

WEIRD FUNERALS OF AFRICA'S KINGS

BY GERALD A. RODERICK



FUNERAL RITES

THE old king of Totoquell was dead. It was in the Liberian hinterland, four days back from Monrovia, a region where the government levies no taxes, where the native African chiefs reign supreme, where the only statutes are the laws of the bush. A couple of English prospectors, an English rubber trader and an American missionary compose the foreign population all the way back to the French frontier. There is no part of the west coast of Africa so lightly touched by the white man, for even the occasional government officials who visit the region are black. In all the towns the babies yell in terror if I walked toward them.

While King Wobeh's star was in the ascendency death came out of the foggy bush and laid its hand upon him. A famous mullah man was called to make incantations and the "sand cutter" brought out all his paraphernalia of divination and peeped impressively into the future. That which Wobeh really needed, a good physician, does not exist in that region. The mullah and the "sand cutter" gave an unfavorable prognosis, so the suffering king was prepared for his departure in the manner prescribed by the law of the bush.

Secretly and in the dead of night he was carried back into the bush to an obscure "hut town" called Goomah, no woman being allowed to know his whereabouts. Courtesy to the mullah and the "sand cutter" demanded that Wobeh should promptly pass into the unknown, but the old man held on to life with his characteristic tenacity. It was several weeks before the news was quietly brought to Totoquell that its founder was dead. The information was passed on to Boporo and King Sow came over to take charge of the town until all its palavers were settled.

The funeral of an African chief follows the law of the bush implicitly, but the details vary in different parts of the west coast. The proceedings in this case extended over a period of about three weeks.

First Wobeh's body was removed from the hut where he had died and placed in an open kitchen in Goomah. These kitchens are merely large huts without walls, or, rather, with walls about three feet high. The roof is of thatch and the floor of clay. In the center of one of these kitchens a shallow grave was dug. Then the feet were bound together, the arms were extended down the body and the hands bound together by means of a strong stick placed between hands and feet, the body was placed in the grave and lightly covered. After it had lain there for two days it was taken up by night and carried to Totoquell, where it was again placed in a shallow grave, but in a hut where no woman could bring ill luck by looking upon it. The law of the bush shuts out all women from any approach to the dead. Then the family and the town began to make ready for the obsequies, formal notices were sent out to all the big kings within two days' walk, in order that they might come (with gifts) and assist Wobeh's spirit into rest.

The funeral continued for eight days. First the body was again lifted from the grave and "laid out" in an open kitchen carefully screened. The king's women were then segregated in another kitchen and intrusted with the duty of making great lamentation. Then the head of the "devil bush"—he is a great functionary in West Africa—came into the village to announce the king's death—a performance on a par with the formal notification given to a presidential nominee by a committee from a national convention. The "devil bush" is a sort of combination of secret society and a boys' boarding school. It is a collection of huts hidden away in the bush which women must avoid or pay the penalty of death. Here are collected most of the boys of the community and they remain in seclusion for a period varying from three to six years, being taught some sense and much nonsense. The grip of superstition is so strong that the head of the bush becomes a great man in the tribe and death is the penalty for any woman who looks upon his face. Totoquell's "devil" preceded his entrance into the town by an unearthly yell, which was the signal for all the women and girls (and every man not a member of the "devil bush") to secrete themselves. Then with a series of ventriloquistic yells he came into the center of the town, announced the death of Wobeh, ordered the funeral to proceed and vanished into the bush. Then the real noise began.

