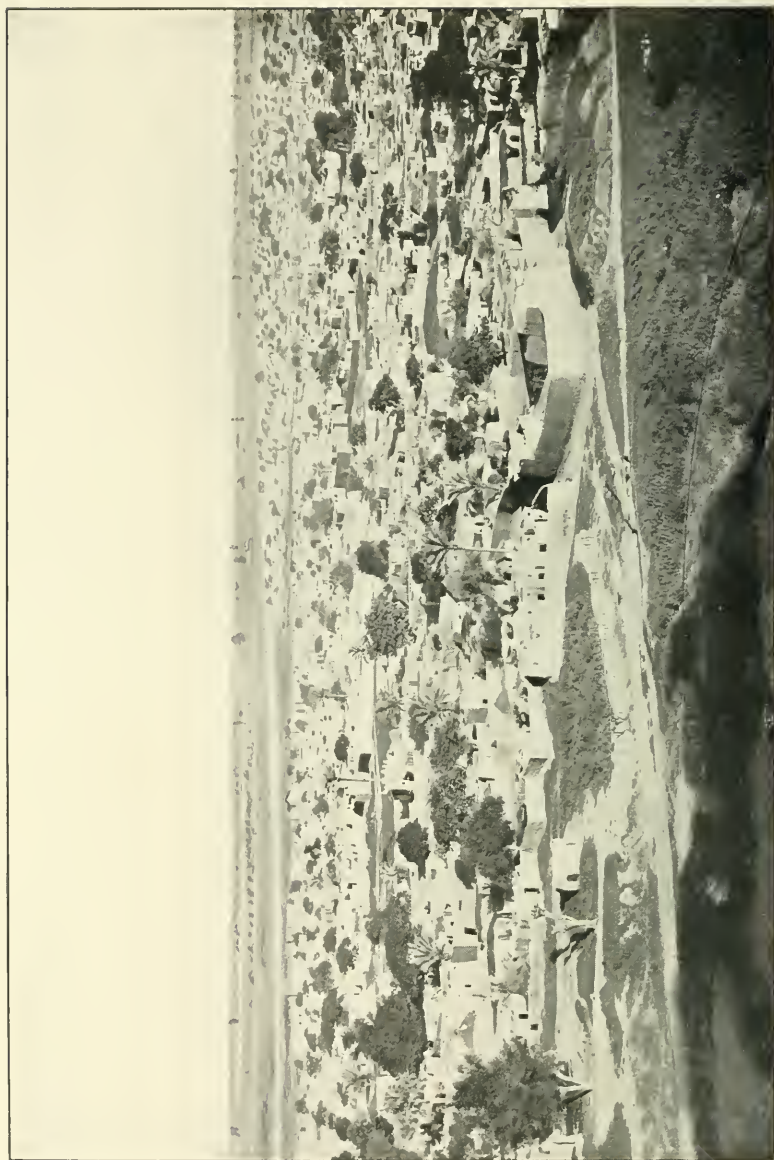


West Africa the Elusive

ALAN LETHBRIDGE



THE LIBRARY
OF
THE UNIVERSITY
OF CALIFORNIA
LOS ANGELES



Kano, the West African Metropolis.

West Africa the Elusive

BY

ALAN LETHBRIDGE

Author of "The New Russia," "The Soul of the Russian"
"Germany as it is to-day," &c.

LONDON:

JOHN BALE, SONS & DANIELSSON, LTD.

OXFORD HOUSE

83-91, GREAT TITCHFIELD STREET, OXFORD STREET, W. 1.

1921

DT
471
L56w

TO THE
"GENTLEMEN UNAFRAID,"
WHO FORFEITED THEIR LIVES IN MAKING
BRITISH WEST AFRICA,
AND LIE AT REST, UNSUNG, AND FORGOTTEN
IN ITS SWAMPS, JUNGLES AND DESERTS,
THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED.

1220135

PREFACE.

Books of travel may be divided into two categories: those which describe what their writers are meant to see, and consequently paint everything "couleur de rose," and those which are framed on critical lines. The latter, if moderate and just, should be of practical benefit to the countries concerned, though, as a rule, their authors are not popular with all portions of the community. I have tried in this book on West Africa to balance the scales, and it has not been easy. When one is, so to speak, a semi-official guest, it seems to savour of ingratitude to comment adversely on matters which attract one's attention. Yet what was the object of my mission? I was sent by the *Daily Telegraph*, most certainly not for a pleasure trip, but to describe West Africa of to-day frankly and fearlessly, in order that this crowded old England might decide whether the rather neglected West African colonies had openings of which the coming generation might avail itself. Obviously, gilding the pill would be an outrage upon those who, troubling to read what was written, felt drawn to take the plunge only to discover the discrepancy between fiction and fact. This is the worst propaganda conceivable. The patent line of action to follow, therefore, is to point out where abuses exist and show how they might be remedied, and I do venture to suggest that the outsider, although he be a mere layman, can sometimes grasp the flaw in a system, administrative or mercantile, more quickly than those actually concerned. Moreover, those in subordinate positions of Government departments or trading firms have long since learnt the fact

that the muzzling order is not confined to the canine world and prefer to take the road of least resistance rather than chance the loss of their livelihood through dismissal. Nominally, those having grievances are invited to ventilate them; anyone with the slightest West Coast experience knows that to be an amiable legend.

The recent dissatisfaction in Nigeria, it is admitted in a Government Report, portions of which I quote in due course, showed that the temper of the official world in that great colony had almost reached flash point. Had this condition been ignored there would have been serious trouble, and, as I write, there is still room and to spare for amelioration of the lot of the Nigerian Civil Servant.

On the Gold Coast conditions are easier; the average of prices is lower, since the railway is run on more economical lines than in Nigeria and transport charges are less. Liberia, the black man's Utopia, the paradise of the fanatical emancipationist, I have touched upon with the lightest of possible pens. That my remarks gave the maximum of offence and that the local paper described me as a "fit companion for gaol-birds," merely made me smile. This opera-bouffe republic is an anachronism in an era of advance when every corner of the world is needed for serious exploitation. If it continues to endure, it will be because of its wealth and the inevitable international jealousy its occupation by any one Great Power would entail. So much by way of explanation of the pages which follow.

I have certainly attempted to avoid wounding any one's feelings, for at all times my wife and I have received assistance, kindness and much consideration.

My thanks must first be extended to Lord Burnham and the *Daily Telegraph*, who made the journey possible. Next I must mention His Excellency Governor Wilkinson of Sierra Leone and Mrs. Wilkinson, who, if report be true, are saying good-bye shortly to this flourishing little colony. Their loss will be very real, for, faced with truly desperate difficulties over native affairs, each in a separate manner has contributed to

the continuing economic prosperity of what was once "The White Man's Grave." Monsieur Crommelin, the Liberian Minister to the Court of St. James, gave me much friendly advice and counsel. General Guggisberg, during a trying tour to those not regularly accustomed to tropical travel, I grew to know well and learned to appreciate the value of his friendship. A progressive Governor in the broadest sense, the destinies of the Gold Coast are in safe hands. To Major F. N. Jackson, the Military Governor of British Togoland, and to Mrs. Jackson my wife and I owe a debt of gratitude we cannot adequately express. Sir Hugh Clifford, Governor of Nigeria, extended to us official hospitality, for which I thank him. To enumerate the names of all those who showed us sympathy in fair weather and foul would be impossible. They were legion, but I have not forgotten them and never shall.

Finally, I cannot close without grateful mention of two great organizations—Messrs. Elder Dempster and the Bank of British West Africa. Messrs. Elder Dempster come in for a good many kicks, and it gives me peculiar pleasure to record our personally happy experiences in their ships. Many circumstances militate against the satisfactory running of these vessels—climate, crews, black labour, difficulties of adequate storage and great length of voyage. So allowances should be made and complainants should remember that they are not the only folk with livers. The Bank of British West Africa has helped many a "Coaster" over a stile and continues the practice. Perhaps the knowledge that strict business does not recognize sentiment and that they break away from tradition to that extent is the best recommendation I can give them, not forgetting their habitual and never-failing courtesy.

It is unlikely that I shall ever see the West Coast again, but with all its manifest faults it possesses a heart as warm as the sun which shines upon it and holds out a hand ready to shake that of a wayfarer. Let him respond; he will never regret it.

It is impossible for me to close this preface without acknowledging the tremendous help I have received from

my wife in the preparation of this book. She accompanied me during the whole of the nine months I was in West Africa, and the strain and fatigue must have been very great. But on her return she insisted on sharing the responsibilities of this volume, which if it contains anything of value is entirely due to her initiative.

ALAN LETHBRIDGE.

WEST AFRICA THE ELUSIVE.

CHAPTER I.

WHY elusive? The query is a very natural one, and the answer is equally easy: Elusive because, in this world of cramped spaces and increasing labour congestion, here lie vast territories which convey practically nothing to the average citizen, who, after all, is the motive power behind the British Empire. True, there is all the machinery of administration to be found there; soldiers, police, law courts, and schools. There are banks and commercial undertakings of some magnitude. There are mines and factories. Yet development has been slow, very slow, crippled by that one fact that the general public cannot grasp what West Africa means, and might mean had it not been for so long "elusive."

Every schoolboy is inoculated with the microbe of a superstitious dread of the "Coast." Grown men shake their heads solemnly when it is mentioned. Mothers and aunts roundly declare that their budding sons or nephews shall never seek a living in such a horrible place. Of course, this attitude is extreme. Every spot has its drawbacks and people have been known to die in Piccadilly. A leading London surgeon made a very true remark when we were wilting under a perfect fusillade of prophecies of the bad end to which we were hastening by going to the Coast. It was a farewell family party, and the lugubrious comment was really very funny. The medical man listened quietly, and then dryly remarked, "Has it ever occurred to you, dear people, that half my practice is obtained by the indiscretions of those who take liberties with themselves simply because they are at home? Place them in a

land where they sense latent danger, and, *ipso facto*, they take every possible precaution, and quite probably their health may even improve." Admiral Sir Reginald Bacon, in his story of the Dover Patrol, puts exactly the same thing in a different way. "However, as is frequently the case, the more awkward a piece of navigation the safer it really is, owing to the care and concentration of attention at the moment which become necessary." And finally, what about the tight-rope walker who was asked how his father died? "He was a tight-rope walker also," was his reply, "and he fell from his rope in a circus and was smashed up." "I wonder you care to follow in his steps; you might come to the same end," said his questioner. "Maybe, but what happened to *your* father?" "Oh! he died in bed." "Did he, now? Well, I wonder you aren't afraid to follow in his steps and go to bed!" This by way of introduction.

Ships, like people, have individualities. A passenger steamer bound for New York is as far removed from a West African liner as chalk is from cheese. In the first case there is fusion—that is to say, fusion which will take place imperceptibly during and after the voyage. Its logical sequence is the curious conglomeration of peoples who make up the United States of to-day. Upon a West African liner, rightly or wrongly, there is no question of fusion. There are Government officials, there are traders, there are missionaries, and, above all, there are black men. If water and oil never assimilate, then, most assuredly, these equally diverse elements will never do so. There is a good deal to be said for each. The missionary may strike one as extreme in his point of view. The Government official has a different angle of vision from that of the missionary or of the trader. The black man stands aloof from all, and, truth to tell, one wonders whether he is not smiling perpetually at the affection displayed by the white man for his own white brothers. But there is one point of similarity amongst these conflicting elements, and that is a wholesome dislike for the Coast, black men excepted. It has become a sort of cult. Nothing that the Coast

can produce or will ever produce is aught but bad. We did hear one officer say that the pineapples in Sierra Leone were passable, while all agreed that the shooting up in the bush was "decent." But otherwise the Lamentations of Jeremiah paled into insignificance by comparison. Now destructive criticism is a very simple matter; constructive criticism is not so easy. This mental attitude, so common amongst "Coasters," is largely induced by factors capable of alteration. The most important of these factors we propose to mention, and, we might add, in no spirit of malice, but merely because our mission would have been useless were we not to comment with some freedom upon matters brought to our notice.

No one will gainsay that, by and large, the influence of womanhood is a stabilizing feature in the make-up of manhood. More and more are men realizing that "it is not good for man to live alone," and even a poor specimen of her sex may have a civilizing influence. To emphasize the point, the very fact that a white man feels the responsibility of protecting his own women-folk in a strange land is all for his good. The time has arrived when a man of common sense values the companionship of a woman more than her looks, and, to the credit of the woman be it said, it is usually the man who is responsible for keeping her safe in England, even when accommodation is available on the Coast or up country. A great deal has been written about the iniquities, so-called, of those white men who, perforce, make their home or their living in West Africa. No one would suggest that they are plaster saints, and, to their everlasting credit, they would be the first, individually and collectively, to deny it. But undoubtedly the absence of feminine influence, of those little touches which mean so much and represent "home," must aggravate any tendency towards the common or garden vices to which human nature is ever liable. At the end of a full day's work in a comparatively lonely station, what is there to do? And it must be pointed out that the white population living in what might be described as "towns" in West Africa is very small. Some may

find solace in shooting, though that represents expense which many a youngster cannot afford. Sometimes there may be a tennis court, though this is rare. But it is impossible to shoot or to play tennis when it is dark. So what is there to do? The temptations are obvious. An enervating climate and loneliness will play the devil with anyone. The first essential needed to make of West Africa a country where life may be lived under normal conditions is proper accommodation; the second, sufficient salaries to encourage domestic life. Towards this consummation there are no insuperable difficulties. It is as easy to build a bungalow of a proper design, comfortable and commodious—most important essentials in the tropics—in West Africa as in India. Encourage this practice, and the whole aspect of life on the Coast will be altered. Granted that the colonization of this portion of the globe will never be effectually achieved by white men, yet, by the introduction of such methods as have been outlined, there appears to us to be no particular reason why West Africa should bear a stigma which is not wholly justified.

For too long has West Africa been regarded as a sort of refuge for the destitute, as a species of dustheap of the Empire. Yet I remember that the late Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, when speaking at a Guildhall banquet, made a comment to the following effect: "As long as Great Britain can produce the type of men who are working to-day as administrators, soldiers or traders under the extremely disadvantageous conditions at present existing in West Africa, so long need we have no fear of the future of the British Empire." Those words probably had their little effect as a mental tonic upon the Coaster, whatever his calling, sweating and struggling, doing his best for the commonweal. And it has not been in vain. It would be useless to say that there are not pronounced antagonisms between class and class; it would be ridiculous to state that the missionary and the trader, the soldier and the political officer always see eye to eye. They do not. And yet, such is the contrariness of nature, there has undoubtedly been born a species of freemasonry which binds these

very different people together. It is rather reminiscent of the story told of an Irish soldier who heard a disparaging remark made about the late Queen Victoria at a wayside station in, let us say, County Mayo. Having knocked the offender down, and being asked for an explanation, he replied, "Faith, she's my Queen and I can say what I want about her, but it's not for the likes of you, ye spalpeen!"

Such is the spirit of the Coast.

Las Palmas, capital of Grand Canary, may well be called the gateway to the West Coast. Were statistics available it would be interesting to know how many "Coasters," outward and homeward bound, pass through here in a year, while it might be saddening to discover the number who have made this their final resting place. Time was when it was the popular thing, in order to avoid giving the Coast an unnecessarily bad name, hastily to ship off the very ill to Las Palmas, there to let them die or recover as fate ordained. At least, so legend has it. Things have altered now, since Elder Dempster maintain a certain number of direct sailings between Liverpool, Sierra Leone, and Lagos, which means a saving of some days if nothing else. A little practice in the gentle art of deduction and it is quite possible to differentiate between the outward bound "Coaster" and the homeward bound. The former is spick and span in beautiful new clothes, but usually is hard up, while the latter is badly in need of additions to his wardrobe, but is distinctly "flush." Those from the West Coast form a curious and transient community of their own in Grand Canary, seldom mixing with the tourists, who under normal conditions throng the island. Undoubtedly, time permitting, the best plan is to stay in the interior of the island, where, at Monte, is an excellent hotel, run by an Englishman, and greatly patronized by jaded "Coasters" who are trying to recover from the effects of the West African climate, which not only saps their vitality, but often upsets the nervous system. What could be a more delightful contrast to their usual environment than semi-Alpine scenery, a garden brilliant with

subtropical flowers and plants, cool and invigorating breezes from the hills, and—absolute quiet?

