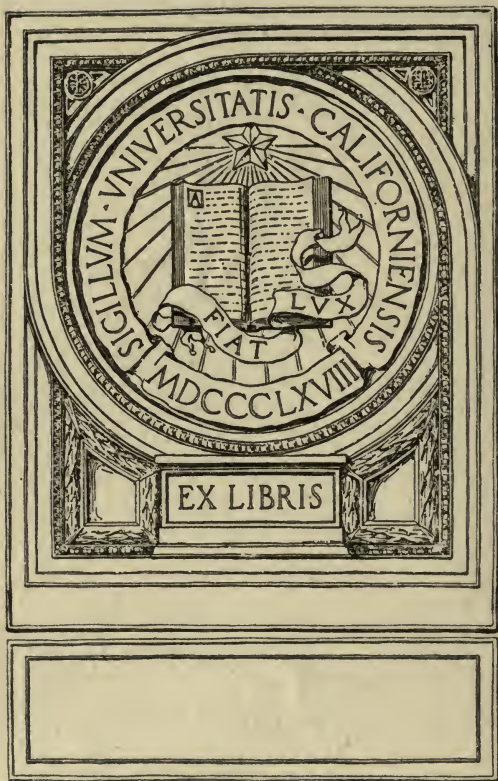


GOLD COAST PALAVER

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LOUIS P. BOWLER

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Gold Coast Palaver



THE AUTHOR

Gold Coast Palaver

Life on the Gold Coast

By

Louis P. Bowler

With Portrait of Author



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TO THE
AMERICAN

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Introduction

MY excuse for writing this volume is that I have had eight years' experience in the Jungle of the Gold Coast Colony.

It is the first attempt at putting my experiences into writing, and for any shortcomings, from a literary point of view, I plead indulgence. In the early days of the Vaal River diggings I essayed my luck at diamond washing, and afterwards drifted into the Cape Government service on railway construction.

When Barberton and Johannesburg started, I joined the gold-digging fraternity. In 1886 my love of adventure took me on a prospecting expedition into Matabeleland. I was at Bulawayo when Messrs. Rudd, Thomson, and Maguire obtained the concession from Lobengula which formed the basis of the Chartered Company. In 1889 the Argus Printing Company of Cape Town published my Pioneer Prospector's Map of Matabeleland. The following year I took an expedition up the Zambesi

Introduction

River from Quillimane to the Kebra-bassa Rapids, into West Nyassaland.

Since, I have been prospecting, reporting, and developing mining propositions, trading, farming, and transport riding in the Transvaal, Swaziland, Portuguese Africa, and Rhodesia, with occasional visits to the United States, Pacific Coasts, and Canada.

When the South African war broke out I supplied a number of contour maps of that country, published in the *Daily Chronicle*, *Standard*, *Daily Mail*, and *Morning Post*.

In 1890 I returned to the Transvaal and placed my knowledge of the country and services at the disposal of the Field Intelligence Department, H.Q.S.

In 1908 I was north of Sudbury, Ontario, near the Porcupine Gold Fields.

Prior to this, I was engaged in rubber and cocoa planting, and alluvial mining in West Africa.

I have refrained from mentioning any existing mining property producing gold, or others in a forward state of development. It is possible I may deal separately with them in a future publication.

Introduction

In the meantime, all I need say is, that in view of the steady development now going on, the blocking out of large ore reserves, the continuous values maintained to greater depths, and the reduction of working costs, the mines in this country will soon become permanent and large producers of the yellow metal.

I have quoted at the end of this volume a few extracts from an old publication of 1705, written by William Bosman, manager of the Dutch Company on the Guinea Coast. The writer depicts many of the native customs at that period as practised at the present time, and the drinking curse of the coast as being responsible for the premature death of many Europeans.

I have also embodied portions of letters I have written to English newspapers.

And I trust my modest effort, which I have written at least with honest convictions, whether wisely or not, will induce others to publish their experiences, thus adding to the general knowledge of the Gold Coast.

THE AUTHOR.

SECONDEE,
GOLD COAST COLONY.

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CHAPTER I

ON THE WAY TO THE COAST

My first introduction to the Gold Coast Colony occurred in 1901, leaving Liverpool in April of that year accompanied by a director of the mining company I had contracted with to go out to investigate titles, cut boundaries, put up beacons, and generally report upon their property.

I was told that the West African jungle was one of those last places on earth where a white man—whom mining companies have a kind of use for—should go and help to make dividends, or die of malaria, yellow jack, whisky, or morphia.

I must confess I have suffered little inconvenience, and have enjoyed excellent health during my eight years' experience of the jungle. I recognized the fact that it is not a country where

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one can tax their constitution over its capacity ; on the contrary, it was a place where precautions were necessary and a different way of living to a temperate zone adopted.

A healthy, clean-living man can live perfectly well in this country if he is abstemious in eating and drinking, especially drinking, treating spirituous liquors as a medicine and not as a beverage. For my own part, I consider that total abstinence from alcoholic liquor is the safest mode of living. Get as much fresh meat, fish, eggs, poultry, milk, farinaceous food, vegetables and fruit, and curtail the living on tinned food as much as possible, for the metallic irritant poisons in tinned goods upset the stomach and assist attacks of malarial fever more than anything else.

My director friend was an ex-colonial Government servant, which position I found entitled him on board the steamer to sit at a table with other officials. Had I not been with him, my seat would have been delegated to the opposite side of the saloon amongst the palm-oil ruffians, as traders on this coast were dubbed. Five of us sat together at meals, and at the head of the table sat a voluble young man, a District

On the Way to the Coast

Commissioner, and no matter what the topic under discussion, the District Commissioner promptly said the last word on it. He rather got on the nerves of the man sitting on his right, an army officer going to Nigeria, by the oft-repeated tales of his experiences as District Commissioner in an interior African village, which seemed to jar upon the captain's ears and evoked bitter verbal skirmishes. The District Commissioner's favourite boast was that he acted as magistrate, judge, process server, jailer, and hangman, a Pooh-Bah combination of duties in his up-country village, and gleefully informed us that in the capacity of hangman he had to perform the dread sentence of the law ; in the case of one man he hanged, having to add his own weight to the victim's legs to straighten out the rope and accelerate the end. Facing him sat a little Government official, as broad as he was long, going back to Lagos, whose entire time on board was divided between testing cocktails and whisky. On the left of our chairman was a Government secretary of some sort who was eternally talking of his aristocratic lineage, and his power with the Colonial Office. All the other tables in our row were occupied by

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officials of one sort or another, returning from leave or going out to represent His Majesty's Government.

The bar, a most important adjunct on all West African steamers, was judiciously placed opposite the pantry, in the lounge at the entrance to the saloon. From opening to closing time it presented the appearance of an early door at a theatre. This favourite corner was always thronged, the official element predominating, the dryness of whose throats seemed to be insatiable. There is a saying on West African boats, that if the sea ran dry one could easily find their way back to Liverpool, by following the course of the empty whisky bottles. Anyone on board who did not swallow gin cocktails *ad lib.*, was no class.

The snobs who infest West African steamers fondly imagine that it adds to the lustre of their fame by hanging around the saloon entrance at dinner-time drinking cocktails, and sauntering into the dining-saloon half an hour to an hour after commencement of the meal, delaying the courses being served to other and more punctual passengers. This senseless behaviour is typical of their conduct on the coast.

On the Way to the Coast

We have sighted Las Palmas, and eagerly look forward to a run on shore, a race up to Monty—while the younger sparks amuse themselves at the Casino and elsewhere.

Off again, a small roulette board has appeared, play started on the upper deck, and money changes hands, and long before Sierra Leone is reached our army man bemoans the loss of £50.

At Sierra Leone another run on shore, to be hustled, jostled, pushed about, and insulted by a crowd of blacks that throng the landing-place, and follow European passengers all over the town. It is well, seeing this is a black man's town under British rule.

Axim is reached, and now for work in the jungle.

My friend the director is a generous-hearted fellow, imbued with the foolish methods adopted by most officials out here in making too free with the blacks, patting, chaffing, and slapping them in fun, thus creating contempt of their masters and breeding insolence.

We had landed three days, when I suggested it would be as well to make a start for the property.

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Forty hammock-men and carriers were engaged; each promptly demanded his subsistence money, threepence per day; all promised to start at daybreak the following morning. The time came for assembling; six turned up, explaining about the others—thus, one man had his mother to bury, another had to get kanki for his wife, a third had a bad leg, a fourth got a cut on his foot, a fifth felt tired, and so it went on, an excuse for everyone to delay departure. All promised to start early the next day, and demanded subsistence. This went on for a week, when I remarked to my director friend, who held the purse, would it not be advisable to withhold the subsistence money and offer a dash of their favourite beverage if they took us to the property the following day. The effect was magical, everyone turned up, and we were encamped on the property the next day.

Finding a concession in the African jungle is no child's play. The leases rarely ever show a distinguishing place or a landmark: more often they are described as that parcel or piece of land bounded on the north, south, and east by the lessor's land, and on the west by a river, which turns out to be a watercourse, with a

On the Way to the Coast

name spelt in such a way that when pronounced it is unintelligible to the natives.

After no end of palaver over the concession lease, one at last gets the natives to show you where it is, and by paying a sum of money to go and cut a small boundary track, which they take care to cut in a direction always bending in to form the narrowest circle possible to the starting-point. Your lease probably says fifty, or one hundred square miles, which upon actual measurements dwindle down to five or ten square miles. The West African is a born trader, and excels in the art of lying, never answering a direct question ; and although he has the protection of the Aborigines Society, he is far more able to protect himself with the assistance of an army of native lawyers at his back than the unfortunate concession holder. In examination it is found that the resident chief, his successor, and half a dozen of his head-men all lay claim to pieces of land near to their villages, and above all comes the paramount chief or king, to whom a portion of consideration money and rent is paid. Certificates of validity are practically a confirmation of a leasehold which, if the rent is not paid

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regularly, is of small use. There is little opportunity to acquire freeholds, as the Government do not allow the natives to sell outright. The bulk of the villages (called towns) are a collection of bamboo and grass huts, with plantains and reeking filth right up to the doors.

These villages appear like dots in the oceans of jungle, many miles apart, with a dozen or so inhabitants, and an acre of cleared ground. Life in the villages is made hideous at night by the tom-toms and incessant palaver of the gin-drinking natives. Every day brings a palaver amongst your Fantee labourers and the people of the village, thefts and misconduct with others' wives which, fortunately, is always arranged by a money consideration.

During the cutting of boundaries about a mile from my camp, an horned adder (*cerastes*) was killed, and being desirous of its skin, I bade my boys bring it to the camp. They absolutely refused, saying it was a female, and the man snake was sure to follow. I carried it back myself, and, curiously enough, just as we were taking dinner, our steward boy killed a horned adder that was coming into the tent, which proved to be a male snake.

On the Way to the Coast

My director friend fell ill with typhoid ulcers in the throat, resulting from the stinks we were living amongst; and as my work was completed we returned to Axim.

Amongst our servants was an Accra cook who had been systematically thieving from our stores, and having clear proof of his guilt, we handed him over to the Superintendent of the Police at Axim. The case came before the District Commissioner; the court was crowded with Accra people, and an Accra barrister defended. Three of our witnesses proved the theft; I was cross-examined by the barrister, and admitted I did not keep books in the bush, but relied on our invoices. The prisoner was examined, and admitted that he had taken the three bottles of whisky, but would pay his massa back for them. The barrister asked for the case to be dismissed on the ground that we kept no books, and, in spite of the prisoner's admission, the District Commissioner dismissed the case.

On the return trip to England we buried four human wrecks from the Coast, and after a month at home I started again for West Africa.

CHAPTER II

APOLLONIA

ON my next visit to the Coast I was entrusted with several commissions regarding concessions in the French Ivory Coast, Apollonia and Axim districts. On the journey out we stopped at Conakry and Grand Bassam, French possessions adjoining our colonies. To any Britisher going out to West Africa I should strongly advise them to call at these places and compare their system and progress (leaving mining out) with ours in our West African possessions. This was ten years ago, yet both these French towns had landing jetties, tram-lines running from pier head into the Customs House, and thence into every factory and store in the place ; a good water-supply laid on, electric lighting, well-built, substantial stores, a boat-building yard, sea-walls, drainage, hotels and café, a well-equipped railway into the interior, and both European and native towns excellently laid out and kept clean, with the natives respectful.

Apollonia

In Secondee to-day one sees gangs of Kroomen laboriously rolling barrels of cement, cases, and hogsheads of rum up the streets into the various warehouses. There is no tram-line here as in French ports, no water-supply laid on, no lighting, but a noisy, dirty market with hundreds of clamouring, insolent natives right in the centre of the town.

Secondee is a port, a landing-place and feeder to the mines of the interior; it occupies the most important position in the colony, and should now, after its twelve years of existence, be a great town, with large emporiums and factories. It would be a vastly different place to-day if the Government had granted a few privileges and encouraged private enterprise. At present I will leave Secondee and confine myself to Apollonia, where my duties take me.

CHAPTER III

COAL AND OIL IN APOLLONIA

APOLLONIA is a name generally supposed to have been given to a race in the Western Province of the Gold Coast, by the Dutch who styled them followers of Apollo; but from hearsay, handed down by generations to their old men, they claim that Apollo, or Apollonian, is the family name of their tribe, and that their ancestors came to this country from the far north. They are a fine-featured race, of distinctly Jewish type, and possess amongst themselves many articles attributed to Assyrian origin, amongst which are scales and weights.

The first property I visited was reputed to be a gold proposition: there certainly was gold in a few of the thin quartz leaders embedded in the clay overburden, but at a shallow depth, as their shafts showed they were floundering in horizontal shale of the carboniferous

Coal and Oil in Apollonia

age. Below this there were greater possibilities of oil and coal than of gold.

Lying parallel to the shore-line of Apollonia are a number of lagoons which have been formed by river-washings silting up a continuous bank of sand, forming a sand-beach between the river-mouths and the sea and holding back the waters of the lagoon. In many places amidst the mangrove swamps I came across traces of crude oil with vegetable matter attached.

Lack of enterprise and capital is probably the explanation why the coal and oil measures of the Gold Coast have not been practically tested by borings, either carried out by the Government or private enterprise.

There exist very favourable indications of coal-bearing stratas in the western portions of the Gold Coast Colony, wherein there appears to be a similarity to the oil and coal measures of the United States, in places where oil is obtained in proximity to the outer measures of coal.

In one part, while canoeing up the lagoon, I came upon oil-sands which were barely covered by the overburden, the oily matter oozing out

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and mixing with organic material, forming a rough-looking asphalte. My impressions were that these oil-sands are bedded between a heavy clay deposit lying on an inclined plane of sandstone strata, and possibly the pressure of the clays arrested the oil in its upward flow, causing only very small quantities to exude.

I am influenced in propounding this theory by finding a sandstone strata outcropping below the point where the oil exuded.

The shales found in the vicinity did not throw off any perceptible odour indicating oil impregnations, but contained numerous carbon cubes. There is a slight similarity in these shales to those found lying between the coal-beds on the Wilge River and Steenkolspruit, Transvaal, where, in 1884, I was the first to open up coal.

On the Apollonian beach particles of bituminous coal are found in the sands. These, however, may have been deposited from wrecks or thrown over by passing steamers ; still there is also the possibility that an outcrop of coal occurs some distance out from the shore, and that the action of the waves has washed these fragments in.

The discovery and development of a coalfield

Coal and Oil in Apollonia

on the West Coast of Africa would be of great advantage to the mining industry and for supplying coaling-stations in case of war. The Gold Coast would largely benefit by being first in the field, for Liberia possesses a very considerable coal-bearing area, and at no great depth; and there is little doubt that, with American energy and capital, she will be the first to open up coalfields in West Africa.

CHAPTER IV

DREDGING AREAS OF THE GOLD COAST

IT has always appeared to me, from my experience of the Gold Coast Colony, that too little attention is devoted to developing its gold-dredging resources, the quickest and cheapest mode of obtaining returns on capital invested. A characteristic feature of this country is that the existing overburden is generally a soft sedimentary deposit containing gold-bearing gravels and clays, lying in approximately flat areas, and offering excellent opportunities for successful dredging.

The alluvial deposits as indicated in following up the native shafts varies in depth from 10 feet to 36 feet down to a decomposed schist, and sometimes layers of cemented gravels, consisting of pulverized angular quartz with pyritic iron pebbles, garnets, and black sands formed in a matrix of silica, as a conglomerate or early banket formation.