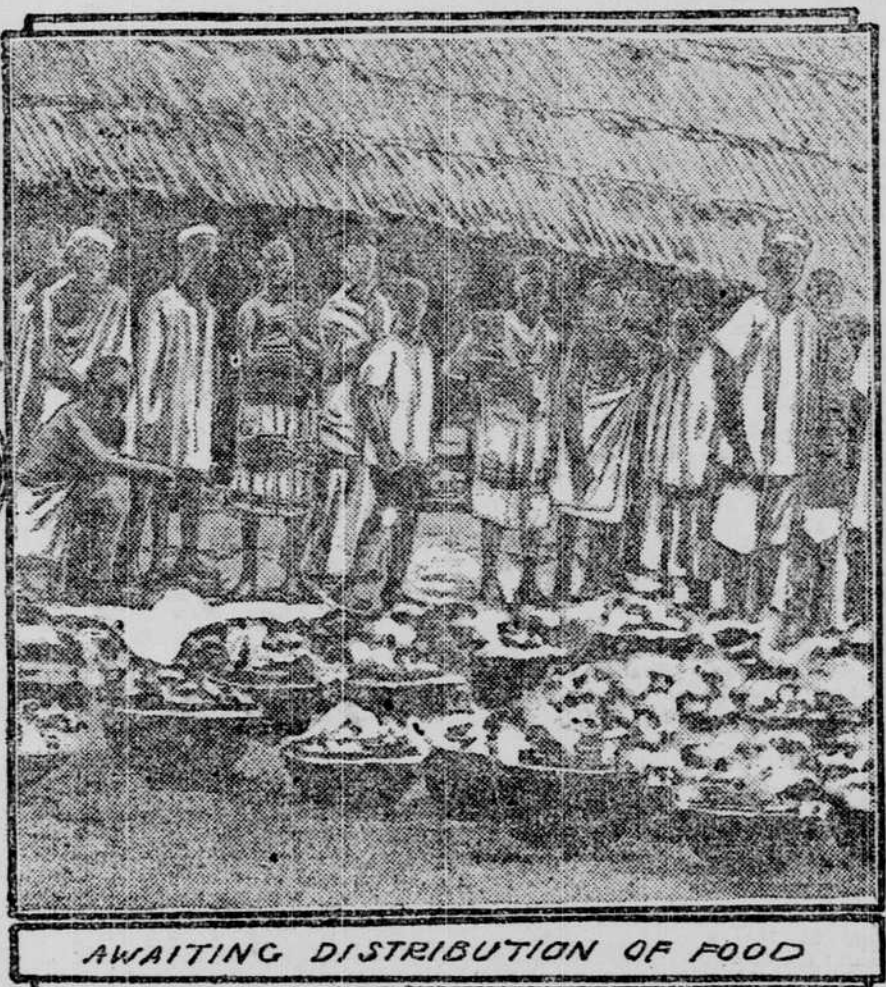
Then the nephew pulled off the chicken's head and threw the body down on the grave. Curiously enough, the headless chicken fluttered around until it reached the head of the grave and then seemed to be trying to bore its way down to the king. It then fluttered away, the

Wobeh's women had held out. Before eating it he made certain promises relative to peace in the family. Each of the relatives was called out in turn and required to go through the same performance. Old King Sow kept his ears open and whenever he was not satisfied with a given promise he arose and cross questioned the relative like a country lawyer until he made him promise what he wanted. Parts of this ceremony were exciting; at times there were outbursts of laughter at one of Sow's

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TWO AFRICAN PRINCES



AWAITING DISTRIBUTION OF FOOD

large enough to be heard. Meanwhile for two days and nights the men of the town made it lively for the spirits of evil that were supposed to be hovering in the bush that surrounds the village. Guns heavily charged with powder were fired at intervals throughout the entire time, causing the evil shapes to take to flight. Most of the night was given over to the beating of drums, the women and younger men dancing in procession all over town.

When night closed in on the scene and the moon began to shed its soft light through bazy clouds the night's dancing began. There was no undercurrent of sadness in it; everybody was literally out for a good time. The dancers were drummed up in groups, the drummers shuffling all through the town to organize a procession. A second crowd was gathered under the leadership of a man with a string instrument made from a calabash, and eventually a third group shuffled along to the tone of a calabash strung with iron rings, the sound being that of a gourd half filled with dried peas.