Getting to Monte is quite an experience. The road is steep and tortuous, and Spanish chauffeurs are not too reliable, though, to be sure, there is no speed limit on the island. Our car broke down just as it grew dusk, and since we were about six miles from our destination, and the driver conclusively proved himself no mechanic, the position did not appear promising. We had no Spanish, and he knew no English; neither, for that matter, did those who were to prove friends in need. The inevitable "Ford" approached, stopped, and four men and a child simultaneously alighted. Then ensued a perfect pandemonium, everyone talked at once and gesticulated wildly. Our motor gave an excellent and prolonged imitation of a Maxim gun. In the intervals of this concert the family history of the owners of the "Ford" was given us in broken French by the only linguist of the party. One was an engineer, another a lawyer, another a widower and the father of an extremely shy "Carmencita," who viewed us with great suspicion. At last our car was pronounced by the engineer and his chauffeur to be capable of proceeding. We all shook hands and bowed solemnly. Our driver climbed into his seat to the accompaniment of more farewells. There was more Maxim-gun noise, and—the car refused to move! After that everything was begun all over again, and the skies grew dark. Finally, the engineer, by dint of the most vivid pantomime and a torrent of words, started our car himself, and we continued on our way with no lamps, up a winding road to Monte.

It may seem that we have harped too much upon questions of health, but the fact is that this particular source of conversation is never long left untapped. There are the pessimists who regard this tour of service as their last, and there are optimists who aver that the Coast is "all right." One of those best qualified to speak with authority on the point told us that he had lived in Sierra Leone on and off for 20 odd years. He had had blackwater fever eight times—that, surely, is a record—enteric twice, and had been actually carried

on to the ocean steamer four times, so grave was his condition. Yet he looked as hearty and jolly as a sand-boy, and was returning in our ship with never a quake for the future. Moreover, he was accompanied by his wife, a fragile, charming woman, who had been with her husband most of those trying years. That speaks for itself. Pluck goes a long way towards good health, a deal farther than many realize.

CHAPTER II.

LIBERIA is included in this volume for two reasons. Its unexplored riches, accounts of which reach England in vague whispers from sources reliable and otherwise, the tales of "big game," its agricultural productivity, all stimulate the imagination and the desire for gain or sport. Therefore, it is as well that the venturesome should realize the difference between this Black Republic and the Colonies which form its boundaries. Also, we were fortunate to witness at Monrovia the inauguration of the new President, a ceremony which takes place—as it does in America—every four years, and our description, slight though it may be, may give pause to those enthusiasts who seem to think that "all men were created equal," and that that equality includes mentality and the ability for self-government.

Liberia is a curious little State. It is situated in a sort of backwater; it is seemingly forgotten by the hurrying liners wending their way to British, French, or Spanish West African Colonies, as also by the giant ships trading to South African ports. Mails arrive rarely and irregularly,* and, in consequence thereof, trade and commerce must suffer. Now, granted that its geographical situation renders it rather difficult of access, granted that the war has hit it mercilessly, owing to tonnage sunk and consequent paucity of vessels, yet the fault of this seclusion cannot be said to rest solely, or even mainly, upon these two factors. Ever since 1848, when Liberia was recognized for the first time in history as an independent republic—let it be noted that this recognition came first from Great Britain, secondly

* Thanks to the enterprise of Messrs. Elder Dempster, this has recently been much improved.

from France, and finally (fourteen years later) from America—it appears to have been the policy of her Government to discourage all outside enterprise. Instead of choosing as a motto “Advance Liberia!” they apparently adopted the old parrot cry, “Liberia for the Liberians.” This, no doubt, is a very pleasant-sounding phrase, very gratifying to the self-satisfied Liberian citizen—though an outsider would at first be under the delusion that to discover such an individual would be an impossible task. But a little investigation soon shows that most of the Liberians—be they frock-coated or barefooted—come under this head. Thus, during the seventy-two years of her independence, Liberia has been content to sleep instead of watching closely the march of events, whatever these might be—social, economic, scientific, or international. Vast areas of her territory remain unmapped and even unexplored. There are no roads, no railways, no internal telegraphic communication, no steamboats on her rivers, no systematization of her agriculture, no practical exploitation of her undeniable mineral wealth; truly she has remained a hermit Republic. Offers of outside aid have been accepted—on paper. Attempts have been made to open up trade in the interior; the Liberian Legislature promptly passed ordinances forbidding any foreigner to possess real estate except at certain specified locations on the coast. In 1908 the Liberian Frontier Force was to be reorganized; at the request of the then President, Barclay—in the opinion of many the most astute President Liberia has yet had—Major Mackay Cadell and two other officers of the British Army were appointed for this purpose. That they carried out their task extremely well, that they were beloved by their soldiers, recruited from the actual native tribes, such as the Mandingoes and Vais, that they instilled discipline and *esprit de corps* into the Force has been asserted to us by the late Commandant, Major Anderson, a coloured officer from the United States Army, whose time of service in Liberia has now expired. Their success, however, apparently irritated the Legislature, and was the cause of their undoing, and they were forced to resign.

The finances of the Republic were in a very precarious condition; money must be had at all costs, or national bankruptcy, internal rebellion, and rioting would result. Yet the Liberian of the governing class, with a superb indifference to common-sense finance, refused to allow the thesis that the creditor has an unquestionable right to demand some form of monetary security upon cash advanced to a borrower. After interminable argument, the Customs was pledged, and even to-day this fact is a very real thorn in the flesh of the so-called Liberian patriot.

At length the time has arrived when a change must be made. Liberia has only two alternatives. Either she continues her career of stagnation and indifference, in which case she will undoubtedly merit her then unavoidable fate of obliteration from the list of independent States, or she may advance and develop along normal lines, guided by friendly and sympathetic help from the great outside world, in which case there is every possible reason why she should become an immensely rich, thriving, and prosperous country, with a teeming, happy population, the Utopia of those coloured philanthropists who, without ulterior motives, have fought for the betterment of the native races. This is the legacy which has been bequeathed to the new President, the Hon. Charles King, to whom the eyes of the world will now turn. What of him, then?

Let us first describe him at home as we originally saw him. President King is a man of marked individuality. Of medium height and spare frame, he has whiskers of the Prince Consort type, which probably make him look older than his years. His experiences in Paris at the Peace Conference and his subsequent visits to England and America, have without doubt robbed him of any illusions he might have originally possessed. He is outspoken, surprisingly outspoken, for, as a rule, the man of colour plus education is on the defensive, as though he were trying to peer behind one's eyes and read what lies beyond. Gifted with a keen sense of humour, he could smile without bitterness at the idiosyncrasies of his fellow-countrymen, and also at the

very manifest intrigues which took place daily amongst the pseudo-international diplomats who suddenly arrived at Monrovia in remarkable quantities. So much for the man. The President's wife is a woman of really rare charm. Although a native-born Liberian she was educated at Washington, and combines with a most musical speaking voice and spontaneous smile the ability to say the right thing at the right time and in exactly the right way. The keynote of their home life was evidently simplicity. Though the President-elect, as he was when we first saw him, was garbed in the conventional frock coat and white waistcoat of the upper-class Liberian, the room in which we were received might well have belonged to one of his humbler countrymen. Two or three easy chairs, an upright piano, and a few framed photographs; nothing here to support the tales of extravagance which one had heard of other newcomers to the Executive Mansion.

After the customary greetings, we were told that, as far as he knew, we were the first representatives of a great daily newspaper ever especially to visit the Republic, that he fully realized the value of publicity, particularly to a small State like Liberia, and that he hoped that since this attention had once been extended it might continue, and that the *Daily Telegraph* would, in the future, voice Liberia's needs. We then made some comments of a trivial nature upon Monrovia.

"It is pretty," he said, "but, of course, it is merely a jumble of bungalows and houses put down without method in the bush. I must have roads, proper roads, and that is one of the first things I am going to see to; that and the building of a new capital on modern and up-to-date lines, right away up country."

This was an eye-opener, indeed, for us. Certainly here was advance, and no mistake.

"You see," continued the President-elect, "this is a ridiculous situation for the capital of a country like Liberia, with great depth of hinterland. Up country we have many different tribes speaking different languages. They seldom or never come to Monrovia, partially, no doubt, because they cannot spare the time

to make a tedious journey, of, maybe, fourteen or fifteen days in order to pay their respects, while obtaining no commensurate advantage. Hence we never get to know each other, and, as you will readily understand, bad feeling may thereupon ensue, leading ultimately to acts of violence and aggression necessitating the employment of armed force to restore peace. If we are going to develop, as develop we must, we must wake up to facts, move the capital, as I say, and as a start, until we can have a railway, make a really good motor road."

"You are evidently a believer in motor transport," was our comment.

"Certainly. If an army in the field can be fed by such means, then undoubtedly, as a start, and pending the completion of a railway, which must take time, and also costs a great deal of money, here is a solution. Get started! That is the whole point.

"Then the question of finance. Liberia is enormously rich. She has rubber, timber in the upper regions, piassava (our chief export), palm oil and kernels, ginger, rice and coffee, and Calabar beans. Not so bad a list, is it? Oh! and then—yes—I had forgotten ivory. Even in 1917, when everybody's energies had been employed in a different direction, we exported nearly two tons weight."

Here we interrupted: "But Sir Alfred Sharp, in a recent speech, said he had been miles through a Liberian forest and had never seen any game."

"Then he must have gone to the wrong locations, since ivory does not grow upon trees," was the dry reply. "And as a matter of fact, in the north-easterly portion of the Republic, which is seldom if ever visited by Europeans, there are plenty of elephants and many other wild animals besides."

"Gold?" we queried.

"An industry requiring development. Chiefly from alluvial washings, we managed to export, in 1917, about £6,500 of the raw article. And, considering that we have no modern apparatus nor appliances and no skilled engineers, that speaks for itself."

We then turned to the question of immigration.

"There are three classes of people we do not want," said Mr. King, with a rather grim smile: "first and foremost, we don't want coloured politicians. We have plenty of them here. Secondly, we have no need of unskilled labour. Of that also we have plenty. Thirdly, it is quite useless for anybody to come here with a view of settling down, unless possessed of a certain amount of capital. Monrovia itself is congested, and if people come out they must be in a position to build their own houses and stock their own stores, and wait patiently until, the country having finally awakened, as it certainly will if I have anything to do with it, they see their profits assured.

"Similarly, we must have steamers for the produce of the agriculturists; we must arouse interest, by one means or another, in our mineral deposits; in fact, we must awake a healthy curiosity as to what can be done in Liberia with competent aid, and then I feel assured that the future of this country, of which I am the chosen leader, is safe."

With that our interview came to an end, Mrs. King in her soft voice adding, as we descended the stairs, that she looked forward particularly to seeing us at the ceremony of the inauguration, and they both assured us of their keen regret that we were obliged to leave the country so soon after that event.

Like a good many other places, Monrovia is distinctly attractive when viewed from a distance, but this attraction diminishes in the same ratio as the distance decreases. Seen from a steamer, one has the impression of a green, hilly promontory, dotted with red-roofed bungalows. One's first disillusionment comes with the landing, which is made in surf boats owing to a dangerous bar which must be crossed to reach the town, and which annually takes a heavy toll of life and property. For the benefit of the uninitiated, it may be explained that the average surf-boat is from six to seven feet deep, struts, to give additional strength, taking the place of seats. Hand luggage and passengers are literally thrown in without discrimination, and one stands, very possibly, on one's kitbag while steadying

oneself by clutching at the shoulder of one's next-door neighbour, while the thermometer registers 110 in the distant shade.

The Customs House is typical of the Liberia of to-day. It is an edifice composed of corrugated iron and kerosene tins; it is also the playground of all the small Monrovia's, and it is only the fact that but few travellers arrive at one time which prevents the loss of luggage. Needless to say, lodgings are practically non-existent, with the exception of one hotel, so-called, the advertisement for which, taken from a native paper, really must be quoted in full: "Faukner's Hotel and Ice Cream Parlor. Ice Cream, Cakes and Candies, Cold Drinks. You Owe It To Yourself To Satisfy That Thirst. So Don't Forget To Drop In At Faukner's. Boarders and Lodgers Received At Fairly Reasonable Rates." The latter part of the advertisement is certainly naive.

Be it said that Mr. Faukner is the Mayor of Monrovia. He is an enterprising negro from North Carolina, and has latterly become a Liberian for business purposes. His idea of a fairly reasonable price is anything from a pound to thirty shillings a day for food and accommodation which one would hesitate to offer to a steerage passenger. A gentleman of resource, this! He runs an ice plant, and in this thirsty land people will part with almost anything in exchange for this precious substance; hence his profits are gigantic. His "Hotel and Ice-Cream Parlor" were formerly German property, which being estreated, had been handed over to him free of rent and all charges on the understanding that he should keep it in repair.* When the whole Liberian navy sank at its moorings—in other words, the septuagenarian gunboat Lark, a gift from the British Admiralty in the middle of the last century—it was Mr. Faukner whose mechanical skill was consulted. If a ship runs short of coal Mr. Faukner will supply unlimited wood—at a price. Naturally, he arranges the official and municipal

* In justice to Liberia this statement is open to question; at the same time I have not equivalent evidence to contradict it "in toto."
—The Author.

banquets, and since he is always present at both, one may be certain that the menu will be suitable to the occasion. He has something to do with the post office and is a police court magistrate. In fact, this remarkable man, starting from nothing, has made himself the Rockefeller of Liberia. The fascinations of the ubiquitous Mr. Faulkner (who always greeted us warmly, in spite of the fact that we did not patronize his "Hotel and Ice-Cream Parlor") have caused this digression.

We were fortunate in finding accommodation with Messrs. Elder Dempster's agent, Captain Beard, who was the possessor of an airy bungalow looking down over the mountain paths and empty tins which represent the streets of Monrovia. The only creature in Monrovia who enjoyed the tins was Cuthbert, Captain Beard's fox-terrier. Cuthbert was a very original person and no account of Monrovia would be complete without him. To begin with, he had selected his own name: no "Spot," or "Dash," or "Jack" for him. He heard the name of Cuthbert one day, liked it and answered to it ever after. His fondness for tins grew a little wearisome at times, for he demanded that they be thrown for him and he would then start in pursuit with shrieks of joy which never ceased until he had retrieved the identical tin from its resting place and brought it back, panting, to the verandah. Tins were his obsession. On one occasion we were invited out to tea, Cuthbert accompanying us.

"There are no tins here," said his master, "and we may enjoy a little peace."

Hardly were the words out of his mouth when we beheld Cuthbert, his eyes pleadingly searching for a likely victim, his long undocked tail wagging, and one slender paw placed on a tin so antique that it made its presence known of its own accord. Where he had found it no one could say. He was an excellent dog in every other respect, devoted to his owner and a good guard, and we trust that when he goes with the other good dogs to the Dog Star he will find plenty of tins to make him happy.

Our "boys," fresh from Sierra Leone, did not enjoy

Monrovia with its unfamiliar population and its scarcity of food. One came to us with a very lugubrious face and announced "Plenty bad place this; I go chase chop, I no catch um." In spite of the fact that they both adopted the latest Liberian fashion in hair cutting (the head closely shaved with the exception of a chaste rosette of wool in the middle of the front), they were very glad to move on to a land where "chop" was more easily "caught." Also they were for ever cutting their feet on the broken glass which is sprinkled on the roads.

These chamois tracks which take the place of streets are in a bad condition, which may be gathered from the following excerpt from an editorial in the *Liberian News*. "It is truly a great blessing to us here that there are but few snakes and poisonous reptiles in the city, for if there were, many of us would often suffer from their bites. The time has now come for us not only to adorn and beautify our houses, but also to adorn and beautify our city." There are absolutely no sanitary arrangements of even the most primitive sort, and there is no hospital. Seven years ago, in a burst of enthusiasm, the Government decided to build one and sent for an European doctor to advise. In due course he arrived and happily is still there, enjoying, as might be expected, a tremendous practice, but the hospital has never been built.

