B-A-T-O-U-A-L-A

By RENE MARAN

A Story of the French Congo which won the Grand Prix for best Novel, in 1922

Translated from the French and Copyrighted by Thomas Seltzer, New York

CHAUTER IV.

The full moon traversed the region of the stars. The festival of the ga'mass was about to begin.

What a stroke of good fortune! A week before, the commandant had left Grimari on a tour of inspection in the neighborhood of Bamayassi. The billy-goat away, the nanny-goats will play. Swarms of natives overrun the grounds of the Government station—the only place that offered room enough for the full sweep of the various figures and the dance of the warriors.

A large empty space, as broad as it was long, reached from the commandant's house down to the Rembe. And only one man had been left in charge, only one native gendarme, one tourougou, Boula, for whom the natives didn't give a tinker's curse—Boula in sole charge of the administration building and annexes, the training-camp, and the guard-house.

Who really did care about a kouloungoulou—the nickname they had given Boula because, they said, he crawled like a milleped.

The fa'mass not having arrived yet, the yangba was not in full swing, but the indications were that it was going to be wonderful.

A dozen fa'mass scattered about seemed to be waiting expectant. These were not ugly little tom-toms, dirty from use, weatherbeaten, worm-eaten. On the contrary, each of them visibly swelled with pride over its double convexity, the great sound of an enormous tree-trunk hollowed out. They had been given a pale coat, made of mixed white clay and manioc meal, with a broad band of red running lengthwise and breadthwise.

On the ground were spread baskets of millet, manioc cakes, whole clusters of bananas, dishfuls of caterpillars, eggs, fish, bitter tomatoes, wild asparagus. There were quantities of meats, either sun-dried or grilled over a fire—antelope meat, elephant meat, quarters of wart-hog and buffalo. There were the tubers that the whites despised—dazos, for example, every bit as good as their white potatoes* There were bangabe or sweet potatoes, both the red-skinned and the yellow-skinned sorts. There were Saba's-son or yams. There were great jars brimming over with the drink made of fermented millet or maize. And there were a few bottles of pernod.

The Pernod had been bought from the boundjoudoulis (white tradesmen) and was reserved for the chiefs, head-men and elders.

From the numerous fires arose volumes of smoke, black, heavy, and very pungent from the damp wood.

The roads from Kama, Pangakoura, Pouyamba, and Kakidji swarmed with the latecomers hastening toward these fires visible from afar—men, women, children, boys, boyesses, slaves, dogs.

They had come, and still were coming, from their kagas, their thickets, their muddy patas-patas, or their plantations, armed with arrows and javelins, and carrying burning pieces of wood to light their way in the wooded strips through which they had to pass before they reached the small lakes.

The women, as soon as they arrived, set right to work with their kouroux to pound the maize and millet and manioc into meal and while pestles banged in wooden mortars they sang the song of the kouloungoulou.

The kouloungoulou, as is known, lives in dung. What's all he eats, too, they say. Think of it!
Kouloungoulou, kouloungoulou,
Kouloungoulou, ho! Ia-ho!
His wealth consists of but one thing.
He got it from the bourjiou (white man).
And excellent husband that he is.
He passed it to his yassi.
She passed it to their daughter.
Kouloungoulou, kouloungoulou,
Kouloungoulou, ho! Ia-ho!
How is it that we saw a kouloungoulou,
Wearing a tourougou's chechia,
Passing through our lovely fields?
Yassis, Yassis, take care, beware
Of the filthy kouloungoulou.
He's no friend for you.
Kouloungoulou, ho! Ia-ho!
Kouloungoulou, kouloungoulou,

There were burst of laughter. The merriment became general. They laughed for the sake of laughing. They talked without knowing just what they were going to say; the kous was already working. They drank maize beer on top of millet-beer, and drank and drank without cease.

A wonderful gathering! All the M'bis and all the N'gapus were there with their elders.

Batouala and his old parents formed the centre of a group of chiefs and their head-men.

He held forth.

The death of several whites had been reported at Bangui. . . . It was said that the Governor was soon going to Bandoro . . . that over in France in M'poutou (Europe) the Frandjes were fighting the Zalemans.

