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Yours sincerely
Braithwaite Wallis
—

THE ADVANCE OF OUR WEST AFRICAN EMPIRE

BY

C. BRAITHWAITE WALLIS, F.G.S., F.R.G.S.

(Fellow of the Royal Colonial Institute, &c.)

OF

THE CAMERONIANS (SCOTTISH RIFLES)

LATE ACTING DISTRICT COMMISSIONER

SIERRA LEONE PROTECTORATE + +

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS AND A MAP



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PATERNOSTER SQUARE · 1903

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To

FIELD-MARSHAL THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
VISCOUNT WOLSELEY, K.P., G.C.B., O.M., G.C.M.G.,

A GREAT SOLDIER AND A MAN, THE EARLY PART OF WHOSE
BRILLIANT CAREER WAS SPENT IN THE REGIMENT TO WHICH
I HAVE THE HONOUR TO BELONG, WHOSE GENIUS, LOVE
OF COUNTRY, AND DEVOTION TO DUTY, HAS ADDED
TO THE ADVANCE AND EXPANSION OF THE
BRITISH EMPIRE, AND WHOSE CHARACTER
AND EXAMPLE IT IS MY AMBITION TO
EMULATE, THIS WORK IS, BY HIS
LORDSHIP'S SPECIAL PERMISSION,
RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED
BY THE AUTHOR.

“It is held
That valour is the chiefest virtue, and
Most dignifies the haver: if it be,
The man I speak of cannot in the World
Be singly counterpoised.”

Coriolanus.

PREFACE

THE idea of writing a work upon the stirring events which took place in Sierra Leone in 1898 was suggested to me by a General Officer who at one time in his career had seen a good deal of service in West Africa. On my return from that country in the following year he remarked that the difficulties and hardships of our "little wars" in that part of the world were not always appreciated by those at home.

Commenced in India—continued, as far as official duties would permit, in West Africa; and completed during my leave of absence in England—I now place this volume before the public, in the hope that all shortcomings will be forgiven. It is intended to be a plain statement of facts, and although I am aware that I have been unable to describe all the incidents of the various expeditions, and have given none of the "Protectorate Expedition" in 1899, what I have said is, I believe, correct in detail.

If the hints on Bush Fighting and for the Preservation of Health will benefit any one in West Africa, and if the remainder of the work succeeds in arousing any interest in that much abused part of the globe, I shall be fully compensated. My thanks are due to Sir Norman R. Pringle, Bart., Captain C. C. W. Troughton, G. Whiteley Ward, Esq., and to the Intelligence Division of the War Office for the use of their maps, &c.

C. B. W.

JUNIOR ARMY AND NAVY CLUB, S.W.

June, 1903.

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APPENDICES



APPENDIX I

NATIVE LAW IN DISTRICTS WITHIN THE SIERRA LEONE PROTECTORATE

IN most of the native states within the Protectorate where native law prevails the Court is formed of the King as Paramount Chief and his sub-chiefs and santiggies, or in small towns by the sub-chief and his principal men, who assist in threshing out the matter, and may make remarks on, and offer suggestions concerning the cause, but have no voice in the final decision, the King or Paramount Chief's word being absolute and final.

II. He may, however, delegate his supreme power to some other member of the assembly, who upon this being done exercises the functions belonging to the King during the inquiry.

III. An appeal may be made from the decision of a sub-chief, but from that of a Paramount Chief there is no appeal, excepting an appeal to arms.

IV. In these Courts crimes of murder, arson, adultery (commonly called women palavers), theft, assault, debt, and other criminal and civil causes, are inquired into, and the decision is generally arrived at after consultation between the King and those of his principal men who sit with him.

V. The punishment meted out for offences differs considerably, in purely pagan countries fines being more generally adopted than any other form of punishment, whilst in districts under Mohammedan influence corporal punishment is adopted in many cases instead of fines.

