

REPORT No. 4

SUBMITTED to the GOVERNOR GENERAL of FRENCH WEST AFRICA.

By Madame SAVINEAU, Technical Adviser

on Education

GOUNDAM - TIMBUKTU - GAO

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Having left Mopti on 23rd November, I completed my tour of Sudan by taking in Goundam, Timbuktu and Gao. I stopped at:

DIRÉ, 24th November,

GOUNDAM, 25th to 28th November,

Return to DIRÉ, 29th November,

TIMBUKTU, 30th November to 5th December,

GOURMA RAROUS, 8th to 10th December,

GAO, 12th to 18th December (resting on doctor's orders)

Departure on 19th for the Niger colony.

As in the preceding report, I will relate the information in the order of the itinerary I followed.

DIRÉ

The Settlement

Our main interest in DIRÉ lies in the settlement villages of the *CICONIC*¹ (the Agricultural and Industrial Company of the French Sudan). This settlement, like the Niger Office, is based on irrigation, but in this case the water for irrigation is pumped. The .../...

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farming methods are also very different here. The cotton-growing land in Diré is very difficult to farm, so it is given a general ploughing by the Company. Rice, wheat and millet-growing land is worked by hand. So there are no ploughs, no oxen, and no fertilizer production. Barges go and fetch dung that has been left along the banks of backwaters over the centuries by herds belonging to nomads. This dung is three times richer than the equivalent found in France, according to Mr MAURIC, who oversees the operation. It is stocked in Diré from where the settlers take it away on donkeys. In return for this provision, each one of them gives 40 days' labour cleaning out the main canals. There is no way of knowing whether the dung is being sold at the appropriate rate.

For the water and the farming instructions they receive, the settlers give in return:

- half of their cotton harvest,
- 130 francs per hectare of rice,
- 120 francs per hectare of wheat,
- 140 francs per hectare of millet.

¹ *La compagnie agricole et industrielle du Soudan français*

Does this system used in Diré make the local inhabitants better off than those in the Niger Office? Just one of the villages that I visited lends itself to such a comparison.

The hamlet of Petit-Bourem

The hamlet is called Petit-Bourem because at the time of the conquest its inhabitants came from Bourem, near Gao. They have been established in the subdivision of Diré for many years.

For along time they paid dues to nomadic masters, but they are no longer required to do this. They were familiar with the irrigated farming of wheat. They are living in round straw huts, just as they would in independent villages.

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The chief's family is composed of three workers, or "dabas"² as they are referred to here. They include the chief himself, his brother and his servant. The women and the children do the weeding and help with the harvesting.

This chief dresses in opulent style with an elaborate turban on his head. His hut is decorated with cushions, intricate leather saddles, and weaponry. Where the Songhay use a huge blanket suspended overhead as protection against mosquitos, he has a Niafunké carpet worth at least 350 francs.

In the brother's dwelling there is only a plain blanket and very few, simple objects. The servant lives under a mat suspended on stakes.

It is the servant who works the hardest. The younger brother works well. The older brother points out, lethargically, that he also works in the fields.

² A daba is a hand-held farming implement but here it refers to a farmworker.

They came to this settlement 7 years ago, with 5 cows and since then they have shared between them, unevenly of course, about 1,000 francs a year. Each has lived according to his status and acquired the following goods:

The elder brother: 3 oxen, 3 donkeys, 10 sheep, 5 horses, of which 3 have died.

The younger brother: 1 cow, 2 donkeys.

The servant: 8 sheep.

No need to ask the latter two if they are happy. Their chief's opinion is the only opinion they have. He likes the new farming methods. The same land yields more, and more land can be cultivated. Previously, crops were irrigated using a calabash, now the water comes by itself.

The work is overseen by the Europeans, but a few settlers are now capable of managing it themselves.