While talking he stuffed the garabos within reach with hemp* and tobacco, lit them, took several puffs, which is the custom, and passed them round.

*Contains a strong narcotic.—Translator's note.

"You know, Batouala, I have just come back from Krebedge," said Pangakoura, the great Mandjah chief. "One learns a good deal travelling, doesn't one? For example, that the whites don't like each other. Here's proof, absolute proof—I had a complaint to make against a Portuguese, and I went to the commandant, the one we call Kotaya on account of his huge paunch. I told him my story, trimming it up a little, of course.

"'Pangakoura,' he said, 'you certainly are an idiot, the most idiotic idiot I've ever come across. What! you poor old dunderhead, don't you know a Poutriques doesn't count? Listen. At the beginning of things—you follow me, do you?—at the beginning of things the N'Gakoura of the whites took the best he had on hand and created the whites. Then he gathered together the leavings and created the dirty niggers like you. Much later, he wanted to make the Portuguese and looked about for something to create them from. There was nothing left but the offal of the blacks. Out of that he kneaded the first Portuguese.'"

Volleys of laughter.

"Don't you think that the drop in the price of ivory is an unexpected piece of luck for us?" asked Batouala. "Even if the commandant had been away, we should not, but for this chance, have been able to come here to the Government grounds to warm our livers. There would have been one of those wretched boundjoudoulis on the spot to make us pay a pata, yes, five francs, for what the whites wouldn't have to pay more than a meya, ten sous."

"Your words are like clear water," said Yakidji. "We must give thanks to N'Gakoura. All the traders, on account of this happy crisis, have had to go back to Krebedge or Bangui. May they rot to death, their mouths open, their feet in filth."

"And that isn't all. Oh, that isn't all, Batouala," said Yabada. "On account of the grand palavers between the white Zalemans and the white Frandjes, the yongorogombes are going to be shipped to M'Poutou. Yes, they're all going off to war at M'Poutou, all the long muskets,* all the black soldier-trash. Probably our present masters will join them. I myself think they will."

*"Long musketo" is the nickname for black troops not native to Ubangi-Shari, but brought by the French from the coast and other districts.—Translator's note.

"Yabao!" quavered Batouala's old father, "as sure as my hairs are white, I think you're taking kagas for rivers and your wishes for the reality. Soon it will be three seasons of rains since the Frandjes and the Zalemans have been palavering. Have the Frandjes given any sign of wanting to leave ? Not a bit. There's danger over there. Why should they go there to get killed? Each man looks out for his own skin, Yabada."

Louder laughter.

"You're always right, elder. I admit it. But will you allow me to hope that the Zalemans will lick the Frandjes?"

"Ah, you boundoua Yabada! Zalemans—Frandjes: whites all the same. Why change one for the other? We are under the Frandjes, we know their good qualities and their bad qualities. They play with us like a niaou with a mouse. In the end the niaou always eats the mouse with which it has played. Since sooner or later we're going to be killed and eaten, what use is there to wish for different niaous than those we have? It's like escaping buffalos to fall into the clutches of a lurking panther."

The discussion became general.

"He's right. Why change? The new ones might be worse."

"They don't like us. And we pay them back in their own coin."

"We ought to murder them."

"We ought."

"We will some day later on."

"When the Banziris, Goubous, Yakomas, Sabangas, Dacnas, all, in short, who talk the Banda or the Mandja or the Sango language, stop their old quarrels."

"That will be when the Bembe flows backward."

"And Macoude catches the moon in his nets."

Laughter again, so long and loud that one scarcely heard a great noise that sounded in the distance.

"Or you are all sons of a dog," cried Batouala under the influence of pipe and dring. "Or else you are drunker than I am. Are you men, yes or no? Have the bazi'nguers of Snoussi castrated you? I don't know. At any rate I for my part can't help cursing the whites. I remember the time when the M'bis lived peacefully along the Niou-Bangui, between Besaoro and Kemo-Oudda. As soon as the first whites appeared, the most of us picked up our fetishes, our pots, poultry, mats, dogs, women, goats, children, ducks, and withdrew to the country near Krebedge.

"I was very little then.

"There were struggles; there were huts to build and fields to sow. All useless. The whites settled at Krebedge.