The following table gives, succinctly, the punishments adopted in districts under different systems:—

PAGAN.

Murder.—Penalty, a heavy fine as the price of blood.

Theft.—Flogging, restitution of property or its equivalent, enslavement.

Witchcraft.—Burning to death and the confiscation of the property of accused.

Rape.—Fines according to position of offender.

Arson.—Rebuilding of house and restitution of equivalent value of contents, fine, and, in serious cases, enslavement of offender and family.

Assault.—Fine according to gravity of offence.

MOHAMMEDAN.

Murder.—Death.

Theft.—In places where there are no prisons, for first offence flogging; second, loss of right hand; third, loss of left.

Witchcraft.—Not recognised among strict Mohammedans.

Rape.—Death.

Assault.—Fine according to gravity of offence.

Arson.—Flogging, imprisonment.

APPENDIX II

NATIVE LAW (*continued*)

MUSHRIKEEN OR PROFESSING MOHAMMEDANS.

Murder.—Death or fine, according to the position of the parties and the circumstances of the case.

Theft.—Flogging, restitution of property stolen or its equivalent, enslavement, and for old offenders loss of limb.

Witchcraft.—Enslavement of the accused and all of his family and the confiscation of his property.

Rape.—Fines according to position of offenders, flogging.

Arson.—Same as Pagan.

Assault.—Fine according to gravity of offence.

V. There is no recognised scale of fees, but they are received in kind, in proportion to the position and wealth of the parties concerned, coupled with the importance of the case under inquiry.

VI. The parties opposed to each other in civil causes generally stake a certain amount on the issue, and this amount is given to the party who obtains the judgment of the Court besides any fine that the Court may choose to impose.

VII. It sometimes happens that a fine is imposed on one not able at the time to pay it. Should such person have any friends of influence they sometimes "buy the palaver," or really assume the responsibility of the guilty one.

VIII. Should any one be guilty of a Contempt of Court, or the breach of some local custom, or of insulting any person of influence, it is customary to give him *Kassi*, that is, to fine them, and upon any one being apprised by the Paramount or sub-chief or principal man that he has been so "Kassied" he has to acknowledge his offence and pay the fine imposed before any further steps are taken in any cause in which such person may be engaged.

IX. There is, however, always a right of appeal from the decision of a sub-chief to the Paramount Chief of the country, but the costs attending these appeals generally make them impossible to any one excepting wealthy litigants.

X. In cases where the decision of the Court is not carried out by the party who is given wrong, that is, against whom an adverse decision has been given, his property, and very often, if there is not sufficient property, his family, and sometimes himself, are taken to satisfy the judgment given.

XI. The most frequent palavers which occur in the native States are "women palavers," really "crim. con." cases, in which the fines are imposed in proportion to the position of the petitioner and the co-respondent, and sometimes results in the enslavement of the offender. The rigid manner in which this law is enforced certainly serves to maintain a purer morality in those States which have had but little contact with the vices of civilisation. They are, however, sometimes based on very slender evidence. A husband who has left his harem for some time, on his return questions his wives as to their several movements, and if he has any reason to suspect any unfaithfulness, he tries them by the ordeal of putting their hands in boiling oil, and if they are burnt he at once commences to flog them until they mention the name of their suspected paramour, who is pounced upon and made to pay heavily to the injured spouse, excepting he is fortunate enough to prove an alibi, or bring very convincing evidence to prove that it was impossible for him to be guilty of the charge.

XII. In cases of witchcraft, or where the accused pleads not guilty, and the evidence is doubtful, trial by ordeal is adopted, and generally takes the form of drinking the poisonous decoction of the sass wood, putting the hands in hot oil, swearing on the Tillang (a fetish which is supposed to have the effect of disfiguring the nose if anything false is uttered after taking an oath on it), and in States professing Mohammedanism, eating the Alafatia balad, which is supposed to result in death to the wrongdoer who dares to eat it.

