

A MYSTERIOUS SULTANA IN GERMAN EAST AFRICA

A MYSTERIOUS Sultana has just been discovered in the northwest part of German East Africa by Lieut. Col. von Stümer, chief of the military station at Bukoba. Such famous African explorers as Stanley, Emin Pasha, and Stuhlmann had heard of this remarkable personage, but failed to meet her face to face. Her name was said to be Nyanningi, she resided in Mpororo, and like a second veiled picture of Sais, threatened to put any person to death who dared to unveil her. Frequently other persons were brought forward to satisfy the curiosity of inquisitive travelers. Lieut. Col. von Stümer has now not only succeeded in seeing this woman, but also conversed with her on several occasions. In a very interesting article, which has appeared in the *Deutsche Colonialblatt*, he writes of his expedition to the village of Tungamu in Mpororo.

Not alone curiosity brought the officer

to the residence of Nyanningi. She had in an unwarranted manner imposed a road toll on a German military patrol. It was therefore Lieut. Col. von Stümer's first duty to call the Sultana's attention to the impropriety of her conduct. But it was no easy task to enter Nyanningi's hut. The station chief was compelled to enter by force. Finally he confronted the wonderful woman—a young, graceful Mtussi native stood before him.

"I saw," tells Von Stümer, "that, like all Mtussi, she was rather tall, of light complexion, with large eyes shadowed by deep eyelashes, a sharp nose, small mouth, beautiful teeth, the head combed in Mtussi style. She was dressed in a red hide, which was covered with white figures. The oval face indicated shrewdness and force; her neck was graceful, her bust well formed, arms slender."

The beautiful Sultana by no means received the white man graciously. On the

contrary, she endeavored to strike him with a long iron pole. After this dangerous weapon had been wrung from her hands she crouched down on her grass bed, and with large, wondering eyes looked at the intruder. Lieut. von Stümer

then asked her to explain to him how it was that she was well and happy, although she sat unveiled before him. The intelligent Sultana managed to make a bright explanation. "Nyanningi," she declared with a slight smile, "has disap-

peared in the clouds. I am only her servant, whom the Sultana has commanded to speak in her name. I am her mouth; through me the people learn the will of Nyanningi when she goes away." Thereupon the visitor expressed the opinion

that Nyanningi had indeed selected a very good-looking servant. This compliment seemed to please her very much, and she became talkative. She related that her name was Kiakutuma, and had been married to a chief in the neighborhood, but that Nyanningi had taken her away.

In the evening, entirely veiled, accompanied by a sorceress and several warriors, the Sultana came to the tent of Stümer. The next morning he received news that Nyanningi had returned and would like to bid him farewell. Before his departure Stümer once more went to the hut of the Sultana. Behind a matting was heard a high voice, who called to him to remain her friend. When Stümer promised this, the matting was raised, Kiakutuma looked out smilingly and gave him her hand. "Where is Nyanningi?" asked the station chief. "Nyanningi has returned," answered Kiakutuma, "and

has permitted me to see you once more."

It was now clear to Stümer that a comedy was being enacted. According to his opinion, a Sultana named Nyanningi had indeed existed who had lived apart from the people. After her death a priestess had been put in her place, the tool of the strongest party. She revealed Nyanningi's will to the people. In this manner the people gradually began to believe in the Sultana's divinity. Of course the chiefs did everything to strengthen this belief. Kiakutuma represented her part with much skill and with much imagination, particularly in the manner in which she told of the Sultana's power and presence. In view of her position, of course, Kiakutuma is a much-sought person. She is a sort of Astarte priestess, on whom the chiefs bestow presents. In the moment of danger, however, the brave men took no trouble to protect the Sultana, but preferred to remain in hiding.

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