The other farmers in Petit-Bourem would be happy if they saw some money. But they still have not seen any revenue for 1936. Mr MAURIC accounted for this delay in the following manner:

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cotton from Diré is sent for sale in France, and the settlers receive half the sale price less carriage and brokerage costs. The cotton harvest of 1936 is selling badly, part of it is still in storage in Dakar. But the settlers have not suffered as a result: you have only to look at the size of their wives.

Indeed they are big, strapping women adorned with silver jewellery. Yet they complain about not getting enough to eat. Another explanation given was that this year they

have not grown as much rice as they wanted because there was an inadequate supply of pumped water. So they grew wheat but it is not ready yet. In the meantime, the company has been advancing them supplies which they will have to repay. The heads of families are concerned about this so are only distributing them in small quantities.

The official figures on profits being made in Diré are more or less the same as in the Niger Office. As we have shown before, these profits are quite derisory when you look at the labour being provided. In Diré, it is certainly the case that women are contributing less work, they are protected from this by their customs. Regarding the contribution of children, they are not participating in the really heavy work because this is being done by machines. Some say that children are being sent to work in the fields at the age of 10, others say at 12. At the school, I noticed that there were far more children from the local independent villages than settlers' children. The schoolteacher told me that this is because they are needed for work in the fields. Mr MOURGUES, the Commandant³ of Goundam, said they prefer to send the sons of chiefs to our schools rather than farmers' children, so that's why there are so few of the latter.

In Diré, as in the Niger Office, the head of the family takes the major share of the profits. But there is another sort of exploitation going on in Diré involving the Bellah villages, which is even more serious. The management, acting under the influence of the Administrator, is proposing to do away with them.

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Bellah villages

³ Literally a the Commandant of the *Cercle* (Circle), or head of the French colonial administrative district.

The land on which these villages stand was given to Tuaregs, who moved their servants on to it under the supervision of a blacksmith. Only eleven marabout Tuaregs have consented to farm the land themselves.

The Bellah village that I visited is not composed of huts as such, but rather of shelters made from animal hide or from a mat supported by stakes.

Under one of these shelters, an old woman was teaching little six-year old girls how to make baskets out of the palm leaves. The woman sells these baskets to buy food, because once the Tuareg has been paid, the head of the family does not have enough left to feed his own people. It takes 5 to 10 days to make a basket worth 50 centimes. They make mats too.

By comparison, the blacksmith's family seems almost opulent. These fine-looking women wear big black wrappers⁴ and trade baskets for animal hides, which they tan, embroider and sell for 15 francs.

The men appeared: "We never have any money, and we don't have enough to eat. We have to make yoghurt⁵ from our goats' milk and trade it for millet. If we need a boubou⁶, we have to sell a goat".

The Tuareg comes every week to issue instructions. But why do they put up with the Tuareg? Just one of the Bellah men replied. He is an 18-year-old who went to school for a time and speaks French. If someone would give him a plot of land, he could farm it with his brothers.

Mr MAURIC has promised to grant this wish.

Wood-carriers

The company needs 100 cubic metres of wood every day to run its pumps, .../...

⁴ A wrapper, or 'pagne' in French, is a piece of cloth wound around the body as a wrap-around skirt or dress.

⁵ Literally '*lait caillé*' or curdled milk, which tastes rather like mild yoghurt.

⁶ A long robe resembling a kaftan.

and this has to be collected from 50 kilometres away. Gradually they have to go further and further afield to gather the wood, and soon the cost of transporting it is going to be prohibitive. The wood will be replaced by gasoline.

In the meantime, barges carrying the wood are unloaded by pieceworkers. Once again these are Bellah workers whom the Tuaregs have sent for hire. They have to feed themselves and hand over a certain sum to the master, who comes to collect it on pay-day.

There are seven or eight small and frail-looking women amongst the labourers. I do not know what loads they are made to carry, as I saw them during a break.

The women porters are not living under mats, they are living under what remains of mats. They are dressed in rags. All their tools, calabashes, mortars and so on, are half-wrecked, and any other woman would consider them fit for nothing.