XIII. Two of the most important institutions of the Mendi and Yonnie countries in particular are the *Porro* and *Bundu*, the former for the men, and the latter for women. They are both of them secret societies, and their members generally meet in the bush, which is called, after the institution that uses it, the *Porro* or *Bundu* bush. The approach to it is generally marked by a large clearing, and the exhibition of a good many charms and fetish signs of all descriptions. Each institution is said to be presided over by a devil, and all women have to betake themselves to their houses and keep up a constant clapping of hands at any time when the *Porro* devil honours a village by a visit. These devils are generally attired in garments made out

of palm leaves, dyed black, and their heads covered with a mask. None but members of the society are permitted to enter the sacred grove, and it is against their laws for any member of the male sex to enter the *Bundu* bush, and *vice versá*. The *Porro* may be divided into two branches—the general *Porro*, to which a very large number belong, and at which the rites of circumcision are performed, and the back and chest tattooed with small marks, and the special *Porro*, which is generally formed for some specific object, and breaks up as soon as that object has been attained. For instance, a *Peace Porro*, in which several chiefs combine to go and make peace in a disturbed area, under the condition that if their *Porro* is refused (*i.e.*, their advice not followed) they will form an alliance to fight the parties refusing to follow their advice.

XV. Then again, there is the *Porro* on palm nuts, which in former years was a law passed by the chiefs and principal men that palm kernels should not be cut before a certain time, so as to prevent the cutting of the nuts before they became ripe, but which has now degenerated into a selfish dog-in-the-manger rule, adopted by some chiefs to prevent others having what he cannot possibly reap himself, as a result of which the nuts are sometimes allowed to fall off the trees and rot.

XVI. If any one dares to pick any nuts, or to reap any land on which a *Porro* had been placed, he is made to pay a *kassi*, or fine.

XVII. All fines and payments are calculated by the bar, which ranges from 1s. to 1s. 6d. in merchandise; head money, which is supposed to be equal to three pounds in merchandise; a ton, equal to four bars; and a *Binki*, which contains about twenty-five bushels.

XVIII. The rates of exchange for a head of money vary in different parts. In the *Timini* country, for instance, a head of money would generally consist of twelve pieces of cloth, at 1s. 6d. and 2s. 6d. per piece, 1 keg powder, 1 gun, 4 bars tobacco, and be probably *really* worth about £1 15s. in *Freetown*, whilst in some parts of *Mendiland* ten pieces of cloth, at 1s. 6d. and 2s. 6d., and one cutlass.

In *Freetown*, worth about 25s. would be taken as a head of money

In these calculations much depends on the distance of the place where the barter is being made away from the coast as a large allowance has to be made for transport.

APPENDIX III

The clauses of the Protectorate Ordinance, 1897, relating to the Hut Tax, are as follows:—

XLIII. From and after the 1st day of January, 1898, every chief, in respect of every house, other than a house owned or occupied by any person not a native, or a person in the service of the Government, situate in any town or village in which he may have jurisdiction, and every person other than a native or a person in the service of the Government, residing in the Protectorate, in respect of every house owned or occupied by him, shall, save as hereinafter provided, be bound to pay to the District Commissioner, or to some person nominated by him, an annual House Tax. And such tax shall be assessed on all houses owned or occupied at any time during the year next preceding that in respect of which such tax is payable.

XLIV. The liability of any person for payment of the House Tax shall be computed according to the number of rooms in each house, and they shall be taxed as follows:—

- (a) For each house with four or more rooms, 10s. per annum;
- (b) For each house with three or any less number of rooms, 5s. per annum.

XLV. The House Tax in respect of each year shall become payable on the 1st day of January of that year, and shall be paid on or after that date, on such day as shall be notified by the District Commissioner of each district, or other officer authorised in that behalf by the District Commissioner. Provided always that whenever a chief shall have paid the full amount of House Tax for which he is liable at the time, and in the manner appointed for the payment thereof, the District Commissioner shall allow him a rebate not exceeding 5 per cent. on the amount so paid.

