

# A NATION GARBED IN BARK CLOTH

## ALL ABOUT THE BAGANDA, WHO RAISE THEIR CLOTHES BY PROCESSES OF A CRUDE AGRICULTURE



THE GIRL WITH THE HOE.

Frank G. Carpenter Takes a Camera Shot, for the Deseret News, at a Shaved Head Maiden Dressed in Bark Cloth.

### The Most Civilized of African Negroes—Their Queer Dresses and How They Are Made—A Suit of Clothes for Four Cents—Across Uganda in an American Jinrikisha—A Land of Good Roads Kept Up by the Women.

plantations, and these clothing trees are planted in among the bananas. They are to be seen everywhere along the roads. They grow to a height of from 20 to 30 feet, and their branches begin at about eight or ten feet from the ground. The bark is cut in such a way that it comes off in sheets. If it is properly stripped from the tree another coat will grow, so that the same tree will produce a new crop of cloth every year. In cutting the bark great care is taken to leave a thin film on the trunk, and as soon as the outer bark is removed the trunk is wrapped in green banana leaves, and these are tied tightly about it with banana fiber. I saw the natives doing such work in many of the gardens on my way across Uganda.

The bark comes off in strips from six to ten feet long and as wide as the circumference of the tree. These strips are soaked for a time in water, until they become soft and pliable. They are then spread out on skin mats and hammered with mallets. This makes them thinner and broader. They are also pulled and stretched until they finally become much like pieces of cloth from half a yard to a yard wide and of the length of the cutting. The bark is composed of many fibers which cross each other this way and that way, just like weaving; and when it is dried it seems like a great sheet of woven fibers. It can now be sewn together into the blankets used as clothing, and it can be painted and decorated in patterns. I have bought a number of sheets of this stuff. They are of a reddish brown color, of the same hue as cinnamon or tan bark. They feel just like woven cloth and look as though they might have been felted or passed through a loom. The stuff is somewhat thicker than cotton sheeting, but it is as firm and almost as smooth.

I understand some of this bark cloth has been sent to America and Europe and that it is used in Germany for making ladies' shopping bags and card cases, as well as caps, hats and book covers. I was told in Entebbe by an exporter there that he had applications for a large amount of it from certain American weaving mills, which wished to experiment in making velvet of it. The cloth can be trimmed like silk, muslin or velvet. It can be dyed any color and it could be made waterproof. When it is blocked to any form it holds its shape; and when cemented together into two thicknesses, laid crosswise, it is very strong. It might be used as a matting, and would be decorative as a wall paper. As it is, there is practically no market for it other than that of the natives; and I have bought several blankets of eight feet square for about 25 cents apiece.

#### NO PINS OR BUTTONS.

I wish I could show you some of these Uganda girls dressed in their terra cotta sheets, as I see them around me. The bark cloth is wrapped tightly about their bodies, leaving their pump arms and shoulders bare. It is often tied in at the waist with a bark cloth sash and is gathered up at the front so that a great fold hangs over and falls half-way to the knees. It gives forth a swishy rustle as the women move, and I am told that they delight in the noise as our girls delight in the swish of their silk petticoats. In such costumes the bust is entirely covered, and the only weak point about the dress seems to be that it has no pins nor buttons and that there are not even shoestrings over the arms to hold the dress up. The mere knot at the front seems by no means safe, and I am in constant fear that the tie will slip and the bark cloth drop to the ground. The longer I stay, however, the less this fear holds. The dresses seem to be as tight as though glued and that even on the girls who work on the road chopping out the weasels with their little hoes and bending half double as they do so. I have seen women so working with little black babies on their backs, held in by the bark cloth.

#### A SUIT OF CLOTHES FOR FOUR CENTS.

Speaking of this dress of the Baganda, I have said they are all fully clad. This is so of both men and women and of even small boys. The only exceptions are girls, up to the ages of eight or nine years. They go absolutely naked, save that each has a ring of woven fiber or twisted banana stems as big around as my thumb. This they wear about the waist. During our trip yesterday, my son Jack met a girl so clad and bargained with her for her outfit. The little one sold her whole suit of clothes for 4 cents, stepping out of her waist ring and standing there naked while she handed it to him and took the money. A moment later she scampered off into a banana patch and made a new ring of banana fibers to

take its place. I am told that the little ones consider themselves undressed, when they have not this ring about their waists; and that if they have left it off they will run for it and put it on before they come to meet strangers.

#### THEY SHAVE THEIR HEADS.

This little girl had her head shaved close to the skin. This is so with both women and men among the Baganda. Nearly every one has a scalp like polished ebony, although a few allow the hair to grow. The Baganda do not wear jewelry and the women do not pierce their ears nor disfigure themselves with scars and various other mutilations, as is common among most African tribes. Those who wear hair do not load it with grease; and, as a rule, the people are noted for their cleanliness and fondness for bathing. Since the country has been opened to Europeans many of the richer natives have begun to wear cotton, and strange to say, they prefer American goods to any other. These goods here go by the name of American. This means cotton sheeting, and that made in the usual length for one dress. Both men and women wear such sheets, so that any large crowd forms a mixture of whites and tans. The whites are the American cottons and the tans are the bark cloths.