There are no horses on account of the tsetse fly, no motors, rickshaws, or other wheeled vehicles, for obvious reasons, and the only hammock is that possessed by the officer commanding the Liberian Frontier Force. Naturally, there is no street lighting. There is no drinking water, and not infrequently food supplies for the European colony run out and strict rationing is the order of the day until a ship arrives. When we were there, there was no sugar, milk, meat or eggs in Monrovia. But in spite of this happy-go-lucky state of affairs the dignity of the Senate, consisting of nine members, and of the House of Representatives, consisting of fourteen members, is such that any member of either arriving at Parliament House not properly attired is liable to a fine of 5 dollars, or £1. Proper attire consists of a black frock

coat, patent leather boots, white waistcoat and a top hat. Truly, Monrovia is a city of extremes!

The largest house in the place, as might be expected, is the White House, or Executive Mansion as it is more frequently called. It is a three-storied building with verandahs on all sides, and was originally intended for an hotel. It looks comfortable, but President King told us that, in his opinion, the rooms were too small. This doubtless will be remedied, like a great many other things, once he gets into his Presidential stride. The Bank of British West Africa have a fine building also, but it lacks verandahs and stands low, which in a place such as this is a mistake. For the rest, all the good houses owe their genesis to German effort; they have now been taken over and given away to officials, which is one way of solving the housing problem.

It must be remarked that Liberia was the only State at war with Germany which expelled every German from within its gates and sequestered all their property. Before the war there were about 100 German citizens in Monrovia alone; Liberia was rapidly becoming a German Protectorate. They controlled a giant wireless plant there, and had evidently made all the necessary arrangements for using that country as a very vital link in the chain of their Colonial possessions. No wonder then, that when Liberia made her fateful and, for her, fortunate decision, German fury boiled over, and the outrage was committed of bombarding the unfortunate little unarmed town of Monrovia.

We asked a Liberian official "What did you do?"

"What could we do?" was the answer. "We had no cannon, no arms of any kind that could reach them, so we just waited for help to come."

And yet, is it possible that a subtle infiltration of German influence has already made itself felt? No one has ever accused the Spaniards of a marked preference for tropical exploitation for many centuries. Why, then, this sudden influx of Spanish traders thither, an influx which seemed to cause a certain amount of malaise to the authorities, and which provided ample food for thought to British and French traders already upon the

spot? It really was most remarkable. Prior to the war there were not half a dozen Spaniards in all Liberia. In 1919, every steamer was landing several, and if the average should continue it will not be long before Spain will be numerically the most influential foreign colony. Can it be, then, that Germany, realizing her lost chances in this land of budding opportunity, in this land which must and will, we are sure, emerge from the slumber of over half a century, is using as her agents aliens to German soil? The suggestion is not far-fetched. On the contrary, it is uncomfortably probable. Hence the necessity for Britons to study this little hermit Republic; that is to say, if they desire to profit while there is yet time. Given resource, patience, perseverance, and, above all, tact, anything may be accomplished here. Mr. Mitchell, the Comptroller of Customs, gave us information which confirmed this. He is a native of Virginia—"a white man" in every sense of the word—and knows his black brethren thoroughly. During his stay in Liberia he had visited portions of the country where no other foreigners had ever penetrated, and the great untapped mineral wealth in certain districts had vastly impressed him. Should it be Liberia's desire, the period of her stagnation is over. But she will have to change her motto before real prosperity is hers.

CHAPTER III.

ON the day of the Inauguration we began by wishing temporary deafness had been vouchsafed to us. The Liberian National Anthem heard, not once but a hundred times, on an extremely hot morning, screamed, shouted and yelled to the accompaniment of a number of drums and an intermittent fife or two, is enough to try the patience of a saint. And there are few saints in West Africa—until they are dead, at any rate. The Liberians take their patriotism very seriously and enjoy enormously the sentiment of this poem, of which we give the first verse:—

“With heart and hand our country’s cause defending,
We meet the foe with valour unpretending.
Long live Liberia’s happy land,
A home of glorious liberty, by God’s command.”

But to return to our *pièce de résistance*, the Inauguration. It took place in what is known as the “Square,” flanked on one side by the Congressional Building—used on Friday nights as a cinema hall—on another side by the United States Legation, while facing the presidential chair, as it was arranged for the ceremony, are the “Dutch House” and War Department, the latter the old Executive Mansion. A clump of trees afforded some shade to the platform upon which we were seated, but the heat was stupendous and it was obvious that even the President felt it. Nominally the ceremony was fixed for ten o’clock, but, in point of fact, there was considerable delay, and the choir did not break into Mozart’s “Let us with a joyful mind” until well past eleven.

The interim, however, had not been uninteresting. First and foremost, a detachment of the Liberian Frontier Force claimed our attention. They really are

an efficient corps, even if, as the Australians remarked about a certain American regiment, "they are a bit rough." Their uniform consists of the conventional khaki shirt and shorts, with a red fez, and they look as if they meant business. They are recruited from the native races of the interior, and let it be written quite frankly, that is all in their favour. Then there was the Militia, a heterogeneous body—gaiters of leather or canvas, buttoned, laced, or tied with string; brown boots, black boots, white shoes, black shoes; pink shirts and khaki ones: stiff collars protected by handkerchiefs, or no collars at all. Majors and officers of superior rank wore sporting uniforms, which, at a hazard, were discarded by the United States Army before 1860. The Militia also possessed several bands—bands of a wonderful type, composed mainly of brass instruments of great size and volume, and of drums. That their repertoire was not extensive mattered not one whit. A Liberian crowd is not highly critical in the musical line, and noise compensates for many shortcomings. Finally mention must be made of the navy. Though the Liberian navy lies at the bottom of the ocean, its personnel still exists, and its commander is the ex-President's brother, Captain Howard, who wears a uniform similar in many respects to that of a captain, R.N. He has under his command some thirty or forty bluejackets, whose duties we were never able to ascertain, though they certainly lent colour to the inaugural proceedings.

Thanks to the courtesy of the President, we had excellent seats on a line with the presidential chair, and just behind the Corps Diplomatique. Behind us were banked the choir, consisting of about sixty men and maidens under the conductorship of a most versatile personage, who, in private life, was a bar tender. There being no carriages or other means of conveyance, the President must, perforce, walk; and thus he made his appearance, preceded by the inevitable band and heralded by the Marshal of Ceremonies, who wore a uniform not dissimilar to that of a British Admiral of the Fleet. Then the choir sang and the inauguration began in earnest.

The administration of the oaths of office to the President and Vice-President, virtually the most important portion of the proceedings, occupied a very few moments. But not so the Presidential address. President King had a good deal to say. It took him approximately an hour; and if he be strong enough to insist upon the legislation he outlined therein, then Liberia really will advance, and will leave behind her the stigma of unpaid debts, corrupt administration, and a national policy which the most charitable can only describe as *laissez-faire*. The President spoke under great disadvantage. There was an incessant noise from the people outside the stand. Occasionally some playful spirit would let off a firework, and there was one gentleman who wanted all and sundry to know that he could blow a bugle. These distractions were not helpful, and it says a good deal for the President's determination that he managed to make us all hear what he had to say. The salient features of his address were, in the first place, his repeated—one might almost say affectionate—reference to Great Britain. It happily occurred that the captain and some of the officers from His Majesty's Ship "Thistle" were present, and there can be no doubt that their attendance was very highly appreciated by the President. Other matters upon which he touched were, particularly, international relations. The United States have lent to Liberia £1,000,000 sterling,* on the condition that all outstanding international loans, together with the interest, shall be paid off, and that Commissioners shall be appointed by the United States to advise the Liberian Government upon such questions as roads, the exploitation of Liberia's natural resources and the augmentation of the revenue.

In parenthesis, one of these Commissioners, evidently not a born diplomatist, made a most illuminating remark to us.

"We have virtually got a Protectorate," said he.

And our reply was, "Oh! is it as bad as that?"

President King supplied a much better answer in the

* This apparently, though promised, has not yet been actually paid.

very plainest language. In effect, he said—these are, naturally, not his exact words—“We welcome assistance from all the great countries of the world and particularly from the United States, whence we sprang. But I should like to make it quite clear that the advent of some American advisers does not bespeak American control in any sphere whatsoever. There will be no uncrowned king in Liberia, and Liberia will remain an independent nation, under God’s will.”

At this particular moment the American Commissioners looked self-conscious, and small blame to them.

He did, however, add that the progress of Liberia was dependent upon the interest shown to her by the Great Powers, Great Britain and France—the greatest Powers in the world, as he emphasized over and over again; and that, single-handed, Liberia was lost in the present and ever-insistent struggle for advancement. Then he dealt at some length on the need for education, and, incidentally, he made some very wise and subtle comments thereon. He explained that the native population of Liberia exceeded the Americo-Liberians by at least fifty to one, that it needed intellectuality of no small order to grapple with this great and ever-present native problem, and that the keynote of success was to be found in mental training and education. In effect, “*tout comprendre serait tout pardonner.*” Not a bad policy, if it can be carried out. As might be expected, the liquor question came in for consideration, and while the drastic measures of the United States are not contemplated, an effort is to be made by which the vast sugar-cane industry of Liberia is to be diverted from the manufacture of alcoholic drinks to the more utilitarian purposes of augmenting the world’s supply of sugar, which even here is deplorably short. Sanitation—most terribly needed, hospital accommodation, roads, transport, removal of the capital, to all of which we have referred, received attention. And, let it be reiterated, if President King has character enough to carry out all his contemplated reforms, then there is no reason why Liberia should not grow up a vigorous, prosperous and progressive Republic.

The proceedings concluded, lunch was served at the Executive Mansion. It was no fault of the President himself that confusion reigned supreme. Democracy, somewhat held in check at the previous ceremony by the height of the platform and the presence of the Frontier Force, now ran riot. Never was such a scramble seen. Many of us gave up the attempt to obtain a mouthful of food. Be it added that the most tired people present were the President and his wife. To describe the mob would be literally impossible. Diplomats jostled with Kru boys. Cabinet ministers received no more attention than the riff-raff from the river side, and the man with the strongest voice and the quickest hand was the best served. And this function actually lasted from about three until six o'clock. No wonder people were weary and tempers frayed. Again, the band must not be forgotten. It played one tune with a persistence worthy of a better cause. True, it introduced variations, a peculiar sort of tremolo preponderating: but it was far from being restful and some of the European community visibly wilted under its effect. But, in a paradoxical country like this, one must take things at their face value and undoubtedly the presence of the orchestra was very kindly meant, while the unfortunate performers apparently suffered as acutely as their audience. Blowing an enormous trombone in a temperature of approximately 120° F. must be a strain upon one's nerves, temper, and constitution generally.

In the evening there was a dance, an equally characteristic spectacle. There was the same crush, the same orchestra, playing automatically by this time, the same perspiring crowd translated into young women waiting for partners who apparently were otherwise occupied; and there were, what we have never seen before at any dance, tables covered with exhausted human wreckage fast asleep. Let it be understood, these folk had not drunk too much; but they had come a considerable distance and they were tired, just tired. Any port in a storm is a good motto, and there was no particular reason why the supper tables should not serve a dual purpose on this occasion. Dancing was very difficult.

What with the crowd, the heat, and the eccentricities of the band, it was not surprising that a goodly portion of the invited guests found their way on to the verandahs, where a faint breeze told one that it came from the north, maybe from England, the homeland of so many of us exiles.

And so the evening wore on, and it was with no regret that we paid our final respects to the Presidential party. Kindly friends—and out here one makes friends quickly—saw to it that, in spite of precipitous paths, we reached our temporary home in safety.

In all truth Liberia is a remarkable country !

We went up the St. Paul river as far as navigation allows. White Plains, at the commencement of the rapids, is a place which other people besides ourselves seemed to have imagined might have a future. There is a forlorn narrow-gauge railway, long since overgrown with weeds, and never operated even in the hey-day of its prosperity. There is one road over which Nature has assumed control. There are bridges across which it is unpleasant to walk, mementoes of well-meaning but ill-judged effort on the part of the Liberian pioneer. It will all have to be scrapped, and in the future undertakings of this sort will need to be conducted along rational, scientific and well-comprehended lines. It is a false philanthropy which throws into the bush material and money, which must be lost unless there is the human element to watch over it and to guard it.

As we were coming down from White Plains we struck a first-class tornado. The lightning flashed, the thunder boomed and the rain was simply torrential. At least we were in a motor launch with some sort of canopy to shield us from the elements. As we shot down stream we came upon three large surf-boats, full to the gunwale with sweating, rain-streamed militiamen. Of course we gave them a tow, and then occurred one of those little things which make one swallow violently, and make one realize that, hidden away deep down, there is a chord of human sympathy which extends far beyond all barriers of race, nationality or colour. The boats had a band, such as it was, and over the waters of

the St. Paul river floated the strains of "God save the King." Never have we appreciated a melody more! Then they sang a hymn which is very popular in these parts, one of Moody and Sankey's, called "Over There." They sang it extraordinarily well, much better, truth compels us to say, than the Presidential choir did their anthems. Somehow it brought to us all something of the realities of life.

Undoubtedly Liberia is not a health resort. We have described it as being one of the forgotten spaces of the globe. But there are people here, Europeans, who are doing their little bit towards the building up of their respective countries. In this community at present British influence and prestige are predominant. It depends solely upon the powers that be in Great Britain whether this continues to be the case. And we recall a very tired-looking man who, with his wife, said good-bye to us, and whose parting words were, "I am going to do all that I can." If he can advance the Liberians to the stage of civilization which brings with it a sense of responsibility, which substitutes a genuine love of country for greed and "graft," or even if he can induce them to walk a little way along the road where that stage is, he will have accomplished much. Time alone will show, but, unfortunately, time has an awkward way of refusing to wait while our good intentions are transformed into acts.

CHAPTER IV.

WHEN we speak of the Gold Coast in these days we include Ashanti and the Northern Territories and, along the littoral, a portion of the old Slave Coast. Historically it has been known, more or less definitely since the time of the Phœnicians, those indefatigable merchants and seafarers, but the honour of establishing the first settlements on the Gold Coast proper lies between the French and Portuguese. The former claim to have begun their trading operations in the fourteenth century while the Portuguese did not reach this coast until 1741, but the pretensions of the French to priority of discovery are based upon slender proof and are usually set on one side. In any case they must have arrived hard upon one another's heels, and have given rise to the African belief that Europeans were people of no country who were forced to voyage over the world in ships until they could find a spot where they could settle to the detriment of the native populations.

Elmina was the first settlement of any importance, and then followed trading stations at Axim, Accra, Shama, Christiansborg and Cape Coast, established under the ægis of the Guinea Company with John II of Portugal as chief shareholder, and the benediction of Pope Sixtus IV to guarantee it. This last, which was in the shape of a Bull, effectually prevented the arrival of other nationalities and it was not until the Reformation that this monopoly began to totter. English, French and Dutch adventurers then thought to turn their ships' bows towards the spot which their minds had long coveted, and spent their time in trading trinkets for gold, ivory and slaves, and in the equally congenial pursuit of making war on each others' little colonies.