I asked them about their lives:

‘A’ lives alone with her elderly mother and her 18-month-old child. The old woman is looking after the little one while her daughter goes off to work. The daughter provides the food. After the working day, she pounds the ingredients and prepares the meals. She has been there for a month and does not know how much she will earn.

‘B’ is married with two children. The monthly ration (rice or millet and occasionally fish) is enough for the mother and the children for 10 days. She gives her wages to her husband, who provides the rest of the food, pays his wife’s tax, and clothes her, albeit very badly. A fixed amount goes to the Tuareg.

'C' has come looking for work. She is alone with two children. She will do anything to earn some money. It is tiring, whatever you do. She does not ask how much she will earn; she is happy just to get something.

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The women earn 1.50 francs plus the food ration. The men earn 2 francs because their work is heavier. These men and women have a right to collect all the cinders that come out of the machines. They separate it from the ashes and sell it in Diré at 50 centimes a basket.

Their wages are sometimes paid late.

Labourers

Some of the farming tasks in Diré are carried out by labourers, among whom are children of 13 or 14 years of age. They are all pieceworkers. They have an assignment to complete within the working day and for this they get a ticket. They present this ticket to get paid. If they do not manage to get a ticket the day before, two assignments have to be completed the following day. Nobody ever manages it.

One of the men claimed he had worked every day for a month but had only been paid for only ten days. Somebody went to fetch the registers. The man had worked 14 days on this site, and the rest of the month on another. Has he received payment for the 14 days? He insists that he has not and that he was handed 10 francs by an African employee who collected his money for him. The matter is going to court.

The mood in the settlement

Despite its serious shortcomings, this settlement in Diré seems more tolerable than in the Niger Office. This is due to local conditions. First and foremost, the Africans have not been moved from their homelands. Secondly, their working methods have only slightly changed. They were already familiar with irrigated farming and crop rotation, so they understood immediately what was new about this scheme they were offered.

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Furthermore, the settlement in Diré, only involves some 400 settlers at most, and it is run by a single manager, Mr MAURIC, and the land all falls under the jurisdiction of Goundam. Consequently, the Administration is running the settlement in Diré. The Commandant, Mr MOURGUES, who represents the Administration, is a good and fair man who likes the local Africans. I became convinced of this during the time I spent in Goundam. Mr MOURGUES has been able to make Mr MAURIC an ally in the battle against the Company, which would readily engage in illegal and oppressive practices. According to Mr MOURGUES, the settlers themselves have also joined forces in this alliance, and on occasion their advice has been taken in matters relating to farming procedures.

In Diré, no-one had a bad word to say. Mr MAURIC is of a kindly disposition. He seems not to impose any authoritarian measures on his personnel. Wishing to show me that the settlers work freely, M. MOURGUES suggested, in my presence, to a French-speaking local that he should implement a system of teamwork.

- If you insist, we will do it, the man replied, very alarmed.

- But you don't want to. Why not?

He struggled with his own thoughts and said, finally:

- We work better with our heads.

The Health service

The service is run by Doctor GULTZGOFF. The main illnesses in Diré are malaria, respiratory ailments, dysentery, syphilis (99% of which is inherited), tetanus cases resulting from circumcision (the children are told to sit on the ground and use little sticks to raise the dust and get it .../...

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to settle over their wounds). The number of consultations for this condition continues to rise.

The clinic and the Medical Service give the following figures for consultations:

5,670 men

2365 women

3733 children

who come on average:

men: 3 times

women: 5 times

children: 4 times

In other words, it is more difficult to get the women to attend but once they have been won over, they attend more regularly.

In Goundam, there was a midwife who found it very difficult to gain the women's confidence. At the beginning, she was so despondent she wept. Finally she began to succeed but then the post of midwife was discontinued. If another one is appointed, she will have to start the process of winning their confidence all over again.

