Mutturri" (Kikamba "Mutui"). Despite this, any stranger would think that most of them were collected from various tribes, for their chief weapon, the spear, is fashioned after all sorts of types such as Kikuyu, Masai, Galla, and a uniform type is not found; so also their swords are sometimes fitted with the long blades of the Kikuyu type, and others have the short Mkamba sword blade. Shields are made either of skin like those of the Akikuyu and coloured after the same styles, or they are made of narrow curved boards likewise coloured. Bows and arrows are commonly used, but are not their foremost arms as with the Akamba. The arrows also vary much in shape, and the finer ones are, I think, all got from the Akamba; steel-headed arrows are not very frequently seen, and are largely replaced by wooden ones; it seems likely that the steel heads are a modern introduction, and that formerly, and not so long ago, the wooden-pointed arrows were the only ones made by the Theraka, while such steel heads as they had were got in time of war. The arrows are marked with the clan mark. The arrow poison used is not found in Theraka, but got from the Akamba by purchase. Quivers are not frequently used, and when seen are of the same type as those of the Akamba. Steel is now

obtained from European wire, but formerly and even now it is got from the hæmatite in the river beds.

The ordinary Theraka dance is somewhat like that of the Akamba, only more monotonous. They commence with a very stately procession of the young men, who chant in deep, measured, tones, accompanied by a kind of board drum consisting of a half circular slab of wood hung from the wrist and beaten by a club bound with grass. In addition to this, a horn consisting merely of a hollow branch gives a muffled, booming note which, in combination with the rest of the music, sounds like the droning of some metallic wind instrument. The young men and girls dance in couples, while one man sings and beats a drum made of a short hollow piece of wood covered with skin, which is carried under the arm. There are a number of other dances, which the young men perform alone. They are also very fond of games and sports, such as jumping and running or wrestling, which they will do of their own accord. A very popular game is played as follows. There are two parties which stand in a long row, along which a hoop is rolled. The party at the opposite end must throw their spears through the hoop, and must transfix it so that the hoop does not fall flat. One of the other party must then go on to their side and throw his spear through the hoop, which is often very difficult by reason of the angle at which the hoop stands; if he fails he becomes a prisoner and is called a "woman," until one of the party capturing him is taken prisoner. Compared to the Akamba the Theraka adorn themselves with very few ornaments; metal and wire ornaments may be seen, but are all obtained from the Akamba and other tribes, as, for instance, the natives of Kitoo, from whom they purchase the iron necklaces wound round with thin wire. Spiral brass plates are hooked into the ear rims, and the lobes are pierced and distended to hold large wooden ornaments of various shapes; occasionally one sees the ear rims cut with a number of incisions all round, but this I have never seen among the younger men, and it appears to be a habit which is becoming extinct. The older men shave their heads completely, or leave a large tuft on the crown, as is most common among the women also; young men twist the hair into strands lengthened by strings attached, and wear them either in a fringe all round the head, or twisted into a pigtail in front and behind, as the Akikuyu and Masai do. Nowadays, however, some adopt the Kikamba styles of headdress. Not a few also go to the Akamba to get their teeth cut after various fashions, and on the whole they show a great inclination to imitate the Akamba, despite the hatred that existed between the two tribes.

In dress the Theraka are very primitive, though the richer men now often wear blankets. The original and most commonly worn dress, however, consists only of a fringe of strings or a tuft of hair hung from a string carried round the loins in front and behind. The women, however, wear more clothing than those of the Akamba do. A complete skirt is worn from the waist half-way down to the knees, and in addition the married women wear an apron of skin, which is tucked in at the belt and hung from the neck. These skins are bordered with cowries and beads, and bead strings are wound round the ankles and below the knees.

In stock the Theraka are very poor compared to the Akamba ; a large number possess no stock at all, and only the richest have any cattle. Their main stock are sheep and goats, but even of these a wealthy man has not more than the average Mkamba.

LAWS AND CUSTOMS.

