children; it was just thrown away because no one would be bothered to rear it, but when Miss Sessor had had all the trouble of it the natives had no objection to pet and play with it, calling it 'the child of wonder', because of its survival.

With the twin baby it was very different. They would not touch it and only approached it after some days, and then only when it was held by Miss Sessor or me. If either of us wanted to do or get something, and we handed over the bundle to one of the house children to hold, there was a stampede of men and women off the verandah, out of the yard and over the fence, if need be, that was exceedingly comic, but most convincing as to the reality of the terror and horror in which they held the thing. Even its own mother could not be trusted with the child; she would have killed it. She never betrayed the slightest desire to have it with her, and after a few days' nursing and feeding up she was anxious to go back to her mistress, who, being an enlightened woman, was willing to have her if she came without the child.

The main horror is undoubtedly of the child, the mother being killed more as a punishment for having been so intimately mixed up in bringing the curse, danger and horror into the village than for anything else.

The woman went back by the road that had been cut for her coming, and would have to live for the rest of her life an outcast, and for a long time in a state of isolation, in a hut of her own into which no one would enter, neither would anyone eat or drink with her, nor partake of the food or water she had cooked or fetched. She would lead the life of a leper, working in the plantation by day, and going into her lonely hut at night, shunned and cursed. I tried to find out whether there was any set period for this quarantine, and all I could arrive at was that if—and a very considerable if—a man were to marry her and she was subsequently present to society as an acceptable infant, she would be to a certain extent socially rehabilitated, but she would always be a woman with a past—a thing the African, to his credit be it said, has no taste for.

I have tried to find out the reason of this widely diffused custom which is the cause of such a pitiful waste of life; for in addition to the mother and children being killed it often leads to other people, totally unconnected in the affair, being killed by the relatives of the sufferer on the suspicion of having caused the calamity by witchcraft, and until one gets hold of the underlying idea, and can destroy that, the custom will be hard to stamp out in a district like the great Niger Delta. But I have never been able to hunt it down, though I am sure it is there, and a very quaint idea it undoubtedly is. The usual answer is, 'It was the custom of our fathers', but that always and only means, 'We don't intend to tell'.

So Miss Sessor stood waiting in the broiling sun, in the hot season's height, while a path was being cut to enable her just to get through to her own grounds. The natives worked away hard, knowing that it saved the polluting of a long stretch of market road, and when it was finished Miss Sessor went to her own house by it and attended with all kindness, promptness and skill, to the woman and children.

I arrived in the middle of this affair for my first meeting with Miss Sessor, and things at Okiyon were rather crowded, one way and another, that afternoon. All the attention one of the children wanted—the boy, for there was a boy and a girl—was burying; for the people who had crammed them into the box had utterly smushed the child's head. The other child was alive, and is still a member of that household of rescued children all of whom owe their lives to Miss Sessor. There are among them twins from other districts, and deliberate children who must have died had they been left in their villages, and a very wonderful young lady, very plump and very pretty, aged about four. Her mother died a few days after her birth, so the child was taken and thrown into the bush, by the side of the road that led to the market. This was done one market-day some distance from the Okiyon town. This particular market is held every ninth day, and on the succeeding market-day some women from the village by the side of Miss Sessor's house happened to pass along the path and heard the child feebly crying; they came into Miss Sessor's yard in the evening, and sat chatting over the day's shopping, &c., and casually mentioned in the way of conversation that they had heard the child crying, and that it was rather remarkable it should be still alive.

Needless to say, Miss Sessor was off, and had that waif home. It was truly in an awful state, but just alive. In a marvellous way it had been left by leopards and snakes, with which this bit of forest abounds, and, more marvellous still, the driven ants had not smelted it. Other ants had considerably eaten into it one way and another; nose, eyes, &c., were swarming with them and flies; the cartilage of the nose and part of the upper lip had been absolutely eaten into, but in spite of this she is now one of the prettiest black children I have ever seen, which is saying a good deal, for Negro children are very pretty with their round faces, their large mouths not yet coarsened by heavy lips, their beautifully shaped flat little ears and their immense melancholy deer-like eyes, and above these charms they possess that of being fairly quick. This child is not an object of terror, like the twin...