This wash has evidently been deposited by

Dredging Areas of the Gold Coast

successive earth waves and floods sweeping from the north-east to the south-west, and possibly in its course meeting with tilted rock obstructions has caused the hummocks, ridges, and isolated hills everywhere to be seen. On this overburden the jungle forest now thrives, and presents a cause of delay to the rapid development of the gold wealth of the country.

The contour of a large portion of the Gold Coast lends itself to dredging propositions. The natives of the past have shown the way by dotting the whole country with innumerable shafts, stopping their work only at water-level, which in many places is reached a few feet below the surface; and presumably the great wealth in gold dust that has been exported from this country during the past four hundred years has been obtained from these shafts by means of the native bowl.

Predominating evidence exists, backed up by the majority of reports made by engineers investigating properties on this coast, as to the existence of alluvial gold, and probably a great many high assays from ore have been due to the presence of alluvial gold cemented and bedded to the same.

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Particles of gold are evenly distributed in the alluvium practically all over the Gold Coast Colony, which has an area of about 15,488,000 acres. Of this acreage fully seven million acres carry heavy alluvial deposits with gold values.

There are few places over this area where the alluvial wash occurs that one cannot rely on recovering at least a quarter of a farthing's worth of gold from nearly every panning of a native bowl, averaging about 112 bowls to a ton, or a value of 7d. per ton.

Estimating on seven million acres to contain one hundred tons per acre at a value of 7d. per ton, or a gold value of £2 18s. 4d. per acre, would show a total gold value of £20,416,666.

This sum might be taken as a minimum estimated value, while a maximum may reach £116,000,000.

CHAPTER V

NATURE'S DUMPS

THE rain-swept jungle and forest-clad wilds of the Gold Coast possibly contain a greater gold wealth than any other equal area in the world. Here Nature offers material assistance to man, by placing at his disposal an immense body of crushed debris with valuable gold contents, consisting of pieces of dust and flour gold, the latter deposited by evaporation of the gold-bearing moisture produced by the action of the sun's rays. Furthermore, Dame Nature's pounding, roasting, and washing process in the past ages has mechanically accumulated deposits of fractured particles of gold-bearing quartz disintegrating the gold sands, and distributing in pulp form into beds of clay at various periods, spreading the same over a large area and forming what might be termed Nature's dumps, the valuable contents of which should, by systematic extraction, reach a colossal

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sum and pay handsomely on its cost of treatment.

The gold found here emanates from the recognized source of alluvial gold, but it has not been subjected to the polishing action that most alluvial gold is generally subjected to, by being hurled down in mountainous upheavals, washed through chasm and gorge, and smoothed by the action of water.

In the Gold Coast the layers of gold dust and heavy gold appear to have been derived by sediments from local erosion, distributed over an area adjacent to its original source, and emanating principally from the numerous small quartz veins and banket formation that practically threads the whole surface overburden of the country. The comparatively low altitude and general flatness assist in arresting and preventing the gold being carried any distance from the rim of the lode from which it has been eroded.

On this account the gold found here is coarse and angular, and rarely smooth or water-worn.

The rivers have been constantly changing their course, filling up with clays and tropical

Nature's Dumps

vegetation, and flow sluggishly to the sea. For this reason the beds of the Gold Coast rivers are not the richest places to seek for gold deposits.

For countless ages the lighter gold has been spread over a large area constantly replenished by floods, whilst the thick forest growth has acted as a sieve, forming layer upon layer of gold-bearing ground, and every heavy rain adds to its quota. The earth is impregnated with gold, and it is from this source we assume the ancient gold-seekers of these parts, with the aid of slave labour and the native bowl, recovered the many millions sterling that this country produced.

The Gold Coast offers unique advantages for a system of paddock dredging operations, as water is generally found a few feet below the surface. If the uncivilized native of the past could collect such an enormous value in gold by means of his simple wooden bowl, washing on an average about 500 lb. of dirt per day, and recovering values of from 1s. to 6s. for his day's work, surely modern dredging appliances, treating fifteen thousand times the quantity that a single native was capable

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of washing, should make it pay handsomely. There are hundreds of suitable areas honey-combed with native workings offering remunerative work for dredgers.

CHAPTER VI

A PARALLEL GOLD BELT TO THE TARKWA SERIES

AN undeveloped gold belt lies east of and parallel to the Tarkwa series, in the hydrographical basins of the Bonsa River, a river which drains the higher ground lying between Tarkwa, Opon Valley, and the Prah River.

For a distance of forty miles from Essuasu and Bensus on the Gold Coast Government railway, and fifteen to twenty miles on either bank, the Bonsa drains a rich auriferous country in extent about 768,000 acres.

The surface indications as seen from the exposed quartz and conglomerate outcrops, together with the immense body of alluvium overburden carrying gold, and the thousands of old native shafts and pot-holes, are such as to lead to the supposition that there are ore bodies in this belt as rich, if not richer, than the well-known Tarkwa series.

In support of the theory of richness, this

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series lies in the direct sweep of the earth's action which formed the Tarkwa beds; the line of sweep emanates from the north-east and travels to the south-west, and as this eastern series is in the direct track there would be nothing remarkable, by the law of gravitation, if it were loaded with heavier gold than those of the Tarkwa beds. The alluvium along this new gold belt is deposited in flats and hollows, and the presence of jagged gold, quartz, and coarse dust gold is probably due to the weathering of bodies of ore outcrops, now concealed by the overburden and dense forests.

Independent of the value of the reefs in this belt, the recoverable values of its alluvial gold offer a profitable field of enterprise.

CHAPTER VII

AGRICULTURE

TIMELY service has been rendered by the publication of the excellent pamphlet entitled *The Agricultural and other Possibilities of the Gold Coast*, by Mr. J. A. Barbour James, of Secondee. Mr. James is a keen observer, and sees in the natural indolence of the native of the Gold Coast a great stumbling-block to agricultural progress. He has his native West Indian and British Guiana experience, where the blacks have learnt their lessons in agriculture from the example set them by the white planters, and by being employed by them to carry out scientific cocoa-growing and other industries.

The making and prosperity of Ceylon have been through the instrumentality of the white planter. Under these circumstances, is it not a short-sighted policy on the part of the Government to expect so much from the Gold Coast

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native, who has never had the opportunity of learning his lesson, or gaining experience either under, or by copying the white planters' methods? I am of opinion that if the Government encouraged the European planters and farmers they would serve the best interests of the natives, and certainly to the betterment of this colony.

Mr. James quotes in his book the Divine order, "By the sweat of thy brow thou shalt eat thy daily bread." If he can get the uneducated loin-cloth West African native to take this order to heart and carry it out, he will accomplish a miracle. I am afraid that the native will never earn his bread by labour unless he is absolutely compelled to do so for sheer existence. He knows that Nature has made it quite easy for him to live without work; the jungle provides all his needs: his food, housing, medicine, and even his drink (palm wine); his wives do all the manual labour, while a month or so working for the white man will supply him with the means to buy his wife, or new loin-cloth; so, as he says, "Why should I work?"

The best means to awaken him from this

Agriculture

lethargic state is to surround his] bamboo villages with plantations and farms operated by whites; also to increase his wants, which to satisfy, compels him to work for money to purchase them. He will then begin to take an interest, and the educated native will come forward and help him after he sees the practical results obtained by the white man. This stirs up a feeling of avarice or pride in his heart, which eventually leads him to copy the modes and manners adopted by the European.

A further reference to Mr. James's book, wherein he states: "To the native, the idea of expending money and time and then to wait a considerable time or period to see results, is not appreciated."

This is straight to the point, and represents the true feeling of the native regarding agriculture. I remember once giving a native to plant for me about three pounds of ground nuts. When they came up there was only about one hundred plants. I sent for and questioned him, when he admitted as follows:—"I no plant all, massa. I had em for chop. I no fit to let dem ground catch em all, and go spoil." It is only for the day hereof the native

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ever thinks about; as to providing for the future, that never enters his mind.

Schools for agriculture are very excellent ideas, but it must be borne in mind that those taught in schools will want to be master farmers. Then where is the labour to come from, unless slavery is resorted to? Theory is all very well, but practice is better.

The British Cotton Growers' Association have learnt a bitter lesson in expenditure of money to encourage natives to grow cotton; they have spent a large sum in putting up ginning factories all over Nigeria, but they have failed in inducing the native to grow cotton on a large scale. In confirmation of this statement, the cotton production in Northern and Southern Nigeria for 1910 was $2\frac{1}{2}$ million pounds, a falling off by half the record year of 1909, and 37 per cent below 1907. The Agege native type fetched 3d., the Meko 2d., and Asaba $1\frac{1}{4}$ d. per lb. If only a very small proportion of the Association's money had been spent in assisting the white planter to settle in Nigeria, the result would have been a continued increased yearly exportation of cotton, as well as setting an example to the native and

Agriculture

encouraging him to emulate the whites. In connection with agriculture, it is pretty generally understood that the power of the tropical sun's rays and heavy dews at night have the inevitable effect of quickening the speed at which the chemical changes go on in the seed and plant.

Some writers assert that the exuberant tropical vegetation is prejudicial to the European's health, that what is favourable to vegetable vigour is unfavourable to animal life. They forget that all vegetable life matures and subsists on similar food materials so essential to the growth of man, and derived from air and soil.

Plant food, like our food, is mainly of two kinds—non-nitrogenous and nitrogenous. The young plant must have starch and flesh food, and all need albuminous material such as is contained in the food of man. Plants have to digest their food just the same as we have to digest ours. The digestive agencies are usually apart from the food material which it is their function to convert into assimilable forms. The production of ammonia from nitrogenous materials constitutes an important function in plant life. Electric discharges produce a

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hastening influence in the growth, and especially in the tropics, where the air is constantly charged with electricity brought about during the prevalent thunderstorms, and is perhaps an explanation of the rapid growth of plant life in tropical zones. It is possible that with further tropical research into Nature's ways science will in time discover the antidotes provided by her for man against malaria. In the meantime we know that carbonic acid, ammonia, and electricity are great stimulants to plant growth, and it is probable that from one of these agents we may obtain immunity from the malarial fever of the tropics.

CHAPTER VIII

SOME OPPORTUNITIES IN THE GOLD COAST FISHING INDUSTRY

A NEGLECTED opportunity exists in establishing a large fishing and fish-curing industry at Secondee, where the facilities of a railway 188 miles into the interior, and a constant service of coastal steamers six hundred miles east and west of this port, offer excellent means of transport in development of such a venture.

The West African native is a great lover of salt fish, which he will pay a good price for. The salted fish imported to the Gold Coast comes from the Canary Islands, and sells wholesale at about £2 5s. per 100 lb.

I believe that a well-directed fish-curing industry could rely upon disposing of over 1032 tons per annum to start with, which at, say, £40 per ton, would yield a gross revenue of £41,280.

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The undermentioned places could absorb salt dried fish, and easily dispose of locally, and for distribution as follows :—

Secondee, 104 tons ; Tarkwa and Prestea, 116 tons ; Coomassie, 260 tons ; and for eight stations on the line, 52 tons, with a coastal trade of 500 tons.

In addition to salt fish, about 1000 tons of fresh fish could be sold in Secondee at, say, £28 per ton, making an estimated total gross revenue of about £44,080.

To materialize this project, what is wanted at the start is a good trawler and drifter, with curing station on the beach at Secondee, covering about five acres, which, being foreshore, ought to be obtained from the Government.

PLANTAIN FARMING

The bread of the West African, the growth of which on a large scale offers one of the most paying projects in the colony, owing to the gradual absorption of the native farming population as labourers in the mines, thus lessening the production and increasing the demand.

Opportunities in the Gold Coast

The price of plantains at the bush farms ranges from eight, to twelve for 3d.; in Secondee, Tarkwa, and Coomassie from four to eight for 3d. A well-developed bunch carries from fifty upwards. Taking the average at fifty, and bush price 1s. per bunch, and producing 340 bunches to an acre every ten months, gives a returnable value of £17 per acre; while if these plantains are sold at Secondee or Tarkwa, £25 10s. per acre would be realized.

BANANAS

The Canary banana, of excellent flavour, thrives in this colony. The late Sir Alfred Jones sent the writer in 1907 fifty roots from Las Palmas, which have since produced most succulent bananas.

A large banana trade could be developed; the passage to Liverpool may be reduced to twelve days, and even this might be shortened. Bananas can be as cheaply grown (in fact, I may say cheaper) in the British colony of the Gold Coast as in the Spanish islands of the Canary group. Four hundred bunches can be grown to the acre, which, at 1s. per bunch,

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would return a value of £20 per acre and pay a handsome profit to the farmer.

I am certain that the cultivation of bananas of the Canary species on a large scale would prove a highly remunerative industry on the Gold Coast, or in Sierra Leone Colony, as outside the English market there is a rapidly increasing demand in France and Germany, which has caused an advance in prices. The farmers of Grand Canary are now getting from 3s. to 5s. 6d. per bunch. The f.o.b. price at Las Palmas is 5s. 6d. to 8s. 6d. per crate. The freight rate to Liverpool is 1s. per crate, materials and packing from 1s. The Norway staves for crates range from £30 to £35 per 1000 crates delivered at Las Palmas. The weight of a bunch of bananas varies from 35 lb. to 80 lb. Four hundred average bunches packed in crates would weigh from seven tons. The total cost price ship's side at Liverpool ranges from 6s. 6d. to 9s. per crate, single and double bunches.

To give some idea of the handsome profits that can be made by the grower and shipper in developing a banana trade on the Gold Coast, I append the following estimate based

Opportunities in the Gold Coast

upon the establishing of a banana plantation, say, at Bensus, on the Gold Coast Railway, twenty-four miles from Secondee :—

	£	s.	d.
Take 2000 bunches of bananas purchased from the grower at 1s. per bunch .	100	0	0
To 1000 Norway crates, say, delivered Secondee, at	40	0	0
Railage of staves, Secondee to Bensus .	13	0	0
Packing 1000 crates, say, at 1s. per crate	50	0	0
Railage of 1000 crates (packed) to Secondee, say	15	0	0
Agents and shipping expenses, Secondee	9	0	0
Freight to Liverpool, say 1s. 6d. per crate	75	0	0
	<hr/> <u>£302 0 0</u> <hr/>		

If the grower, packer, and shipper sold his produce f.o.b. at Secondee at 8s. per crate, he would net about £173 profit per 1000 crates.

The only additional costs as a set-off against this profit would be management, and costs of land for growing bananas, which can be grown at about 6d. per bunch.

As to the demand for bananas, it is an increasing one. At present there is a shortage in the banana trade, and with the constant opening of fresh markets both a shortage and higher prices may be expected. The develop-

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ment of this trade in either Sierra Leone Colony or the Gold Coast could not fail to become a success, as both colonies are admirably adapted to the growth of bananas and plantains.

RICE

The Gold Coast consumes a very large tonnage of imported rice. The wholesale price is about £13 10s. per ton. This same rice could be grown in the colony and sold for £8 or £9 per ton, and leave a very large margin of profit to the grower.

MAIZE

Maize stripped from the cob sells in the bush at 3s. 6d. per bag, holding about 85 lb. The corn on the cob sells at 2s. 6d. per bag.

Two crops in a year can be obtained, and as a produce creates a value of about £10 per acre.

COCOA FARMS

The cultivation of cocoa has steadily increased as an export from £27,280 in 1900 to £515,089 in 1907. In this industry there is plenty of scope for remunerative farming.

Opportunities in the Gold Coast

Cotton, jute, pissava, ramie grass, ground nuts, yams, cassava, tapioca, all offer opportunities for commercial development.

RUBBER

In 1905 I laid out extensive Para rubber plantations near Bamianko, on the Ancobra, planting about fifty thousand trees. The Para tree thrives remarkably well in West Africa, equal to, if not better than in the Malay Peninsula. It grows free from pests and disease, and has the further advantage of being two-thirds of the distance nearer to the markets than the East, besides being a British colony, if this counts for anything in rubber finance.

At the Government nurseries Mr. Reece is tapping over one thousand Para rubber trees, and has proved conclusively that the Para tree is the best and quickest grower, taking a third less time to mature than the native funtum tree.