The law is administered as among the Akamba by a council of elders, which is called "Kiama" (Kikuyu "Kiama," Kikamba "Nzama"). Apparently each clan had its own Kiama, but cases between men of two clans were tried by joint councils. Kingolle did not exist among them, but if a man disobeyed the orders of the Kiama he was publicly beaten. The oath of Kithito is represented by that of "Muma," which is also commonly used among the Akamba, but more for the taking of an oath by a number of people, for instance, a whole district. The procedure among the Akamba is as follows. A goat or bull is killed, and the blind-gut is filled with the blood. One of the party touches this with a stick and takes his oath, to which the rest assent, after which the gut is torn and the blood spills on to the ground. I believe that the procedure is much the same among the Theraka. Those who swear falsely by Muma are doomed to die. The ordeal of licking a heated knife blade is also used. Blood money is stated by different authorities variously as 40, 60, 100, and 600 goats. It is probable that 100 and 600 goats are incorrect, but which of the other two, viz., 40 and 60, is correct, I cannot say ; the latter has been quoted several times to me by the principal chief, while the former was asserted to be right by two other chiefs and some elders of "Ukuu," to whom I paid the customary fee for their information ; on the other hand, one of these chiefs formerly stated that 600 goats were paid, but I can scarcely credit this, as it represents an amount which is altogether unreasonable in proportion to the wealth of the Theraka. Blood money is paid by the clan, and taking 40 goats as the proper compensation, it is the practice for ten goats to be taken by the deceased's clan, while the remaining 30 head go to the brother or next of kin. I cannot find that any evil effects are ascribed to an omission to pay blood money, but formerly at least this always meant that the deceased's clan endeavoured to recover the amount by force.

Adultery is compensated by payment of seven goats or seven loads of Maweles ; if there is issue the child goes to the woman's husband. Free love is permitted among the unmarried men and girls, but if a man causes a girl to conceive he is required to pay 32 goats, and the child goes to the girl's father. The stealing of honey barrels is a very serious crime and is punished with a fine of fourteen goats, which is double the fine imposed for ordinary thefts.

For loss of a finger, eye or toe, seven goats are paid, and for a leg or an arm twenty-one goats. A comparison of these amounts with those of the Akamba will show a great difference, which speaks plainly of the comparative wealth of the former as compared with the latter tribe.

On a man's death all his property is divided equally among his sons, though the eldest gets one more of each sort of animal than the rest, as also his father's wives. These he may not sell under any circumstances to another man, but he may give them away to members of his father's clan.

Birth.—This is only marked by the killing of a goat, from the skin of which three strips are cut and one put on the wrist of the child, another on that of the mother and the third on the father's wrist. The child takes its father's name, as among the Akamba; the most common name is simply "Mundu wa" (man of) followed by the father's name, and in such cases it has seemed to me that more frequently than otherwise is added also the grandfather's name.

Marriage.—The price of a wife is 28 goats and sheep. If the wife leaves her husband of her own accord he may keep the children, but has not the right to claim those which the woman may bear later, neither can he in such case claim return of dowry. If, however, instead of this he claims back what he paid for the woman he is entitled to the increase also. When the dowry is paid, the husband goes to the girl's village and fetches her away at night to his own village, on the way to which they must cohabit. On arrival at his village the husband kills a goat and carries it before the girl into the hut; according to others the goat is laid before the door of the hut and the girl must jump over it. A strip of the skin of this goat is then put on the wrist of the girl. During nine days after this no one may enter the village, and on the tenth day the couple go to the river to bathe.

A man may not marry a woman of his own clan, if he were to do so all their children would die, neither may he marry the daughter of a man with whom he has made blood brotherhood. On the death of a man his son may marry any of his wives excepting the big wife and his own mother. As a rule a man states before he dies which of his sons and wives shall be married to each other, but if this is not done they cannot be married until the elders of "Ukuu" have consented to it, in which case the brother of the deceased must first cohabit with the big wife. If this is not observed Makwa will ensue. If on a man's death neither he nor his wife have any near relations left, the woman can marry whom she pleases, but she must first have connection with a stranger. For this purpose a Mkamba is usually chosen, and as my informant added, "a Mkamba never refuses because he knows that he will get honey beer."

Death.—The ordinary mode of disposing of the dead is by throwing the bodies into the bush. This is done by the elders of "Ukuu" unless there is a son left, in which case he will do it, no matter how young he may be, and if he is too young to drag the corpse by a rope he will be aided by his mother. More important elders are buried before the entrance to the village. The body is laid outside the village with the head towards the doorway and on the right side, in which position it is left until next day, and then buried in the same position; in the same night the brother of the deceased cohabits with the widow.

The subsequent purification of the village is performed by the elders of Ukuu. A goat is slaughtered and eaten by the elders; the meat must all be eaten and the

bones may not be broken or cut. The bones are then thrown into the bush and the skin is haired and dressed by the deceased's brother, who gives it to the widow to wear. The following night the brother and widow must cohabit, and both their heads are then shaved. The purification is then completed, but until then no man may cohabit with any woman, or both will be stricken with Makwa; a case of this was seen in a man who looked rather as if he was suffering from leprosy. If a member of the village was away at the time of the purification he may not enter the enclosure until the elders of Ukuu have killed a goat and smeared the contents of the stomach before his mother's hut. A non-observance of this results in Makwa, but there is no prohibition against his returning and entering the village before the purification is complete.