The succeeding day was one of the most eventful of all. Before sunrise the men of the town brought large stones to the grave and walled it in, making an inclosure about six feet wide and 10 feet long. Dozens of empty gin bottles were brought and placed all around the grave—a very common custom on this coast. The mound was then leveled down and wet sand. At the head they placed a couple of small ivory tusks, a rice bowl containing Wobeh's silver ring and some kola nuts, two pitchers and a small brass kettle. Across these was laid an unsharpened sword. The fixing of the grave was not completed until they had brought a small jug of rum and poured a little of it into each vessel. The thirst of Wobeh's spirit was apparently more easily quenched than had been that of the man in life—and this enabled the men about the grave to put the greater part of the rum to better use.

After the grave had been properly arranged the town assembled to witness the significant ceremony of killing the white chicken. The principal nephew of the late king knelt on the grave and held the chicken's head above Wobeh's head. King Sow made a long speech and then different members of Wobeh's family gave the chicken messages to take to his spirit. This part of the ceremony was very solemn and impressive. It was clear that they implicitly believed that their messages would reach their destination.

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jokes; very little of it was sad or pathetic. When the chief widow's turn came there was pathos in her voice, though she gave no other sign of grief. Turning her motherly face to the grave, she sat there and talked to Wobeh's spirit as naturally as if she were looking into his face. Nobody needed to guess question her.

There was nothing extraordinary for the next two days. On the first day the mourning women were taken to the creek and washed, in order that they might begin to dress up for the final feast. On the second day the men of the town were assembled under the big palaver tree and individually sworn to be loyal to the town. The oath was administered by making the man drink from a bowl of milkish fluid which was supposed to kill the man if he was insincere. On this day, also, the men brought in large quantities of firewood and the women were busy threshing and cleaning rice and pots.

Then came the third and greatest day—the slaughter of the bullock and the great feast. So far as I could learn there is no sacrificial idea involved in the ceremony; the slaughter is solely for the purpose of providing for a joyful banquet. The big bullock was led to a vacant place near the grave, just at sunrise, and securely tied down on its side. Its throat was then cut, the windpipe being severed, and the animal slowly bled to death. It was 20 minutes before the animal ceased to struggle, but its tail had been severed long before, this being the especial requisite of the men selected as butchers.

The carcass was then skinned and King Sow sat in his leopard chair while the bullock was cut up. He kept a careful watch to see that not even an ounce of meat was taken by anybody. Two large brass kettles and a large basket were placed in front of him and in these were placed the internal organs and the choicest cuts—the king's meat. Now and then one of the butchers would overlook some small portion, but the king overlooked nothing; he had the error promptly rectified. Altogether he received about one-third of the bullock. The remainder was cut up and distributed among the families; to be cooked; positively no part of the animal except the hide and horns was discarded. There was not quite enough to go around, so the king ordered a dog killed to make up the deficiency.

Bessie Was Willing.
"Oh, dear," said the tired mother, "I wish I were a little girl again like you!" "Well," rejoined five-year-old Bessie, "let's play you are my little girl, then you act naughty and I'll spank you and send you to bed without your supper."

Would Not Have It Lessened.
Dr. Walter C. Smith, the popular Scotch poet-preacher, on one occasion tried to explain to an old lady the meaning of the scriptural expression, "Take up thy bed and walk," by saying that the bed was simply a mat or rug easily taken up and carried away. "No, no," replied the lady. "I cannot believe that. The bed was a regular four-poster. There would be no miracle in walking away with a bit of mat or rug on your back."

HUDSON RIVER CAMPS



THE TENT VILLAGE



A CANOE CAMP

New York has but recently discovered a new summer resort right within the metropolitan district, and it is only just beginning to utilize it. This is the Palisades park, which belongs jointly to the states of New York and New Jersey and stretches for miles along the western bank of the Hudson. The ground from the top of the cliffs to low water mark and several places at the top of the cliffs were acquired five years ago in order partly to stop the destruction of the Palisades by stone quarries and partly to prevent this, the choicest spot around New York, from getting into the hands of real estate dealers, and so being cut up into building lots and thus taken away from the general public.