CHAPTER IX

NEED OF THE WHITE PLANTER

THE Gold Coast is a country that should be better understood and advertised, for it is one of the richest undeveloped gold areas of the Empire, and also offers excellent opportunity to the planter. A slight comparison as to the contour of the country may be taken by comparing the Trundle, a hill at Goodwood, in Sussex, and generally the rounded-off hills and downs of Sussex and Kent, England, increase the county area to 24,200 square miles, place in it a population of about 121,000 blacks, and instead of the chalk hills and downs of old England substitute hills of clay and breccia with 12 to 40 feet of gold-bearing alluvial soil, cover every inch of space with a dense forest of trees, made denser by an undergrowth consisting of an interminable labyrinth of vines and creepers festooning the trees and shutting out the light of heaven ; show in these forests

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an isolated acre or so where trees are felled, with plantains, cassava, and yams planted in between the trunks and stumps, with here and there a village of a dozen grass and bamboo huts giving it local colour by dotting in a few loin-cloth blacks with a load on their head, crawling along a bush path, worse than a game track ; then fill in a tram-line of a narrow-gauge railway, 3 ft. 6 in., meandering through the dense jungle, with tree-stumps and tropical foliage growing up to within three feet of the rails, on either side ; make it 188 miles in length from Secondee to Coomassie and Prestea ; add along this line the bungalows and batteries of the mining companies, with a straggling road at Tarkwa and a few galvanized iron stores, then fill in the terminus of Coomassie, the most prepossessing and finest town of all, and you have a roughly drawn picture of the Gold Coast Colony, occupied in 1482 by the Portuguese, the Dutch in Queen Elizabeth's days, and the Company of Adventurers, London, in 1618, and in 1871 transferred by the Dutch to Great Britain.

The development of this colony compares unfavourably with South Africa or Australia,

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and illustrates an example of forty years of Crown Colony rule in endeavouring to lift the native up to the level of the white man and instruct him (a hereditary indolent subject) in approved methods of preparing products, and developing the natural resources of his country, without giving him the opportunity by encouraging the white planter and agriculturist to first set and afford a practical demonstration of what can be done with such a prolific country.

CHAPTER X

INSECT PESTS OF AFRICA

A STUDY and knowledge of insects and means of extermination are absolutely necessary to successful agricultural pursuits in the Gold Coast. The ant, while serving the purposes of a scavenger, is a destructive plague to the farmer. He attacks maize when in its green stage, and destroys an enormous quantity of cobs. Fresh-sown seed is scented, dug up, and eaten by this pest. Maggots also form in the maize-cob, the result of the deposits of various flies; and pumpkins, cucumbers, water-melons are also sufferers by the attacks of flies.

Cotton seems to be specially selected by various moths and flies. The American boll worm does not appear in any numbers in the Gold Coast, but a pink variety, as found in India, is a habitant of the jungle, and infests the boll of the tree cotton. It is possible when large areas of the jungle have been cleared,

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and homes of multitudes of insect life destroyed, that their numbers may be diminished. Thus, together with the cultivation of resinous plants and trees of the pine and fir order, sown either in rows between the cotton or around cleared areas planted with cotton, and utilizing remedial measures, the present insect pests would be kept within bounds.

I have many times noticed around certain trees in the jungle, a great quantity of dead insects, whilst those flying in the vicinity appear to avoid these trees, whose pungent odour seems distasteful to them. Possibly, if this tree were cultivated it might act as a preventive.

I remember, when a lad, that on a hot summer day there was no better place to be free from gnats and other English flies than to lie down in a pine or fir plantation of Sussex. It is possible that some relief might be obtained by planting the dwarf pine cones in rows between cotton. It is an experiment worth trying.

Nature has certainly provided some means to check an over-multiplication of insects of all species, and it is for us to study her ways to ascertain and find out her remedies, and propagate them to the utmost of our ability.

CHAPTER XI

THE WONDERS OF NATURE

ONE of the most fascinating wonders of nature in the African bush are the mysterious Black Driver Ants, or Termites. The workers amongst these creatures are about a quarter of an inch in length, the soldiers half an inch, and the captains or generals nearly seven-eighths of an inch. I have continually watched these insects on the march, and on one occasion traced the same procession for over a mile in length. They form up in close formation with marvellous precision and regularity ; forming a line, about two inches wide, the workers or carrier ants march twelve abreast, and at regular intervals, a small body of three or four rows of warrior ants are embodied in the procession ; on either flank, at a distance of six inches apart, are the captains or guards, possessing formidable nippers, held high up

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from the ground, ready to give fight on the slightest provocation. The procession takes the form of a long straight line, and travels at the run, straight across the country, selecting cover as much as possible. If any obstacles are encountered, they climb over it in graceful undulations ; but prior to making a march they send a pioneer force to spy out, and construct a road ; this force consists of soldiers as guard, excavators and tunnel-making ants.

Their road engineering is remarkable. It is marvellous how these tiny creatures surmount the obstacles, and construct tunnels under exposed portions on the road of march. I have seen a continuous tunnel, a length of thirty-two feet, and a height and breadth of about one inch, with three air-shafts, the earth excavated being carried to its approaches and forming a bank or causeway. This work had all been carried out in one night. In places they excavate long open trenches, here and there leaving a small tunnel or bridge.

In the procession now and then is seen half a dozen or more ants carrying a piece of bark, caterpillar, or some insect they have encountered in their march, often ten or twelve times their

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own size. Others in the procession carry their eggs, children, wounded, sick or dead comrades.

Whenever a point of danger is passed, they post a strong body of fighting ants. Every animal and reptile makes way for them, and if a disabled snake, or rat, by any chance get in their road they are instantly covered, and thousands of sharp razor-like pincers are at work, tearing away the flesh and attacking the vulnerable parts. The long earth-worms common to the jungle, if encountered, are cut in a few seconds into hundreds of pieces and removed out of their path. If one breaks the line, in a second or so they swarm out in every direction, looking for the enemy.

Their system of communication, both to their leader and to the rear, is simply marvellous. News of the obstruction is instantly telegraphed along the line, a halt is called, and those in the vicinity of the breakage halt, marking time, while the principal captains and soldiers hurry up reinforcements. Scouts are sent out in all directions, and on a satisfactory solution of the cause they re-form into line and continue as though nothing had happened, leaving a

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strong outpost at the scene of interruption. These pugnacious creatures will face fire for a time, perishing by the thousand, until they recognize the futility and reluctantly retreat. The pioneer, or scouting work, spying-out and mapping a suitable road is often done in the daytime; but night is chosen for the heavier work, and the march, which terminates as soon as the sun is high up in the heavens and exerts its heat.

One marvels at the military organization of these creatures, their sagacity and extraordinary discipline and knowledge of their power, based on "unity is strength." Amidst the wondrous and mysterious works of nature, the ant occupies one of the foremost places in indefatigable industry, forming a subject of intense and absorbing interest to the observant mind.

In my wanderings over the African jungle I am never tired of trying to learn something of Nature's works and ways, especially in insect life and their purposes.

To those eager to learn of the purposes of Nature's problems there is no more interesting task than the study of the habits of the red,

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black, and sugar ants, which swarm the African jungle in myriads. They are always laboriously toiling from morn till night, and are seen hurrying and scurrying in every direction, scouring the country in quest of food, furnishing of their homes, and providing for their young. These incessant workers play a great part in Nature's schemes ; they form a portion of her vast army of scavengers, especially needful in the dense tropical vegetation. You can see them tearing to pieces dead birds, rats, reptiles, and other carcasses, carrying away morsels to their larders. They search the tree-tops for their daily requirements, and if in a hurry to alight on terra-firma, or blown off, they think nothing of falling through space from the highest trees, often a height over eight thousand times their own stature, scampering away on reaching ground as if it were an ordinary incident in their lives.

If you observe them closely you will often see a party of ants laboriously occupied in dragging a beetle, moth, or caterpillar fifty or a hundred times their own size to their store-houses in the ground. Their mode of procedure is for several ants to dig under the

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object until it rests on their backs, thus forming a moving platform on which the beetle or moth rests; and along either side their comrades affix their forceps tightly to the body and drag it along sideways, and at the rear others push it forward.

It is astonishing to note the precision with which they execute their work. At a given signal of command all put their shoulder to the wheel, and with their united strength the object is carried along at the trot.

Their system of communicating with one another is marvellous; they tell to a nicety the number of helpers required to carry the carcase. There is no wasted energy, all work in unison, pull or stop together.

Often one will see an ant struggling to drag a piece of decayed stick, a little more than it can manage. It at once summons a comrade, who rushes to its assistance.

The ant, like all carrion-eating creatures, possesses an extraordinary sense of smell. If a deer is killed in the African jungle, or blood spilt on the ground, in an incredibly short time it is smothered with ants, who, in the former event, contest the devouring of the car-

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case with vultures, crows, beetles, and flesh-loving flies.

Where they all suddenly come from is a puzzle. Flies are the first in the field ; in fact, within a minute or so of offal, excrement, or dead meat being deposited they appear on the scene.

Some species come to feed solely on the carcase, others to deposit their eggs, and the more thrifty to enjoy a glorious feast, and carry away portions of choice bits to replenish their larders.

The red ant is of a smaller size than the black, but is the more ferocious and pugnacious of the two.

They are early upon the scene ; their scouts report and telegraph the news of a find of dead meat. How they communicate with one another at considerable distances is past comprehension. It is evident they possess some remarkable means of express communications, for if you make a circle of fifty feet or so around the dead body you will see not alone ants, but all other kinds of insect scavenger creatures heading at top-speed, and with one accord, toward the carrion to be devoured. The winged scaven-

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gers also hurry in their thousands to the centre of attraction, and if you go a hundred yards away from the carcase you will see the same occurrence.

Sometimes when the carcase has been first occupied by red ants, a formidable army of black ants appear and dispute possession, then a furious battle takes place, and during the progress of the fight each side removes its dead and wounded; they form squares, advance in crescent shape, attack and repel onslaughts. The red usually come off victors, although I have at times seen them in full retreat when greatly outnumbered.

Like human beings, all creatures of the jungle have an incessant struggle for existence, but Nature in her wondrous achievements adjusts and accommodates every part to part that occurs in every department of animal and vegetable life. Existence of everything depends upon the contents that they themselves contain in the conditions necessary to their existence. Each and everything has a set purpose, a work to perform in the vast and marvellous machinery of the Universe.

The smallest and minutest creatures perform

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some of the most valuable and important works.

The ground below the surface, and the air above all teem with life. Their origin, description, dissection and unravelling of individual character, I must leave to scientists, to those who make it a life-study, who are adepts in distinguishing creatures by their zoological and etymological names, for I am but a simple, unlearned observer of Nature, as she shows herself to the toiler in the solitudes and depths of the interminable African jungle.

Amongst the venomous creatures there is none more feared by the natives than the scorpion, especially the large black species, whose body attains a length of eight to ten inches, with huge lobster-like claws. Their favourite lurking-places are under stones and fallen trees. All animals in the bush well understand the deadly weapon it possesses in its sting, and give it a wide berth. With its claws the victim once seized is held as in a vice, while arching its tail over its victim's body, striking with force and plunging its sting in.

The natives say it is past all devil, and once

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lived for water like a good King Prawn (the fresh-water African prawn has two claws like a lobster or cray-fish). "One day this prawn do bad to woman crab, so fetish man tell him he no fit to liv for water, and make him liv for land ; and so that all prawn know him, he make him black, he liv small for land when he catch black snake, steal him poison, and put him for tail. He fit kill man if him strike with tail."

Regarding plant life, I might mention a plant that the natives look upon with holy horror. It is one of the sensitive species, the leaves fold up or close on being touched.

They say that a spirit "liv for dis thing, and came from bad spider, the brother of the great spider that made the world." That this plant "when he shut him leaf he shuts his hand and close his door. When he do this thing him fit tell all man he make war on them."

Another object of terror to the native is a flower somewhat similar in shape to the moon-flower, but shorter, and the base near the stem is circular, like a calabash. Inside the flower is a hinged lip, or trap-door, which directly on being touched shuts up.

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It is a flesh-eating plant, and upon closing emits a peculiar squeaky noise.

The natives say it makes this noise "to let all man know he liv for chop, and catch plenty too much flies, who stick for him throat, so make cough."

Inside of the bell-shaped hollow of the flower are usually found a number of dead flies and gnats, induced to enter by the sweet smell of its saccharine material forming the inner lining. Once the trap-door tongue closes the stalk emits a spray of acrid acid upon the intruders, destroying life, their bodies ultimately fertilizing the plant.

Another peculiar flesh-loving flower grows on a stem something like the sugar bush. It is a brilliant red, and emits a horrid stench. The natives call it the Latrine plant. Its putrid smell attracts huge numbers of flies. All around these plants are quantities of dead flies; the natives liken the flower to the propagating portions of a female's body, and say the flies go there to conceive and die. They say if a man touch this plant he becomes possessed of a devil.

The fetish or medicine-men grind the flower,

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and mix it with the potions they serve up to be taken in the oath drink, a mixture that tells whether a man speaks the truth or not. This drink is used mostly in adultery cases.

CHAPTER XII

ENTOMOLOGY

THE insect life of West Africa, its connection with malaria, and health of Europeans is of such vital importance that reference to it should not be omitted in any book on this colony. With this object in view, I am quoting extracts from a public lecture given by H. Maxwell-Lefroy, M.A., F.R.S., F.Z.S., of India, as follows :—

“Applied entomology, which is a development of pure entomology, deals with insects which affect man ; the greater number of insects affect man directly in no way at all ; they have an indirect bearing on man, as they have their part to play in the economy of the earth ; they scavenge and cleanse the earth ; they pollinate flowers and make possible the fruiting of many plants ; they populate all parts of the earth’s surface except the sea, and in numbers of kinds, as in actual abundance, they exceed

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all other forms of animal life visible to the naked eye. In these respects they are of interest, but not of direct importance, and while the study of insects is a fascinating branch of natural history, there would not be any necessity to have economic entomologists if they did no more.

“It is only lately that the significance of the insect world has become apparent; and it is mainly owing to the immense importance of tropical entomology that the study of insects from the economic aspect has received its greatest impetus. The opening up to agriculture of new tropical countries, the increasing competition in the cultivation of tropical products, the discovery of the part played by insects in disseminating human disease, have brought entomology to the front, and have shown that, far from being a science concerned solely with the minute classification of interminable varieties and species, it is a science which has a great significance for man, and one which requires to be developed in serious earnest if we are to be in a position to harvest our crops, to cope with disease, and to populate tropical areas successfully. In closely

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cultivated countries with temperate climates, insects have not the significance that they have in tropical countries and in newly planted areas, and it is perhaps due to this that in the study of economic entomology England is somewhat behind America and some other nations.

“Out of all the hundreds of thousands of kinds of insects which now live on the earth, a small proportion are of very vital importance to man, affecting his agriculture, his cattle, his merchandise, and causing or transmitting disease to man on a very large scale. It is these with which we are now concerned, and it is on their account that the economic entomologist comes to play so vital a part at the present day.

“All plants, whether crop plants or wild plants, are affected by insects, which live on them, destroy them, lessen the value of their produce, and increase at their expense. In nature, this is limited and checked; but in cultivated crops, grown in blocks, under artificial conditions, these insects become abundant, increase beyond nature's due proportion, and take a very perceptible part of the crop.

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“It is, however, from the destructive side that insects are of the greatest significance to man, and though the results of practical entomology are in a sense indirect, they are of very great commercial importance. Cotton is a crop in which commerce is at present very deeply concerned, and whose production in the Empire is being extended; in this crop destructive insects play a very great part; it is probable that were there no boll worms, no cotton stainers, no cotton caterpillars, the gross yield of cotton from the area now existing would, without further effort on man's part, be increased 10 to 20 per cent; in Sind and the Punjab in one year the cotton crop failed wholly from the attack of the boll worm; the loss in cotton not produced was in excess of £2,000,000 sterling, and this was due solely to the work of one cotton pest. The same applies very markedly to cotton which is introduced into new localities or to new varieties introduced in new areas; the first trials of Egyptian cotton in many parts of India failed wholly from the unforeseen attacks of the pink boll worm; in the trials made of tree cottons in many countries it has been found that the pests

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are the factor determining success or failure. If the pests are neglected it is commercially impossible to grow tree cottons in India at the present time, and for want of realizing this much money has been wasted ; in every cotton-growing country insect pests are of the first importance, and no one growing cotton in any part of the world can afford to neglect them.

“ I will quote a case where we have definite figures : In 1905 the cotton crop failed over 700,000 acres in the Punjab ; eight districts reported no yield at all, four reported a quarter crop, and one a crop a trifle over a half ; in 1906 we adopted three remedies, impressing them on the cultivators with all the resources of Government, but not actually spending any large sums of money ; one remedy was a failure, two were successful. In 1906 the districts that had no yield in 1905 reported an average of 53 per cent, those with a quarter yield reported 62 per cent, and a loss of two and a half million pounds sterling was reduced to one of only seven hundred thousand pounds sterling in the next year, and the crop has since been normal. These remedies were not introduced into Sind, and in 1906 the cotton crop there

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was again a failure till, in 1907, we applied remedies and produced a normal state of things. We have campaigns of this sort going on year by year in India and in our Colonies, and it is this class of work that our entomologists are constantly engaged in. There are many problems to be solved, but the experience of the past has shown that the application of entomological science to similar problems has been very largely successful.

