

yards, surrounded by low thatched buildings, and opening into one another. These were for the king's wives, principal and secondary, his domestics, and his trade goods. In front of the house, under the projecting roof, along the side of the street, was a long sofa-like seat, made of beaten clay, well-shaped and painted. Inside the principal or public court-yard were similar seats all round. The walls were tastefully painted in gay and bold native patterns, the king's ladies being the artists. The king took the head of the table; his brother Tom, a really dignified gentleman, took the foot. A file of youths marched into the room, each carrying on his head a large covered calabash with an ornamental cloth thereon, which he placed on the table. The contents consisted of multifarious stews of fish and flesh, deeply indebted to palm oil, savoury to smell but not tempting to behold. Sheffield has put knife and fork into the hands of King Eyo and his gentlemen, and nothing unhandsome was to be seen in their manners. There was wine for the guests, and even champagne was not wanting. But Eyo never drank wine or spirits. When one of the company pressed him and filled his glass, he declined courteously but decidedly, acknowledged his health which the others drank, and handed the glass to a servant. "King Eyo, why do you never drink wine?" cried one of the guests, a rude and boisterous captain of the sea. "If I begin to drink wine," he replied, "what will become of my trade, and of yours too?"

Every Sabbath for many years Mr. Waddell had a large meeting in the king's own yard. Mr Waddell preached, and the king interpreted "with great good will and considerable efficiency." When he had mastered an idea, he would enlarge upon it in his own way, sometimes with great liveliness and energy. But when the king spoke in a subdued tone and in few words, then the preacher knew that his doctrine had touched sore places.

Slavery is a prominent feature in the state of society in Calabar, and all the region round about. But it wears a very different character from the slavery of America. The slaves are in a degraded position, but they do not belong to a degraded race, for the masters are of the same race. The words *master* and *mistress* are not in the Calabar language, the words *father* and *mother* being used instead. Slave children and free children grow up together as playmates. In the mission schools they sat side by side, read in the same classes, and were in all respects treated as equals, without offending any native prejudices. The first step in a slave's ascent to freedom is to possess a slave of his own. The chattel can employ his chattel as he pleases for his own benefit, or send him as his substitute for all common

work when called on for service by his master. He is a happy and a proud man when he can thus claim exemption from drudgery, and employ his own time as he likes.

The towns of Calabar are small republics, each with its own chief and council, and a "Palaver-house," where all knotty points are discussed. A curious kind of confederation, supplying the place of a supreme authority over all the chiefs and towns, exists among them. It is called *Egbo*, after the name of a deity who is supposed to preside over it. It is a secret association, in which there are ten degrees of honour and power. A person joining the highest rank pays an entrance fee of £100. The mysteries of the association cannot be witnessed except by the initiated, nor divulged under pain of death. The great *Egbo* drum, fixed on a frame, stands in front of the "palaver-house," splashed with the blood of human sacrifices. Its deep, sonorous boom, heard on occasions of importance, fills the whole town. *Egbo* forms a bond of union for mutual defence among the members of the association. No chief or "king" in Calabar could play the despot over free men, like the kings of Ashanti and Dahomey, who seem to hold the heads of their nobles in their bloody hands. Any attempt of the kind would be effectually resisted and punished by a combination of "Egbo gentlemen."

No words can express the horror and detestation with which the Calabar people regard witchcraft. They call it "free-mason." Any evil-disposed person, they imagine, can inflict deadly injury on any other person by means of charms. A person afflicted in his body, his family, or his estate, traces it to witchcraft. Some one has "free-mason" on him. Suspicion fixes somewhere. In vain the suspected person denies the crime. He cannot disprove it except by the poison ordeal, called "chop-nut"; that is, by drinking water in which bruised *esore* beans have been mixed. The belief is that the guilty alone die. The draught is powerful enough to kill in two hours. If the stomach ejects at once the poisonous drug, the person may survive the ordeal. When a great man dies, except it be from old age, his death is attributed to some secret enemy, and his wives, his friends, and his head slaves, must all purge themselves from suspicion by the poison ordeal. Any person accused of "free-mason" has, however, the right of challenging an opponent to "chop-nut" with him. The challenge cannot be refused. Challenger and challenged must drink the death-cup together.

A strange and shocking superstition of the Calabarese is their horror of twin children. The ladies of Creek Town regarded twins as monstrous and abominable. They spat out in disgust at the mention of such a thing, and brushed down their arms as if