In the meantime, it is the doctor who deals with the new mothers, but it is much more difficult for him than it would be for a woman. It is particularly difficult with Tuareg women. The traditional birthing attendants⁷ have kept their influence among Songhay and Bozo women. They make the women give birth sitting down. This often results in tearing because female genital excision has reduced the elasticity of the tissue. There are also frequent umbilical hernias caused by bad stitching, and ptoses due to the new mothers getting up too quickly after the birth.

Some of the traditional birthing attendants have done 2 or 3-month placements in the clinic, and have made a lot of progress. They are given a little case. Every woman whose delivery is attended by the recognised birthing attendant, receives two boubous.

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Dr GULTZGOFF says that over the past ten years the Medical Service has made considerable progress. In 1928, the doctor used to have to take three guards with him to vaccinate a population, and have the villages surrounded. There were fights and imprisonments. These days the chiefs themselves report epidemics. The sick now travel great distances to attend the clinic, and are happy to stay near the doctor for a long period, and because he can cite from the Koran, they will even take medication during fasting. Where the marabout⁸ has objected, the Koranic school has been closed. Some very cunning marabouts have been selling grigris⁹ and advising sick people to go and see the doctor.

⁷ Literally *matrones*, which is sometimes translated as 'traditional midwives'.

⁸ A Muslim religious leader and teacher.

⁹ Charms bought and sold to ward off negative spirits and conjure helpful ones.

As far as health matters are concerned, the settlement in Diré has been a force for good. Despite enormous numbers of mosquitos, malaria is on the decline. For example, in Bourem, after two years of settlement there were four swollen spleens¹⁰ among 110 children, and after six years, only four swollen spleens among 228 children. In Goundam, there are six swollen spleens among 93 children. This fall in the rate of infection has been achieved without quinine, just with decent food.

Comparing births and deaths in the independent and settlement villages in Diré, we can see that there has been a growth in the population of the latter:

independent villages:	46 births	41 deaths.
settlement villages:	50 births	7 deaths

In 1936, the highest percentage of African riflemen¹¹ fit for service was recorded by Diré. Although the settlers' children work in the fields from the age of ten, they look better than the other children of the region. It was noticeable how healthy they looked.

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GOUNDAM

I will not elaborate on the customs of the Songhay, the Arma or the Tuaregs, or on their dwellings, which it was interesting to visit. The important thing to study in Goundam are the Bellahs, the servant class of the Tuaregs.

As I was leaving the house belonging to the chief of the canton¹², I came across a group of women going in. They had come to offer to carry millet. Amongst them, there were

¹⁰ This was used a sign of malarial infection.

¹¹ The *Tirailleurs*, or *Tirailleurs Sénégalais*, a regiment of African rifles formed by Governor-General Louis Faidherbe in Saint-Louis in the 1850s.

¹² The canton was the smallest administrative unit in French West Africa, each of which was headed by a chief.

children aged 12 or 13. Some were dressed in cheap-looking wrappers, others in torn and patched animal skins. One of the little girls had a necklace made of china buttons.

When they have completed their task, which involves going from the hut to the river carrying a packet of millet on their heads, they are given five ears of millet.

They also thresh the millet, and earn one tenth of the grain. Alternatively they pound the grain, and carry water.

They live on the grain they earn. They give forty or fifty two-kilo measures to the master. This leaves them with little left over to eat during the rainy season.

The married women are clothed by their husbands, if not, they clothe themselves. Of the six women, two were married. The others, although they were not married, had children. All the little ones were in the courtyard of the village, where the mothers are allowed to shelter free of charge, either under a mat or in the open air.

When the Bellah women are worn out, they stop working and then they do not have anything to eat. When they are old, their children, or those who believe in God, take care of them. Alternatively they take up begging and .../...

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hadly have anything to eat. At the age of eleven, a Bellah girl goes out to earn her own food. Any profit goes to her parents. From seventeen onwards, she works for the Tuareg.