The first English effort was made by Captain Thomas

Windham and a Portuguese named Pinteado in 1553. It does not seem to have been a peculiarly happy voyage. Windham proved to be a violent tempered man with no business sense and his death, which occurred at Benin, was the salvation of the remnant of the crew, already depleted by the climate. Pinteado also died, heart-broken by Windham's treatment, and out of the 140 men who had sailed from Portsmouth only forty returned alive. They brought back a rich cargo, however, and others, too numerous to mention, soon followed them to Guinea. It was Sir John Hawkins who was first among the English to engage in the West African slave trade in 1562, although other nations had pursued it for many years, and in or about 1563 an Act was passed legalizing this occupation. The English, however, were not serious competitors of the Portuguese at this time in any respect; it was the Dutch who threatened their supremacy by the different attitude they assumed towards the native chiefs and their peoples. Whereas the Portuguese policy had ever been to terrorize and to intimidate by acts of the grossest cruelty, the Dutch were scrupulously fair and just in all their dealings, and assisted friendly chiefs in their wars against aggressive neighbours. Eventually the Portuguese drove their rivals from the Gold Coast, taking possession of the stout fortress of Elmina and of the other strongholds of the once flourishing Guinea Company. Then came Swedes, Danes and Prussians, attracted by the lucrative results of the slave trade, who founded their little settlements, built their forts and added their quota to the confused squabbles which were for ever breaking out between the Dutch and English. Natives were bribed to take sides and contributed to the barbarity of the quarrels to no small degree. In fact the whole history of the Gold Coast from the early part of the seventeenth century until the end of the eighteenth is nothing but a recital of aggressions and retaliations which are only to the discredit of all concerned.

In 1751 the Royal West African Company sent out its first Governor, and it must be remembered that other nations had their Factors or Governors in the same towns

at the same time. It was not until 1822 that the Gold Coast became a Crown Colony, and it was at one period under the Governor of Sierra Leone, and at another joined with Lagos, now a portion of Nigeria. It would be interesting to know how in those days of slow communication proper administration was achieved. 1872 marked the ratification of the treaty between England and Holland, whereby the Dutch handed over their settlements, and in 1886 the Gold Coast became a separate entity under the Crown. Some traces of the Portuguese occupation still remain. There are words in common use in "Pidgin English," corrupted from their original Portuguese. Amongst these are: palaver (palabra), fetich (feitico), piccaninny (picania), and dash me (das me), this last now meaning "give me a tip." Amongst names, Cape Coast has wandered farthest from its first significance, as the correct translation of Cabo Corso is "cruising cape." The name of the Volta River is unchanged and Elmina was formerly San Jorge del Mina. The Portuguese forts at Axim, Elmina, and the Dutch forts at Beyin, Elmina and Seccondi still exist, some of them ruins, others even now in use.

But the Gold Coast is too progressive to waste time on sentiment over these relics of the past. Once their usefulness is gone and there is the labour and material available to construct newer and better buildings, they are either demolished or the rain, and sun, and sand do the work of house-breakers and only lizards scuttle over the crumbling stones and mortar. From the drowsy backwater of Liberia to up-to-date, hustling Accra is, indeed, a transformation. In Monrovia time is forgotten, and Rip van Winkle-like, it would be easy to sleep the years away and remain oblivious to the world's progress. In Accra the hour has sixty minutes, and woe betide the man, be he official or trader, who forgets that fact. This city, for it is a city, is unlovely, truth compels one to say as much. Vegetation is scarce. There is a certain sameness about the streets with their uniform, bungalow-built houses bordering monotonously excellent roads which extend in all directions for many miles. That, surely, is the keynote of Accra—the recognition

in practice of the well-being of both white and native population. Here the fact has been grasped that it is false economy to house Europeans in any sort of hovel, as was too often the case in the old days, and expect the best out of them. These commonplace bungalows are comfortable and roomy, with wide verandahs, hygienic lavatory accommodation and bathrooms, and equipped with all the conveniences which go to make for health in a climate which is far from perfect.

In effect, Accra is utilitarian and so far has not striven after the beautiful or indulged in the gentle extravagance of the pursuit of the picturesque. Its atmosphere is that of a young American town. No one, apparently, has time to walk. The aforementioned excellent roads teem with motor cars—nearly all of American make—and motor-cycles. Occasionally one encounters a rickshaw, and it is then safe to hazard that the occupant is a retired native merchant who has made his pile out of cocoa and now finds that he can dawdle as much as he will and enjoys so doing. In 1911 the population was approximately 30,000. To-day it is probably not far short of double that figure and there is no sign of any limit having been reached. Accommodation is at a premium and as difficult to obtain as a room was in London during the period when the Government occupied practically every hotel.

It is an anachronism that of all places along the West Coast the landing at Accra should be the worst, with the exception of that at unimportant townlets like Addah and Saltpond. But here, with steamers for ever loading and discharging cargoes, passengers and mails, everything in the way of communication with the shore has to be done by surf boat, and, be it added, the landing at the best of times is extremely unpleasant. During the rainy season it is frequently impossible, causing congestion of shipping and a good deal of criticism of an adverse nature upon the enterprise of the responsible Colonial authorities. This, though natural, is not entirely justified, as it is even beyond the task of the master mind to dam the Atlantic, though the effort was made by the construction of a breakwater at enormous

cost. This promised some sort of protection for landing boats, but the sea was not to be baulked and the embryonic harbour has silted up until it is now useless. A Naval Commission, however, has been out to the Gold Coast examining the coast carefully, with a view to finding a location where a really practicable port can be constructed, which will be an inestimable boon to the colony, and will hurry on with ever-increasing speed the almost abnormal growth of prosperity and development which it is already enjoying.

Perhaps the adjective "abnormal" does not accurately represent the remarkable change which has taken place during the last four or five years. It is not simple of explanation but it is a fact that the native has at last realized that agriculture can prove a direct pathway towards considerable affluence. The natural resources of the country are infinite. During the war vast fortunes were made from cocoa. There appears to be no reason why this trade should not become a regular staple industry for the whole of the eastern portion of the colony, which is rapidly being opened up by means of motor roads. Palm oil and palm kernels are other steadily increasing exports, and there seems every likelihood that, in the Northern Territories, ground-nuts should prove an extremely profitable investment. But of this more anon.

The one really picturesque spot in this severely hygienic town—and in West Africa the picturesque and the hygienic are usually sworn foes—is Government House. It is the old Danish castle of Christianborg, a white, irregular pile of masonry, turreted and battlemented, for all the world like one of Edmund Dulac's illustrations. In its inner courtyard stand the guard, bare-legged soldiers of the West African Frontier Force, with red fezzen and red-and-gold zouave jackets, which repeat the colours of the almander and flamboyant flowers climbing above their heads. The living quarters are spacious and lofty, overlooking the ever-restless sea, the monotonous roar of whose surf is always in one's ears. With the exception of punkahs and mosquito nets, life is lived as though this stage castle were on the Devon

coast. One dines in the conventional dinner jacket at the conventional hour, in a most beautiful though modern dining-room, where only the breeze of the punkah and the soft voice of the black butler saying, "White or red wine, please?" makes one realize that it is Africa and not Europe.

To those who may possibly exclaim, "How frightfully uncomfortable it must be to wear black clothes and a 'boiled shirt,'" there is a very good reply. White mess kit is rather an expensive luxury, particularly for those who come out here to replenish their exchequer rather than further to deplete it, and it is most essential that one makes some sort of change in one's clothes for dinner, otherwise the dry-rot of slackness sets in. The note struck at Government House is imitated, consciously or unconsciously, throughout the town and from there throughout the colony. Therefore, let the Harmattan blow furnace-like from the Sahara or let the air reek with moisture, but do not discard the dinner-jacket or the tail coat. Another antidote to slackness is sport, and of this Accra has its full share. There are two golf links, innumerable tennis courts, a racecourse, polo ground, and cricket club. The Governor is himself a well-known cricketer and an all-round athlete, and his enthusiasm is infectious. In some respects the Governor of a colony can be said to resemble, should he so desire, the father of a large family. Actually this is as it should be in British Possessions of moderate size, for in these days of democracy it is futile as well as injudicious to insist too much upon the prerogatives of position. A touch of human nature now and again works wonders in all departments of life, and the Governor who can find the time and show the inclination to enter into the relaxations and recreations of all classes of the community to the exclusion of none is indeed a very valuable asset. Everyone is genial, hospitable, and ready to help, even at personal inconvenience. And this tone is directly attributable to Government House.

The manager of one of the banks emphasized the point for us, "Yes, we are lucky," he remarked; "I know a place in the bush where there are only three white

women and there are, if you will believe me, three separate and distinct cliques. Here there is no such thing. The older members of the European colony have their nicknames of affection, pure and simple. We have "Aunt Betty," who looks after the newcomers, and "Mother," who honestly is a sort of mother to all the naughty boys, and so on. It really is wonderful, and so restful."

Now this sort of atmosphere is not only healthy temperamentally but also physically. Worry kills more people in a climate such as this than fever directly derived from the unwelcome "Anopheles" mosquito. Weariness of mind quickly begets weariness of body, appetite goes, insomnia sets in and there is another patient for the Government doctor, and, as likely as not, another passage to be booked for home. This should be grasped by all those who may make up their minds to come and risk the present with a view to the future. For there is so much to be done here by the man of enterprise, especially if backed with a minimum of capital. This country as a whole is not a residential one. A year is amply long enough at a stretch, but following certain regular principles there is no reason why health should necessarily suffer. After avoiding worry and taking a sufficiency of exercise comes the question of food. We have visited many bungalows, both of officials and traders, and we were struck by the excellence of the dinners we enjoyed. There could be no doubt about it, these people were doing themselves uncommonly well and one and all told the same tale. The days of incessant tinned food, served upon dirty tables and minus the accompaniments which are common to all at home, are gone for ever, and there can be no doubt that that lack of comfort was responsible for many a physical breakdown blamed upon the climate.

As for the upper-class natives, the plutocrats of the Gold Coast, who make of Accra the Mecca of their endeavour, they are enormously instructive to those who have the eyes with which to see. An example: A large case fell overboard from the slings of the ship in which we arrived as cargo was being loaded into the surf-boats.

The chief mate looked quizzically at the disappearing package, and then remarked: "That's done it. No silk stockings for the ladies." We asked to see the manifest out of curiosity, and there it was: "One case silk hosiery. Accra. New York Pure Silk Hosiery Company." Further inquiry, and we were told that the native ladies of the Gold Coast are very partial to such luxuries, and that price is no deterrent to their desires in that direction. On the other hand, they do not appear to indulge to any great degree in jewellery in spite of the fact that the Gold Coast goldsmith is a craftsman of the finest order, excelling in the most delicate and intricate branches of his calling. Clothes possess the fascination, and it is illuminating to wander along the streets wherein are situated Accra's most up-to-date stores, and study the latest creations for afternoon or evening wear. And what applies to the native in a lesser degree may be said to apply to the *bona fide* citizen of the country, untouched by European custom, who adheres to time-long tradition as regards clothing. The women wear the most gorgeous raiment, which would have made Solomon envious; silks embroidered in gold and silver thread, borne with all the grace of a Roman toga, surmounted by elaborate turbans of all the colours of the rainbow. Whatever the buildings of Accra lack in distinction is more than made up by the eddying crowd of native women intent upon their shopping and proving themselves at the same time no bad business hands at a bargain.

Prices rule high here, and what with the incessant demands from all classes of the working community for greater wages, presumably they will soar yet higher. Cocoa is in the main responsible. When the export of this commodity reaches such a figure as four million sterling, when it is remembered that it is practically a weed here, and when it is further recalled that the export has never reached the limit of possibility, it can be understood what a magnet it represents to labour. The work is arduous as regards collection, and it is unsuitable to Europeans. But the profits are so immense that the plantations can afford to pay the

highest wages, and are prepared to go up in an increasing ratio commensurate with the difficulty of obtaining the necessary hands. Small wonder, then, that there has been a veritable exodus of what one may call the coolie class, that longshoremen for shifting cargo are as scarce as the great auk's egg, that servants are non-existent unless they have been brought from afar, and that even the chauffeurs of well-to-do people are deserting their situations to drive the inevitable Ford motor lorry with the equally inevitable load of cocoa.* One suspects that all this development is being watched with jealous eyes by those who were first upon the scene—and, in fact, hearsay is quite prepared to aver that the newcomer stands the chance of either accepting the offer of the big man and being bought out or being crushed under the heel of a combine. How much truth there may be in this asseveration it is hard to say, but, if in the least correct, measures should be adopted to abolish once and for all a system which must prove in the long run absolutely disastrous to the best interests of the colony.

* These prices have now dropped considerably. Central Europe, and Russia are no longer purchasers. Still upon a stabilized base cocoa has a long and prosperous future before it after the collapse of the boom.



Mate Kola, a Gold Coast Chief who gave an aeroplane to the British.
Note the staff.

CHAPTER V.

THE following is a true cocoa story. Those concerned are well known to us, and if in this old world merit ever meets with just reward, they deserve just what they are meeting with, namely success beyond the dreams of the ordinary citizen who governs his day by the train which takes him to his office and by the train which takes him therefrom. In their own way they are pioneers; maybe their ancestors made history in some portion of the Empire; with that we are really not concerned. Both members of the firm, a very baby of a firm just five months old, naturally played their part in the great game of war, and both emerged captains with medal ribbons and distinctions which cause them either to blush or to swear if mentioned in their presence. Both were Public School men—this in parenthesis. Also, perhaps more important, neither knew anything of the intricacies of account keeping. But they possessed energy, enterprise, and pluck in unlimited quantity. So they put their heads together, faced a different music from that to which, maybe, they had grown accustomed, bought steamer tickets to the Gold Coast, and started in as Cocoa Planters. The capitals are deserved. Common sense appears to have done it. After five months only—five months as a time limit sounds absurd, but it is strict truth—they were when we saw them millionaires in the making—that is to say, if cocoa keeps up to its present price. They are suffering from no illusions. Also they are doing something infinitely more difficult—they are keeping their heads. The senior partner, aged about 26, was on the point of going home to buy machinery and motor cars, and, let us hope, also to have just the good time he deserved.

But, surely, what these two youngsters have accom-

plished others can do. This is written with the fullest idea of the responsibility attaching to the printed word. It does not necessarily mean that every Dick, Tom, and Harry can find in cocoa the wherewithal to buy a mansion in Park Lane. And there is always the question of mental stability—most important—and general health. Some folk could not live lives divorced from all the creature-comforts of England, emphasized by climatic demands which are ever insistent upon the strongest constitution. One's life has to be governed by certain laws of daily hygiene, and those who find such discipline irksome should undoubtedly keep away. On the other hand, there appears no reason to us why the man of enterprise could not go out and take his chance with the rest, and, to use an Americanism, "make good." One of the chief factors, as we have seen it, is the proper understanding of how to handle the native, which means, of course, native labour. Scientific knowledge of the most advanced type is quite lost unless the possessor thereof realizes that the mainspring of the machine is actually the black man. To obtain your labour, to rent the land, or buy it, to do anything and everything, it is essential that it should be remembered that, no matter who your father was or where you went to school, the black man was here long before you counted in the statistics of the British Empire, and that he will exist long after you figure in the obituary notices in the daily papers. That is the chief element of success, given normal business training of the most rudimentary type. Also, it must be added that the black man is no fool; he understands kindness very well—much better than people seem to imagine—and, in addition, he has as good a head for business as any one in Lombard Street. He is quite aware that great fortunes (the adjective is used after consideration) are being made and will be made from cocoa. Hence he is inclined to be cautious over the disposal of property which may or may not be worth the collection of supertax upon income.

Cocoa here is practically a weed. It crops three times a year, and if the undergrowth is cleared there is little to fear from disease. Naturally, there are cocoa diseases ;

so there are potato diseases; but the cocoa plant has what in insurance parlance is called "a good life." It likes moisture; as a matter of fact, this colony has the lowest moisture average of any cocoa-growing country in the world, and if afforestation is not resorted to it is possible that cocoa may suffer, but that will not be within the life of anyone who reads the above. Hence it seems fair to state that here is an opening, and a legitimate one, for a man with confidence in his own capabilities.