A commission, consisting of 10 New York and New Jersey business men, was appointed to look after it and one or more of these visit the park every day.

New Yorkers have just discovered what an ideal spot this is for camping. All along the shore are tents, in which boys and men and often women, too, are living close to nature. The debris washed down from the Palisades by the waters of the ages has formed a beach, sandy and smooth in some places, rocky and overgrown with trees in others. Upon this beach any one may pitch a tent, except in a few choice spots, where a small fee is required, but it is necessary for all to obtain a permit from the commission and also to obey the rules that are laid down by it.

The beach is reached by boat easily, but one can walk along the shore from the Fort Lee ferry, or, better still, take a trolley car to the turn at Main street, Fort Lee, and then walk about a mile along the road in a northwesterly direction and down a flight of primitive stone steps. There are also other points further north at which one can descend the cliffs. Along this stretch of beach the campers may be found. Their tents and fires are visible from the far upper west side of Manhattan, say from about One Hundred and Seventy-second street up to Spuyten Duyvil. In some tents are whole families, the father going to and coming from business in a motor boat and rowing across to and from Fort Lee or Coytesville, N. J. In others are parties of young men. In one group is a band of volunteer life savers, who keep a beacon burning at night and encourage the boys of the other camps to learn to swim and dive. There are boats that may be hired by the day, week or month. There is excellent fishing for eels and crabs; the water, while not quite as salty as the sea, is more than brackish and the river in many places is so shallow that at low tide one may walk half way across to New York.

Franklin Hopkins, the broker, of No. 25 Broad street, is one of the most active men on the commission that has charge of this strip of park and has really made it his hobby. A few days ago he took the writer in a motor boat for a tour of the camps.

"Two years ago these hills were in a very, very bad condition," he said, as he pointed out their beauty. "Campers used to come over in whole families, set up great tents and take in boarders. The sanitary conditions were appalling and the conditions of morality were little better. There was really a canvas tenement district here in the woods and a vandalism that showed only too plainly that there would be few natural beauties along the shore left if these people were

permitted to go their own way. To stop this it was made a law that a camping permit must be obtained and that no tent could remain up for more than four weeks out of any year. If certain rules and laws were violated the campers must go, permit or no permit.

"We have picked six men who have lived under the Palisades nearly all their lives to do the patrolling and the work here."

At sight of a thin spiral of smoke rising from amid the trees the captain roared ashore. "That," said Mr. Hopkins, "is not permitted; fires may be built on the shore. You see, we have learned that eternal vigilance is the price of parks. Often in the summer and always in the fall it is difficult to keep fire out of the hills."

The captain returned and reported two fires extinguished in the woods. They had been made by canoeists whom we presently saw coming down the rocky sides of the hill and preparing to make their fire on the beach. Mr. Hopkins, taking up the megaphone, called a pleasant "thank you" over the water and was answered by a wave of the hand and a cordial nod of the head.

"That's the thing we try to encourage," he said, pointing to a picnic party on the rocks; "those young people come over in the morning and have a bully time all day, healthy and good, and return to town with a picture other than of brick streets in their mind's eye. Suppose we run in and see them."

Going ashore, it was discovered that the men of the party were the big fellows of the traffic squad, happy, healthy, having a royal good time.

"Have you found the water, boys?" asked Mr. Hopkins. "No, and we've needed it, too," said one of the men.

"Well, right up there about a block you will find a cold spring. And right up there," pointing to the woods, "a path that is mighty pleasant to take an after luncheon walk on, not too strenuous a path, either."

The water pipes of the Palisades are especially good; there are nine springs and wells that have been supplied with piped barrels. These are cleaned out twice each week and kept in absolutely sanitary condition. On a beautifully clean beach, set aside for canoeists, Dr. and Mrs. William McAndrews, of the Washington Irving high school, were found at their afternoon meal, happy and having a perfect rest.

In a sail of several miles up the Hudson many instructions to the boating parties were called through the megaphone. Fires were moved, tents were changed from a forbidden ground to suitable spots and water was located for the campers.