"Another move. We liked Griko. We halted at Griko. The same difficulties getting established there; but we thought we'd be able to draw a peaceful breath. Wrong! The whites—the whites again!—descended on Griko.

"We started off once more. To Grimari. There was a fine location for us in Grimari between the Bembe and the Pombo. We settled there. Alas! before we had completed our building and planting the whites were upon us again. By that time we were worn out and discouraged. Besides, we had lost so many men taking land away from others by force that we were afraid our tribe might be destroyed. So we stayed where we were, and looked pleasant. . . ."

The great noise in the distance drew nearer.

"No use. Our submissiveness didn't bring us the good will of the whites. Not content with trying to suppress our customs, they wanted to impose theirs on us. We had no right to play patara for money. We had no right to get drunk. Our singing and dancing interfered with their sleep. But—pay them a tithe, and they'd deign to put up with our singing and dancing. Pay, pay, pay, always pay! The Government treasuries are insatiable.

"Yet after all, we'd give into them, the mean bullies, if only they applied the same logic to themselves that they do to us. They don't. Listen. Two moons ago that beast Ouorro, drunk as a white man, beat up one of his yassis. She was bruised and swollen from head to foot. Blame him if you feel like it. But who of you—eh?—has never beaten his yassi?

"The jade actually went to the commandant to complain. It so happened that he had several white guests stopping with him. As a rule, he is that rare thing among the whites—sober. On this occasion he was full to toppling over. He ordered a tourougou to palce Ouorro under arrest. The tourougou carried out his orders rather gently, and the commandant went into a fury and threw an empty bottle at his head. The tourougou fell down, the blood streamed from his forehead. He made a face from the pain, and all the whites laughed as though it were a huge joke. That's the way they treat us.

"Yabada, see for yourself. Dare to risk two francs at patara under the eyes of the commandant. What'll you get for the awful crime? A lashing with a knotted whip, and with that you'll come off easy. Only the whites may play games of chance."

Batouala's eyes were bloodshot, he shouted and stammered.

"The whites are good for nothing. They call us liars, and treat us accordingly. Our lies don't deceive anyone. If we embellish the truth sometimes, it's because the truth isn't good enough; manioc without salt is nastiness. But the whites! They lie for nothing. They lie with methcd. They lie by rote, as naturally as they breathe. That's what gives them the advantage over us.

"They say the Negroes under one chief hate the Negroes under another chief, La, la! How about the boundjoudoulis, the long muskets, the Mon Peres (priests), and the commandants? Do they agree? And if they don't they should we? . . . man's a man, no matter what his color, here as well as in M'Pautou . . .

The huge sound in the distance had become more distinct, like the droning of thousands of blue or green voumas (flies) about a carcass.

Batouala rose to his feet and shouted and gesticulated.

"I will never allow anyone to deny the manhood of the whites. What I blame them most for is their lying and their cheating. The things they didn't promise us! 'Later on,' they said, 'you'll see, it's only for your own good that we force you to work. We'll take only a very, very small part of the money we make you earn. We'll use what we take to build villages for you, roads, bridges, machines that run on iron rails by means of fire.'

"Where are they—the roads, the bridges, the wonderful machines? Where I ask. Nowhere! Not a sign of them. Nothing nothing! And so far from taking only a tiny part of what we earn, they rob us of our last sou. Aren't we to be pitied? I ask you, aren't we to be pitied?

"Thirty moons ago we got three francs a kilo for our rubber. Over night the price went down. Without offering the shadow of an explanation, they paid us only fifteen sous for the same quantity of banga—one meya and five bi'mbas. And the Governor chose that very moment to raise our tax from five to seven and ten francs.

"Now there isn't anybody who doesn't know that from the first day of the rainy season we work just to swell the taxes—if not also to fill the pockets of our commandants.

"We're nothing but flesh to feed the taxes. We're nothing but beasts of burden. Beasts? Not teven that. Dogs? They feed their dogs, and tend their horses. We? We're less than their animals, we're the lowest of the low. They're killing us by slow degrees. . . ."

A drunken crowd pressed up behind the group of which Batouala was the centre.