The Omanhene, or Chief, of Koforidua, is probably one of the richest of the cocoa magnates. As special correspondents of the *Daily Telegraph*, he was good enough to receive us in audience. We were accompanied by Colonel Colin Harding, C.M.G., D.S.O., the Chief Commissioner of the Eastern Province of the Gold Coast, while the Omanhene had assembled many of his chiefs and ministers to greet us. The reception took place in his palace, a fine airy building, constructed upon European lines. It was an unexpectedly impressive sight. Under a red umbrella with heavy yellow fringe, was seated the Omanhene, upon a leather throne so studded with brass nails that it appeared to be gold. On his head he wore a species of crown composed of plaques of alternate silver and gold, laced together with green velvet. The sandals on his feet were of similar plaques, while his robe, which he wore like a Roman toga, was of Ashanti silk, a shimmering glory of red and green and gold, which had taken six months in the making and had cost £100. After our introduction had been made he extended to each in turn a slim brown hand covered with gold rings of extraordinary size and shape. One in particular was about 3 in. in diameter and resembled nothing so much as a golden pincushion full of long, blunt, gold nails. Conversation was carried on through the medium of an interpreter, although the Omanhene is able to speak very fluent English. On the other hand, however, his suite knew no language but their own, hence the interpreter, in order that no doubt might exist as to what transpired.

The gist of our conversation was as follows: We

explained that we had come to his country in order to make it better known amongst the British public. This pleased him. He then pertinently asked what was the circulation of the *Daily Telegraph*. We gave him some idea and he was visibly greatly impressed. He asked whether the great White King would ever send one of his sons here, to which we replied that of that we had no direct knowledge, but that we sincerely hoped so. He then told us that he had collected £1,200 towards the purchase of an aeroplane for the British Army in France. Our official conversation ended, we were introduced to all the members of the suite in turn, after which we adjourned to the private apartments, where champagne was produced; the King's health was duly honoured and was followed by that of the Omanhene himself. The interpreter was now dispensed with, as the conversation had ceased to be official.

We then paid a visit to his six wives, handsome women, all of them. Then we were shown the Royal porcupines and the Royal racehorse, the latter rather a fiasco, from a sporting standpoint, as it always comes in last in every race. The visit terminated with the gift to us of his photograph and also one of his famous carved Ashanti stools.

Koforidua itself is an example of what the cocoa industry can do. Six years ago it was a small bush village; to-day it is a flourishing town where land sells at £150 an acre. It has good roads and the motor traffic, particularly that of motor lorries, is relatively speaking very large. The European population is numerous, included in which may be noted three ladies. It would be untrue to call Koforidua a health resort, but, with care, life can be endured there for a year at any rate. One learns many lessons upon the Coast and one unlearns many preconceived conceptions. But of all matters pertaining to health the greatest enemy is undoubtedly the sun. Why this should be so is something of a mystery, for there are many other places upon the globe nearer the Equator where the sun might be expected to be more deadly. This is not the case, however, and for the unacclimatized it is little short of madness to attempt to

do anything between the hours of noon and four. Even motoring with a sun hood up and wearing a solar topee will terribly tax the strength.

It was at Koforidua that we had our first introduction to "white man's justice" dispensed for the benefit of the black man. The court room was open at one end to the outside world, and behind the sprinkling of police in their blue uniforms one caught glimpses of interested faces whose rolling eyes spoke of curiosity, personal or impersonal, as the cases came up for trial. One man especially attracted our attention. His melancholy countenance was partially hidden by a swathing of immaculate white bandages, underneath which his brown spaniel-like eyes gleamed pathetically. His right hand and arm, also bandaged, was in a sling. A victim of some dastardly outrage, we thought, and looked at him with commiseration. It was in the nature of a shock to discover that he was the example of the "biter bit." This battered and dejected specimen of black humanity was in reality a highwayman, a brigand. He had waylaid on a lonely road two men whom he knew would have several hundred pounds in their possession. What he did not know, however, was that they also carried matchets—long and weighty knives. They defended themselves so stoutly with their matchets that he had for ever lost the use of his right hand, and, patched and stitched and sore, he was only awaiting the doctor's certificate before he was despatched to Accra to serve his sentence. Meanwhile he attended court daily under guard as a relaxation; a novel kind of "busman's holiday."

On the occasion of our visit the cases were of the "petty" type, but the District Commissioner devoted as much care and attention to them as though they were of vast importance; following the native ruling wherever possible, taking into consideration the black man's susceptibility on points which would leave the European cold, using tact and oh! such patience in that heated and rather odoriferous atmosphere. Four men, all scoundrelly-looking creatures, were accused of brawling and disturbing the peace. To the casual observer there

was not a pin to choose between them save that one looked angry and the other three phlegmatic. In less than five minutes the angry one was discharged and the rest fined "five shillings or five days." Another pleaded guilty with a virtuous air to riding a bicycle after dark without a lamp. He was promptly fined ten shillings or ten days, paid the fine and departed, still preserving his virtuous expression, only rather enhanced if possible. A third case: a man who, on the principle that robbery begins at home, had stolen a tin of sardines from his brother-in-law's stall in the market. The chief witness was a minute and bow-legged boy of 10, obviously terrified and overawed. In due course the evidence became so conflicting, and also so complicated by the constant popping up like a jack-in-the box of the injured owner of the tin, that the case was adjourned to the following day.

We were fortunate, or unfortunate, according to one's point of view, to be present when the offences were of so light a character. The advent of great prosperity in this region has brought with it a corresponding degree of crime, and, in one quarter, there were over 350 criminal cases to be judged. It is difficult to say whether the ability to buy spirits lessens or increases such disasters. Certainly, the negro, when inflamed by drink, is not a pleasant object to encounter. But one cynical youth who was administering justice in another part of the country put the matter in a different light.

"Much better if they get drunk," he said. "The black man usually does that sort of thing so thoroughly that, however much he may want to murder, he is physically incapable of doing much damage. A few cuts and bruises—some of them on himself—are all he can achieve. But if a man is sober and really sets about it properly, he can mess things up past the doctor's skill to repair."

Convicted prisoners are sent to gaol at Accra and many are the amusing stories told about them, one of which must be related. It is customary for gangs of prisoners to be sent out about the town to clean paths and suchlike. It happened that a gang was sent one

Christmas Day to the quarters of the Chief Inspector of Police. Work proceeded along the usual lines (needless to say it was not at the pace which kills), and at noon, the regular "chop" hour, no food had arrived. Time passed, and nothing came. The Police Inspector chanced to be sitting on his verandah and could not help but notice the anxious glances cast at him by his involuntary guests. Being the most kind-hearted of men he asked the cause and was told in the best West African pidgin English, "Chop no live."

"Why?" he asked. "It ought to have been here ages ago. What's the warder about?"

"No be warder fault," answered the spokesman of the party. "We go tell um we be asked out for chop."

History does not relate what their luncheon consisted of that day, but, knowing the inspector personally, we can imagine that they did not fare badly.

Dealing with a white prisoner is, indeed, a problem in a country like this, where the prestige of the white man must be maintained at all costs, and where, therefore, it is impossible for a white man to be put into a native gaol. In point of fact, such an occurrence was giving the Koforidua authorities many an anxious moment while we were there. However, even an unpleasant happening such as this may possess its humorous side, as the following story will show. A white man, under grievous provocation, caused considerable bodily harm to one of his personal servants. In due course the case came up for trial at the assizes, where, everything being taken into consideration, the climate particularly, which is liable to produce great irritation, he was sentenced only to two years' imprisonment. The question arose of what to do with him, and eventually quarters were assigned to him in the house of one of the European warders. In spite of his proven reputation for temper he was actually not at all a bad fellow at heart, and the fact that he was known to be a first-rate cricketer was the cause of the commencement of the comedy. Owing to the sudden illness of one of the members of the local eleven, he was told to play. This he did, making top score for his side. After that he

was habitually smuggled into the team, became a most popular member, and in due course was elected to the sergeants' mess where by-gones were tacitly allowed to be by-gones. Had it ended there probably nothing would have been said, for in these parts officialdom is easygoing and things not absolutely essential are frequently looked upon with a paternal eye. But alas! one day a senior officer of the West African Frontier Force found the sentries saluting the delinquent with great gravity. And that ended his cricket days and his evening cocktail at the sergeants' mess until his release.

Leaving Koforidua before the sun was unpleasantly high in the heavens, we motored to Kibbi, and from this journey of only thirty-six miles we can begin to speak with positiveness of the trials of motoring in tropical heat. It is exhausting. The sun beats down upon the canvas hood of the car and even when going at as rapid a pace as the condition of the roads permit, the atmosphere beneath the hood is that of a furnace. Woe betide the reckless man who takes off his topee in the mistaken conviction that the hood is sun-proof, for it is not!

Although the road surface left much to be desired the scenery was beautiful. Upon either side lay mile upon mile of unexplored jungle, so dense that it was impossible for the eye to penetrate more than a few feet into its depths. Cocoa trees, palms, climbing, swaying vines, which burst now and then into riotous colour, formed the undergrowth. And over all towered the stately odum trees, with their straight, pale trunks and crowns of feathery leaves. The odum is the principal tree of the country in these parts. It is a species of mahogany and makes excellent furniture which will survive everything save the attentions of the white ant.

Kibbi itself is really only a straggling village with a Commissioner to look after affairs, the sole white representative. It must be a very lonely post, and yet our host was as cheery as a sandboy and opined that bush life was far preferable to working in towns such as Accra and Coomassie. One imagines that the evenings

must pall when reading by lamplight becomes almost a torture on account of sand flies and other insects. But, on the other hand, these junior commissioners are all youngsters with an instinct for adventure, and are usually armed against ennui with some hobby connected with native affairs. We encountered one who had taken up the study of the nomenclature of native villages, and had already obtained interesting results. Thus he found one little town which was named in English "The home of good men." It seems this was something of a misnomer, since its chief is now undergoing imprisonment for life. Another village owes its name to the fact that it is peopled by Ashanti immigrants, who, however, arrived too late in the day to secure the pick of the land; to be precise, they secured the worst, and bad at that, hence its name of "We have settled in vain." It is evident that the etymology of these curious names forms a study which conceivably might result in far-reaching consequences, since light might thereby be thrown upon the original location of tribes of the most obscure origins but obviously with a great historical past, such as the Cow Fulanis. Mention will be made of these later.

The Omanhene of Kibbi is a man of considerable standing, a member of the Legislative Council and a C.B.E. One gathers that his task has not been an easy one, since the villages within his territory are small, but cover a very large area, and over every conceivable topic they squabble amongst themselves. It is naturally easier to administer a large and closely populated community. Upon hearing of our arrival the Omanhene sent his messenger with congratulations and presents of a sheep, yams and eggs. Now here let it be emphasized that the face value of a "dash," as it is called, has nothing to do with its significance. In happier days the Mayor of a Russian town, irrespective of size or importance, always offered visitors of whose presence he had heard the traditional bread and salt, emblems of hospitality and welcome. This was a similar case and we felt very pleased that the Omanhene had remembered our journey, though, to be sure, it was the *Daily*

Telegraph he had in mind. After proceeding with the necessary formalities we were received by him and the majority of his chiefs. The Honourable Nana Ofori Atta, C.B.E., is not at first sight so intelligent a looking man as his "brother" of Koforidua. He is older and his features are heavier. But when he speaks or gives any matter his silent attention one sees that here is not merely intelligence but intellect of no mean order. All speeches were translated from English into Twi or *vice versa*, by the interpreter, despite the fact that the Omanhene knows English so well that he was able to prompt the interpreter when the latter was searching for "*le mot juste*." This tedious business of translation is customary in order to avert suspicion from the minds of the less well educated that something may be said or done, suggested or arranged, of which they are not cognizant.

And a lengthy process it was! Under the oppressive shelter of the mud roof, seated on a platform crowded with chiefs and attendant satellites, the conditions were well-nigh unbearable. One of the chiefs was a woman, we were interested to observe, and the Queen Mother (properly speaking Queen Aunt, as the succession goes from uncle to nephew) was a wonderful old woman with a turban headdress which wobbled precariously and gave rise to much speculation on our part. We were later told that she was quite bald and wore a pad of wool, which was never in the right place, beneath her turban. These Queen Mothers are generally mines of information concerning rites and ceremonies and are always consulted where a question of etiquette is involved, their opinion being the last word on the subject. As usual the explanation of our mission was received with enthusiasm, and we then thankfully adjourned to the Omanhene's private residence, where we were offered the traditional champagne. This time we ventured, with thanks, to refuse it, for with the heat and the sun the results might have been disastrous. Nana Ofori Atta is a subscriber to the *Daily Telegraph*. He likes books, eschews cards and gambling, and with a smile remarked that he had quite enough on his hands

in looking after his administrative family of some hundreds of chiefs. The female chief or chieftainess, was doing well, he told us, though it was an innovation. He is a "fetish" worshipper, strange as that may seem, but were he anything else he undoubtedly could not exercise the control he does over his community, which would not only be a local loss but an Imperial one, as the Commissioner frankly told us.

Kibbi possesses a curious climate. The heat at noon is terrible and enough to try the temper of an ostrich: night brings an atmospheric coolness which makes it possible to sleep with one blanket or even two. Our "boys" informed us that it was "cold past all place," and were not cheered when they heard that M'Praisso, our next stop, might be even colder, although the Commissioner vehemently denied this. There is a certain amount of friendly rivalry between Kibbi and M'Praisso in the thermometric line, each claiming lower temperatures than the other. Certainly, fever is not prevalent at Kibbi and the agricultural station there flourishes satisfactorily.

M'Praisso is situated on the western boundary of the great Afram plain, and were it in a more accessible part of the globe would speedily become the haunt of those in search of beauty spots. Getting there from Kibbi was something of an undertaking. True, the distance was not great, some sixty miles, but mileage means nothing here. It is the character of the road and transport which tells. In this instance we were provided with a Ford car, worthy of a museum, in which to cover the first forty odd miles of the journey. It must have left the Ford works when that great undertaking was in its infancy, and if ever these lines catch the eye of the illustrious gentleman whose name is immortalized in these cars, he might like to purchase that particular car as a curio to be erected in the town of its origin. Its component parts were string, nuts which came off in showers, rust, wheels which wobbled ominously, and a chauffeur who frankly admitted he was learning. Incidentally also, there was no horn or hooter, a disturbing factor upon a road full of curves and

unexpected, narrow, rickety wooden bridges, along which, at full speed, rattled lorry after lorry—Fords, all of them—packed to the fullest capacity with cocoa. Under the circumstances the only thing to do was to imitate as nearly as possible the cry of the old-time London fireman and shout “Hi, hi, hi!” at the top of our voices, to the immense amusement of everyone except ourselves. At every slight rise our car stopped, and the villagers had to be commandeered to push it uphill, and then to shove it along for a hundred yards or more in order to encourage the engine which was distinctly peevish. The scenery, which we had been told was lovely, was lost upon us, and all that we longed for was the termination of as tempestuous a land voyage as we had ever experienced. Of course, one of the springs went, for even the best intentioned Ford ever put upon the road objects to steeplechasing downhill over ruts and rocks and then being dropped into a hole a couple of feet deep! But we arrived at length at Jajade, a village beyond which no road runs for vehicular traffic, and where we found carriers and hammock boys awaiting us.

Hammocks vary; so do hammock boys! In a hammock of the chair variety, with trained boys, a journey is bearable; with untrained hands and a hammock in which one must more or less recline, fourteen miles appear more like fourteen hundred. The interest is heightened when, as in our case, it is impossible to explain what one wants done. Our police escort orderly manfully attempted to interpret our desires with the assistance of a very handy-looking little whip, but the fact remains that when the moment arrived and we had to continue on shanks’s mare we were not sorry, especially as the rope of the hammock conveying the lady of the party broke, and its occupant enjoyed an unexpected fall in a particularly rocky portion of the path.

M’Praisio is approached by a winding track up a scarp, 2,500 feet high, and which rises sheer out of level country. To get to M’Praisio this must be surmounted willy-nilly; there is no other approach for many, many miles. Moreover, the track, which is unsuitable, if not

impossible, for hammock boys, mounts at least 2,000 ft. in under a mile. Add to that a tropical sun and, as foothold, slippery rock or loose gravel, and it can be imagined that, at present, people do not visit M'Praisso except upon business. Once there, however, one forgets the trials of the way thither in delight at the panorama spread before the eyes. On a clear day it is possible to see the highlands of Togoland, nearly 300 miles distant. Between lies the Afram plain, sparsely populated, portions of it unmapped, rich in game of all kinds and with soil which should render a good return if scientifically farmed. It would be an ideal cattle country, were it not within the tsetse-fly belt. But it will be developed in time, of that there can be no manner of doubt, since there is a magnet which shortly will draw labour thither.