#### HOW THE BAGANDA LOOK.

These natives of Uganda are fine looking. They are shorter than the average Caucasian, the men being not more than five feet four or five inches tall, and the women still less. Both sexes are well formed. Every one holds his head up and throws back his shoulders, and all are broad breasted and chest deep. This may come from the largely muscular life of the country and the fact that the people do much walking up and down hill.

The younger women have beautiful necks and arms and very full breasts. Many of them are like ebony statues, and almost every girl has a form which would be coveted by any American belle. Their erectness of figure comes largely from the labor they carry out on their heads. This is done by both men and women. During my trip across the country I passed hundreds carrying loads in that way. Men went along on the trot with drawrow, bunches of bananas and bales of hides balanced on cushions of leaves upon their crowns. I saw women carrying gourd of water upon their heads, so carefully poised that the water did not spill, although the gourds were untouched by the hand. Now and then I passed a woman still less. Both sexes are well formed. Every one holds his head up and throws back his shoulders, and all are broad breasted and chest deep. This may come from the largely muscular life of the country and the fact that the people do much walking up and down hill.

#### ACROSS UGANDA IN A JINRIKISHA.

But let me tell you about a jinrikisha ride which I took from Entebbe to Kampala, the native capital of Uganda. Entebbe is situated on Victoria Nyanza, 325 miles from the lake. The road to Kampala, and Kampala is about 25 miles away back in the hills. The road between the two places has been laid out and improved by the British, and it is now one of the fine drives of the world. The roadway is about 30 feet wide. It is as hard as stone and as smooth as a floor. The grass and weeds are kept out of it, and there are ditches at the side, with culverts here and there to carry off the water. The streams are crossed by bridges, and the whole 25 miles is as good as the beach drive along Rock Creek in Washington, or any of the roads at Central Park. Indeed, the only native high-ways that will compare with it are those of Java, the labor upon which is done in much the same way.

#### A LAND OF GOOD HIGHWAYS.

Uganda is a land of good roads. This country is about as big as Kansas, and it has thousands of miles of native roads, each 10 feet or more in width. This is different from the other countries of Africa.

The most of the native territories are accessible only by footpaths, which wind in and out about the trees and around the stones and logs, permitting passengers to travel only single file and on foot. This is so in the most of German East Africa, in British East Africa and in the Congo valley. It was over such roads that Stanley went; and Livingstone and the other great African explorers made their way through such paths.

These roadways are one of the greatest signs of Uganda's civilization. They go up hill and down vale, crossing the streams and swamps on bridges and causeways.

pulled by natives, from here to Lake Albert, a distance of about 200 miles. I understand that there is even a road to Gondokoro, which lies in the Sudan on the other side of Uganda. That place is the terminus of steam navigation on the Nile, so that I could go by jinrikisha from here to that point and thence by steamboat and rail to the Mediterranean.

#### WHERE WOMEN WORK THE ROADS.

All the roads of this country are kept up by the natives under the direction of their chiefs, although back of the chiefs are the British officials, who work through them. Every person in the country, male and female, is subject to one month's work during the year as a road tax. We think it a heavy burden if we have to pay for one day's work on the roads, but here every one is supposed to work a whole month. Each chief is responsible for the roads of his territory, and he calls upon every householder for the requisite amount of labor. The householder as a rule sees that the most of the work is done by the women. This I found to be the case all the way from Entebbe to Kam-

pala. Everywhere there were girls down on their knees pulling out weeds, or bending over and smoothing the roadbed with unsharpened native hoes. In one or two places men were at work, but as a rule the rough labor was done by bare-shouldered, bare-armed and bare-footed females clad in bark clothing. Now and then I stopped on the way to watch them, and once took a snap shot of a shaven headed maiden with a native hoe in her hand.

#### AMERICAN JINRIKISHAS.

It is an odd experience to travel through the African wilds in a jinrikisha, but that is what I did on my way here from Entebbe. This vehicle was originally the invention of an American missionary who lived in Japan. It took so well there that a great part of the travel of that country is now done in it, and it has since spread from Japan throughout the far east. We have it in Manila and it is also common in South Africa a few years ago, and an enterprising American firm has taken to manufacturing them for export. Those used here are of American make. They look somewhat like a victoria, having seats wide enough for one or two people. I took four for my trip. Two of these were for myself and son, and the others for our baggage and photographic instruments. We paid \$2 for each jinrikisha, and this included four lumpy natives who pushed and pulled us along. One man pulled in the shafts and the three others pushed from behind. The men were as black as jet. They were bareheaded, bare-legged and barefooted and wore cloddy gowns of bark cloth or cotton. They