“In forestry the influence of destructive insects is very marked ; in nature, where the forest is undisturbed, matters adjust themselves to a large extent, but the earth is being cleared of natural forest, and man is making forestry a business in which artificial conditions are established, the natural law is upset, the balance of life is altered, and outbreaks of insect pests become a very serious matter. The loss annually in American forests is put at twenty million pounds, and the losses in tropical forests are probably much higher ; in planting and working large areas, in the preparation of working plans for felling and replanting successive areas, the influence of insects and the methods of meeting them

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cannot be neglected, or the losses from this cause become enormous.

“In all the cases I have mentioned up to now, insects affect man indirectly, but the last twenty years have shown that insects have a great significance also as carriers of disease to man and to domestic animals, and we are here confronted with a very large and difficult problem. It is common knowledge now that malaria is communicated to man by the bite of one of several kinds of mosquitoes; to those who have lived in the tropics the significance of this will be obvious. Few Europeans in the tropics escape malaria; many die from it, and the mortality from malaria among Europeans and natives in a bad season may be awful. Since this discovery was made, it has been found that other diseases are carried by mosquitoes and other biting insects; yellow fever is carried by a mosquito common in the tropics, so is filariasis by other common mosquitoes; the rat flea is the agent which spreads plague; the tiny midge of the genus *Phlebotomus* carries Pappataci and similar fevers; the large flies of the genus *Glossina* carry sleeping sickness of man and similar trypano-

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some diseases of cattle, horses, and dogs. The common bed-bug is suspected, but not definitely convicted, of carrying kala azar and similar diseases. It is no exaggeration to say that these discoveries opened a new field, and, when one considers the dreadful mortality these diseases cause, a very wide one. The significant point in attacking these diseases was thought to be the germ or organism carrying them; but the insect is now shown to be at least as important and, in many cases, a far more attackable point. Plague in India has been a terrible scourge, and might be so in Europe; but the plague flea and the plague rat are far more easily controlled than is the plague germ, and it is on them that the spread of the infection depends.

“Let us see what occurs in plague. A plague rat, that is a rat infected with the plague germ, is, we will say, let loose in London or anywhere you please; its fleas suck its blood and draw in the plague germ; the rat gets worse and dies. As its body gets cold, the fleas leave it to seek another rat or some other warm animal on which they can live; they bite that animal and give it plague also, thereby infect-

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ing other fleas, which leave that rat when it dies. Now, were these fleas only to bite rats, the disease would stop there, but they do not. They bite man also, incidentally, and he gets plague, and probably dies of it. That is why, in India, when rats begin to die, the people at once have to avoid being bitten by a flea from a dead plague rat, and if they are wise they leave their houses. Now, clearly, here one link is the flea, and we want to know all about it; where does the flea come from, where does it lay its eggs, how does the grub live, and so on. Instead of using disinfectants to kill the germ, which was supposed to live in the dirt of the house, we now use insecticides to kill the fleas and to prevent them breeding. One reason why Europeans in India seldom get plague is because they live in clean houses, where fleas cannot breed or live. If there is going to be an epidemic of plague in England, it is to the plague rat and the plague flea we must turn our attention."

CHAPTER XIII

VEGETABLE LIFE

VEGETABLE life in tropical zones is suspended, or sleeping, for a very much shorter period than occurs in colder climates. Bulbous and tuberous plants hibernate in spells of a little over a month, reappearing three times in the course of twelve months. Maize (or mealies) reproduce crops three times within the year. This rapid evolution of nature is presumably brought about by the tropical heat, rain, electricity, and a superabundance of carbonic acid in the air, together with the action of long spells of sunlight, which tend to a rapid production of plant food. Vegetable life in the tropics does not take the long winter rest that it enjoys in colder climates, where its life germs retire into protected shelters, and slumber away the period of frosts and snows. The dead seasons in the Gold Coast Colony occur between the rains. January and March months

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are the principal rest months for recuperation, but most trees take their rest after they have shed their fruits and leaves in September, October, and November. The rains that take place at the end of November, and the tornado downpours in December add temporary activity to vegetable growth. The general growing season for cereals, however, starts after the dry and hot month of March.

The colder atmosphere existing during the period of clouded sun and heavy rains extending from May to the end of June, enables some species of vegetation to recuperate, while it has a contrary effect on others by awakening and increasing their activity after their short sleep in the early months of the year.

The unseen wonders and complexity of growing plants, with their peculiarities, mechanism, and Nature's provision for multiplying in the thick growth of the African jungle, are marvellous. It is one continuous struggle for existence and preservation of the fittest. No better example comes under notice in this struggle of plant life to live than the race for light observed in the various kinds of trees in the densely packed forest.

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The sturdy quaccoe (iron wood tree), the bully amongst trees of the jungle, pushes and elbows its way and ousts its neighbours. The only tree that competes with it for supremacy is the cotton tree. This tree fights its rival inch by inch in its race upwards to spread its leaves and branches above its competitors. If you look down from a high place on to the top of an African forest, you will observe the quaccoe and cotton tree spreading out their topmost boughs and foliage like huge mushrooms, twenty or thirty feet above the sea of the surrounding tree-tops.

The delicate funtumia rubber tree, in its struggles for very existence, rushes its growth upwards, to force its topmost branches into the light, with the consequence that its girth is like an overgrown whipstick, as in its upward race it has no time to mature or expand.

The monkeys and pigs are great lovers of its fruit, as well as the fruit of the Landolphia rubber vine; they are great distributors, carrying their seeds and dropping them over the forest. The reproduction of the vines is slow, as not only have they numerous enemies that feed upon the young plant, but they have a con-

Vegetable Life

tinuous struggle to force their growth through the thick vegetation.

There is, however, one thing in their favour. In the forests exist dense layers of decaying vegetable matter, which produce a powerful stimulant in the large quantities of ammonia contained in the soil water.

The rubber seeds have a considerable surface and attracting agents for absorbing water, which convey the ammonia into the seed and hasten the vigour of its growth.

The Paupau tree grows in great quantities; there are two sorts, commonly called male and female. The male tree bears no fruit but is continually full of blossoms, consisting of a long white waxy flower. The female also bears a flower, though not so long or numerous. The male and female trees are generally found together, and the finest and greatest abundance of fruit is produced from the females when the male tree grows near them.

CHAPTER XIV

RAILWAY CONSTRUCTION

THE railways constructed, and working in the Gold Coast Colony, compare unfavourably, in regard to mileage and cost of construction, with the railways now in operation in the adjoining French and German colonies.

The Gold Coast, with all the great attraction offered by the development of its rich gold fields, has only about 225 miles of railway constructed and working, from Secondee to Coomassie, Prestea, and Accra, at a cost from Secondee to Coomassie of £10,800 per mile, while the French have over 1400 miles of rails laid in their colony, made up as follows: about 380 miles from Kayas on the River Senegal to Kulikoro, about 235 miles from Dakar to the river navigation, 375 miles from Conakry to Kurussa, 160 miles from Binger-ville to Dombokroo, and about 250 miles in Dahomey, at an approximate cost of about £6500 per mile.

Railway Construction

In the German Colony of Togoland, adjoining the Gold Coast, they have about 250 miles of railways working, from Kotonau, Whydaw, Anecho, and Lome, at an approximate cost of construction of about £7000 per mile. Both of these colonies lack the magnet of a gold field as the preliminary inducement for building railways. They have been built solely for the development of the natural resources of the respective countries.

The German mileage in their colony is in excess, while the French have nearly five times the mileage of the British Gold Coast Colony.

The extraordinarily lethargic rate of progress in the Gold Coast is unaccountable. The magnificent and healthy northern territories of Ashanti are lying fallow and unprofitable, awaiting the advent of the extension of the railhead from Coomassie to develop that country into a rich domain.

What it appears to me is, that the official element sent to the Gold Coast is too subservient to the will of the blacks, and for this reason they are largely responsible for the backward state of the colony.

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In Nigeria, and Ashanti, a superior class of official workers appears to exist. Nigeria, from all accounts, is forging rapidly ahead, and yet it has not the apparent gold wealth of the Gold Coast. How is it that with such a bountiful provision of Nature in her stores of gold and vast richness of natural products and agricultural possibilities, that this Gold Coast Colony should be so far behind? There is something radically wrong somewhere, and I am afraid that the responsibility rests with those young, inexperienced college youths, who are sent out here to officially advise as to the management and necessities of this Crown Colony.

Regarding future railway construction, it would facilitate and encourage farming operations if a law were passed making it compulsory on either white concession holders, or native owners, to cut down and clear the ground for a distance of one mile on either side of the railway line constructed through their properties, under penalty of forfeiture of rights to land for non-observance.

This law would be no hardship on the native, but a mild measure to make the native richer by increasing the value of his land, offering

Railway Construction

him an inducement to farm, and at the same time feeding with produce the transport on the railway, and helping to make the country healthier by clearing the jungle.

CHAPTER XV

NORTHERN TERRITORY OF THE GOLD COAST

FOUR days' journey north of Coomassie takes one into the splendid open country of the northern territory, offering an entirely different aspect to the interminable jungle of the Gold Coast.

Around Yeji, Alabubu, Tomale, Gambogo, or following the Volta from Yeji to Daboya, a fine agricultural and grazing country is met with, where guinea corn, ground nuts, maize, cotton, sheep, goats, and oxen thrive splendidly. These northern grass lands of Ashanti could supply (if the railway were extended from Coomassie) the whole of the Gold Coast with cereals and fresh meat. Besides, the communication north to the boundary of the French Soudan would tap and secure a large produce trade, which would afford transport for the railway to the seaport of Secondee.

What the Gold Coast urgently needs is the

Northern Territory

extension of its main line of railway and the building of feeding branch lines to the mining districts, which, besides carrying the mining necessities, would develop agriculture. There should be no difficulty in raising money for construction purposes, seeing how the new Prestea branch is paying, and the steady five per cent paid on the Gold Coast Government Railway.

CHAPTER XVI

GIN-SOAKED NATIVES

THE natives of the northern territory of the Gold Coast are an agricultural race and law-abiding, quite a different class to the truculent, gin-soaked, spoilt natives of the Gold Coast Colony, who, when they go into the northern territory, imagine that by being British native subjects they can indulge in their insolent drunken behaviour with impunity. They however find out their mistake, thanks to the excellent administration and military supervision of that territory—the best-governed portion of West Africa. Fully 80 per cent of the prisoners in gaol at Coomassie are Gold Coast natives, a fact that does not reflect credit on the administration of the Gold Coast. Wise laws are enforced in the northern territory prohibiting the native gin traffic, and therein lies a secret accessory to the improved and orderly state of affairs.

Gin-Soaked Natives

If some member of Parliament moved for an inquiry with a view of stopping the gin traffic on the Gold Coast, he would confer a blessing upon that colony, for it is a disgraceful act on the part of an enlightened Christian Government to tolerate and support this iniquitous trade solely for the benefit of half a dozen or so importing traders. It is a curious anomaly that the Aborigines Protection Society, ever ready to voice the interests of the native, should by their silence tacitly approve of this demoralizing traffic, thereby encouraging the natives in their craze for gin.

A far better and nobler purpose would be served by members of Parliament taking up this question, than in destroying the prospects of every new rubber and trading company formed to exploit the Gold Coast, by asking for prohibition of natives disposing of their land, or questions as to adequate payments for leaseholds granted by African chiefs.

In their intense desire to benefit the natives, these members of Parliament overlook the fact that Great Britain is openly encouraging a diabolical native liquor traffic, that causes increased crime, disease, and misery, ending in

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ultimate extermination. While, on the other hand, in allowing and not frustrating the development of the Gold Coast to go on by means of companies would afford employment to the native, create industries, and be of lasting benefit to him, his country, and civilization.

Cannibalism is accentuated by the gin craze. Only recently there were exposed openly in the Lagos market human legs and arms for sale; and it is well known amongst Europeans at Lagos that a woman was killed recently and eaten by Kroomen. The West African sees in the stupid desire of governing officials to pander to his customs, and subservience to his interests, a weakness that he quickly takes advantage of, knowing full well that he can practise his foul excesses with perfect freedom. There is plenty of work for the Aborigines Protection Societies in protecting the natives from their own diabolical customs, which are far more harmful than any supposed injury to their interests through the white man renting land to develop.

CHAPTER XVII

NATIVE POPULATION PROBLEM

THE problem of the native population in our colonies is becoming more acute than ever, especially in Africa, and more so in the Crown provinces of West Africa, a state of affairs brought about by spoiling the native mind by excessive fatherly interest in his welfare, and the influx of a large European mining and trading population. The solution in regard to the internal development of the country conflicts with the policy of the Colonial Office, and it is about time that a broader view was adopted by whoever is in charge, whether it be Sir Edward Grey, Lord Lansdowne, or Winston Churchill. These gentlemen are apt to overlook their obligations to the white subjects of the realm—the men who risk their lives, from malaria and other causes, who by their indomitable pluck and energy transform the wild African bush into prosperous domains, adding

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their quota to the great work of civilization going on within the Empire.

The policy of the Colonial Office appears to be a selfish, one-sided one, extending its entire sympathy (as far as the Gold Coast is concerned) to the natives, whose interests are amply safeguarded by the black barristers of that colony, and the Aborigines Protection Societies. It fails to recognize that the oversea white toilers of the Empire, bearing the white man's burden, are worthy of some consideration and recompense for their labours. An equitable system of co-operation is needed ; a confidence reposed by the Colonial Office in its capable administrators and officials ; the appointment of men experienced in colonial needs and measures, who would sympathize with, and accelerate expansion of its mining, trading, and other industries in the various districts under their charge, instead of resting contented and summing up its ills and detriments to progress by calmly asserting that it is a black man's country.

They should remember that if it is a black man's country, it is governed by British Crown officials: that the black man enjoys the protection of the British flag, and should be made to take

Native Population Problem

his fair share of the burden of protection, and not, as he does now, reap all the benefits at no cost whatever to himself.

The system of the governors of the Gold Coast and Nigeria in employing as confidential clerks natives of the coast is a pernicious one. The private official correspondence is openly talked about by the native clerk. I myself have had natives whose brothers were in a responsible Government post tell me that they could get any information I might want. Any new measure proposed, whether for improvement or otherwise, is known to the Gold Coast *Leader* or Lagos *Standard* long before it reaches the Colonial Office; and if it is a measure that the natives consider distasteful to themselves, they immediately set in motion counteracting influences and use the Aborigines Protection Society to prevent its adoption. I remember in Secondee, nine years ago, when Governor Nathan proposed certain improvements, it was met with a storm of disapprobation from the natives. It is the fate of every new Governor, or any progressive District Commissioner, who desires to improve the state of affairs existing, to meet with rebuff, with the natural consequences that they

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let matters slide, and permit themselves to be governed by the natives.

If governors must employ natives, then give the preference to the educated West Indian, a far more trustworthy and respectful class of man, who does show some appreciation of what the white man does for his race. The native West African is absolutely devoid of the slightest gratitude, and shows no appreciation of the protection afforded him by the British flag, under which he lives *free* of taxes. He is not called upon to pay anything, no tax whatever towards the cost of administration of the country, but enjoys all the benefits and privileges, and makes money at the white man's expense, who bears all the burden. Is this not an absolutely unfair and iniquitous state of affairs in the British possessions of West Africa?

CHAPTER XVIII

AN ANCIENT CITY IN APOLLONIA

APOLLONIA is the country name given to the western portion of the Gold Coast Colony lying between the Ancobra River, Tano, and the French Ivory Coast. On its coasts are still to be seen the remains of solidly built old Portuguese and Dutch forts, monuments of strength and durability.

My journey took me about sixty miles into the interior, for I had heard of a once large and powerful city, the ruins of which lay buried amidst the dense forests of Apollonia.

We came upon these ruins hid in a mass of bush with lemon, orange, and cotton-wood trees growing in what formerly were the courtyards of houses. My guide showed me the low crumbling walls that surrounded a one-time house, where a huge tree now stood, and a gigantic creeper of the *Landolphia* species, nine inches in diameter, had enveloped in its

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folds a piece of rubble masonry, and in its growth had lifted it up bodily into the air fully ten feet. The rain had washed the protruding round pebbles embedded in the concrete, giving to it the appearance of a gigantic head with two uncanny-looking eyes peering out between the foliage, and as we were looking at this strange object a large yellow-headed lizard appeared on the masonry, gazing inquisitively at us. Directly my guide saw it he yelled and ran away, shouting : "Massa, come. He be no good ; dat be devil-man."