Other Bellahs live in the encampment close to their mistress, a huge woman who squats on a mat, demanding constant care and attention. These servants are relatively well-off.

The Liberty village

On the edge of Goundam village, there is a group of Bellah runaways. There are some old men there who remember having been abducted and sold in their adolescence. Others were born into captivity. Some sought refuge with the French in the earliest days of the conquest, then put down roots here and are now heads of large families. They adopted Songhay customs.

Amongst these refugees, there are a few single women. We visited the home of a beautiful woman aged about 35. She has been there for ten years. She goes to other people's homes to do some spinning or fetch wood. She earns 15 francs a month plus food. She would happily get married and showed us her dowry of 100 francs. She would give 15 or 20 francs for a good husband, but nobody asks her.

Women's industries

To make a spherical water carrier, Goundam's female potter kneads and rolls the earth into the shape of a sausage, then flattens it with a spatula. She puts another round of sausage-shaped clay on top of the first piece, and continues building up the bowl like this. She sells her pots for between 50 centimes and one franc. With the money she gets, she buys millet, or rice, and sometimes a little meat or fish.

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Progressive couples

I met a despatch clerk who has two wives. The husband sleeps on a mat under a mosquito net. There was a bottle of eau-de-Cologne on his table. The first wife, who was married to a white man, has a monumental bed with cotton drapes. The second wife has a mat

on the ground. There were straw objects decorating the walls but the room was dark and sombre, and smelt unpleasant.

The prison

It comprises a yard surrounded by dark and narrow cells, flanked by a very high wall. The administrator did not want to keep his one female prisoner there. She has her mat in the yard reserved for the guards, beneath the veranda. She is an old woman, who was for a long time her husband's only wife. The Songhay are generally monogamous, but, as Muslims, they have a right to four wives. The husband took a second wife and no longer gave food, clothing or his company to the first wife, who had produced eight children, three of whom had died. One day he came to visit to discuss a matter to with her. When he had gone to sleep, she took up a spear and killed him.

Two former prisoners had been found guilty of infanticide. One of them was a young unmarried girl who had abandoned her child in the bush. The other was a married woman who had strangled the child, which she had conceived before she was married. This is what happens when the customary way of treating women who stray is very severe. In both cases, the court assessors¹³ were after their heads and the presiding judge had had a hard job saving them.

At the market there was a female leper selling charcoal she has prepared herself in the bush. She comes to Timbuktu once a week, where she divides up her load into twelve little piles and sells them for 50 centimes each.

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¹³ The local cantonal court comprised a bench of assessors appointed from the local African community.

Schooling

A class for young Tuaregs has recently been opened at the school in Goundam. They are the sons of a maraboutic tribe. They are very white and look sickly, but they are lively and are obviously happy to be studying.

In the morning the class is taken by a black teacher, and in the afternoon by a marabout. They live in an encampment, guarded by servants. Their mothers come to spend sometimes quite long periods of time with them.

The Health service

Same observations as for Diré.

TIMBUKTU

The customs in Timbuktu are strange and complex. Working-class women enjoy plenty of freedom while the bourgeois women are secluded. However, one day a year, the upper-class women have the right to go and meet up with a male childhood friend, or even several, one after another, without their husband being able to protest.

I visited some Moroccan women who were married to Moroccan men and were complete secluded. On the day of the great celebration that marks the end of Ramadan, they were all gathered together in one of their houses. A young servant, who had just recently got married, was wearing all her mistress's jewellery.

A mixed-race girl, the daughter of a trader, was likewise married to a Moroccan. She has a half-Arab, half French lifestyle and works as a shop assistant.

Women's industries

The women of Timbuktu make bracelets out of palm fibre which they cover with beads. They make three a day and sell them at 50 centimes each. A skein of beads, which is enough to make a dozen bracelets, costs 2.50 francs.

