



Fig.027 A native man sleeping in his hut. He is laying on the side as most of other natives using his arm as a pillow. He may be also laying on a bed made of two timbers facing the fire that keeps him warm through the night. In the event of a powerful storm a native may lay next to the timbers so as to protect themselves from falling branches.

Exposure Among the Natives of Higher Africa

If natives had doors "they would not be able to look out and see the starry sky". In a black farmer's hut or in a white man's house they "feel stifled and rather claustrophobic" and "will not willingly sleep behind a closed door" (Hallet 1973). In fact, doors "are unknown" and the utmost natives do is to "barricade the entrance with branches" to keep "unwelcome fauna" out. Moreover, they have no knowledge of "mattresses' blankets" and what we regard as necessary for a "night's repose". They are perfectly satisfied stretching themselves on "hard timber, facing the fire" to keep themselves warm during the "chilly night". They always sleep on their side with their "knees huddled up" and their arm under their head "in lieu of a pillow". They are in exactly the same position in the morning as they were when they "lay down to sleep the evening before." But "if the morning is rainy, or cold and dull" there is not a stir "until fairly late". However as soon as "the smoke of the first fire curls up" from a hut, it is "the signal for all to get up" even if it is still raining. As natives venture "into the open" they hug themselves "against the cold" but in no time they dive back again "under the thatch and crouches over the warm fire". On these rainy days "the camp remains dead and silent" (Schebesta 1933).