The ruins appeared to cover about seven acres. The vegetation had so completely covered them that it was difficult to trace the outline of the outer walls. I lingered long amidst these ruins, loth to tear myself away, for the weird and curious shadows caused by the afternoon sun peering in between the tree-tops, shedding a light on this scene of desolation, exercised a strange fascination, and set the mind wondering what manner of people in the dead ages built this town, which no doubt at one time was the scene of busy human life, and perhaps a stopping-place for slave caravans from the interior to the coast. One could picture

An Ancient City in Apollonia

its market-place crowded with natives selling their palm oil and gold dust, the strings of slaves laboriously trending their way in and out of its gates, and the cruelties practised therein, where, by native custom, if a man talked too much for the liking of his master his lips and tongue were cut away ; if he heard too much, his ears were lopped off ; and if he saw too much, his eyes were gouged or burnt out—a land where the lust for human blood and torture reigned supreme.

My guide was a born slave-dealer. I had known him previously. He came from Suma, in the north ; had quite a billygoat of a black beard, was a Mohammedan, and dressed in the Houssa style.

I did him a good turn once and won his confidence. He it was who informed me of these ruins, and told me of having found over six pounds' weight of gold in nuggets, in a clay pot, buried amidst its crumbling walls, a part of which he now keeps buried to cover the funeral expenses of his near relatives and himself.

Nothing in the world would persuade him to repeat the digging, or assist me to examine the place ; he was in mortal fear while I cut the

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bush and poked about amongst the ruins. The explanation he gave was that when he took the gold "he heard plenty of people talk, but saw no one"; he picked the jar up and ran, and then a big black animal ran after him, and the talking became louder, and then, as he expressed it, "I feared, plenty too much."

He had hardly finished telling me this tale when a large monkey leaped out of the undergrowth, close to where we stood, and dashed up a tree. My companion on seeing it gave a terrific shriek, and disappeared in the forest.

CHAPTER XIX

AN INCIDENT IN THE IVORY COAST

It was in the latter days of March, 1902, that I found myself with forty Apollonian carriers standing at the lagoon wharf side, French Assinie, so called to distinguish it from the small town of the same name on the English side of the boundary.

The Company Kongs launch took my party up to Obosso, a journey of eight hours across the Aby Lagoon and up the Bia River, in the Krinjabo and Sanwi territory of the French Ivory Coast.

Obosso, at this date, was a great trading centre, the starting- and receiving-point for the large rubber trade of the interior.

From Obosso we trekked inland, my duties being to report upon, cut intersection paths, and put up beacons on five concessions granted by the French Government.

The different grants were circular in form,

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and generally around a village with the chief's house as the centre pivot, as a base to mark off kilometres and cut a path east, west, north, and south.

The chiefs, when I came to the villages, were totally unaware of any concession being granted, and resented my cutting the paths to chain off measurements.

On completing my work on the first concession and leaving for the next I found that a fetish man, daubed all over in white, had attached himself to my party. On commencing work at the second property the same troubles occurred, and on leaving for the third, I found two fetish men were following us. This went on until the fifth property was reached, where I found that four fetish men had preceded me.

On arriving at this place, I think it was called Mafia, I heard that the Ivory Coast Company's store near there had been sacked and burnt, and that a white French surveyor had been murdered. The people in the town received me sullenly, and while at my morning chop came in a body with their chief, who demanded to know why I had taken his god's stone, alluding to a piece of quartz I had taken to test.

An Incident in the Ivory Coast

He then flung his necklet at me, saying they would make war. I felled him with a pick-handle, when the whole of the villagers ran for the bush. Anticipating trouble, I had a Mauser ready, and my boys all their cutlasses sharpened. Hastily getting my loads together, I called my carriers and told them if they valued their lives they must all run for Mafere, a village where I heard a French Commandant and Senegalese soldiers were stationed. After patching up the old chief, who was bleeding profusely from a fractured jaw, we started in a tremendous down-pour of rain. Swimming a river, and pushing on through the night, we came in the early morn to a small plantain farm and half-a-dozen huts. Here we rested for an hour, then made for Mafere, which we reached about 11 a.m., to find the Commandant and Senegalese soldiers had bolted to Assinie. The town was empty, the inhabitants having run into the bush at our approach; so I urged my followers on in the track of the retreating Senegalese. We reached Aby late that night, thoroughly exhausted, and found the town deserted. The Company Kongs stores, expecting an attack by the natives, was guarded by two fierce-looking Houssa men,

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armed to the teeth, who seemed disinclined to receive us. In the night the chief and a few followers crept into the town and came to the house I occupied. During the interview I had with him, he said the people were rising up about the concession palaver, and that they were going to fight. They, however, bolted directly they heard the two Houssas coming towards our house with naked swords. In the morning I instructed my people to search the lake shore for canoes. They succeeded in seizing one, in which I crossed the lake, and lay in the Bia River to intercept the launches coming down. In this I was successful, returning with the launch, took off my people, and brought them safely back to Apollonia.

CHAPTER XX

THE WHITE APE OF THE TANO

FAR away in the primeval forests of the Upper Tano, in the Gold Coast Colony, a strange tale is told by the natives of a wild man of the woods, which would appear from the description given to be a white ape of extraordinary stature and human instinct. The natives who live in the village near to the haunts of this freak of nature are terrified out of their wits. They barricade their doors at night, and place broiled plantains and cassava on the jungle-paths leading into the village to propitiate him and appease his hunger. They declare he comes to the village at night, and only runs when fire is thrown at him. The women especially are almost scared to death, and go in a body to their plantain farms. It appears that two women while gathering plantains were confronted by this creature. One he seized and flung over his shoulder, carrying her off; the

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other ran screaming with fright back to the village. No trace of the other woman has been found. Several children have been taken by this creature, their mutilated bodies being found with the whole of their bowels devoured.

The hunter and women who have seen this animal describe him as "past all man" in size; his arms they describe as thick as a man's body; his skin "all the same as a white man," with black hairs growing thereon. The hands have four fingers but no thumb, the head is flat, and, as they describe it, "left small for big monkey head," meaning that it was very near or like a large monkey's head. They say the mouth "was all the same as monkey with big teeth sticking out, and he carries a skin of a bush cow," which the natives say "he carries for cloth when small cold catch him," meaning he wraps himself up in it when feeling cold. A hunter tried to shoot him, but he smashed the gun and broke both the hunter's arms. Many other incidents are related of this terror of the Upper Tano.

CHAPTER XXI

OLD SLAVES OF THE GOLD COAST

FROM the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries the value of gold produced by the Gold Coast of West Africa is assumed to have amounted to over seven hundred millions sterling. Undoubtedly most of this gold must have been obtained by hand-washing and slave labour. A quota of this gold was probably obtained by pounding rich quartz on stones; but the larger portion came from the sands and gravel deposits inland, and on the sea-shore.

A question is often asked, if the natives of the past obtained gold, why do they not do so now? A solution to this question is, that nine-tenths of the native population in those days were enslaved to the other tenth.

Their masters forced them to wash for gold, at no expense to themselves except their food. These poor creatures were underfed and treated

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with the utmost barbarity. They had to obtain gold for their master, or go without food, besides getting a flogging.

An old and intelligent native informed me that usually each slave had to bring gold to his master of a value of not less than 1s. 6d. per day, but 3s. and 5s. was generally expected. Some chiefs had as many as five hundred slaves, which if each earned 1s. 6d. meant an output of £37 10s. in gold per day. This offers some explanation of the gold obtained in the past by means of compulsory labour.

Since the abolition of slavery the descendants of slaves are adverse to searching for gold, considering it derogatory; but more likely they are imbued with a traditional sense of the cruelties practised on their ancestors. Hence so many natives will reply to-day, when asked why they do not wash for gold, that they are not slaves; it was slaves' work. The native descendants of the slave masters bemoan their fate, saying they cannot get their people to work; in other words, they cannot compel their black brethren to work for them for no pay.

Unfortunately there is no published official information regarding the manners and cus-

Old Slaves of the Gold Coast

toms or history of the Gold Coast, as in South Africa, where Mr. Theal, the Librarian of the Government, rendered public service by publishing the history of the natives of South Africa. There should be official information lying in the dust-heaps of the Government offices at Cape Coast, Elmina, and Accra that would make interesting reading matter, if published.

Until this is done, the only source of information is from Bosman's book on the Gold Coast, or to yarn with the older and intelligent natives.

I interviewed a very old slave at Ewiabo, who gave me the following, interpreted in pigeon English :—

“I be an old man (naguar); my father him be a slave. Look um—see the mark on my face (pointing to slave mark, a gash on his face); my father be slave for big chief, who fit catch plenty slaves—sixty man and woman. The place he liv for work be far from here (pointing east); him father work small, but catch plenty (sika-a-futi). Gold past all, but him massa flog plenty too much.”

When I asked him who his massa was, and where they worked for gold, he replied, “Dem

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big chief for Elmina bush part ; him slaves work for Wassau part, long past Elmina bush—dem men catch dirt and go—come, bring it to woman to wash.”

I asked him how much did these sixty people catch per day. His reply was: “Makeker oiyez a sun sika-a-futi” (they weighed and caught 7 lb. of gold).

I suggested he lied. The wizened old patriarch was very indignant, and replied, “Naguar morrocau Edinyah a bannassi” (my father go to the Elmina bush).

In further conversation I learnt that there were forty women and twenty men, that they often secured as the result of their day's work £10 to £15 worth of gold. The slaves received no pay, but food, and sometimes were given a piece of cloth. This old slave's reply to a question why the natives did not get gold now, is expressive of the ingrained indolence of their race. His answer was: “White man he go—come, him juju past all. Fetish God make all dem gold run away. He fear white man—he spoil gold.” I told him this was all nonsense ; it was because they were too lazy. He replied, “That's not the palaver—all man fit to go—

Old Slaves of the Gold Coast

come, plenty chop liv—plenty work liv—plenty
gin white man fit to give—plenty wife wash
cloth and cook chop—no man be slave now—
he sleep and liv for house plenty too much.”

CHAPTER XXII

A COCOA-NUT GROVE TREASURE

DURING one of my visits to Apollonia I met an interesting parchment-looking-faced old African chief who had an intense desire to possess a tall silk hat. Knowing of his weakness, I brought one with me in a leather case, and made him a present of it. He immediately transferred it to his head, while his head-man seized on the case, and did likewise, then strutted round with only their loin cloths on, beaming with happiness.

This act of grace made me an eternal friend of the old chap; we got quite chummy. He had many interesting tales to tell of the Ashanti raids and slavery in former days, and of his own valiant deeds, which he corroborated by showing me with intense pride the jaw-bones of four Ashanti men he had killed, and gloried in the fact that he and his followers surrounded two hundred Ashantis, who lay drunk in a forest, and cut off their heads.

A Cocoa-nut Grove Treasure

My friend the chief, I soon learned, was a great medicine man, or fetish doctor, and also a spiritualist. He told me that on certain nights, in a cocoa-nut grove near his village, the spirits of those who had been killed whistle and make palaver.

I laughed at this, which rather nettled the old chap, who retorted by saying in pigeon English, "You fit, massa, to go, come, and liv for dat place all night?" I replied I did not mind. So a few nights afterwards found the old chief and myself sitting on stools, the sole occupants of the cocoa-nut grove. We sat smoking up to about 11 p.m., when feeling weary I lay down on a mackintosh and dozed, leaving the old man looking like a gaunt Egyptian statue, sitting bolt upright. I had not been asleep long before I felt a tug at my arm, and a whisper of "Massa, dey come." I jumped up and sat listening fully a quarter of an hour, hearing nothing but the cries of the sloth, when suddenly came a weird soughing noise, like the wind whistling amongst the cocoa-nut palms. Gradually the noise appeared to come nearer, and sounded like the hum of human voices; then a strange rushing sound over our

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heads, dying away as it travelled down the grove. My companion sat glaring at the ground in front of us, perspiring and shaking with fear, then, turning to me, said, "You no see em; you no see 'em killing people. You savvy, massa, I no lie." I told him I saw nothing, but did not know what to make of the noise.

Some months after this my old friend of the cocoa-nut-grove experience came to see me at my camp to borrow a few packets of candles. Curiosity led me to ask what he intended doing with so many candles. He was reticent about explaining; but, taking me by the arm, led me mysteriously into the bush until we were out of hearing from the camp. He then said, "Massa, I no sleep, long time, past all; dem people flog me too much." I asked who did he mean. He replied that "Dem spirits of people who liv for die, made palaver, because he bring white man to look 'em gold."

"Gold!" I ejaculated. "What do you mean?" After a deal of persuasion I got out of him the following tale, the gist of it being that in the past, when he was very young, his father used to collect slaves to sell to a big slave-

A Cocoa-nut Grove Treasure

dealer who came down from the north. This man was bringing slaves down, also a lot of gold sewn up in skin-bags, and calabashes. It seems that the party made their camp where the cocoa-nut grove now stands, and during the night they were all killed. They had been in the habit of burying the gold every night for safety. I asked what became of it; the old chief naively remarked :

“Gold no liv ; it liv for ground ; dem people savvy who liv for die—we look 'em proper, but no find.”

His father planted the cocoa-nuts to mark the place.

The old man wanted the candles to go and burn medicine there to make the spirits rest.

He informed me that it took twenty slaves to carry the gold ; that it was “all the same,” as he expressed it, as twenty planes of rubber. A plane is a 60-lb. load. So according to this old chief's reckoning there was about 1200 lb. weight of gold buried near this cocoa-nut grove.

CHAPTER XXIII

GOLD SMOKE OF WEST AFRICA

“MASSA ! look 'um, see dem gold smoke ; plenty gold liv for dat place.”

These expressions came from my native head miner as we emerged out of the jungle into a clearing in the Gold Coast, where there were numerous old native workings. The West African firmly believes that a certain mist seen at times rising from low-lying places is a sure indication of gold.

This superstition is not confined alone to West Africa. The Mexicans and Peruvians believe that where a phosphorous-looking mist is seen hanging over the ground it indicates a store of gold. There is possibly some foundation for this belief. In tropical countries where fine powdered dust gold lies impregnated on the ground, and floating as scum on pools of water caused by heavy rains, the sun's rays have a tendency to draw the moisture laden

Gold Smoke of West Africa

with gold in the form of a mist which, on evaporation, would be re-deposited. There are many curious beliefs amongst the natives here; for instance, on certain days it is no use to look for gold, as it runs away. Certain trees and vegetation are stated to grow only on gold ground, and sprinkling the ground with gin is a custom to make gold grow.

CHAPTER XXIV

AN AFRICAN GOLD GOD

ONE of the ancient gold-washing places in the Gold Coast Colony is named Subilsu, a tributary stream of the Bonsa River, near Bensus. Country folk-lore of this part declares that certain old native shafts are guarded by a gold god, and that any man showing these shafts will surely die. To lend colour to their assertions an instance is quoted by a very old man, translated by the interpreter in pigeon English as follows :—

“When he was a piccayne, he had to carry dirt for the women to wash at Subilsu. There liv for that place a fine girl, past all girls. Ashanti man he catch her for him wife. She no like ’im, and run away. Her man catch her, and flog plenty too much, then cut off her breasts, and left small for die. The woman cry all day that her man should die that moon. One dark night big water come; the woman run from

An African Gold God

house and jump down big shaft, and cry out, all who follow her die. Her man run to catch woman, when big fire come from top and kill him. Now no man fit to go to dem shafts."

CHAPTER XXV

BURIED IN GOLD

THE incident referred to in the above heading occurred at a place called Arkah-Sonda, near Abrodiam, on the Ancobra River, and was told to me while stopping a few days in this village by a grey-haired, wizened-looking old native doctor. It relates to bygone searchers for gold and their untimely end in a native shaft of that district, now regarded as a fetish-place.

The doctor's tale is as follows :—

He was a piccayne at the time, now he was past sixty years of age (he looked eighty), when the people from Inframadzi and Arbrodiam towns made a partnership of workers to dig for gold at this fetish-place. The native custom of partnership was that each told the other of any gold found and showed it to all. They made a shaft seven fathoms deep and came to hard rock at bottom. One day it was the Inframadzi people's turn to work, when they

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all came shouting from the shaft that they had found "big gold," so thick they could not lift it out, and had to cut it with a native chisel; but before they touched the gold they sent for their partners from Abrodiam. All the people came to the shaft; some went down to look—twenty-six men—and while they were there the ground shook, a big noise came from below, and the shaft fell in with smoke and fire and buried the people. The rest ran away for fear, as all of them said, "Look, the gold god has done this because we try to steal his gold." Some days afterwards they tried to make a hole to save the people, but smoke came and they ran away, and to this day no one dares to go to this place. Curiosity led me to inspect this fetish place, and I found a large cup-like hole, 60 feet across by 12 feet deep, that looked like the subsidence of a shaft or pit, while a cotton-wood tree, probably forty years old, was growing in the centre.