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The wives of the district's¹⁴ interpreter make indigo-dyed fabrics that have white patches on them achieved by applying boiled rice to these areas. They flatten out the creases in the pieces of cloth by beating them with a stick. Next to the women there was a little girl using a hot iron to iron the husband's boubous.

Schooling

The girls at school in Timbuktu do not want to be civil servants, they prefer to stay at home and cook, spin cotton, and write letters to their friends.

The health service

There is a medical check in operation for the prostitutes of Timbuktu. The doctor gets access to contagious women through sick riflemen. The women are given a card and have to come in for a check-up twice a week. Those in need of medical attention are admitted to the hospital where they are treated twice a day. They have gone from 40 new cases of venereal disease amongst riflemen, to only two.

After the visit, I spoke with some of these women, all of them very poor:

¹⁴ Literally the *Cercle*, or Circle, as the French called the administrative district.

a) Samadeye comes from a vassal Tuareg tribe. Her husband was a houseboy who left for France with a lieutenant. She had upset her family through this marriage and so could not return home. Women of her race are not supposed to become house servants. She set up home with a mixed-race sergeant from Martinique. She had a child. The sergeant left and never wrote. She has never asked for the welfare assistance offered to people of mixed race.

b) M'Barka, a French-speaking Arab, was married, but her husband left for Gao. She did not want to leave her mother. They got divorced. She had to sell the camels for food and tried to find some means of support.

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c) Almoudoné is a bellah girl aged between 17 and 18. She is pretty, laughs a lot, and is not married. Her parents live in the Bellah district, she eats at their home. They do not tell her to "Do that", but she has to bring them money.

d) Aïssa Sidi Ali is a Moorish Kounta and the daughter of a marabout. She span me a yarn about her parents being poor people, and her having to provide food for them. The doctor's houseboy, who is her cousin, tells another story: her parents are rich. They have tried everything, even tying her up and beating her, to prevent her from going out, but she does it all the same.

e) Alice Mohamed is a pure Tuareg girl who fled from their encampment because she detested the diet of milk young girls of her race are subjected to as a means of fattening them up.

The Bellah village

Free Bellahs are settling around Timbuktu, where their villages are getting bigger and bigger. The men are working the land while the women go to the Niger, with their donkeys, to buy fresh fish. These women leave at midnight and arrive at seven o'clock in the morning. They rest there until two in the afternoon and get back around 5 pm, sometimes later, or even the following morning if they have to wait for the fish. They go to Timbuktu and sell all the fish straightaway, except for a small portion which they keep back for the family. They make about 2 francs' profit, sometimes more. Some days, they do not earn even 10 centimes. When the fish goes off while they are on the road, they have to dry it before they can sell it. Then they make almost no money at all.

Having sold their wares, they rest until midnight then set off again.

In the growing season, they do the cooking and take food to the fields, then they go with their donkeys to buy millet and sell it at the market.

These women have their own goods and considerable .../...

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authority in their households. Some prefer not to get married.

The sorters of Kabara

In Kabara, three commercial companies, Aubert, Maurel Prom and Teyssère employ women to sort rubber and wool. At Aubert's, I saw wool sorting for myself. They employ up to 100 women for this. When I arrived on the day in question, the women were hurriedly summoned. Fifteen sat down on mats in a shed, and sacks full of raw wool were emptied in front of them. They started beating the wool with little sticks and a cloud of dust rose up.

They all began to cough. The procedure lasted only a few moments but the coughing persisted for quite some time. I should also mention sieving, which “makes them cough too much”. Forty women are set this task which lasts for half an hour.

As they sorted the white wool from the black, I talked to them:

‘A’ was a pretty young 16 year-old girl who works for her mother, a nearly blind widow, and for her little brother, aged six or seven. When she does not come to do the sorting, she looks for wood in the bush with her little brother. Each of them brings back a small bundle that they sell for 10 centimes.