They reviled the whites. Batouala was right, a thousand times right. of old, before the coming of the whites, they had lived happily. They had worked a little, for themselves, they had eaten and drunk and slept. From time to time they had had bloody palavers and had plucked the livers from the dead to eat their courage, and incorporate it in themselves. Such had been the happy days of old, before the coming of the whites.

Now they were mere slaves. There was nothing to be hoped for from a heartless race. For the boundjous (whites) were heartless. They deserted their children by Negro women, and these children, knowing they had sprung from the whites, scorned to associate with the blacks. They were full of hate and envy, these boundjouvoukos, these half-whites-half-blacks. They were lazy, mischievous, rotten with vices.

As for the white women, no use talking about them. For a long time they were considered precious objects, and were feared and respected like fetishes. Now they had come down a few pegs. Now it was known that they were just as easy as the black women, and more venal, and had vices the black women were innocent of. . . . But what was the use of talking about it?

And the white women wished to be respected!

Batouala's father held out his hand. The uproar subsided as if by magic. Not so the sound of music and singing that filled the air.

"My children, everything you say is so. Only, you should see there's nothing to be done. Resign yourselves. When the bamara (lion) roars, the antelope fears to bell. You are not the stronger. Keep quiet.

"Besides, to be quite frank, we are not here to curse the boundjous.

"I am old. While you were discussing, my tongue got dry. Let us shout less and drink more. Next to the bed and the easy-chair, Pernod is the most important invention of the boundjous. My eyesight is not so good, but I thought I noticed several bottles of absinthe. Do you mean to brood on them Batouala?"

The tension relaxed. They were into fits of laughter. Batouala himself had tears of laughter in his eyes as he hastened to satisfy the waggish old man's desire.

(To be continued next week.)

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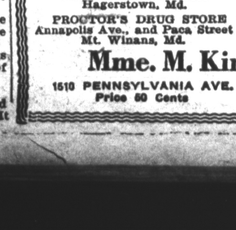

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Magazine Page

EDITED BY AFRO'S WOMAN EDITOR—EVERY READER OF THIS PAGE IS INVITED TO CONTRIBUTE TO IT

AUNT DILSEY'S PUZZLE CORNER FOR CHILDREN

AFRO'S PLEDGE

I solemnly pledge to abstain from using the terms "shine," "darkey," "nigger," "sheeny," "twop," "mick," "hunky" or any epithet which might humiliate American citizens.

Name .....

Address .....

Who will take this pledge and promise to keep it? Those who will, send the above pledge, properly signed to me.

Editor of Magazine Page.

NOTICE

I have received a pledge but from one person. Are you not willing to refrain from using vulgar epithets and persuading others from doing so?
I want to receive a pledge from every reader next week.
THE EDITOR.

PLEDGERS

Ridgely Miller, Philadelphia.
Madeline Christopher, Attleboro, Mass.
Mary Smith, 1805 Druid Hill avenue.
H. S. Brown, Chase ,Md.

THIS WEEK'S PUZZLE
HERE'S AN EASY ONE—

A A A A
B B B C
C C D D
D E E E

Here are 16 squares containing 5 different letters. The letter A appears 4 times, the other letters each 3 times. Try to arrange the squares so the same letter will not appear in any one line—either vertical, horizontal or in a diagonal direction. Send your solution to Puzzle Editor, The AFRO-AMERICAN.

ANSWER TO LAST WEEK'S PUZZLE

79 84 2-6
x 5 1-3

84 1-3 84 1-3

The seven digits, 1, 2, 5, 7, and 9 when arranged as shown on the left add up to the same total as the even digits when they are arranged to form the number on the right.

WHAT A FUNNY DINNER—

RED INN
SOME CONE
FEAST BORE
POET OATS
TIGHT APES
IN SOON
PALE PIPE

Here is a strange bill of fare. Every one of the items listed is the name of some familiar dish—with the letters mixed to form other words. For example. The words "Red Inn" contain the letters that compose the word "Dinner." The remaining items are all part of the menu. What did they have for dinner?
Send your solution to Puzzle Editor.

Can You Rhyme-a-Line?

A rhyme-a line is a jingle to two lines. Almost anybody can write one that will make folks laugh. Try your hand and send the result to the Rhyme-a-line Editor, "AFRO-AMERICAN." Best ones

I know a girl who powders her nose.
Yet all her stockings have holes in the toes,
M. M. L., Media, Pa.