CHAPTER XXVI

“WOMEN SLAVES OF AFRICA”

“If I marry a rich man, my family come to me,
If I marry a poor man, my family run from me.
God be good, be good to me.”

THE above lines are taken from the black maiden's song of the Gold Coast, which they sing while their female friends spend hours in dressing one another's hair. They appear to be a happy, laughing, chaffing lot, with no cares, yet every girl knows the life of slavery in front of her. Women amongst black nations are regarded by the men as beasts of burden, to work for and attend to their daily wants. Little if any affection is shown amongst them, except for their children.

In the marriage arrangement the women are purchased on paying head money and dowry. The man's main object in buying a wife is to get a woman to work for him and wash his cloth, so as to obviate any further exertion on his part in life. The wife is simply a slave,

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working harder, and often treated worse than the slaves of the past. It would be a good thing if some of the Suffragettes of England spent a little of their energy in endeavouring to improve the lot of their black sisters in Africa.

CHAPTER XXVII

CHIT-CHAT—NATIVE CUSTOMS AND YARNS,
WRITTEN PARTLY IN PIGEON ENGLISH

ON a trip to the bush country east of Bensus I came across an Elmina girl. She possessed the thin lips of the European, good features, and light brown tinge in her skin that tells of the white parentage on the father's side. I questioned her, and she told me her father was a white man and her mother an Elmina woman; but as she said, in pigeon English, "Her mother no liv—she die. While her father liv for England, her mother catch piccayne. Her father liv small for come; her mother get shame, so she catch medicine (poison) and die." I asked if this was the custom. She replied, "Some Elmina woman do this thing when they get shame, but plenty no fit to do it." In her simple way she told of a quiet tragedy of the coast, of a self-sacrifice which shows that even in the black race there lurks in their hearts that

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feeling of shame, or of conscience, a something that they cannot face, and to escape do away with their lives.

I once had a steward, a native of the Mendi country, who showed great grief when I lay sick in my tent with fever. He would insist on lying on a mat at my feet. One night I awoke and found this boy, Fatima by name, weeping copiously. I asked him why he cried. "Oh, massa," he replied, "you liv for die, and poor Fatima he be sorry. He no sleep."

A small steward boy I once had on the coast became very attached to me, and in one of my wanderings in Apollonia he saved my life. I had trouble with my cook, and found it necessary to chastise him. A week after this event I was having chop (dinner) in the evening. When my boy (Havelock by name) brought in the soup, he whispered in my ear, "Soup no good, cook put medicine." I got up to fetch the cook, but the boy was in a terror, and said, "No, massa, he flog me." So I desisted, and put the soup in an empty soda-water bottle. After finishing my meal I sent for the cook and

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tied his hands, then told him he would have to drink the soup. He went livid, and said, "Massa, I no fit to die." I told him it was the nice soup he made for me—fine soup; he had better drink it. With that I put it to his lips. He shrieked out, "Massa, dem soup kill man one time!" "Oh," I said, "then it did not matter about me, eh?" "I beg you, massa, I'm sorry I put medicine dere." I let him off with a flogging.

Funeral customs are far more important events than marriage functions amongst the natives of the Gold Coast. A funeral takes the form of an Irish wake, and lasts sometimes for weeks. The native saves up gold against the death of his parents. In death customs they exhibit great pride in being able to show off by a large expenditure in gin. On such occasions, the greater the carouse, and the longer the gin lasts, the richer and more important the relative of the deceased becomes in the eyes of his fellows. A good deal is spent in powder for shooting off of guns to scare away the evil spirits from molesting the dead, or by making "gun noise," as they call it, to inform the

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departed that they are duly celebrating his departure from this world.

Another custom is the parading of young girls directly they obtain the age of puberty. It is the daughter's debut into marriageable black society. The girls are decked out in finery and borrowed jewellery. Accompanied by a bevy of young girls, they call upon every place where there is any likelihood of being seen by marrying men. After all, this custom is an adaptation of that practised by their white sisters in English society, where marriageable daughters make their debut on the matrimonial market, bidding for wealth and position.

The aunt amongst the Gold Coast natives generally occupies the important post in contracting marriages. She is the go-between of the family, arranges and receives the head-money. The prices paid usually range from £3 to £12 for head-money, which is divided amongst the family, and from £1 to £5 for dowry, which furnishes the supply of gin for the occasion. The bride gets nothing but her subsistence and cloth money, which ranges from 3d. to 1s. per day.

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The same custom applies to the marriage of a black girl to Europeans ; and when a European, or for that matter a native, wishes to leave his wife, he simply divorces her by sending her away, thus leaving her free to marry again. From the family's point of view this is a welcome arrangement, as it means more head-money or dowry. If one is desirous of retaining his wife, he has to pay for her subsistence during his absence. The natives are strict on one point: that is, if a wife misbehaves herself her husband can demand and get her head-money paid back. When this happens it is called "disgracing her family." It will be seen from the foregoing that marriage here is a marriage of convenience—a purchase, in fact. Little affection is ever shown on either side ; the dusky maiden, like her sister in London society, has no choice, but abides by the decision of her family.

I once attended a court at Axim when a native was being sworn in the witness-box. The District Commissioner asked him if he savvy God. The boy replied, "I no savvy dat man ; he no liv for my side." One of his brothers in the court called out to him, "You savvy God ; he be

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dat man who liv for top" (pointing heavenwards). The witness at once replied, "Yes, massa, I savvy dat man from on top," and was duly sworn.

I sent a boy to get me an umbrella I left on a mining shaft; the boy came back without it, his reply being, "Massa, I go, come one time I look um, but I no see."

I once employed a head-man named Samson, a man of gigantic stature, who came from the Cavalhy River district in Liberia. He told me of his experiences in a war, as he termed it, they had with some interior tribes in his country, in which some portions of the killed in battle were eaten. His opinion of human flesh is expressive. He told me they ate the heart and some fleshy parts of the body, and added, "Massa, dem man meat past all meat," meaning it was superior to every other kind of meat.

This cannibal also told me of his last return to his native village, when he found that his wife had been untrue during his absence, so he condemned her to die by torture, the manner adopted being to stake the poor creature out flat on the ground, and then make a slow fire on her stomach.

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This mode of torture, and that of being eaten by ants, were commonly adopted in his country.

On the death of a chief or important personage in the Gold Coast, it is necessary, according to native custom, to send out in the vicinity of the place he dies in, and kill strangers, so that the departed chief has the spirits of strangers to accompany him to the Unknown. This custom is secretly practised at the present time.

I remember years ago the paramount chief of the Axim district dying near to the African Rubber Company's Plantations, where at the time I was manager. I saw a party of men hanging about the bush-paths, and on inquiry was informed they were looking for a stranger to kill. My native employees were scared, and kept to our village.

The Apollonians are a fetish-loving race; they firmly believe that whatever the fetish man says will come to pass. When fetish is put on a man, and he is told he will die in one moon, he always dies if only to oblige the fetish, whether naturally or unnaturally.

Some years ago I secured the confidence of a

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powerful fetish doctor. In the village in which he lived stood a fetish tree, which he described as his tree of knowledge. When he wanted to know of any matter he consulted it, and the tree spoke, and then he became wise. When he put fetish on bad man or woman he took leaves from this tree, put medicine on, and then laid it on them ; the devil inside man then ran out, and man die before moon come and go.

All palaver for town took place under this tree. When night came " he go look tree, who fit talk plenty." His father, he told me, planted that tree, and when he died his spirit, as he put it, " liv for dat tree, and suppose he go and rub root of tree, and put him ear for ground small, him father talk to him. When plenty leaf fall from tree, plenty chop live for his people. Suppose tree catch small cold and white salt come for skin, den big sickness" (small-pox) " come plenty too much, and plenty people die one time. When I fit catch devil-man, I go look tree three times, and then I throw for up this fetish" (showing me the leg-bone of a man). " Suppose leaf fall, that be devil-man live for woman ; if small stick fall, that be for man. I look dem proper, for that side dem tings

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look, den I go for dat place, look 'um, and catch man or woman." I asked him why the strings of old shells and bones were hung across the path at the entrance to the village. He replied, "You savvy dem snail-shell. I make slave of him, he fit live one time, for dat shell, him fit tell all snail come fetish man when any bad thing come for town. Dat crab shell he be slave; all crab who liv for water come tell fetish man all palaver. Dat bone he be jaw-bone of woman; she fit talk plenty. She fit to tell when thief-man come catch plantain. Dat chicken-head tell all woman she no fit to cross water when sick."

The explanation given in regard to habits, etc., of various animals is amusing. For instance, they say the snake crawls on his belly for two reasons. The first is that "hunger catch him plenty too much, so he lay on him belly to make him think he chop small." The other is, "he fit for lie on ground, open mouth so that frog jump in. Frog he think snake's mouth be some hole for stick."

The monkey, they say, "be men, but no talk if he talk; he fit to work, like other men." The tiger (leopard) "he be past all; he catch dem

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ghosts of people who liv for die. When tiger come town, and catch fowl, he no be tiger, but thief-man's ghost. The tortoise he be past all thief; he steal him house from snail; he no fit leave house, so he carry on him head, suppose snail no fit to catch him house again."

"Dem commassie (driver ants) dey catch too much sense, dey savvy dat when plenty liv for come, no one fit to stop 'um." The hen "him be good fetish. Him come tell black man look 'um house and wife proper and catch plenty piccayne." The cock "he tell dem time of day, and tell hen not talk too much."

The cat, they say, "is left small from tiger."

The bee "is fit catch sweet meat" (honey) "for him wife because she flog him too much."

The fish, "he liv for water because he drink too much. Fetish man no let him liv for land; he make plenty too much palaver with him wife." The alligator "he talk too much, so fetish man make him mouth big; he come for land at night, and talk plenty. He no good, catch plenty man."

The sloth, "he fool the tiger; him cry 'Oour-a'" (I am here) "when he climbs up a tree to his house" (hole in a tree) "to make tiger think he's coming down."

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The house-builder (a large kind of hornet which builds a clay nest in the bungalows like a miniature martin's nest, in which he turns into a chrysalis), the natives say: "He be fool animal, him build house, go inside, shut door and then die."

On my asking a native how many children he had, he replied: "Him mammy born three—two man, one woman—mammy catch piccayne no born. No savvy if he be man or woman."

The chameleon is a puzzle to the native. He says: "He is past all, catch plenty sense, one time he liv for man who fit steal plenty cloth. He fear now some man catch him, so he fit change colour of dem cloth, all time when man look 'um, him eye liv for look back and front, all same time."

The bee, "him no good. One time he fit to be slave-woman, who no savvy work; so fetish man make him liv for bee, him work plenty for one woman king—who make him go—come, bring sweet chop for him house. Him no like man; when he catch man he flog* plenty too much."

The man pig, "he be past all king; he like

* Flog means to bite, sting, or strike. When speaking of a woman they refer to her as "him."

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plenty wife too much ; him kill all other man pig who go, look 'um wife."

The parrot "he be palaver birds ; he catch plenty too much sense past all birds. He liv once for woman, but like palaver too much so fetish man make him poli" (parrot). "He fit tell all animal for bush, what man do. When he look man work, him laugh—ah ! ah ! and cry fool man no savvy work—ha ! ha ! Go home make woman work—ha ! ha ! You no fit—ha ! ha !

The frog "he catch small cold, when no water come, and make noise like man with bad belly. Him be big fool ; him jump, no fit walk. If he walk, he think snake catch him."

It is customary amongst the natives of West Africa for the lowest in the social scale to show great respect to their superiors, and in some parts of the country they still carry this custom out in its entirety. For instance, when the lesser meets the greater he at once falls on his knees, places both hands together as a token of submission, claps them, and bends to the earth.

On saluting or speaking, the lower in grade

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places his hand over his mouth so that his breath shall not pollute his superior. This respect is taught to children : the younger showing respect to the elder, the children to the father, and wives to their husbands. When persons of equality meet they both fall on their knees, and in this posture salute one another, rising at the same time. If an important man sneezes, all the inferiors near him fall down and clap hands.

In regard to number of wives the natives possess, some of the more important have from one to two dozen. The chief captains in large centres sometimes have a hundred or two ; the king's run into five hundred to a thousand.

In Togoland if any common person even touches with his hands any of the king's wives, by accident or otherwise, he is at once killed or made to pay a heavy price.

For this reason, any man happening to pass, or go near, these women has to shout out, making them aware of his presence ; and if they are coming his way, have to fall on the ground until they have passed.

The principal captain is entrusted with keeping the king's wives, and seeing that they behave

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themselves. He is also appointed to obtain fresh wives for the monarch. When he sees a good-looking young girl, he brings her to the king. No one dare refuse. If the king likes her, he takes her for a wife, and, after a few weeks at the royal residence, she is shut up in a house, and leads the life of a recluse or nun. For this reason, the young girls are not at all desirous of the honour of becoming a king's wife. Many good-looking girls disfigure themselves so that they shall not be picked out, while others have been known to prefer death by poisoning or drowning to entering the king's harem.

Amongst many West African tribes the mentioning of death is tantamount to putting a fetish or some evil upon them, and often the person to whom it is mentioned will try to secretly poison the person doing so, thinking that by the mere mention of death you intend that they shall die, so they endeavour to forestall the event.

To be reputed a rich man is to possess a huge family, especially in regard to females, which constitute wealth on being sold for wives, while the males add to their stock of servants or slaves.

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Some natives possess families of several hundreds, while those who have only twenty or thirty mournfully declare that they are poor unfortunates whom their gods do not favour.

The officers of state in the retinue of a West African chief consist of a head captain, a second captain, head-man, stick-bearer, elders, sword-bearer, horn-blower or drummer, public crier, umbrella- and chair-bearers. The head captain is supposed to take the place of general or leader in battle, and if he possesses the necessary pluck has to be the first to charge. Amongst the Gold Coast natives they generally depute someone else, as invariably the heads lack grit and have no stomach for fighting, or endanger their lives by being the first to charge. As a rule they shift this responsibility on to each other's shoulders. There are generally from two to four sword-bearers; their duty is to be always near the king as a guard of honour. The public crier is a sort of king's messenger whose duty it is to proclaim laws. He is also a special ambassador to accompany the king's stick-bearer when conveying messages or orders of the king. The medicine-man (in case that the king himself is not a great medicine-man)

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occupies the position of adviser, confidant, or lord high chancellor of state, king's executioner, etc. His is a very important office. Added to the above are king's clerk and writer, generally an educated native. The sub-chiefs under the paramount chief or king also keep up a similar retinue. On the Gold Coast there are hundreds of these chiefs, some with only twenty or thirty subjects, all enjoying British protection, but exhibiting an absurd and ridiculous travesty of native authority.

When a woman's family reaches nine children, the ninth born is looked upon as the ugly duckling, and one possessed of nine parts of all the bad qualities of the parents. Native custom ordains that it shall be killed, but I have met several ninth-born natives who are generally miserable, unfortunate creatures, bitterly complaining of their outcast existence and ill-luck, attributing all their misfortunes to being the ninth child. On the appearance of a tenth child, great consternation is aroused in the native mind. They begin to think the woman is bewitched, and their custom necessitates her retiring into obscurity, by solitary confinement in a house specially set aside for this purpose.

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She is compelled to live there by herself for twelve moons. At every full-moon time, the barren women of the town she lives in, dressed in all their finery, pay her a visit to implore their gods to bestow upon themselves some proportion of her prolificness. They beg for small pieces of food that the recluse has prepared, after receiving which they yell, screech, dance, and clap their hands, until the perspiration rolls off their bodies; then beseeching the goodwill of the prisoner, they rush off like a lot of she-devils to their homes, thoroughly believing that they will become mothers.

In some towns of the Gold Coast there are women who, being dedicated to their idols or gods, must never marry; they are called Aabelicray (common women). These are considered necessary in their social life, and formerly were held in high esteem.

When a lonely native becomes sick and possesses no money or expectations, no relative to obtain necessary herbs to alleviate his disease, he lies down and dies. I have seen natives who have been bitten by poisonous snakes, having no money, or objecting to pay the medicine-man's charges, resign themselves to their

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fate; while others in my employ have begged for loans or advances to pay the native doctor, believing in his efficiency far more than in a European.

POISONING CASES.