That magnet is "bauxite." Situated not far from the District Commissioner's bungalow in which we stayed is a hill, 2,150 feet in height, which rejoices in the name of Mount Edjuanema. It is composed of nothing but "bauxite," and without further delay it may be explained that "bauxite" is the basis of aluminium. At a moderate estimate, we were informed that the value of this provincial asset cannot be less than twenty million pounds sterling. Bauxite, as we saw it, is a species of hard, red, clayey substance which can be polished and fashioned into quite pretty necklaces or bracelets, much sought after by the native women. The machinery for the reduction of this material into the aluminium of commerce is not over costly, but at present the difficulty in the way is that dreadful though beautiful scarp. A railway has been proposed, and, indeed, has been surveyed to connect Accra with Coomassie, and this would pass along the base of the scarp up which there would be erected an aerial railway for the conveyance of the raw material to trucks or to the smelting works near by. That is, as near as may be, the proposal; it can only be a question of time and expediency before work commences.

The word expediency requires some explanation. Very wisely it is the policy of the Administration to

encourage native chiefs to understand the value of their possessions and to allow them to benefit rightly and reasonably thereby; in other words, it is discouraging the ephemeral company promoter, who only looks to his own pocket and cares not a rap about the good of the people and of the country which he is farming. Administration of this type is common-sense policy, for it cements ruler and ruled by a bond of mutual trust and feeling of security, and, moreover, the Gold Coast in the past has been the happy hunting-ground of so many fraudulent schemes that its reputation has been undoubtedly smirched. This is now all being altered, and the surest way to that consummation is the education of the Chief regarding the potential value of the resources at his disposal. Then let him grant concessions by all means, with the advice of capable people behind him, and there will be a plentiful reward for both parties and satisfaction all round.

CHAPTER VI.

WE left M'Praisso with a certain amount of regret. Cool nights, such as we had there and at Kibbi, act as a tonic to the jaded mind and body after the trying heat of the day. Our personnel was increased at M'Praisso by the gift of a monkey, christened by us, on account of her perpetual melancholy, with the name of that most dreary of heroines, Clarissa Harlowe. Her one delight was to clap on her small head an empty cigarette tin, and then stagger, with the vague gestures of one blinded, the length of her chain. Raising the tin she would take her bearings, push it down again and recommence her game. Would that all her existence had been spent in so harmless a manner! Accompanied by Clarissa we retraced our steps to Koforidua and parted without reluctance or regret from our antique Ford car. Striking away eastward from Koforidua, this time in a car in first-rate condition and with an excellent driver, we reached the town of Akuse. The road wound up over mountainous ridges and down into valleys, and gradually we left behind the squat plantations of cocoa trees with their glistening leaves and quaint fruit growing on the trunks, and passed from roads which shake our bones in retrospect to a flat well-made surface on which we could go at a fine speed.

Between the towns of Sunyana and Akuse there rises out of the plain a hill with a sinister reputation. In days gone by, Krobo Hill was undoubtedly the scene of many human sacrifices, and even now no native likes to pass it on foot within easy reach of its base. We have heard it said that the pluckiest act of that plucky woman, Mrs. Gaunt, was when she was carried in her hammock by terrified "boys" close to that spot.

Now the motor road is at a safe distance and the old road is closed, but it is only some nine years ago that a native clerk set out from Accra on his bicycle to take up his duties at Akuse and had to take the old road. Days elapsed and he did not arrive. Inquiries were made to no purpose. Finally his bicycle was discovered in the scrub which grows timidly and sparsely, as though itself affected by the revolting stories, a few yards up the hill. Of the man himself there was no trace, nor has there ever been. And Krobo stands evil and brown in the midst of the lighter brown of the plain, waiting patiently for its next victim.

Akuse possesses the unenviable reputation of being the hottest place in the Gold Coast. Whether this is deserved or not it is difficult to say, but certainly never have we felt the heat so much. The official settlement or cantonment is situated at a distance of about a mile and a half from the town. It is as ugly a place as could be found. In order to prevent mosquitoes, shrubs have been cut down, grass burnt, and the surroundings turned into a miniature Sahara. Time appears to have been when a numerous official population was anticipated, but for some reason that anticipation has not been fulfilled, and a few gaunt, uninhabited bungalows, the home of white ants and rats—millions of the latter, as we know to our cost—lend a sense of desolation and decay to a thoroughly unprepossessing place. Even the kindness of our hosts did not allay the feeling, and that is to say a good deal, since everything possible was done for our comfort. And most surprising of all, Akuse is not an unpopular station with those who reside there. As usual, we visited the paramount chief of the neighbourhood, a fine old man with a sense of humour and a vein of matter-of-fact honesty which was rather refreshing. The Konor (Chief), Mate Kolo, has been a good friend to Great Britain, having fought on the right side in the Ashanti War, a fact which has not been forgotten, and which is testified to by the number of framed autographed photographs of bygone Governors which decorate the walls of his room. As before remarked, it was dreadfully hot, and the Konor did not offer us

champagne, much to our delight. But he did offer us, and we did accept with gratitude, large bumpers of ice-cold beer.

For the rest Akuse is merely a stopping place for those, like ourselves, journeying further afield, though it is the centre of a large administrative district, whence it derives such importance as it may possess. In addition, the River Volta flows near by, an important highway to the sea when there is sufficient water. We chanced upon it when navigation was at a standstill practically, owing to long-continued drought. In the rains, however, it taps all the immensely rich districts bordering its left bank as far as the Togoland frontier, and then small ocean steamers can reach Akuse without serious difficulty. Our road lay down stream to the river mouth, Addah. Owing to the exigencies of the situation, we did the nine hours' journey in a minute shallow-draught motor launch, formerly German property. It boasted one microscopic cabin, seven feet by four at most, which we shared with an enterprising young Frenchman, bound for Lome. Outside seethed a noisy, thoroughly happy, black multitude. That sitting accommodation was insufficient mattered to them not a whit. "Mammies" with their babies squatted on the roof of our cabin and dangled their legs over our portholes. Our servants went promptly to sleep on the deck and over all floated that pungent perfume known as "Bouquet d'Afrique." It certainly was not travelling "de luxe," but for those possessed of a sense of humour it was quite entertaining. Moreover, we had Clarissa, the surest banisher of *ennui*. A West Coast wag once remarked that one of four things must inevitably happen to a sojourner in these parts. He either becomes neurotic, hypochondriacal, or a dipsomaniac, or else he would keep a monkey. To the last we have already pleaded guilty. Clarissa was presented to us by a weary-looking District Commissioner. We now understand the source of his weariness—Clarissa. Coupled with her expression of permanent melancholy, Clarissa possessed the fertile imagination of an inventor and the trickiness of Puck himself. She never slept;

also she had a great penchant for matches, red-hot cigarette ends, and anything which tinkles when it breaks. Clarissa, on our down-river voyage, most successfully depleted our supply of crockery and enjoyed herself immensely. That is all that need be written upon a very painful subject.

The Volta River, between Kpong, where we embarked, and Addah, does not possess any striking characteristics. It is simply very wide and very shallow—at this season—with low-lying banks on which grow rough scrub, a monotonous landscape indeed. There are crocodiles to be found here in great number, but it is only in the early morning or late evening that one has any opportunity of shooting them. At the best it is poor sport, and it is worth notice that, in contradistinction to popular idea, the only portion of a crocodile's skin useful for commercial purposes in the making of bags, purses and such-like, is that which is found upon the stomach.

The small port of Addah, for some unknown reason, has a bad name. Possibly the surf, the worst upon the coast, has something to do with it. Yet history recounts only one steamer being wrecked actually upon the bar, though others have been driven ashore, with the inevitable toll of human life. But to us it appeared a delightful place. The official bungalows are situated close to the shore, and one can sniff the good Atlantic breeze during the entire twenty-four hours. Bathing is dangerous owing to undertow, but otherwise the fore-shore might well be backed by a promenade and a bandstand, and one might imagine oneself at a Devon seaside resort. That is as Addah appealed to us. The town is clean and well laid out; it may have been incorrect, but the inhabitants seemed exceptionally courteous, in spite of an overwhelming curiosity on the part of the ladies to see a white woman. Plenty have passed through, but there is a large floating population from the hinterland, and to these a white sister is a novelty to be treated with respectful toleration, commensurate only with a certain surprise that one so placed should ever deem it desirable to wander so far afield. Addah is one of the candidates in the running for portship, if such a word

may be coined, of the Gold Coast. There is a good deal to be said for and against the proposition. To the outsider it would appear that from a practical point of view it is too remote from railway and main road communication. Further it is tucked away in the far east of the colony, whilst the trend of development is westward and central. Moreover, in the event of the Accra-Coomassie Railway materializing, time and labour would be saved by sending goods through by that line to Coomassie and thence to Secondee or such other harbour in that portion of the Colony as may be found to offer safe anchorage. The fact is that there is room for two good ports, were finance available. Development should bring that consummation, and then trade will increase with the rapidity ever attendant upon facility in handling inward or outward bound merchandise.

CHAPTER VII.

WE were told by various cheerful pessimists at Addah that the road from Attititi to Quittah was the worst that the mind of man could possibly conceive, so, with recollections of other awful roads, we set our teeth and prepared for something truly terrible. Like many other anticipated horrors, however, it turned out to be much better than we had pictured it. From Addah to Attititi one goes by launch, and in the early hours of the morning we found this really exquisite. The sun rolled up the dense sea fog like a curtain and we could see the mangroves reaching their long brown arms into the slime of the Volta swamps with enormous oysters clinging to them, while flashing in the sun or darting back into the shade were innumerable bright coloured birds. The sluggish water teemed at one place with small jelly fish; opaque, they looked a cross between mushrooms and soap bubbles and bobbed serenely about a few feet beneath the surface. Everything was calm and—as yet—cool. Consequently we climbed into a Ford, the distant cousin of our antique acquaintance of Kibbi, with serene minds. This was the car concerning which we had received the following communication the day before:—

“Dear Sir, the car and lorry in which you are indigent of for to-day at 2 p.m., I beg to state that the differentia has got damaged and we are renewing the washers. It cannot be ready at 2 p.m., unless to-morrow morning. Yours sincerely,” and then followed a quite unreadable signature.

We then learnt that the Fia, or Chief, of the Awunas, particularly desired to greet us and we were not slow in accepting the invitation. It must be explained that this chief occupies a position of peculiar prominence and that his kinsfolk are to be found all over the western portion



Sri II. Fia of Auna.

of Togoland. In the Great War he displayed wonderful energy and helped the British to such an extent that he was honoured by the gift of a very finely chased sword from King George together with a huge silver medal commemorating succinctly Britain's gratitude. Not a man to be overlooked, this! Our road to Awunagah lay along the sea-shore, fringed with palms which looked delightful. In places there were bumps but there are many worse roads than this in the Colony.

Upon reaching Awunagah we were conducted to the Fia's residence, in front of which were stationed the pupils of the local school, boys and girls, who sang "God Save the King" as though they meant it. Undoubtedly they did.

The native population in this part of the Gold Coast is intensely loyal and appreciates at its fullest value the justness of British rule. Following upon the National Anthem came introductions, and then we were invited to the Council Chamber, a handsomely furnished apartment, and an address was read to us, the following being its purport:—

The Fia, who incidentally belongs to the Legislative Council of the Colony, together with his advisors protested (*a*) that Togoland should not be handed over in any circumstances whatsoever to the French. He maintained that racially they belonged one to the other and that the cleavage was unnatural. Further, he remarked that his race who had helped the British in the Togoland Campaign had done so largely from sentimental reasons because they believed Britain would unite them with their Togoland brethren once again as a family; (*b*) it was asked that a railway might be constructed from Attititi to Lome; (*c*) that gunpowder might be sold at a reasonable price and not be subject to trade fluctuations caused by profiteering. He reminded us that at funerals the firing of guns was a regularly recognized custom without which the dead were not properly honoured; (*d*) he complained of the currency being paper which in such a climate and carried by natives in their loin cloths quickly deteriorated, became torn and was rendered useless.

Now for some consideration of the points raised: Regarding Togoland there can scarcely be much difference of opinion. This former German colony was the first tangible asset of victory for the Allies in the war. That it was so lightly secured was in no small measure due to the action of the Fia, who not only found soldiers and transport but indirectly influenced his kinsmen across the border to lay down their arms, thus embarrassing the Germans to such an extent that they were ultimately obliged to surrender. To hand over all that portion of Togoland referred to in the address is little short of lunacy apart from the doubtful, very doubtful, political sense of honour incurred thereby. To divide a tribe in two after the specific declarations of statesmen of all the allied nations is wrong policy and it may very likely lead to consequences not yet appreciated in Downing Street or the Quai d'Orsay, but certainly well understood by all upon the spot, whatever their position or calling. Plain writing is essential. The French have no legitimate local claim upon Togoland. Frankly, the subject peoples would prefer to remain under German rule than be switched off and placed under the government of the French whom they neither like nor understand. This is nothing derogatory to France or French rule any more than there is anything derogatory to the individual when someone prefers Jack to Tommy. It is a matter of temperament, and while the British are most popular with the natives of Togoland, and of that there is no doubt, the French are disliked and distrusted. Natives have told us time and again, "If not the British, let us go back to our old masters." In any case the division of a large and wealthy tribe into two sections by a stroke of a pen is an act of such an arbitrary character that it is hardly conceivable that a British statesman with intelligence and the fact before him would agree to such an act. That is one aspect of the affair.

Then there is the commercial point of view. Togoland was the one German African colony which could boast of an annual credit balance. Moreover, this was increasing and the Germans had schemes without number for developing the latest resources of this wealthy little

country. Considering that it was British enterprise and blood which secured it to the Allies, then assuredly and in view of the preceding statement of native desires, Britain should derive whatever commercial benefit is obtainable. Of its resources we shall have occasion to refer to at a later stage when we shall have visited Lome, and personally inspected the up-country districts wherein are carried on such profitable enterprises as sisal growing — from sisal is made rope — coco-nut plantations, from which are obtained copra and so on. For the nonce all that we desire is to bring to notice the very just and reasonable claim put forward in the Fia's address, backed up by impressions formed upon the spot and hazarded not without the most careful consideration.

The second point made by the Fia is really one of local interest. Contingent upon Britain retaining Lome, then assuredly a railway must be built upon the Volta River thither. From many viewpoints Lome is in a sadly neglected condition at present. Mails are irregular to the *n*th degree. No one ever knows when or how a mail is to arrive; an elusive branch boat may bring one having taken six days *en route* from Accra. Or else the postmaster at Accra may decide that it is worth while for the official and trading community to hear from home, and a runner is sent. But there is no system and that in itself is deplorable. To get away from Lome means one or two alternatives. One may retrace the track we have followed and go to Addah, launch up stream to Akuse, and then motor, if one has the wherewithal to pay for it plus the automobile, to Accra, a distance from Akuse of over fifty miles. The other proposition is equally alluring. Upon certain high days and holidays, Elder Dempster honour Lome with a visit from two dear old boats called the *Sir George* and the *Bida*. Reference has been made to these even in the Chief Justice's speech of welcome to the present Governor of the Gold Coast, General Guggisberg, upon his arrival at Cape Coast. The Chief Justice spoke quite plainly, and therefore the subject needs no further notice from my pen, except that if the best is to be made of Lome and the contiguous towns of Quittah and Addah, then

speedily must be constructed a light railway linking the three as far may be; that is to say, a flat-bottomed steam carrier would feed railhead at Attititi with goods from Addah, and thence a service of inestimable value would be maintained with Quittah and Lome. It would pay quickly upon capital outlay, especially if constructed upon the Decauville system, as was carried out by the Germans in many portions to Togoland. From Lome the ocean ships could be fed, more especially as at Lome there is no surf difficulty, that having been overcome by the construction of a pier at which passengers may land in comfort and cargo handled in safety. That disposes of the traffic question.