‘B’ works for a Daga (a vassal Tuareg) master. She and her mother pay him 25 francs a year.

‘C’ is married to an old husband. He earns 75 centimes a day making rope. When she is not sorting, she weaves baskets: it takes two days to make a basket that sells for 10 centimes. On days when they have a bit of money they have a good meal, otherwise they eat just millet, or nothing.

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GOURMA - RAROUS

I had a bout of dysentery so I did very little work here. However, I did gather some curious information about the dances of the Koyaboro.

After Goundam and Timbuktu, the native town of Gao had nothing new to offer. I found just a few examples of more progressive couples there.

a) Abdallah Diakité, a writer-interpreter, wishes his wives could speak French: it would be very convenient not to be understood by the children and their staff.

He has two wives, they have not been to school but he has seen to it that they have been taught European cooking and ironing. One of them can sew. She mends her husband's clothes, hardly ever her own and the children's.

b) Bogoba Tangara is a 23 year-old Bambara from Ségou. He has one wife and lives an indigenous lifestyle. He goes out to dance and eat European-style food at the home of women formerly married to white men (in other words, prostitutes).

He would like to have a wife who earns money; then they would take a female servant. He thinks that an educated woman should, like any other woman, obey her husband. In the home, it should be as if she had never been to school.

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c) This civil servant is married to a Tuareg woman who is happy because she no longer has to live on the milk diet. She still drinks a litre a day, but she eats meat, rice, and millet as well. She would not accept a co-wife (Tuaregs are monogamous). She goes out only at night, and even then rarely. This seclusion is in keeping with tradition. She does it voluntarily.

d) Jean-Marie Koné, a teacher from Segou, is a Christian and has married a Christian woman. Their house is decorated tastefully and conforms far more closely to the European model than the preceding ones. Both husband and wife eat at the table, with all the required utensils.

The health service

The clinic is in good condition but the building in which hospitalised patients are kept is squalid. It is composed of suffocating cells, which patients abandon in the hot season to lie on the sand in the yard. They do not have any taras¹⁵. They did try beds made from banco¹⁶, but these were no better than lying on the ground.

Clean people do not want to put a foot in the place. Only the poorest of souls appear, people who have been suffering awful afflictions in the bush before coming for a consultation. They look dreadful. The sight of them is all the more distressing because the European town at Gao is the most luxurious in the region. One would imagine that the tourists Gao is so eager to please would probably be put off if they saw its so-called “hospital”.

The maternity ward is managed by a charming midwife. Miss Marcelle DUPUIS, the daughter of Mr DUPUIS-YACOUBA. She is completely devoted to her duties, and the doctors are very happy with her work. Dr FRAIMBAULT, from Timbuktu, which she has just left, misses her very much. In Gao, .../...

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¹⁵ Low-lying local style beds.

¹⁶ A building material made from earth, straw and water, similar to adobe, usually used for constructing the walls of huts.

she is working through that difficult period when the women need winning over.

They would happily allow themselves to be cared for at home but they are still afraid of the maternity ward. However, they are beginning to learn to be wary of the traditional birthing attendant. They have been known to come in and ask for the midwife to deal with babies still attached to the placenta. To attract the women to the maternity ward, they need to install beds and cots, instead of taras. Miss DUPUIS thinks that the women are not put off by European comfort, on the contrary it attracts them. She has seen them admiring electric lamps, for example.

In addition to the beds, they need bedcovers instead of those dirty blankets the women bring with them. The ward also needs to be in a position to give them the soap when they ask for it.

There are 179 women registered at the mother and baby clinic. 10 new women registered for the prenatal clinic in November, and 15 more during the first half of December.

Miss DUPUIS would be able to visit far more women if she had a bicycle. And she needs a kettle and a stove for making boiled water.

The American Missions

There is nothing to say about either the one in Timbuktu or the one in Gao. They are having no success at all.

signed: Madame SAVINEAU