



#### A SAVAGE STRIKES BACK

*When a benighted savage turns to caricature, he wields a deadly weapon. Here is the haughty wife of a colonial official as a Madagascar native saw her: Done in wood, the lady wears skimpy white dress, high-heeled red shoes, purple parasol, sun helmet, and a dirty look. She is on exhibition now in Chicago's Field Museum.*

#### GEOLOGY

### Vast Underground Workings Supply Limestone for Steel

See Front Cover

**L**IMESTONE, necessary in the smelting of iron ore, must be mined just as is the iron and coal used in steel manufacture, now that surface workings have been exhausted. How the "hard rock men" who blast out the limestone work is shown in the photograph on the front cover of this week's SCIENCE NEWS LETTER. Two men are here shown, dwarfed by the great masses of limestone overhead, drilling in a back stope of the Muscoda Limestone Mine, near Birmingham, Ala. This mine produces 130 tons of limestone per hour during busy seasons, all of which is shipped for use in the nearby smelters.

*Science News Letter, April 9, 1938*

Important gland secretions that exist in the human body in quantities as tiny as one-millionth of a per cent. can be analyzed chemically by new methods.

#### ETHNOLOGY

## Liberia Natives Lose Respect For Europeans

**W**HEN Miss Etta Donner, a young Viennese girl, came home from her first expedition into the primeval forest of Liberia and was asked whether she had not been afraid to live all alone among savages, she said:

"Oh no! White people are very much respected where they are not known."

Now, returning from her second expedition, she says:

"White people are no longer so much respected. Several journalists who had been received with great hospitality by the natives wrote odious things about them—thinking these poor illiterate fellows would never know. Yet they did know; for however primitive these people may be, they are subjects of the Republic of Liberia, which has consulates in many countries."

#### Taxes Promote Sales

The "savages," the Dan and Kran peoples, have to pay to their government one Liberian dollar a year for every hut. As they are not fond of working they gladly earn taxes by selling Miss Donner masks and other handicraft articles, some of them having high artistic value.

It is not difficult to get these things, Miss Donner says, when one knows what they have. The difficulty is to guess what they have, for the natives answer only what they are asked.

Miss Donner, pupil of the Vienna African Institute, knows the Mano language, yet direct speech is no more good etiquette than direct handing of a gift. The ceremonial etiquette requires every formal conversation to go through the mouth of an interpreter, and every present through the hands of at least one servant. Social precedence is strict. Hence the natives march in single file. Miss Donner could not induce her boy to walk at her side. She was compelled to twist her neck when she wanted to talk to him while walking.

Emblems of the highest social rank, Miss Donner says, are the two enormous metal rings into which the feet of the chieftain's wife are riveted on the day of her marriage, so that she can hardly creep along. The rings are at last removed, after her death; because nothing

binding, no tie whatsoever, should be taken into the other world.

In the life of Dan and Kran peoples of East Liberia dancing is important. Dancing women announce the birth of a child. When somebody dies, singing women dance through the village to expel the spirit of death.

Preferably they dance in the silvery shine of the moon on the village square, but to welcome Miss Donner, they also danced in bright sunlight—a procession of dark female bodies carrying their babies on their backs and in their hands green branches as signs of peace.

At the festival of Youth Initiation sometimes the incredibly skilled stilt-dancers appear—called "long devils" by the Dan negroes.

Other masked dancers are "bush-devils" performing at special functions. If the clan chief cannot settle a conflict, he calls in a bush devil of high rank against whose verdict there is no appeal. Women are not permitted to see him and must retire into their cabins for the time of his stay. This office is a privilege of a few families whose names are not known.

#### A Demon for Cleanliness

A minor devil cares for order and cleanliness of the streets. He runs about with two sticks in his hands and beats people who get into his way. If he finds cow dung or other dirt in the street, he throws it at the faces of the villagers. Nobody dares oppose his tyranny.

With the Kran people Miss Donner met a masked dancer who imposed disagreeable things on the inhabitants. One man, for example, who boasted and bet too much was commanded to drink a whole bucket of water. A glutton was ordered to eat an enormous dish of rice. If such an unfortunate victim cannot fully accomplish his task, he is laughed at by the whole village and thrashed pitilessly by the devil.

The playful spirit of the natives needs masking and dancing not only for pleasure, Miss Donner finds, but also for carrying out educational and cultural duties.

*Science News Letter, April 9, 1938*