Circumcision.—All Theraka are circumcised; the act is called "Nyumbula" or "Kutana." The ceremony takes place every year before the commencement of the autumn rains, and seems to consist very largely in drinking. The liquor is supplied by the mothers of those about to be circumcised, five bowls of honey beer and three clay jars of Mawele beer being given to the elders, while the young men receive the same and drink theirs apart from the elders. When a boy is being circumcised and happens to be touched or struck by a man, he takes that man's name in place of his own, and is regarded very much as his son; it should be noted that to strike or harm a boy under the same circumstances is a grave offence among the Akamba, which may possibly be derived from the same or a similar custom.

Blood Brotherhood.—When two men wish to make close friendship, they make an exchange of bulls, of which the owner of each gets the head and the skin. Blood brotherhood may after this be formed by both taking the oath of Muma to be faithful to each other. This, if ever broken, will result in the death of the one breaking faith, together with all his family. On account of the prohibition against the children of blood brothers marrying, the Theraka say that they never make blood brotherhood with members of other clans, and being an almost senseless undertaking between members of one clan it is rarely made with anyone but a foreigner.

When a hut is built, the same observance is necessary as among the Akamba, otherwise all manner of ill-luck will befall the inmates. Most villages have two entrances because it is bad to enter and leave by the same entrance, presumably because ill-luck remains at the gateway and may be picked up again on going out.

The number seven is very unlucky, and the same rule applies to work done during a certain number of days, as among the Akamba.

When grain is sown it must be given out to the women by the father of the village, otherwise he cannot eat of the harvest and would fall ill and die were he to do so.

The learning of the customs belongs to the elders of Ukuu here also, and fees are paid to them for their instruction, but the curing of Makwa is not known to them and requires the aid of a medicine man.

The only causes of Makwa which I have discovered as yet are those already mentioned. The elders have told me that there are no others, but whether this is so I do not feel at all assured of. Makwa being apparently more the sphere of the medicine man, it is probable that such a man would be the best authority of whom to enquire regarding this subject.

It would be curious that while the Akikuyu have such a large number of causes for Makwa, the Theraka should have fewer than the Akamba even; it seems otherwise rather that the belief in this affliction has spread from the Akikuyu and diminishes in importance as one goes southwards.

MEDICINE MEN AND RELIGION.

According to the Akamba, the Theraka are much versed in the arts of medicine and witchcraft. Medicine men seem to be pretty numerous and the Theraka certainly appear to be proficient in knowledge and use of poisons, but the ideas of the Akamba regarding their neighbours in this respect are very much exaggerated. It strikes one rather, however, that among the Theraka almost every man is something of a medicine man, and charms and medicines of every sort will be found in almost every village.

At one I saw two halves of a baobab tree fruit pierced inside with a network of acacia thorns intended to keep out witchcraft. Another, the object of which was to bar my entrance to a deserted village, consisted of a number of odds and ends placed in a bag hung on a tree, including an old pipe and a small tortoise shell stuffed with some herbs; this was enormously feared by my Akamba, who could not be got to stay near it. Others were horns of all sorts placed on the paths with ashes strewed round them.

Spirits abound in Theraka as in Ukamba and seem always to be situated on the tops of hills where sacrifices are taken; best known of these is, I believe, a rocky hill-top called Siri Etumo.

Particular places of sacrifice do not seem to exist, nor are there any Mathembo, or elders answering to those of Mathembo, among the Akamba, so that there are, so far as I can learn, only two classes of elders, viz., those of Kiama and Ukuu.

The above is all I have been able to learn in regard to the Theraka. It is very little, of course, but since it has been collected in the course of two trips to this country only, during the first of which the people were bent more on hostilities than on the display of friendship, my opportunities of collecting information have been few. Yet even on better acquaintance it will be a considerable time before they overcome their natural timidity and feeling of reserve resulting from their primitive mode of life. They are a people chiefly interesting, as it seemed to me, on account of their peculiar mixture between the Akikuyu and Akamba. It may be noted that a few of their customs are strangely indefinite, such as the compensation paid for murder and the right of young men to drink intoxicating liquors. My

information on these two points, as well as one or two others too vaguely understood by me to record, has been obtained from prominent elders who particularly latterly seemed most friendly inclined, and I am unable to explain the variations unless it is that there are two or more sections of the Theraka who vary slightly in customs. Opportunity has not presented itself to me to investigate this question ; it would be curious enough to find such a division in so small a tribe, yet it should be remembered that there are two sections of the Akikuyu distinguished by the mode of circumcising, and it may be that something analogous to this exists among the Theraka, and for future researches into the customs of the Theraka it will be as well not to lose sight of such points in regard to which present obtainable information varies.