

population estimated at fully 100,000. It was strongly fortified, not only by a ditch and adobe wall, but by a belt of forest entirely encircling the place. To get through this forest one would have had to cut his way foot by foot through large interlacing vines and creepers. Since this forest added greatly to the defences of the city, it was a capital crime to disturb it in any way. Narrow ways led through it to the gates.

The ruler of the city was a cruel, superstitious despot bearing the titular name of *Aréh*. Possibly because he thought that it would promote trade, he greatly desired that white men would live in his town; but while guaranteeing personal protection to the missionary, he refused to defend from persecution the native converts to the Christian faith. He gave permission to preach the gospel to his people, but he would not listen to it himself. His compound was really a fortress and covered about eleven acres of ground. He had three hundred wives and one thousand slaves.

While acknowledging the existence of a Supreme Being, under the name of *Orlorun*, the Yorubans declare that he does not concern himself about his creatures on earth. Everything is left in the hands of inferior deities to whom men may come in times of emergency. The spirits of the dead are also invoked for protection and blessing. Under the name of *Ashu* they worship the devil, who is always represented by a hideous black image. Amulets are sold as a protection against all kinds of evils. Those seen on the persons of chiefs and rich persons often represent a very large sum in native currency, and many lose their lives by trusting too implicitly in these "refuges of lies."

Another skeleton in the Yoruban closet is polygamy. This is universal, and so is the treachery, strife, and domestic disorder which always accompanies it. Yorubans know little of that happiness that is found in every place worthy of the name of home. A girl has to take the husband that has been selected for her, however disagreeable the union may be. Betrothals in infancy are common, but the usual age of betrothal is five or six years. It is regarded as very disgraceful for a girl to speak to her betrothed husband until the day of marriage. There is, therefore, no room for courtship or for "love's young dream." The following incident is related by Mr. Stone:

"Among our children was a bright little lass of copper color. One day a man of some prominence entered the gate of the compound while I was standing in the door of the mission house. So soon as this little girl saw him she fled like a frightened fawn, and I was nearly overturned in her effort to rush into the house. With some heat I asked, 'What do you mean by frightening the child?' 'That is my little wife, white man,'

he laughingly replied. Sometimes in passing through the streets, I would see a little girl dart suddenly away as if greatly frightened, and I knew it was because she had seen her future husband approaching. It was quite amusing to see the 'mannish' dignity that boys sometimes manifested when they saw their future wives flee from their august presence."

The gospel was regularly preached in the market-place of the city where there was always a concourse of people. This was freely permitted, little opposition being met with except on the part of traders from the interior, who were mostly Mussalmans, and who had caught the intolerant spirit of the Turks. Converts to this faith were quite numerous in this part of Africa and they were rapidly increasing. One of the missionaries met with by Mr. Stone was a Persian. He had not seen his home since he was a young man, although he was then old enough to have a married son.

"For the purpose of getting acquainted with



AT BREAKFAST.

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the people, of winning their confidence, and of instructing them in the truths of Christianity, I visited them in their homes. Generally my reception was polite, but sometimes I would get into a house where the people did not conceal their dislike for the innovations of civilization and of Christianity. The reader may imagine me surrounded by a crowd of men, women, and children, sitting on a grass mat in a low piazza of a native compound. Sheep, goats, chickens, pigs, and dogs are running around everywhere. After calling for the *bale*, or head of the household, and exchanging the ordinary salutations with him, I request permission to '*sawraw Orloroon*,' that is, 'talk the word of God.' This being permitted, for courtesy's sake I address myself to the *bale*, though it is understood that I am speaking to all within the sound of my voice. The greater number pretend to listen, but I am fre