My city cousin, little Bess,
Climbed a fence and tore her dress.
R. L. S., Richmond, Va.

I know a man who broke his collar bone,
By playing jazz on a saxophone.
T. SMITH, Dover, Del.

My dog is woolly, fluffy and fat,
And likes to chase our one-eyed cat.
R. M. JONES, Reading, Pa.

Next door to me lives Jimmie Jones.
He killed two birds with two little stones,
L. T. M., Massillon, O.

Can You Make A Phrase?

Each week, for the best phrase made from the initials of your own name. The AFRO offers a prize for the best one. Address Phrase Editor, AFRO-AMERICAN.

Many Exercise Deceit,
MARIE E. DAWKINS.
Penn's Grove, N. J.

AFRO FASHIONS—By Aunt Dilsey

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What Baby Said

AFRO will give a prize for the best contribution to this column. Write Baby Editor, AFRO-AMERICAN.

Billy was saying his prayers and was asking blessings for his relatives. "And bless Grandma, too," he finished, "the one that makes doughnuts."
He has two grandmas.
S. M. GORDON, Indianapolis.

Tested Beauty Hints

FOR BRITTLE NAILS

Dip your finger tips in warm olive oil every night or anoint the nails with vaseline. This will keep them from breaking so easy. Never cut them with the scissors, but file them with a flexible steel file in a curve that will conform to the tips of your fingers. When the vaseline is used persistently, usually a gentle buffing with a chamois-covered buffer is all one needs for polishing. Otherwise, a pink cream polish is used before the dry powder is applied. Gently push back the cuticle with an orangewood stick, working from the center up the sides.

Company Dinner Story

As we were getting seated at the dinner table, three unexpected guests arrived. There were only enough fresh cookies on the pate for our family, so when I noticed the three extra plates I hurriedly flew to the cellar for a peep into the cookie jar. There I found a handful, which were more than a week old. I decided to put them on the table, anyway, and instructed the children to take these and leave the fresh cookies for the company.

As usual, Betty was ready first, and asked, "Mother, may I have a cookie with the white frosting on?"

"Aw," piped up Eddie, "didn't you hear mother tell us that we had to eat the dried-up ones?"—MRS. B. A., Cleveland, Ohio.

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HOME EDUCATION

STORY-TELLING FOR CHILDREN

Julia W. Wolfe

To sit among a group of eager children with shining eyes and expectant faces is an inspiration to any story-teller. One is filled with ambition; to fail would be disastrous.

We hear much about the kind of story we are to tell, and with regard to this wise ones differ. Let us study the child first—then the story.

Some people think that myths and fairy tales should not be told to children, that they cause them to become visionary rather than practical. In a very few cases this may be true, but it does not prove that this very strong love of the child is generally harmful or to be discouraged.

What a dry, dull world it would be if the children were cut off from all imagination! It peoples the world in which they live with a distinguished company, and entertains them right royally. The ancient myths of the Old World are ever fresh and new to them, in fact they fascinate both young and old alike—all who love the mysterious and the beautiful. Our Indian legends, too, have charm, and there will be found plenty to agree that many of the more modern fairy tales are very much worth while.

Said a noted educator: "Much of the selfishness of the world is due, not to actual hard-heartedness, but to a lack of imagination."

If our nature stories do not bring the children closer to nature, their object is lost. "They do not so much need Nature as she is taught, but Nature as she speaks while we are silent." Let it be to each child as it was to Hiawatha:

"He learned of every bird its language,
Learned their names and all their secrets."

Stories are extremely valuable as a means of moral training. There are no wrong inclinations or weak points that may not be reached by the story, if skillfully told.

Very important is it, that we have genuine fun in our stories. While life is serious, there are certain rights inherent in childhood, of which one is genuine mirth. While we quicken the wits and impart sound wisdom, let us teach the science and art of happiness.

"When I'm tired, first gives me rest—
Is to hear a little child
Gurgle out in laughter wild,
And just laught and laugh its best."

