

IMPRESSIONS OF THE AZANDE.

By Major P. M. Larken.

(Continued from Vol. IX, Part I).

(PLATES VI—XIV).

CHAPTER VII.

MANNERS AND HABITS.

THE Zande are great chatterers, and can never state a fact succinctly. The narrator of any event will describe it at the greatest possible length, enlarging upon all details however remotely connected with it, whether relevant or not, and retailing the most unimportant conversations *in extenso*. His hearers will listen with avidity, and will show no signs of boredom at his repetitions or prolixity. He will talk in rather a loud voice, accompanying his words with unceasing pantomime, for he is quite unable to keep his hands still when speaking, and his gestures are often very expressive. In *oratio obliqua* he instinctively throws the proper inflexions into his voice, and he would be a wonderful actor, if the theory of acting¹ were known to him, which it is not; he is a very clever mimic.

This inability to control the flow of speech makes the hearing of cases by the Chief a lengthy business, which, however, is usually somewhat shortened by both parties to the suit talking at once. That they should do so seems to cause no inconvenience to the judge at all.

Both Avungara and Azande have most retentive memories even for trivial facts and conversations. A man who has travelled a road that is new to him will keep a picture of it in his mind's eye to the minutest detail; and hearers of cases seem to be able to remember them for years, and are seldom at fault when questioned about them later.

These two traits, retentiveness of memory and eagerness to hear the most uninteresting story in detail, seem to suggest that the Zande has

¹ The nearest approach to acting *qua* acting that the writer has come across was an impromptu entertainment given by a carrier to his companions during a halt on the march. He gave representations of animals, that were nothing less than marvellous, copying their characteristic movements with perfect fidelity and no exaggeration. He finished up with a comic sketch of a woman (which, though somewhat broad, was exceedingly funny) and miming caricatures of his friends.