As regards powder, we are not in a position to make much comment with the exception that it has been brought directly to our knowledge that profiteering on an enormous scale is going on, as the Customs ledgers show. The amount of money coined out of a barrel of gunpowder after paying Customs dues, freightage and labour, would make the mouth of the greediest pawnbroker in the East End of London water. The District Commissioner at Quittah, Captain Poole, M.B.E., rendered a valuable service to the native community when he read the Riot Act and threatened to import the article himself and retail it officially to the population. The funeral customs referred to are quite harmless and bear the same relation to the funeral ceremony as the use of incense in a Catholic church. To profiteer over the necessity of such a commodity is a blot upon West African trading firms.

Paper currency also requires the minimum of attention if the question is studied without prejudice or commercial "arrière pensée." It stands to reason that a shilling note printed upon paper indistinguishable from the envelope of a telegram is, apart from all else, a beautiful temptation for the wily, black "sharp customer" to substitute the one for the other. This has been done in scores of cases. The individual responsible for the colour of the one shilling West African note deserves the thanks of the whole coloured criminal community. Beyond that, in a hot country can any-

thing more futile be imagined than a paper currency which human perspiration quickly renders indecipherable and which, moreover, carries contagion every bit as easily as the wily mosquito? Seriously, there was a deal to be said for the cowrie shells of old days, for at least they were clean currency, and could be carried "native fashion." If the world supply of nickel is really short then some form of token for purely native market use might be devised. At present one silver shilling is worth approximately three shillings of paper money, and the native capitalists are making their war bonus therefrom in spite of official restrictions. Further comment is needless.

To leave discussion of this nature and turn to actual happenings is somewhat of a relief. But our mission would indeed be barren did we not touch with as kind a pen as we can jointly handle upon things and matters which literally seem to cry out for emendation.

The Fia before we left gave us a wonderful specimen of native woven cloth, a combination of old blues, gold and green. One is reminded, in looking at it, of the antique Rodian work which is occasionally met with in the Balkan States and Greece. The Fia told us that its weaving had taken two months, which is not difficult to believe. The native choir sang the National Anthem once more as we boarded our car, and then we were really on the way to *Quittah*.

On our arrival we were most kindly and cordially received by Captain Poole, who, however, broke the news to us that there would be another reception in the afternoon, the local chiefs having their own points to make. One gets accustomed to anything, even with the thermometer at boiling point. And so we did our duty to the *Daily Telegraph* and to the tune of "God Save the King," played apparently in ragtime by the Quittah brass band, and were ushered into the Court House. Reiteration is very tedious, especially to those who glance through these lines, so we will curtail description and merely mention that in all sincerity the meeting literally implored us to place the case of Togoland before readers of the *Daily Telegraph*. But our joint

sense of humour does demand some outlet, and hence we make no apology for quoting the following from the inevitable address. "Although you have not yet told us the object of your mission or the purpose of your visit, we know it would only be to advertise your famous papers, and to prepare important articles to support your Press. We therefore give you our word that we shall endeavour to support your Press. Your visit will ever remain in our memory, and you will become our friends, and brother and sister, for we are being governed by the same King and under the same flag. We wish you all success in your endeavours and further journey." Follows the signatures of all the local notables. Certainly from this one may be permitted to deduce that the folk in this part of the world really do welcome the representatives of a British daily paper, and that already the power of public opinion is understood and valued. Also we shall be very disappointed if the circulation of the *Daily Telegraph* does not increase at least by ten copies weekly!

Quittah is a curiously situated townlet. At places it is possible to throw a stone from the sea-shore into the lagoon which lies at the back and extends for many miles laterally. When we saw it the major portion was dry sand, and we were able to enjoy to the full a motor run of ten miles or more over a surface which was as level as a billiard table. We noticed a peculiar atmospheric effect: Quittah happens to be one of the biggest markets in the Gold Coast, and natives come many miles to sell their wares there. The dry lagoon forms an excellent short cut from the hinterland, and we were treated to a vista of people, basket on head, walking single file, and in what seemed never-ending procession. And, as distance intervened and lessened the distinctness of vision, so also the people apparently increased in height until those in the rear attained gigantic proportions and appeared as supermen stepping forth from some other world. There was an unbroken silence. The sand deadened all sound, even the engine of the Ford car appeared less noisy than usual, and the eye became puzzled by that never-ending expanse of colour-

less sand. We have seen the same effect translated into white in Siberia during the winter, and we can testify that there is something uncanny about such monotony which causes the mind to wander over a world of inexplicable problems which are incapable of solution here below. For the rest, Quittah is a busy populous place; its bungalows are literally upon the sea-shore, and it is not long since the hospital was swept away bag and baggage one stormy night. There is a good Catholic Church, as also one supported before the war by the Bremen Mission; there are stores in plenty, and above all and beyond all there is abundance of fresh food of all kinds—this last somewhat uncommon in these parts.

To-morrow we leave for Lome, and we shall be interested to study at first hand the various problems of the situation there. At present the air is thick with rumours as to the ultimate fate of the rather unfortunately placed colony. British troops have been withdrawn until there only remain sufficient for purely police duties and, so to speak, Major Jackson, D.S.O., the British Commissioner in charge, has his luggage packed and is sitting on his boxes waiting for orders. Let us hope that the order to quit may never come. If it does then Eastern Gold Coast will receive a staggering set-back which it will take years to remedy, and which will be fraught with consequences of a character far more serious than can be imagined from a casual glance over the question. But why be pessimistic? It is an error. Common sense and fair play have a way of winning through, and out here it is essential not to allow the bogie of depression to sit on one's shoulders.

Meanwhile the sun is shining and the Atlantic looks like the Mediterranean seen from the Côte d'Azur. There are moments when one cannot comprehend why this Coast should have the reputation it has, why nature's wonderful handiwork evidenced in flowers, trees, gaudily-feathered birds, and scenery which would delight the heart of an artist, should suffer from the seemingly incurable ailment of a sinister name. Perhaps time will change it: perhaps the on-coming tide of new ideas may bring with it a fresh estimate of the West Coast. Most

fervently do we hope so, for, in spite of all the difficulties one is bound to encounter in wandering through the highways and by-ways of this part of Africa, somehow it makes an appeal to the senses as though it were saying plaintively, "Now, tell us please, that we are not so bad as we are painted."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE road from Quittah to Lome more nearly approached one's idea of a nightmare than any other one had seen in that part of the country. Even the luggage lorry, which usually charged ahead at some forty miles an hour over any sort of surface, protested, and our medicine chest fell off twice, reducing its contents to a pungent omelette as we sadly discovered later. But it would be doing Togoland an injustice to say that all the road was bad. After passing the old German boundary, which is now a preventive station, the road visibly improved, and after we had to search for superlatives of excellence instead of the reverse in describing the highways made by the Germans in their former colony. Thanks to the kindness of Major Jackson, D.S.O., Commandant of the British forces in Togoland, we had the opportunity of travelling some hundreds of kilometres through the country, and it was the condition of the roads which most impressed us. In England one is accustomed to measure a road for quality by comparison with such well-known highways as the Great North-road and that leading to Bath. As near as possible, the surface upon these routes is as perfect as human ingenuity and practically unlimited financial resources can make it. Yet look at a map of Togoland, find the seventh parallel, just south of which and midway between the 0° and 1° longitude will be found a place called Missahohe. Follow with the forefinger, almost directly north, a distance of some thirty miles, and a village called Baika will be noted. The road connecting these two places runs through an extremely mountainous region, offering superhuman, one might equally add appalling, difficulties to the surveyor, the engineer and the contractor. We have

travelled through the Brenner Pass in a motor, and to those who are acquainted with it the illustration affords an apt comparison. Only remember always that the latter belongs to Europe, while this is unexploited Africa. The road corkscrews and zigzags on the brink of virtual precipices, where, far below may be seen vegetation of an entirely different character from that through which one is passing. The trees are the highest and most majestic we have ever seen. They must be at least 150 ft. in height, possibly more; estimate is very difficult. Straight as a telegraph pole they rise towards the light from the evergreen twilight of their tropical surroundings without a vestige of foliage, until at their tops they branch out into dense masses of feathery leaves which shimmer and play with the sun which beats upon them. We were told that they were cottonwood and odum trees. Surely here must be a small paradise for an enterprising timber merchant. How that road was ever made is a perplexity, but the brains which fashioned it were the brains of craftsmen. As regards labour, of course, it was forced upon the natives of the region. There are those who will raise their hands in horror at the very thought of what to them appears an outrage upon humanity. There is another side to that. When the Germans constructed that road, and continued it as far as Yendi, due north, and halfway between the ninth and tenth parallels, and so on to Sansane-Mangu, about thirty miles north of the tenth parallel, they knew that they were constructing a commercial windpipe which would supply the lungs of Lome with the merchandise necessary for its vitality as a seaport. And incidentally they were opening up to the natives a new channel for the disposal of their wares, and were turning a very poor population into a community which now bids fair to become prosperous. That the natives have realized this fact we saw when in our presence a deputation from the village called upon Major Jackson and asked for even more roads, and offered to find the labour if the Administration could supply a constructor to show them what to do. In this connection it is impossible to ignore what the loss of Lome will

spell to these people. The existing railway to Palime from Lome, the feeder to this great road, under the suggested scheme is to pass into the hands of the French. Apart from Customs, delays, and such like, there is no guarantee as to freightage rates. As an alternative route, there is only the very lengthy and unsatisfactory journey to Addah via the Volta River, thither through a practically pathless country. The Germans, whatever may be written for or against their system of colonization, were eminently practical. Years ago they realized what we are only beginning to grasp ; namely, that facile means of communication, lending themselves to easy transport, not only spell control in a strategic sense, but must also inevitably lead to commercial development. Therefore, the man on the spot, be he white or black, laments the loss of Lome with an exceeding bitter cry, and Downing Street cannot understand. The town of Lome has Germany stamped upon it with an indelibility which no amount of outside alteration will ever be able to erase. It has palm-lined avenues which really are a delight to the eye after the sandy unloveliness of the streets of Accra, the Gold Coast capital. These are intensely practical, since they are broad, shady, and allow such little breeze as there may be to wander at will through the stifling midday heat. There is a hospital, built upon the latest lines and equipped in a fashion which would make the mouths of doctors serving in tropical hospitals in other parts of the world water. Again, that is practical and thorough. Seeing to the health of the individual, be he official or trader, is virtually only an insurance premium upon the existence and success of a dependence in the tropics.

In Lome there is no bugbear of surf. German engineers built a pier, once washed away, now rebuilt and strengthened, from which one gets into the steamer's boat with the same ease as one embarks upon a tender at Plymouth. So much is good and might well be copied. Even the spiritual needs of the people were not overlooked, and the Catholic Church is a landmark for many a mile, and is certainly finer than anything of the kind from Morocco to Cape Town. The Technical

School attached thereto is a model of what such an institution should be. One can have furniture made there, one can get a suit of clothes tailored, one can have a defective sparklet bottle or a wheezy automobile repaired, effectively and without any loss of time, and, be it said, along this coast the last is very rare. Of course, there is a Lutheran Church, not so conspicuous as the Catholic Cathedral, emphasis upon which has been laid largely because, to anyone with a knowledge of Germany, it entices a rather interesting vein of speculation. Everyone knows by now that the Prussian is a Lutheran, that the ex-Kaiser heartily disliked Roman Catholics and that only the Rhine Provinces and Southern Germany represented Catholicism in the old German Empire. Then why, may the outsider aptly query, was the Roman Catholic Church made one of the most prominent features in an obviously officially-planned administrative centre? If one may hazard a guess, and without any precise guide before one, was it that the major portion of the official population was drawn from Catholic Germany, that is to say from Bavaria or the Rhine provinces? If that be so, reconstructed Germany, or maybe a newly resurrected Bavaria, may yet find these officials an asset not to be overlooked, since, as surely as the sun shines, Germany will discover some Colonial outpost to occupy. This is merely a train of thought which may interest those with a purview a little larger than the immediate moment. There is also at Lome a Catholic Convent, where four fresh-faced Irish nuns, too recently arrived to have had the rosy colour drained from their cheeks, and a Mother Superior from Alsace, are engaged in one of the saddest tasks imaginable—the care and education of half-black female children. This is a painful subject but one which must be dealt with as it forms one of the problems of the West Coast. If such things must be and will be until there is a larger white society of both sexes, how should one deal with these little unfortunates? When their fathers possess consciences they are sent to the Convent and a sum paid for their education. Education to what end? For some reason which possibly a scientist might

explain, they are usually dull, apathetic scraps of humanity, lacking the superficial quickness of their mothers' race and the perseverance of their fathers'. We saw many of them. Some of them were pretty, others bade fair to be dangerously beautiful. We use the word dangerous advisedly. When they grow up and leave the Convent their equipment for life is approximately as follows: a little acquaintance with the three R's, a smattering of housewifely knowledge, possibly the ability to play a little on the piano, but above all and beyond all they know that their fathers were white and that, therefore, they are of finer clay than any ordinary black man who might seek them in decent and honourable marriage. Nothing the Sisters can do seems able to eradicate this from their minds, although other useful things never linger long. The effort is made to marry them to the half-black lads who are brought up by the Fathers at the Technical School, sometimes successfully. Not often. The fate of these poor, vain, stupid girl-children is what one might expect, particularly if cursed with that beauty we described as dangerous. They sink to the level of their mothers before them and go lower, for the latter usually erred through love and their daughters take the path of vicious ambition. Would one be wrong to say: Better let the mother take her baby back to the bush whence she came so that the child may stand her chance with Nature and keep so-called civilization out of it altogether? We venture to think so, and, after a frank conversation with the patient Sisters, we saw that they realized the hopelessness of their task.

Going back to the "make up" of Lome, one cannot but be struck by the obvious efforts of the Germans to impress the native mind by outside effect. Thus the bungalows, or to be correct, houses, are grotesquely ornate for the work for which they are designed. Ornate outside and very uncomfortable inside would be the exact description. No verandahs, no space to speak of, rooms which are not airy, and, crime of all, many of them so constructed that two families were expected to occupy "stages" as at home in Germany. In Europe a

flat is comfortable and convenient; in the tropics it is the reverse; and the application of the principle shows how the most practical people may make the greatest mistakes. If you want to fill your model hospital then by all means make your white population live under such conditions.

Government House, as might be expected, is a large building standing in the midst of really finely laid-out gardens. It is battlemented and turreted in the best and most modern German style. Take a walk along the fashionable suburban thoroughfares of Bremen or Hamburg, and you will see this type of building duplicated many times: the homes of the rich and prosperous merchants hailing from the aforementioned cities. It is a species of architecture which usually makes no appeal to anyone without a certain mental training which it is hoped will not be introduced into England. Some would call it vulgar pretentiousness. With that one can fairly say that comfort never need be anticipated. Was it not some wag, who discussing this question of Teuton love of the very ornate, described the style as early Pullman or Late North German Lloyd? Be that as it may, the idea certainly fills the bill as regards Lome Government House. Everything remains much as it was in the days when the Duke of Mecklenburg carried on the duties of Governor. Evidence of one's eyes is sufficient to prove the haste with which the Germans departed from their Togoland capital. Even library books, toilet sets, brick-a-brac, and framed photographs were left behind in the hurry. And they all remain "in statu quo," as one might say. The rooms remind one of a German hotel; the vases holding flowers come from Dresden, while the tables upon which they stand are of that incongruous species known as "Art Nouveau." The climate of Lome is truly abominable. "There comes a breeze from off the sea," as Lewis Carrol said, after sunset, but it dies down about the time one goes to bed. The result is that one wakes in the early hours drenched to the skin with perspiration. In fact the mattress may even have to be changed, and we know one man there who could see nothing smaller than a towel effectively to mop

his face and who wore three pairs of pyjamas a night. Then comes prickly heat! Rather humorous to those who have it not, like slipping on a bit of orange peel, but a torment to its victims. There are golf links at Lome and tennis courts, but it made us uncomfortable even to think of such exertions, though many intrepid spirits played daily and grew visibly thinner in consequence. Therefore it was with delight that we took train for Palime, en route to Kluto where the temperature was more endurable. Palime possesses an interesting market where one can purchase, amongst other things, the sun-baked pottery so dear to the native heart and in which "palm oil chop," or "ground-nut" stew becomes a most attractive dish. Unfortunately it is so brittle that even with the greatest care its life is not long. We brought two black "hens," from which the natives drink palm wine, and a number of other utensils. The hens still survive, albeit somewhat battered, but the teapots and dishes arrived in England ground to powder.