Secretary Ade's Smart Dog. A. A. Ade, assistant secretary of state, is the proud possessor of an intelligent collie dog, reckoned the smartest canine in Washington. During the Boxer outbreak in China, while Mr. Ade was acting secretary of state, telegrams on the situation in China received at the state department at night were hurried to the Adee home.

About one o'clock one morning such a dispatch, of the utmost importance, arrived. A messenger took it post haste to Mr. Ade's residence, but after repeatedly ringing the door bell failed to obtain any response. Upstairs in bed Adee was snoring away, deep in sleep. He couldn't have heard a dynamite explosion.

But the collie heard the jangling of the bell. He waited in patience for a time, and then, as his master did not go to the door, he marched into the secretary's room, pulled the bed clothes off the sleeping official, greatly astonishing that person, and then, having aroused him, dragged him to the door. It happened to be a dispatch requiring an immediate reply, and Secretary Adee was more than ever impressed with the intelligence of his favorite dog.

Bank notes were first issued in China 2697 B. C.

WOMAN WAS A SOLDIER

Tablet to Honor Barbara Ann Duravan, Who Died in Prison.

Captured by union soldiers as a confederate spy and imprisoned in Alton during the civil war, it was not known until death that B. A. Duravan was a woman, that she was Barbara Ann Duravan, and that she had come from Tennessee. On one of the tablets of the big shaft, now being erected in memory of the 2,600 confederate soldiers in the confederate cemetery in Alton, the St. Louis Republic says, will appear the name of the only woman buried in the cemetery.

An old citizen of Alton recalled the discovery that the prisoner was a woman creating much excitement at the time.

With a big batch of soldiers brought in to be incarcerated in the prison was a frail little creature who gave the name of B. A. Duravan. Duravan had been where the bullets had been flying thick and fast, had been in the

long marches with Lee's army, had slept out in the open when only the snow that fell served as a cover to keep the little soldier warm.

Comrades had a warm spot in their hearts for Duravan. The little soldier was strong in the belief of the southern cause, eager to bring about the defeat of the unionists.

One morning Duravan was found dead in the prison cell and then it was learned for the first time that the pale little soldier was a woman.

Two days ago the story of the brave woman who had donned man's clothes to go to war was revived and her name will be especially emblazoned on the bronze tablet that will mark the resting place of the soldier.

One Point of View.
"Is this war of Spain with Morocco what they call a 'holy war'?" "Well, the Spanish people seem to think it is a wholly unnecessary one."

FAINT HEART AND FAIR LADY

Chances Good That the Ancient Adage Once More Proved Wisdom of Man Who Uttered It.

He was afraid to tell her right out and out that he loved her, so he began in a roundabout way, hoping she would catch his drift, then betray, by her confusion, her own feelings. He didn't dream but that she loved him, but thought that she, like himself, was afraid to demonstrate it.

"Heart trouble?" she repeated. "Are you sure you've heart trouble, Alfred? You know indigestion is very like it at times."

"Oh, I know I've got heart trouble all right. I can't you see it yourself?"

"Why, how silly, Alfred; no one can see heart trouble; they have to feel it. Have you taken anything for it?"

"No, not yet, but I—I want to, don't you know?"

"Then why don't you?"

"I—I would; that is, if I could get it."

"Can't you get it, Alfred?"

"I—I don't know."

"Have you tried?"

"No, not yet."

(Silence for two provoking minutes.)

"Alfred!" (coldly.)

"Yes."

"Let's have a game of checkers."

A Question of Grammar.
Hetty's uncle, who was a school teacher, met her on the street one beautiful May day and asked her if she was going out with the Masys party.

"No, I ain't going," said her uncle. "You must not say 'I ain't going,' and he proceeded to give her a little lesson in grammar. "You are not going. He is not going. We are not going. You are not going. They are not going. Now, can you say all that, Hetty?"

"Sure I can," she replied, making a courtesy. "There ain't nobody going."