XLVI. The House Tax shall be paid in coin, unless the officer

collecting the same has no alternative but to accept grain, stock, merchandise, or produce, when the value of such grain, stock, merchandise, or produce shall be deemed and taken to be the price current at the nearest available market at which such grain, stock, or produce can be disposed of.

XLVII. A receipt in form of Schedule A hereto, or in such form as the Governor may approve, for the amount of tax paid by each person, signed by the officer receiving the same, shall be delivered to the person paying the same.

XLVIII. If any person or persons liable to pay any taxes, under the provisions of this or any other Ordinance, shall refuse or neglect to pay the same at the time and in the manner hereinbefore appointed for the payment thereof, the District Commissioner for the time being is hereby empowered and authorised to levy the taxes on the goods and chattels of such defaulters. Provided that in the case of a chief who is in receipt of a stipend from the Crown, the District Commissioner may, in the first instance, levy the tax on such stipend, and, if such stipend should prove insufficient, then on the goods and chattels of such chief for the balance.

XLIX. All goods and chattels which shall be levied upon by the District Commissioner shall be sold by him at public auction to the best bidder, and the sum or sums of money arising from such sale the said District Commissioner shall apply to the payment of the taxes imposed by this Ordinance, and all charges attending such levy and sale, and shall return the overplus (if any) to the person or persons entitled thereto.

* * * * *

LXI. The District Commissioner of each district may, from time to time, by writing under his hand, appoint deputies to represent him in the execution of the powers hereinbefore conferred on him for the recovery of taxes, and it shall be lawful for any such deputy to exercise all the powers of the District Commissioner; and all acts done by any such deputy in the execution of his powers shall be as valid and effectual, to all intents and purposes, as if they had been done by the District Commissioner.

* * * * *

LXIV. It shall be lawful for the Governor to declare, from time to time, by order, that any district or districts, or any portion or portions of any district or districts, or that any town, village, or house shall be exempt from the

payment of House Tax, and to alter, amend, or revoke any such order or orders; and all such orders and alterations, amendments, or revocations thereof, when published in *Sierra Leone Royal Gazette*, shall have the same force and effect for all purposes as if the same had been made by Ordinance.

* * * * *

LXXI. Any person who fraudulently evades payment of any House Tax, or Licence Duty, for which he is legally liable, or any part thereof, shall be guilty of an offence, and on proof thereof shall be liable to a fine not exceeding treble the amount of the tax or duty which he ought to have paid.

Fraudulent
evasion of
House Tax, etc.

* * * * *

APPENDIX IV

AGREEMENT BETWEEN GREAT BRITAIN AND FRANCE, FIXING THE BOUNDARY BETWEEN THE BRITISH AND FRENCH POSSESSIONS TO THE NORTH AND EAST OF SIERRA LEONE

SIGNED AT PARIS, *January 21, 1895.*

The Special Commissioners nominated by the Governments of Great Britain and France, in accordance with Article V. of the Agreement of August 10, 1889, having failed to trace a line of demarcation between the territories of the two Powers to the north and east of Sierra Leone, in conformity with the general provisions of Article II. of the said Agreement, of its Annex I. and of its Annex II. (Sierra Leone), and with the indications of the Agreement of June 26, 1891, the undersigned plenipotentiaries charged, in execution of the declarations exchanged at London on August 5, 1890, between Her Britannic Majesty's Government and the Government of the French Republic, to proceed to delimit the respective spheres of interest of the two countries south and west of the Middle and Upper Niger, have agreed to fix the line of demarcation between the above-mentioned territories on the following conditions:—

ARTICLE I.