I remember years ago a European from England going to an up-country town in the Gold Coast to collect a debt from a chief, who owed him some hundreds of pounds for goods supplied. This gentleman, unfortunately not being versed in the country's ways, foolishly accepted some cooked native food given to him in the chief's town. Feeling ill after partaking of the food, he ordered his hammock-men to take him to the coast town. Within a few hours of starting he died. His body was brought down to the coast and buried, as usual, without any post-mortem or inquiry, it being given out that he had succumbed to fever. Some time after, it came to light that he had been poisoned, the chief adopting this remedy to get rid of a pressing creditor, and redeeming the debt. It appears that the English merchant had notified the chief that he should bring him down to the court at —— and sue him for recovery.

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Another case was brought to my notice where a European unwisely parted with money to a chief for consideration on a concession. After obtaining the chief's promise to accompany him to a coast town to sign the usual declarations before a District Commissioner, it appeared that he had previously sold the same concession and obtained money thereon. The European died mysteriously the night before his projected departure. He was fond of pine-apples, and the chief sent him a couple as a present, which unfortunately he partook of. It seems that the chief, or his medicine-man, had inserted a deadly poison into the pine-apple with a piece of thin wire.

Poisoning over women palaver is a common occurrence on the coast.

A gentleman I was acquainted with met his fate in this manner. He was amenable to the fair sex, and unwisely adopted Mormon customs. Jealousy arose, and he suddenly died.

On one occasion I stayed at a friend's house when his *femme* upbraided him before me, saying he had cast his eyes upon one of the women carriers in my caravan. There was no truth in her assertion, and I did my best to

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appease her wrath. When I departed next morning, the woman carrier had disappeared. I inquired of my head-man the cause. He told me that she had been flogged, and driven out of the town. A short time after this my natives informed me that my friend had been poisoned by the woman.

I once had a head-man who incurred the displeasure of some men in a village we were staying in. He came to me one day with his foot in a terrible state, resulting from treading on poisoned glass. It appears that some glass bottles had been broken up into small jagged pieces, which had been steeped in a deadly poison, allowed to dry, then spread over the floor of his hut. He had stepped on it, and the poison, through incisions in his foot, was conveyed into the system, causing his leg to swell to an enormous size. I injected ammonia into the veins, scorified the foot where the glass had cut it, and made a ligature above the knee to endeavour to arrest the circulation of the poison, but all to no purpose, the man dying during the day.

I remember an instance of very fine powdered glass being placed in some soup on the table of

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a European, which fortunately was discovered in time. Powdered glass is a favourite Fantee means of injuring or killing those they have a grudge against. It is broken up fairly fine, put into kankee or fufa (native food), and when swallowed lacerates the bowels, setting up internal hæmorrhage. Another of their methods is to rub the sticky latex of the rubber vine on the latch of the doors, rails of beds, on the loin cloths, or anything their victim is likely to touch. They then shake the poisoned broken glass on to the sticky rubber, and any person taking hold of these things and receiving a prick in the hands is inoculated with the poison. There are many deaths of Europeans in West Africa that are put down to fever, blackwater, typhoid, and stomach complaints, that if their true cause were investigated would be found to arise from irritants and other poisons that the natives are adepts at using. When a native dies, the first question asked by his relations is—"Why did he die?" If the prevalent suspicion of poison arises, an exhaustive inquiry is made to ascertain those responsible, and revenge themselves. Recent visitors are closely examined, his wives are interrogated, and suspicions in-

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vestigated as to whether they wanted him to live or die. If they cannot assign a reason, they look about to ascertain if anyone put a devil on deceased ; and, as a final resource, they go to the fetish-man and ask him. This, however, means a money payment, which they try to avoid. After paying the fetish-man they implicitly believe in his answers. Therein lies the opportunity for the fetish to gain importance and get even with any person he has a grudge against, or who has not paid him for advice.

Directly a native dies his wives shave their heads, and go about yelling and wailing. It is noticeable that they only set up their dismal wails when there is an audience to hear them. Distant relatives are summoned from all directions. They leave everything they are engaged upon to pay respects to the dead, and to attend the funeral. In funerals of kings and people of high degree, slaves used to be tortured and killed ; and even now, under British protection, these customs are secretly carried out. As there are no slaves to kill, they seek those they call strangers.

The custom of burying relatives under the ground inside of their houses is still practised.

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Only recently the Government servants have had considerable trouble at Mansu over this custom.

Whatever laws may be in force in the Gold Coast Colony, if they interfere in the slightest way with native custom, they are found pretty difficult to effectually carry out.

I remember once on a journey to Assinie stopping at a small fishing village for the night. A woman was in charge, having lost her husband a fortnight before my arrival. She turned out and offered me her hut, the best in the place. And seeing a nice clean-looking white counterpane on a native wooden bed inside, I accepted it.

After chop (dinner) I went to bed, but noticing a frightful stench which emanated from under it, I lit a candle to ascertain the cause. The floor was sand (being on the beach), and I found a few dirty-looking utensils under the bed, so I called my stewards to come and remove them. While doing this the landlady of the house came rushing in, gesticulating frantically. My interpreter informed me that the reason of her excitement was that I was causing the removal of water and food placed there in

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case her departed husband should need them on his journey, he having been buried there, under a couple of feet of sand, about a fortnight previously. Needless to say, I spent the remainder of the night on the open beach, preferring the company of the land crabs to the decomposed body of an African nigger.

AN AGRA BEAD LEGEND

“Massa, dat bead liv for dead man, who liv for die long, long ago ; past all moons, as many moons as seeds liv for the pau-pau. If man keep dat bead, plenty too much bad come : all massa’s chicken die, sickness liv for house, no corn liv for farm. I beg you massa bury it.”

The above remarks were made to me by an old grey-headed native known far and wide, around the countryside, as a great medicine-and fetish-man. I had found an agra bead during excavating operations around an old native shaft, when we came upon the remains of what had once been a human body lying bedded in the heavy clays ; and amidst the mouldy dust streak, all that was left of his remains, I found a copper buckle of a belt, and a brass bowl, which crumbled into powdered

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pieces on touching them, together with a very fine specimen of what is known as an agra bead, made out of fine powdered stone of delicate flesh-pink and green tints, cemented together in a hard concrete form, with a polished surface. These beads appear to be a lost art of the Egyptians, as similar beads are to be seen in the mummy cases at the British Museum. The one I found was an inch long, circular in form, with a hole in the centre, through which the leather cord had passed that had strung it around the neck of the deceased personage.

I asked the fetish-man why he attributed such ill-luck to this stone, when he told me that what he now spoke was given to him by his father's father, who, according to the custom of his race, gave news of importance to the medicine-men, who received it from their father's father, who took it from the father's father before him. It was so long ago that he could not count.

"A certain agra bead belonged to a man who was a great king, who ruled all the land from the great waters this side to the lands and big waters of the great spider, who made all the land. This great king was the head captain of the great spider. He was a wise man, past all

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men, could read and write book, and had plenty too much gold. He sent his head-man with soldiers to these lands to catch gold and slaves. The journey was far; past fifteen moons. Some of this king's people died for this place, and were buried with the agra beads and fetish things they carried; for the great king, their master, gave every man some of these beads, telling them if they die the bead will tell the great spider where they liv for ground, when the time come that the big spider want all his people to come for him. Their captains warn the people this side that they are no fit dig up these men who liv for die if they do, the stone is fit, tell big spider, and trouble come. Plenty big chief this country, be greedy, and catch agra bead, but all man get bad. Den big Wassau King catch bead from Ashanti woman, daughter of chief; then Ashanti chief come down and kill all Wassaus. Den big Ashanti chief, Prempeh, he get greedy and catch plenty agra beads. White man he go flog him, and he no liv longer for land. The agra stone that liv for dis place is left small from big agra stone that the great King of the East (pointing to where the sun rises) catch

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from the big spider. One time a Wassau chief take some stones from ground and bring to him house. When dark come a black serpent went to chief and tell him if he no fit put dem stones back for ground, he make him big monkey. This chief laugh at serpent, and take stick to flog him from house. Next day, when him wife look husband, she look big monkey lie beside her. She cry, and run from house. All people come and flog monkey from house, so he run for trees. The people den catch wife, and ask what she do for big chief. No one fit know, so they kill the woman. Small wife she see agra stone, and savvy how trouble come, so she put bead for cloth and hide. That night black serpent come and make her woman-monkey, so she run for bush to meet husband. All monkey now turn stone over in bush to look him proper to try catch agra stone. If he fit catch same, he beg big snake to let him come man ; but snake master the big spider no like monkey. Him do him bad, so he fit to tell him Captain Snake to make him liv for bush all time. You savvy, massa, why dem agra bead no good to man. I savvy white man who catch dem beads for Prah river-side. He catch fever and die. A woman

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took agra bead from farm. She born piccayne, and him get snake's head. So people kill woman and piccayne. Den big white captain, who liv for Accra, him catch plenty agra bead ; him die for fever. Massa, him stone no good. I beg you put him for ground."

I listened attentively to the old native's narrative. He seemed so earnest and thoroughly convinced that I was almost persuaded to do as he wished. Instead of this, I brought the bead to England, and had it fixed as a pendant to my watch-chain. A connoisseur offered me £25 for it, but I refused. Strange to say, on leaving West Africa on this occasion I lost my box. Two deaths occurred on the steamer during the home trip. We had terrible weather on the passage, and bad luck pursued me from the moment I set foot in England. I lost a considerable sum of money ; ill-fortune attended my business transactions ; I met with an accident ; unhappy domestic troubles occurred. I went one afternoon to the British Museum to compare this agra bead with the others in a case in the mummy section. I only saw two others like it. On leaving the museum I missed the stone from my chain. Whether it had fallen off or

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been stolen I cannot say, and never troubled to inquire. Its disappearance I looked upon as a good omen, for it had begun to get on my nerves. The old native's warning frequently came to my mind, and I seriously considered the advisability of getting rid of this ornamental bead to a gentleman who had made me an offer, as I was beginning to think that there was some truth in its evil reputation. After its disappearance I certainly had better fortune.

CHAPTER XXVIII

EXTRACTS FROM BOSMAN'S BOOK ON THE GUINEA COAST

I HEREWITH append a few quotations from a quaint publication translated from Dutch into English, written by William Bosman, chief factor for the Dutch at the Castle of St. George, d'Elmina, printed in 1705, and reprinted for the late Sir Alfred Jones, K.C.M.G., in 1907 :—

Bosman states that :

“The negro inhabitants of the Gold Coast of Guinea are generally very rich, driving a great trade with the Europeans for gold, which they chiefly vend to the English and Zealand Interlopers, notwithstanding the severe penalty they incur thereby ; for if we catch them, their so bought goods are not only forfeited, but a heavy fine is laid upon them . . . by which means we are hindered from having much above an hundredth part of the gold of this land.”

In speaking of Chama, Bosman refers to a king called “Anquah.”

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“This Anquah, for so he is called, is more detestably bloody and barbarous than any negroe I have met with on the whole coast. This barbarous monster having in an engagement taken five of his principal enemies Anno 1691, he wounded them all over; after which with a more than brutal fury, he satiated, though not tired himself by sucking their blood at their gaping wounds: but bearing a more than ordinary grudge against one of them . . . he caused him to be laid bound at his feet, and his body pierced with hot irons, gathering the blood that issued from him in a vessel, one half of which he drank, and offered up the rest to his God. . . . He caused the hands of one of his wives to be cut off; after which, in derision, he used to command her to look his head for vermin, which being impossible with her stumps, afforded him no small diversion.”

In regard to health, Bosman, in his Letter IV, containing a description of Fetu, together with the chief place of residence of the English, says:

“’Tis very well known that you are a learned physician, but I cannot tell whether you are of Mr. Bontokoe’s opinion, who ventures to say that most men shorten their days by an irregular

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way of living . . . but if our mentioned Author means such irregular lives as the English soldiers live here, I should make no difficulty to declare for his doctrine. 'Tis incredible how many are consumed by this liquor, which is not only confined to the soldiery, but some of the principal people are so bigotted to it that I really believe for all the time I was upon the coast that at least one of their Agents, and Factors innumerable died yearly. So that if the state of health in Guinea be computed by the number of the English which die here, certainly this country must have a much more unhealthful name in England than with us.

“If the Fantyneans [Fantees of to-day] were not in perpetual civil division the circumjacent countries would soon find their power. . . . This land is so populous, it is very rich in gold, slaves, and all sorts of necessaries of life ; but especially in corn which they sell in large quantities to the English ships. This great opulency has rendered them so arrogant and haughty that an European who would traffic with 'em is obliged to stand bare to them.”

Dealing with the districts where gold is obtained Bosman says :—

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“The first country which produceth gold is ‘Dinkira,’ situate so far inland that our servants are commonly five days in going from Elmina to it, and from Axim about ten days’ journey.

“Dinkira, elevated by its great riches and power, became so arrogant that it looked upon all other negroes with a contemptible eye, esteeming them no more than its slaves, which rendered it the object of common hatred, each impatiently wishing its downfall, though no nation was so hardy to attack it, till the King of Asianti, injured and affronted by its governor, adventured to avenge himself on this nation in a signal manner.

“Bosiante, the king of Dinkira, a young prince whose valour was become the admiration of all the negroes of the coast, sent some of his wives to compliment Zay, the King of Asianti, who not only received and entertained them civilly, but sent them back with considerable presents to express his obliging resentment of the grateful embassy. And being resolved to return his obligation, sent some of his wives to compliment the King of Dinkira. These ambassadresses were not less splendidly treated at Dinkira, being also loaded with presents, but the King

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cast a wanton eye upon one of them, and hurried on by exorbitant lust gratified his brutal desire. After which he suffered her together with the rest to return to their country, and the injured husband who was informed of this affront took care to make the King of Dinkira sensible that he would not rest till he had washed away the scandal in his injurious blood.

“The King of Dinkira offered the King of Asianti several hundred marks of gold to put up the injury.

“The enraged prince, deaf to all such offers, prepared himself for a vigorous war by raising a strong army. And about the beginning of this year, being completely ready, he came with a terrible army into the field, and, engaging the Dinkiras, he entirely defeated them. The negroes report that in two battles above 100,000 men were killed. Of the negroes of Akim only who came to the assistance of the Dinkira's, there were about 30,000 killed; besides that a great Caboceer of Akim with all his men were cut off. The plunder after this victory took up the Asianti's fifteen days' time, Zay's booty alone amounting to several thousands marks of gold.”

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Next Dinkira we come in order of description to Acanny, whose inhabitants brought the gold of Asianti and Akim, together with some of their own, hither to market. That which they vended was always so pure and fine that to this day the best gold is called by the negroes Acanni Sica or Accanny Gold.

“Akim is the next in our way, which furnishes as large quantities of gold as any land that I know, and that also the most valuable and pure of any that is carried from this coast. It is easily distinguished by its deep colour. Acra at present carries away the greatest part of this metal from hence.

“This illustrious metal is generally found in three sorts of places. First, the best is found in or betwixt particular hills. . . . The second place is in, at, and about some rivers and waterfalls. . . .

“The third is on the seashore, where (as at Elmina and Axim) there are little branches or rivulets into which the gold is driven. After violent showers of rain in the night, next morning these places are sure to be visited by hundreds of negro women naked. Each of these women is furnished with large and small

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troughs or trays, which they first fill full of earth and sand, which they wash with repeated fresh water till they have cleaned it from all its earth, and if there be any gold its ponderosity forces it to the bottom of the trough. The operation generally holds them till noon. Some of them not getting above the value of sixpence ; some of them find pieces of six or seven shillings. . . . The gold thus digged or found is of two sorts : one is called dust gold, or gold dust, which is almost as fine as flower, and is the best, bearing also the greatest price in Europe. The other sort is in pieces of different sizes, some being hardly the weight of a farthing, others weighing as heavy as twenty or thirty guineas. Of the last sort not many occur. The negroes, indeed, tell us that in the country pieces as heavy as one or two hundred guineas are found. These lumps or pieces are called mountain gold, which, being melted, touch better than dust gold ; but the multitude of small stones which always adhere to them occasion a great loss in the melting, for which reason gold dust is most esteemed.

“Concerning gold, weights are either pounds, marks, ounces, or angels. In Europe twenty

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angels make one ounce, though here but fifteen go to the ounce. Here are also pesos and bendos; the former contains four angels and the latter two ounces. As four bendos make one mark and two marks one pound of gold . . . exactly 660 gilders, . . . we constantly here reckon three marks of pure or good gold worth one thousand gilders.

“We use here another kind of weights which are a sort of beans, the least of which are red spotted with black, and are called dambas, twenty-four of them amounting to an angel, and each of them reckoned two styver weights. The white bean with black spots or those entirely black are heavier, and accounted four styver weights; they are usually called tacoës.