—Lutheran.

And All with Company There.
"Now, children," said the mother, as a whole roomful of company had come in, "suppose you run off and play by yourselves."

"All right, mother," replied Edith. "Can we go up and play Hamlet and Ophelia?"

"Certainly," smiled the mother, while her guests looked on at the tableau.

"Goody!" replied Edith; then, turning to her sister, she said: "Now, Maude, you run up to mamma's room and get all her false hair that you can find."—Judge.

Not Ambiguous at All.
The donkey is—or has been—associated with party politics in other countries besides our own.

In one of England's elections a candidate for parliament, the late Lord Bath, called attention to himself by means of a donkey over whose back two banners were slung, bearing a ribbon band on which was printed: "Vote for Papa."

It must be added, however, that in each banner stood one of Lord Bath's daughters.—Youth's Companion.

"Chickens a nuisance." declares the Charleston News and Courier. What, fried?—Baltimore Sun.

Chickens a nuisance? Yes, when all they leave of your garden is a reminiscence; yes, when the young cock, full of the joy of life, comes you in the early dawn; yes, when some low-browed, vulgar, noisy whippersnapper comes in the evening and, with the very life out of your fabled hen, yes, when the pig or sheep or piglet worries the amateur gardener. But when fried? Never!

Wash white goods, in the way fine sheet goods when new, eye them of their attractiveness to see why they are laundered, this being done in a manner to enhance their textile beauty. Home laundering would be equally satisfactory if proper attention was given to starching, the best starch being good Starch, which hardens and strength to stiffen, without whitening the goods. Try Defense Starch and you will be pleasantly surprised of the improved appearance of your wash.

Naturally.
Magistrate (to witness) understand that you overheard a quarrel between the defendant and his wife?
Witness—Yes, sir.
Magistrate—Tell the court, if you can, what he seemed to be doing.
Witness—He seemed to be holding the litigator's—Pearson's Weekly.

With a smooth iron and Defense Starch, you can launder your shirtwaists just as well at home as the steam laundry can; it will have the proper stiffness and finish, there will be less wear and tear of the goods, and it will be a positive pleasure to use a Starch that does not stick to the iron.

Expectation.
His Daughter—Father, I wish you'd stay home to-night. My Slowboy will want to ask you for my hand.
Her Father—Has he really proposed at last?
His Daughter—No; but he will to-night.

Nebraska Directory
THE PAXTON Hotel
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Rooms from \$10 up single, 75 cents up double. CAFE PRICES REASONABLE.
KODAK FINISHING Mail orders receive prompt attention. All supplies for the Amateur supplied fresh. Send for catalogue and finishing prices. THE ROBERT O. BEMSTER CO., Box 1197, Omaha, Neb.
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Woodward's Fine Candies
Sold by the Best Dealers. We will send to pupils and teachers on receipt of certificate and stamp, a 25-cent, hard maple, brass edged ruler. JOHN G. WOODWARD & CO., "The Candy Men" Council Bluffs, Ia.

Pigeons Will Carry Cameras

Ingenuous Photographic Apparatus Invented by German.

Photographs taken from airships or balloons have long been considered a practical method of learning the whereabouts of an enemy's forces or fortifications in time of war, but snapshots by a camera attached to a pigeon are an altogether new idea. This minute photographic apparatus is

bronzer, and has just been patented. The officials at the German patent office were disposed to ridicule the invention at first, but after proofs of its practicability were offered their opinions changed. The German war office recognized its strategic value, and they believe that photographing pigeons can render much assistance to a besieging army.

The miniature camera weighs only

the invention of a German, Dr. Neubach, and that is considered the maximum weight which a homing pigeon could carry in a flight of not more than 100 miles. As many as 30 snapshots may be taken automatically, and the instant of exposure can be so timed that the desired views will be obtained. By this means objects may be photographed from no greater height than 150 to 300 feet, an impossible feat for an airship or balloon.

The luck that seems to come easiest is hard luck.