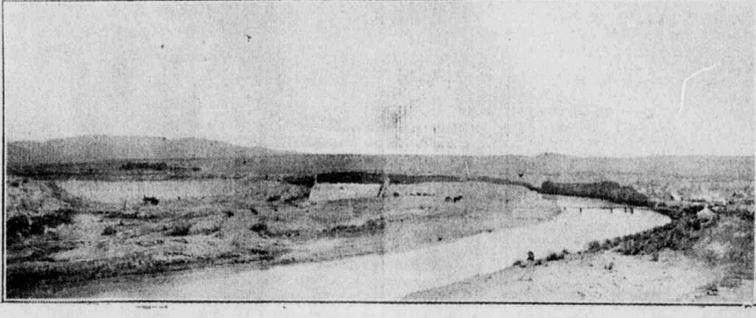
went on the trot even while climbing the hills, and they sang all the way. Each jinrikisha party formed a quartet, of which the man in the shaft was the leader. The songs seemed to contain a thousand verses of one line each. This was yelled out by the leader, and at the end, the three men behind would grunt out one or two words sounding much like the croaking of a bullfrog. It was "Karung! Karung!" The singing did well enough at the start, but after 10 miles it began to wear upon us, and we wished they were dumb.

#### COUNTRY SCENES.

We were about five hours in making the 25 miles. The way led up and down over a rolling country, much of it open pasture land consisting of hills covered with grass and spotted here and there with groves of trees. Everywhere there were patches of bananas, and out of each rose one of the round grass huts of the natives, with these bark clothing trees all around it. In places we went through forests, and now and then skirted a jungle which made us tremble a little as we thought of the Leopards, lions and other wild beasts which infest parts of Uganda. There were natives everywhere on the way, and at times the roads were lined with them. Now and then we passed a great foreign wagon hauled by 16 or 20 lumpy black fellows, and again went by gangs of porters trotting along with great loads on their heads. The trip throughout was wild in the extreme, and its climax was capped by this great native town of Kampala, where I now am, and of which I will write in the future.

FRANK G. CARPENTER.

## A GREATER MILLARD COUNTY



Down in Millard county, at a point near Riverside, on the San Pedro Los Angeles and Salt Lake Railroad, there is being constructed by the OASIS LAND AND IRRIGATION COMPANY and the MELVILLE IRRIGATION COMPANY, one of the largest diverting dams in the State of Utah. This dam is part of the largest irrigation system in the State and is supplied directly by the waters stored in the Sevier Reservoir, located in Juab and San Pete Counties and having a capacity of 90,000 acre-feet. The waters diverted at the Riverside dam will serve the arid lands lying in the Pahvant Valley, which 45,000 acres have been recently withdrawn from entry at the United States Land Office in Salt Lake in accordance with an application made under the Carey Act by the Oasis Land and Irrigation Company. It will also serve about 15,000 acres which have been located under the desert and homestead acts by the members of the Melville Irrigation Company. It is expected that the Department of the Interior will take action on the application made by the Oasis Land and Irrigation Company some time in May, when a drawing will be held and the lands thrown open for entry in accordance with the Carey Act. Millard County has the largest tract of arable land in the State. It has a deep alluvial soil, formed by a delta deposit of the Sevier River, which has the largest drainage area of any river in Utah. The latent possibilities of this territory are beginning to attract the engineer, capitalist and homeseeker. In addition to having a rich and exhaustless soil, this valley has ideal conditions for irrigation and drainage, the latter being most essential for the best results in an irrigation system. The productiveness of this region is further enhanced by long periods of sunshine in each year and a beneficial climate that gives abundant yield of crops and vigor to the home-builder. The Riverside dam is, roughly, 500 feet long on the crest, 170 feet wide on the bottom and 36 feet above the bed of the river. It has a reinforced concrete spillway, a concrete tunnel, 200 feet long, 4 feet wide and 8 feet high through the center of the dam, in which is set the steel gates—one 8 feet high and 4 feet wide, and two gates serving a three and four foot pipe, respectively, that are used in connection with the electric power plant, which will be constructed at this point. Approximately 500 electrical horse power will be generated. This will be transmitted to the towns of Burnett, Ozels, Deseret, Hinkley, Abraham and other points where it may be needed. Four sets of large steel gates are being installed in the dam at the Sevier Bridge Reservoir, and while this work is going forward, the construction will be completed at the Riverside or Melville dam in closing off the river, installing head-gates in the canals, etc. About fifteen miles of main canals have been completed, leading from this diverting dam, and upwards of 15,000 acres will be served by the system during the present year. The dam proper will be fully completed by May 1st. Millard County is beginning an era of progression, and the potential desert is being transformed into the garden of Utah.

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