The boundary starts from a point on the Atlantic coast, north-west of the village of Kiragba, where a circle of 500 metres radius, described from the centre of the village, cuts high-water mark. From this point it proceeds in a north-easterly direction, parallel to the road leading from Kiragba to Robenia (Roubani), which passes by or near the English villages of Fungala, Robant, Mengeti, Mandimo, Momotimania, and Kongobutia, at an even distance of 500 metres from the centre of the track, as far as a point half-way between the village of Kongobutia (English) and the village of Digipali (French). From this point it turns to the south-east, and cutting the road at right angles,

reaches a point 500 metres on the south-eastern side, and proceeds parallel to the road, an even distance of 500 metres, measured as before from the centre of the track, till it reaches a point to the south of the village of Digipali, whence it is drawn directly to the watershed formed by a ridge which, commencing south of the destroyed village of Passimodia, distinctly marks the line of separation between the basin of the Mellakori (Mellacorée) River, and that of the Great Skarcies or Kolenté River.

The frontier follows this watershed line, leaving to Great Britain the villages of Bogolo (N'Bogoli), Musaliya, Lukoiya (Malagma), Mufuri (Maforé), Tarnenai (Tanéné), Modina (Madina), Obleni, Oboto, Balimir, Massini, and Gambiadi; and to France the villages of Robenia (Roubani), N'Tunga (N'Tugon), Daragli (Daragoué), Kunia, Tombaiya, Heremakuno (Erimakono), Fransiga (Fonsiga), and Maodea, as far as the point nearest to the source of the Little Mola River; from this point it follows a straight line to the above-mentioned source, follows the course of the Little Mola to its junction with the Mola, and then the thalweg of the Mola to its junction with the Great Skarcies or Kolenté.

From this point the frontier follows the right bank of the Great Skarcies (Kolenté) as far as a point situated 500 metres south of the spot where the road leading from Wulia (Ouelia) to Wossu (Ououssou), *viâ* Lucenia, touches the right bank. From this point it crosses the river and follows a line drawn to the north of the above-mentioned road at an even distance of 500 metres, measured from the centre of the track, until it meets a straight line connecting the two points mentioned below, namely:—

1. A point on the Kora, 500 metres above the bend of the river, which is situated about 2,500 metres north of the village of Lucenia, or about five kilom. up the Kora River, measured along the bank, from its point of junction with the Great Skarcies (Kolenté).

2. A gap in the north-western face of the chain of hills lying in the eastern part of Talla, situated about two English miles (3,200 metres) south of the village of Duyunia (Donia).

From this point of intersection it follows the above-mentioned line eastward to the centre of the above-mentioned gap, from whence it is drawn straight to a point on the River Kita, situated above and at a distance of 1,500 metres, as the crow flies, from the centre of the village of Lakhata. It then follows the thalweg of the Kita River as far as the confluence of that stream with the Lolo.

From this point of junction it coincides with a line drawn straight to a point on the Little Skarcies of Kaba River, four English miles (6,400 metres) south of the tenth parallel of north latitude; and it then follows the thalweg of the Little Skarcies as far as the said

parallel, which then forms the boundary as far as its intersection with the watershed (*ligne de partage des eaux*), separating the basin of the Niger, on the one hand, from the basins of the Little Skarcies and other rivers falling westward to the Atlantic Ocean on the other hand.

Finally the frontier follows the aforesaid watershed south-eastward, leaving Kalieri to Great Britain and Heremakuna (Erimakono) to France, until its intersection with the parallel of latitude passing through Tembikunda (Tembikounda), that is to say, the source of the Tembiko or Niger.

ARTICLE II.

The boundary defined in this Agreement is marked on the map which is annexed hereto.

ARTICLE III.

This Agreement is regarded by the two Governments as completing and interpreting Article II. of the Agreement of 10th August, 1889, Annex I. of the said Agreement, Annex II. of the said Agreement (heading Sierra Leone), and the Agreement of 26th June, 1891.

Done at Paris the 21st January, 1895.

(L. S.)	E. C. H. PHIPPS.
„	J. A. CROWE.
„	GEORGES BENOIT.
„	J. HAUSSMANN.

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