“All the negroes have cast weights either of copper or tin, which, though divided or adjusted in a manner quite different to ours, yet upon reduction agree exactly with them. . . . A great deal of gold might be separated but for want of skill in the metallic art; and not only so, but I firmly believe that large quantities of pure gold are left behind, for the negroes only ignorantly dig at random without the least knowledge of the veins of the mine.

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And I doubt not but if this country belonged to the European they would soon find it to produce much richer treasures than the negroes obtain from it. But it is not probable we shall ever possess that liberty here, wherefore we must be content."

Bosman states in his Letter VII that: "Our West India Company yearly exports 1500 marks; the English African Company 1200 marks; total, 2700 marks."

N.B.—2700 marks is equivalent to 1350 lb. of gold.

"The Zealand interlopers are sure to carry off as much yearly as our Company, namely, 1500 marks, and the English interlopers about 1000. But the last have for two or three years past pursued this trade so vigorously that they have exported above twice that quantity.

"The Brandenburghers and Danes, in times of peace, both together about 1000; the Portuguese and French together at least about 800, which makes 7000.

"According to our reckoning, then, there is brought hither and carried off exactly twenty-three tunn of gold, reckoning three marks to one thousand gilders."

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Note.—A tun of gold in Holland is computed at 100,000 gilders, somewhat under £10,000 sterling.

“ The negroes come daily to our castle or fort with their gold, for which, after it is weighed, assayed, and purified, they receive our commodities. Those who come from the inward parts of the country to traffick with us are chiefly slaves, in one of which the master reposes the greatest trust.”

In mentioning the insalubrity of the coast, Bosman says: “The unwholesomeness of this coast, in my opinion, seems chiefly owing to the heat of the day and coolness of the night, which sudden change I am induced to believe occasions several contrary effects in our bodies, . . . together with the stinking and sulphurous damp or mist that riseth, especially near rivers or watery places. . . .

“ . . . Some people here occasion their own sickness, though that cannot be said of all. If these men were more careful of their healths, 'tis more than probable that so many would not sicken and die here yearly as now do. But these rash and inconsiderate wretches no sooner receive their pay than they lavish it

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out in palm wine and brandy. . . . This is the commonest course of life which the ordinary people here lead . . . excessive drinking being here too much in vogue . . . and to make the quicker work they are zealous votaries to Venus as to Bacchus, and so waste the small portion of strength left them from tippling and the ill air, and then adieu health, and soon after death itself. . . . The negroes live healthful lives, but seldom arrive to a great age. . . .

“The negroes are all without exception crafty, villainous, and Fraudulent, and very seldom to be trusted, being sure to slip no opportunity of cheating an European, nor indeed one another . . . nothing but the utmost necessity can force them to labour. . . .

“The negroes are very obligingly civil when they receive visits from a person who lives in another country. As soon as the compliments are passed, the wife or a she slave brings water, grease, or ointment to wash and anoint the stranger.

“Amongst the coast negroes they believe in one true God, to whom they attribute the creation of all things. They make no offerings to God, or call upon him in time of need, but

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in all their difficulties they apply themselves to Fetiche.

“A great part of the negroes believe that man was made by Ananfie, that is a great spider. The rest attribute creation of man to God, which they assert happened in the following manner:—In the beginning God created Black as well as White men . . . they tell us that God having created these two sorts of men, offered two sorts of gifts, viz., Gold, and the knowledge of the arts of reading and writing, giving the Blacks the first Election, who chose Gold, and left knowledge of letters to the White. God granted their request, but being incensed at their avarice, resolved that the Whites should for ever be their masters, and they obliged to wait on them as their slaves. . . .

“Fetiche or Boffum in the negro language derives its self from their false God, which they call Boffum. . . .

“. . . When they desire to be informed of something by them they cry out, Let us make Fetiche ; by which they express as much as let us perform our religious worship, and see or hear what our God saith. . . . Obligatory swearing they also call making of Fetiche's.

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. . . When they drink the oath-draught 'tis usually accompanied with an imprecation that the Fetiche may kill them if they do not perform the contents of their obligation. . . . They believe the perjured person shall be swelled by the oath liquor till he bursts, or that he shall shortly die of a languishing sickness. The first punishment they imagine more peculiarly to women who take this draught to acquit themselves of any accusation of adultery. . . . This drink seems very like the bitter water administered to the women in the Old Testament, by way of purgation from the charge of adultery."

Describing how the inland negroes behave themselves in the marriage state, and what punishment they inflict on adultery, Bosman goes on to state that "he who debauches a negroe's wife here is not only generally ruined, but his relations often suffer with him. For if the injured person be a rich and a great man, he is not contented with ruining the malefactor only, but will not be quiet till he hath removed him out of his way. If the guilty person is a slave, his death is undeniably determined, and that in the most cruel manner that

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can be devised. A woman caught in adultery is also in great danger of her life, unless her relations pacify the enraged husband with a large sum of money."

" . . . However jealous the Black women are of their husbands, yet they have no satisfaction to pretend to, if their husbands by diverting themselves with other women rob them of their right, their only remedy is to wean him from this vice by agreeable, soft, and tender means, for none of them, besides his chief wife, dare to pretend to chide him for it.

"Each wife is sure to do her best to please and charm her husband, in order to be preferred above the rest in his love, and to secure to herself the greatest share of matrimonial favours. . . .

"As soon as the child is born it hath three names bestowed on it (though always called by the one); the first is that of the day of the week on which it is born; the next, if a son, is his grandfather's; if a girl, her grandmother's name. Some are called after the number of children that their mother has borne, as the eighth, the ninth, or tenth child; but this is only when the mother has borne above six or

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seven children. In the country of Ante, if a woman has borne ten children, she is obliged to be separated from her husband and live in a solitary hut, remote from all the rest of mankind, for the space of a whole year.

“The negroes still retain several laws and customs which favour of Judaism. The honouring of the moon at the time the Jews begin their festival; the marrying of their brother's wife; the custom of holding women unclean and circumcising of children; the customary questions to the dead. As soon as a sick person is expired, they set up such a dismal crying lamentation and squeaking that the whole town is filled with it, and by which it is soon published that some body is lately dead. If the deceased be a man, his wives immediately shave their heads very close, and smear their bodies with white earth, and put on an old worn-out garment. Thus adjusted, they run about the streets like mad women, or rather she-furies, making a very dismal noise, continually repeating the names of the dead, and reciting the great actions of his past life.

“I once asked a Negro what number of god's

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they had? He laughingly answered, that I had puzzled him ; and assured me that nobody in the whole country could give me an exact account of it. For, said he, any of us being resolved to undertake anything of importance, we first of all search out a god to prosper our undertaking. . . . With this design we take the first creature that presents itself to our eyes, whether dog or cat, or the most contemptible animal in the world. This new chosen god is immediately presented with an offering, which is accompanied with a solemn vow, that if he pleaseth to prosper our undertakings for the future, we will always worship and esteem him as a god.

“It is certain that the Negroes have a faint idea of the true God, and ascribe to Him the attributes of Almighty. . . they believe He created the Universe, and therefore vastly prefer Him, before their Idol gods ; but they do not pray to him or offer any sacrifices to Him, for which they give the following reasons: God, say they, is too high exalted above us, and too great to condescend so much as to trouble Himself, or think of mankind ; wherefore He commits the Government of the world to their idols ;

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to whom as the second, third, and fourth persons distant in degree from God, and our appointed lawful Governours, we are obliged to apply ourselves. Their principal Gods, which are owned for such throughout the whole country, are of three sorts. First, certain sort of snakes, who possess the chief rank amongst their gods. . . . For as we take the serpent for the fatal destroyer of Human race, so these of Fida on the contrary esteem him their supreme bliss and greatest good.

“Their second-rate gods are some lofty, high trees, in the formation of which Dame Nature seems to have expressed her greatest art. The third and meanest god, or younger brother to the other, is the sea. These three mentioned are the public deities which are worshipped and prayed to throughout the whole country. And each of these, according to their ridiculous persuasion, hath its particular province, like the officers of a king or prince, with this difference only that the sea and trees are not permitted to intermeddle with what is entrusted to the snake; which, on the contrary, hath an influencing power over both the other, in order to correct them when they prove idle or lazy. They

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invoke the snake in excessive wet, dry, or barren seasons; on all occasions relating to their Government, and the preservation of their cattle, or rather, in one word, in all necessities and difficulties in which they do not apply to their new batch of gods.

“The Negroes have a sort of idea of hell, the devil, and apparition of spirits. . . . As for hell, they bestow on it a fixt place under the earth, where the wicked and damned are punished with fire. . . . An old sorceress, that came from some odd corner, has told them strange things concerning hell; as that she saw several of her acquaintances there, and particularly the last captain of the blacks, predecessor to the present Captain Carter, who was there miserably tormented.”

In referring to the prevalence of Guinea worm, a disease common to the coast at the present day, Bosman states:

“That the national diseases of the negroes are small-pox and worms; by the former in these thirteen or fourteen years thousands of men have been swept away: and with the latter they are miserably afflicted in all parts of their bodies, but chiefly in their legs, which occasions

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a grievous pain. . . . The manner which the artists take to get it out is this: as soon as the worm is broken through the tumour, his head commonly first making its way, they make it fast to a stick, about which they every day wind a small part of it, till, continuing this tedious method, they have entirely wound out the whole, and the patient is freed from his pain. But if the worm happens to break, they are put to a double torture, the remainder part of the worm either rotting in the body or breaking out at some other place. The negroes are most afflicted with these worms. But though the Europeans are but seldom troubled with them, yet they do not escape them entirely. . . . If you would know the length of these worms, Monsieur Focquembrog obligeth . . . by which you are informed that they are some of them an Ell-long, and some as long as Pikes, and have not the patience to stay till the man is dead, but seize him alive.

“In all parts of the Benin territories twin births are esteemed good omens, except at Arebo, where they are of contrary opinion, and treat the twin-bearing woman very barbarously; for they actually kill both mother and infants,

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and sacrifice them to a certain devil, which they fondly imagine harbours in a wood near the village.

“In the year 1699 a Merchant’s wife, commonly called Ellaroe or Mos, lay in of two children, and her husband redeemed her with a slave, but sacrificed his children, after which I had frequent opportunities of seeing and talking with the disconsolate mother, who never could see an infant without a very melancholy reflection on the fate of her own, which always extorted briny tears from her.

“The following year the like event happened to a Priest’s wife. She was delivered of two children, which, with a Slave instead of his wife, he was obliged to kill and sacrifice with his own hands, by reason of his sacerdotal function. And exactly one year after, as though it had been a punishment inflicted from heaven, the same woman was the second time delivered of two children; but how the Priest managed himself on this occasion I have not been informed, but am apt to think that this poor woman was forced to atone her fertility by death.

“The wood before-mentioned, in which the

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devil is supposed to lurk, is by them esteemed so sacred that they never permit a foreign Negro or any of his wives to enter it. If any person accidentally happen on the path which leads to this wood he is obliged to go to the end of it without returning. . . . And they are firmly persuaded that if this law be violated, or that of the offering of the children and mother, or at least a female slave in her place, the land will be infested with some severe plague. . . .

“The commonalty of the Gold Coast such as wine-drawers, fishermen, and such like are very poorly habited, some with an ell or two of sorry stuff, others with a sort of girdle drawn through between their legs and wrapped about them to hide their nakedness. . . . The men here are not so very much addicted to sumptuous attire, but pride even amongst the savage, as well as in the Netherlands and all Europe over, seems to have established its throne amongst the female sex, and accordingly the women's dress is richer than the men's. Ladies platt their hair very artfully, and place their fetiches, coral, and ivory with a judicious air, and go much finer than the men. About their necks they wear gold chains and strings of coral,

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besides ten or twelve small white strings of Coute de Terra and gold. About their arms and legs also they are plentifully stored therewith, and they wear them so thick about their waist that their nakedness would be sufficiently covered thereby if they wore no clothes, and the rather because they always have a garter, or rather girdle. . . . On the lower part of their bodies they wear a Paau, which is often three or four times as long as that of the men. This they wind around their waist, and bind it on with a fillet of red cloth, half an ell broad and two ells long, to make it fit close to the body, both ends of the fillet hanging out on their Paau, which in ladies of quality is adorned with gold and silver lace.

“On the upper part of their body they cast a veil of silk or some other fine sort of stuff, whilst their arms are beautified with rings of gold, silver, and ivory.

“These female Negroes, I can assure you, are so well skilled in their fashions that they know how to dress themselves up sufficiently tempting to allure several Europeans.

“Marriage here is not overladen with cere-

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monies, nor have they any notion of a previous courtship to bring on a match. . . . If a negroe fixes his eye upon a young woman . . . nothing is more requisite than to apply to her Father, Mother, or nearest relation, and ask of them, who seldom deny a request. . . .

“If the young woman is marriageable he takes her home with him, but if too young he leaves her for some time with her parents. To defray the expenses of the wedding day, consists of a little Gold, Wine, Brandy, a sheep for the relations, and new cloaths for the bride. . . .

“The Bridegroom keeps a very exact account of everything that he bestows on the Bride, or her friends, that if she ever comes to be so far disgusted at him as to leave him, he may demand all again, which she or her friends must pay to the utmost exactness, together with the wedding charges.”

CHAPTER XXIX

SIMPLE PRECAUTIONS AS TO HEALTH

LESS food is required to support nature in the tropics than is necessary in colder zones.

Rise at sunrise. Never take a cold bath at any time; always have the water lukewarm. The best time for a bath is the evening.

Get into pyjamas or flannels or evening dress, whichever one prefers.

Always wear flannel or flannelette next the skin or undershirt.

MEALS.

At daybreak: Milk, tea, coffee, cocoa, or lime-juice, with biscuits, toast, bread and butter, or fruit.

About 8 a.m. : Very light breakfast ; jam and bread, eggs, sardines, milk puddings, porridge, and fruits.

About 11 a.m. : Soup, fresh fish, fresh meats, poultry, pastry, and fruit.

About 4 p.m.: Tea and jam, bread and butter, etc.

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About 7 p.m. : Dinner—similar to eleven o'clock meal.

Avoid tinned foods as much as possible.

DRINKS.

As a usual beverage : Milk, milk and soda, or filtered water, ginger ales, lime-juice, with water or soda.

When run down : A little claret, champagne, or weak whisky and water.

As a medicine, and on rare occasions, drink beer, whisky, gin, and cordials.

Don't make a rule of drinking regularly in a tropical climate as in a colder one. Gin is a good drink if only extreme abstinence be adopted. One a day won't hurt, and some men one or two ; but to drink cocktails at all hours, and while the sun is up, is simply hastening your funeral ; and mixing liquors all day long—well, you're just polishing yourself off at express speed.

Don't eat too much. Don't drink too much.

Every kind of fresh meat or fish can be partaken of except the domestic native pig. The wild pig is excellent eating.

Native chop : Ground nut chop, boiled or broiled plantains, yams, can be freely eaten.

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Palm oil chop suits some, but it is very bilious, and should be taken seldom by bilious Europeans.

Sterilized fresh milk, sweetened and unsweetened, ideal, etc., are excellent sustainers, and have a healing action on the stomach.

Quinine now and then, as you feel you require it, in three to five-grain tabloids; allow of considerable intervals between. Take it on an empty stomach, or after a purgative.

It is the only known remedy to stave off or cure fever, but if constantly partaken of, and the constitution is saturated, it requires very strong doses to have any effect when a bad dose of fever sets in.

IMPORTANT: The most important of all preventives is that you keep your bowels open. Constant attention must be paid to this in the tropics. Constipation has a deadly effect, and adds fuel to raising a temperature in fever. Those who suffer habitually from constipation soon go under when attacked by fever. Take whatever opening medicine suits you best, but above all pay the strictest attention to this all-important function.

Epsom salts, Eno's fruit salts, pills, etc. etc., are the usual remedies.

Simple Precautions as to Health

TYPHOID

When typhoid surroundings are met, or symptoms showing, take three to ten drops of rectified spirits of turpentine on moist sugar two or three times a week ; put it on the tongue and gulp it down with water or milk.

YELLOW JACK

For yellow jack or blackwater take stronger doses of turps, and frequently in the earlier stages.

Avoid chills, and change at once after getting wet. Directly fever comes on, take a strong purgative and move the bowels at once. Then strong doses of quinine, from ten to fifteen grains up to thirty in the twenty-four hours if a bad case. Wrap yourself in blankets, and keep on drinking hot lime or lemon water until profuse perspiration is produced. Persist in drinking it quite hot.

Don't take stimulants until after the third day. Never mind feeling weak. If you take it there is sure to be a recurrence of fever, until it is saturated out of you.

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