The faculty of putting oneself in the place of others is of great service to the cause of morality, and this faculty may be cultivated by means of fairy stories. As a rule, children are in sympathy with all creatures; as they follow the story they share the joys and sorrows of Ulysses, Snow White and Rose Red or the Ugly Duckling. It is the exception when we meet a child who has not his share of imagination.

Occasionally we do meet a Peter Bell, to whom

"A primrose by a river brim
A yellow primrose was to him,
And it was nothing more."

While developing the imagination is desirable, too much of fairyland is to be avoided. Lead the child to see beauty in commonplace things. A piece of coal, a drop of water, a bean, each has a life history which in the hands of a skilful teacher becomes as beautiful and mysterious as any fairy tale.

To Keep You Guessing

How does a tipsy man look? Dizzypated.

What authority has a man for possessing 16 wives? The Episcopal marriage ceremony, which says, "For (four) richer, for poorer, for better, for worse." Sixteen in all.

When will the alphabet have only 25 letters? When U and I are gone.

What boat should shoot rapids most successfully? A gunboat.

What Bible character besides Adam had no parents? Joshua, the son of Nun.

How can you make a slow horse fast? Tie him to a post.

How can you spell blue water with three letters? Ink.

What goes up the steps on his head? A shoe tack.
White Hall, Md. THELMA CORDERY.

Week's Best Joke

The AFRO gives a prize for the best contribution to this column. Write Joke editor, AFRO-AMERICAN.

Lady Driver (at garage)—Do you charge batteries here?
Proprietor—Sure we do.
Lady—Then put a new one in this car and charge it to my husband.
C. ROLLINS.
Frederick Junction, Md.

Helpful Hints

RING ON BOBBIN WINDER

When rubber ring on old bobbin winder becomes too loose, remove and fit a piece cut from an automobile inner tube to fit ring, fastening with rubber cement, allowing it to set thoroughly. This works splendidly.

Ink may be removed from a linen tablecloth by steeping the cloth immediately after the ink has been spilled in boiling milk.

QUICK SALAD DRESSING

One egg yolk, 1 teaspoon sugar, ½ teaspoon salt, ¼ teaspoon mustard, juice of one lemon; 1 cup salad oil. Beat until thick. This can be made in five minutes.

Scrubbing neckbands of shirts and boys' blouse, the cuffs and separate soft collars saves time and keeps them white.

Embarrassing Moment

WHAT WAS YOURS?

Last week my husband and I went to the movies. Parts of the picture were very sad and I wiped away tears a number of times. Before leaving I took what I thought to be my compact and powdered my eyes, also my nose. We started out, and, glancing into a mirror, I saw to my horror that my nose and eyes were a fiery red. I had used my rouge box in my confusion to conceal the evidences of my emotion. Fortunately I was able to slip into the rest room and wash the rouge before many persons had seen me.—MRS. A. R., Huntington, W. Va.

DO'S AND DON'TS—HUSBANDS

Make your wife a real partner. Discuss your business problems with her.

Take her into your confidence.

Have children, or adopt some.

Supply your wife with sufficient to maintain a household.

Work together, play together and grow up together; and share responsibilities and pleasures alike.

DO'S FOR WIVES

Be not afraid to soil your hands.

Be not afraid of the really big thing in life—motherhood.

Do not tease your husband by flirtations.

Feed your husband well and make a pal of him.

More than anything else, your husbands to be the one man in your life. He wants your undivided affection.

Show him that he has it.

What Do Ye Hear?

What do ye hear? What do ye hear?
Ye people far and near?
Ye hear the sound of the rolling drum
Ye hear the cannon roar?
Ye hear the fife and the merry tune
Ye hear the soldiers marching soon
Ye hear the sound of the trumpet shrill
Ye hear the bugle blow?
Ye hear the sound of the tolling bell
Ye hear the church bell toll?
Ye hear the sound of the wedding bell
Ye hear the sound of the funeral knell
Ye hear the sound of the dinner bell
Ye hear the sound of the school bell
Ye hear the sound of the fire bell
Ye hear the sound of the sleigh bell
Ye hear the sound of the door bell
Ye hear the sound of the call bell
Ye hear the sound of the alarm bell
Ye hear the sound of the church bell
Ye hear the sound of the tolling bell