From Palime we motored between rows of flowering flamboyant trees to Missahohe and on to Kluto, receiving a deputation on the way, the dignity of which was somewhat marred by the vision of a minute "Teddy Bear" on the top of the Chief's state umbrella. Missahoe was in the days of the Germans the "Residenz des Kaiserlichen Bezirksamtes," or District Commissioner, in plain English, and we followed their example. It is a charmingly situated spot, but what was even more charming was the drinking water, which arrived fresh and cool and clean from an uncontaminated spring in the mountains through cement pipes. G. W. Stevens in his "With Kitchener to Khartoum" has an illuminating chapter entitled "The Pathology of Thirst," With every word of it we agree, except with his final conclusion. Whisky and soda is good. Gin and soda is better. But even what he terms "that triumphant blend"—gin, vermouth, angostura, lime juice and soda, whether it be taken by the glass or the gallon, is merely a promise of joy, compared to the soul-satisfying delight of unfiltered,

spring water. The point is that it must be unfiltered, and in how many places can one take that risk? Rain water from tanks, water drawn from doubtful streams, all has to pass through a filter, and the result is as insipid, unrefreshing and characterless as would the most brilliant article from the most gifted of war correspondents after it had been through a mesh of press censors. But Missahohe water! As one admiring spectator watched jug after jug disappearing down our responsive throats, he ejaculated, "Madame de Brinvilliers could not have taken more."

Not far from Missahohe, and upon a mountain over 2,000 ft. above the plains, is Kluto. It cannot be called a village, a station, or a settlement. It consists merely of two houses and a most glorious view. Before the war this was the spot where sleeping sickness was treated, since in the valley below is a broad belt of tsetse-fly, thus giving the German doctors many victims to be cured of this dread disease. But now Kluto is used as an official health resort for men and women alike, and nothing could be a more refreshing change from Lome, or, for that matter, from any of the parched villages at the foot of the mountains, than the cool air there. At night one actually needs one blanket, and sometimes two—a very rare experience in these parts. There is an adjacent hill, the Hofberg, which looks down upon Kluto, and on its summit one can see the ruins of a house. There it was, in the days of the Germans, that every couple married in Togoland had to spend their honeymoon, and the house was known as "Honeymoon House." The road from Missahohe thither has been a wide one, but is now overgrown with weeds, elephant grass, and all manner of creeping vines. On many of the trees are orchids, and we were fortunate enough to secure some good specimens of what may prove to be uncommon species. From the ruins of "Honeymoon House" one has the most extensive view to be obtained from any mountain in the range. While we were there a great proportion of the vegetation was brown and dry from lack of rain, and enormous bush fires smoked by day and flamed by night. But, even so, the panorama

from "Honeymoon House" was one which would do credit to Switzerland. Someone unkindly remarked as we surveyed the view that the site might have been chosen because of the facility with which an unsatisfactory bride—or groom—might be hurled down the mountain side with no witness to tell the tale. Certain it is that the house was destroyed by a tornado, and tradition now has it that the tornado came from the inside of the building! The beneficial effects of Kluto as a health resort we can vouch for personally. On our arrival we were languid and dispirited; by the time we had spent two nights in that cool mountain air, energy returned to us. Yet, grateful as we were for this relief, we could not help regretting that the great work, originated, if we mistake not, by Dr. von Raben, of studying, stamping out and curing that scourge sleeping sickness, should have been scattered to the four winds which may blow on Kluto. Near by is a broad belt of country infested by the tsetse-fly, and the opportunities for scientific research are therefore vast. But nothing remains of Dr. von Raben's efforts save a few mutilated books in German, thrown aside as rubbish. Such action is near-sighted and deplorable, and usually more expensive in the long run. It remains to be seen what France will evolve from Kluto, but signs point to its being used by her as it is by us—as a sort of health resort for jaded officials. Excellent as far as it goes, but, is that far enough?

CHAPTER IX.

By way of preface, let it be understood that we are neither of us agricultural nor horticultural experts. Also that, not being children, we accept with reserve what we are told by folk with business axes to grind or enthusiasts who allow their beliefs to run away with them. Before entering Togoland the very name of "sisal" was unfamiliar to us, as probably it will be to the majority of those who trouble to read what follows. Sisal, briefly, is the basis of possibly the finest hemp rope obtainable, and until recently this peculiar, pineapple-looking plant had been regarded, if not exactly as a weed, then distinctly as a plant lacking commercial value. The Germans, however, with that inborn patience over scientific research which, whatever people may say, is undeniable, quietly went in, and without advertisement made their experiments, which culminated in astounding success just as they embarked upon the world war.

Everyone is aware that rope is of illimitable value as regards demand. In other words, as long as the world endures there will be those who will pay for the finished article, from a steamship firm who want hawsers to the gentleman who fulfils the office of public hangman. Hence, when a common bush shrub, requiring the minimum of skilled attention, is found to offer such a remarkable means to a financial end, then it may be said to look from all normal points of view as an uncommonly likely investment. Facts and figures from an official report are proverbially dull. But to illustrate fully our genuine interest in this out-of-the-world Togoland plantation, some space must be devoted to extracts from this report, which we were privileged to see. In the first place, the efficiency of a sisal plantation depends upon



Togoland Beauties.

having a poor soil. That sounds extraordinary, but it is true. Almost one might write, the poorer the soil the better the sisal, and since the area of wasted land in tropical countries is enormous, it seems as though Nature, tired of seeing her handiwork relegated to the waste heap of disuse, has introduced sisal at the last moment to show the dubious that, far from being played out, she still possesses some cards metaphorically up her sleeve.

The chief requisite after having chosen your situation is to maintain the welfare of the plants by affording them security from weeds and undergrowth, since the larger and coarser the sisal leaves the more valuable they are. To get your finished article, that is to say, baled fibre ready for the ropemaker, machinery of a simple nature is required, as also cheap haulage to the factory, since there is no reason why a plantation may not run into thousands of acres, given labour and light tramways.

Now the Togoland plantation covers 2,700 acres. For this area 365 outdoor labourers are required and thirty-five factory hands. Let it be added that only a portion of this acreage has been kept up to the mark, and some land even wants planting. Moreover, though there is a light railway system, there is only one machine for stripping the pulp from the leaf, in other words, separating the hemp from the pulp, whereas there should be at least two machines at work, and possibly three. One, indeed, was on order from Germany, and its concrete base remains to this day; the machine, however, was captured, and is rusting its life away somewhere, which seems a pity. Yet what are figures even in such circumstances? There is an output of forty tons of fibre monthly, or 480 tons annually. Taking as a minimum price for hemp £45 per ton, this means a gross income of £21,600 per annum. Call the working expenses £7,600, and there remains a residue of profit of £14,000 a year.

Granted these figures may be exaggerated since, for instance, no allowance has been made for mechanical breakdowns, and the profit is thus inflated, yet even if halved £7,000 profit is very handsome. The purchase

of such land is, for obvious reasons, not difficult; the present market for hundreds of acres of poor soil cannot be said to be large. The capital outlay upon machinery, factory buildings, and light railway likewise is not an enormous item of expense, and thus it resolves itself into the question of labour supply. Be it mentioned that the shedding machine known as the Corona, certainly the best of its kind to be had, cost in pre-war days a modest £1,000, and it is economical in horse-power and hence in fuel. A clean, full-grown plantation should produce 1,200 tons of fibre yearly from every 1,000 acres. This, again, represents £54,000 a year if the fibre fetches £45 a ton, and thus the Togoland enterprise should produce over £145,000 per annum, with working expenses which could not exceed £12,000. Of course, that is the most favourable aspect of the financial proposition, and the figures may be juggled with by hemp merchants and others to suit their own convenience, but surely enough has been written to show that the idea is worthy of consideration by long-headed business men.

Space forbids one to go too minutely into the actual process of manufacture, but our visit to the estate was full of interest. It is situated close to the highest hill in Togoland, Mount Agu, which has a curious history. It is precipitous and extremely difficult of access. In fact, we could never find that any white man had ever made its ascent. Withal it is thickly populated with a native tribe who formerly occupied the surrounding plain, whence they were driven many years ago by the Ashantees. They took refuge in the caves and crannies of this hill, and have never left it since, except during the daytime, when some of them work upon the sisal. They have their own farms, make their own pottery, and weave their own clothes, and thus have no reason to visit neighbouring villages in the plain, which they never do under any circumstances. Had one the time it would be interesting to go among them and learn a little more about them and their fetishes, for they are all followers of fetish.

The gentle Germans, when they started the plantation, bought 22,000 acres approximately, of the necessary

land for the remarkable sum of £40. Someone must have been a humorist connected with the deal, for after consultation with a native lawyer the price was raised to £60. History does not relate what the native chief thought about it. The factory, which was in full work when we saw it, is a compact building, in which every bit of space has been utilized. This obviates running about from department to department and cuts down working cost. For the amount of work accomplished it is almost comic to look at. But then everything in the manufacture is so simple that elaboration is unnecessary. The leaves, some of them as long as five feet, and as we said before, shaped like those of a pineapple plant, are placed upon an endless leather carrier, which transports them to the Corona stripper. Short work is made of them there. Knives dissect them as though combing hair, and a greenish fibre emerges, with, it must be admitted, a horrible smell. It is then thrown into a tank to be washed of impurities and hung upon what might well be clothes lines to dry in the sun. The fibre is then brushed by a very simple machine, which, incidentally, takes away a great amount of powder extremely trying to the lungs of the workers, who were offered masks in which to do their duties. The offer was politely refused. The black man is a funny creature on occasion, and maybe he thought they were a form of malignant juju. Then comes the baling and packing, and the goods are ready for delivery. As the conjurer would say, "There's no deception; it's only knowing how." And £45 or £35, or even £25 a ton for the result; no wonder that we thought a little woefully about writers and their financial returns!

One plantation of sisal looks exactly like another except, naturally, where weeds have been allowed to accumulate the plants have not had the chance of such expansion as when kept thoroughly cleared. The life of a plant is four years, after which it grows a pole in the middle which, if removed, gives it an added existence, although the leaves are not so good in quality. Hence, there has to be replanting, turn in turn, which is easily accomplished from a nursery where seedlings,

or bulbils from older plants, are brought up. A bulbil, for the benefit of the uninitiated, is a little growth thrown out by a parent plant from its base. A plantation, therefore, with care, is practically self-supporting.

So much for the Togoland plantation, over which we were led by its supervisor, Mr. Lyne, one of the senior specialists of the day on the subject, and withal a tremendous optimist as to the commercial future awaiting the exploitation and development of the industry.

Finally, it is no secret that the Gold Coast Government are seriously considering using their waste lands in this manner after suitable experiment and observation. While in company with Mr. Lyne we happened to hear him make an observation in German to an ordinary native labourer, who replied in equally good, if not better, German. We have ourselves met plenty of natives from French territory who all could speak quite excellent and fluent French. The German-speaking native, we were told, was no exception, which leads one to an interesting point. Why is it that in all British West African Colonies the abominable "pidgin" English is still adhered to? It is a language of its own, and it is no exaggeration to say that the newcomer has actually to learn it before he or she can do anything with native servants or others. Surely it would be better in the nature of things, and certainly more dignified, if an order in English were given in English, and not something after this fashion: Mistress to boy, "Ansammanah, what for you go do this? Where my tings lib I sleep in for night? You savvy, plenty good, you go take 'em buy chop. You be tief, boy, and master no go give you any more dash." And so on *ad infinitum*.

There are schools in plenty, where the budding native child is seriously taught such valuable history, as the story of Romulus and Remus—one of us really heard such a lesson—when, if those same infants were shown how to speak the King's English, with the accent on the King, some permanent good would result, and the poor European would be spared many an hour of irritation. Imagine a hot day and trying to explain to a lad, who himself only imperfectly speaks this extra-

ordinary dialect, that you are expecting three friends to lunch, one of whom, having had fever, must have a special dish prepared for him. It really does tax the patience of Job, and much must be forgiven masters or mistresses whom, forgetting the moralities of their youth, as taught by their parents, burst quite without warning into the broadest and plainest vernacular. Which reminds us of a quite delightful chauffeur we had who also used the vernacular to an extent which would have made the mouth of a hardened fo'castle hand water. "My boy," we said, "where on earth were you educated? How did you ever learn such expressions?" The reply came very glibly. "I be Mission boy sah!" And, moreover, there is another side to this question of pidgin English, and really a serious one at that.

In countries such as these which we are visiting one is dependent upon the services of an interpreter in interviewing chiefs and at other official functions. And this necessity is not confined to visitors. Officials themselves are often obliged to entrust the translation of matters of importance to interpreters who are unable to understand ordinary English. Therefore the weary official has to translate into "pidgin" what he wants to say. The interpreter then translates what he imagines was what the official wanted him to say, and heaven alone knows what the resultant communication will be as understood by the native mind. For instance, this happened to us. At the request of the District Commissioner at one place we met an Omanhene, or chief, of great importance. He asked, through the Commissioner, what we were, and the latter was wise enough in his generation to hand the little task to us. We explained with some detail that we were special correspondents of the *Daily Telegraph*; that we were seeing his country in order that people in England should be told something more about it than they knew, and that we hoped that our visit would be of real and lasting benefit to him. We took infinite trouble in choosing one-syllable words and making the phraseology as simple as was humanly feasible. Afterwards we leant how what we said had been handed on. It was as follows:

"They be plenty big man for book." Talk of waste energy! In this connection we really must be forgiven for the narration of an equally authentic little story. The name of the Governor we suppress merely because he has gone on to his reward, which, if measured by the affection and regard in which he was held by official and native alike, will indeed be great. He was a very erudite and intellectual man, and withal a very fine speaker, who could not manage to turn his best periods into "pidgin" even had he wished. To him it was an impossibility. The phrase was something like this: "It was truly wonderful that delicately nurtured women should be found who were willing to brave the dangers and discomforts of the pestilential West Coast climate." The translation ran: "He says his women be damned sight finer than yours." Comment really is needless. And, finally, for brevity of telegraphic "pidgin" the following is priceless. It was sent by a brother-in-law to his sister's husband, the sister having just died: "Orella kick bucket: what do?" One can best illustrate and emphasize a point often by a little humour, and those three quoted messages are sufficient to show where the need for education comes in.

The present Governor of the Gold Coast, General Guggisberg, a soldier of great distinction, as well as an administrator who, though he has not lived his life in the latter capacity, has already shown what energy, enterprise, and common sense can do, has taken up this question of education with no uncertain determination. In a speech before the Legislative Council in February he outlined a far-reaching policy, which should have enormous results if carried out in its entirety. To use an Americanism, he has "caught on" to the fact that the infant schools should have a separate organization, and should be in the nature of "preparatory schools"—that is to say, they should be there to prepare infants for admission to the primary schools. If infants receive a good grounding, and are taught to speak English as it should be spoken, then truly an advance of more moment than people at home might imagine will have been made. In this country it appears to the travelling

outsider that the aim of former administrations has been to get over the ground too quickly. Education costs a deal of money, and this has to be found somewhere, for all administration is a compromise as to what is most urgent for the community at the moment.

Again a comparison. No battleship has ever been constructed which combined within herself maximum of gun-power of any ship afloat, maximum of protection, maximum of speed. Something must be sacrificed to obtain the one of the three essentials which the designers may deem most important. Similarly, as we are daily learning, the administration of a colony is not so easy as it appears, even though there may be a good bank balance and a loan of respectable proportions has been forthcoming.

General Guggisberg, being a Royal Engineer, has struck bed-rock by plumping first and foremost for education, an education of a new type. He has schemes of every kind. He wants a marine parade from Government House to the port, a distance of three miles at least. He wants railways and roads and bridges, and we are not at all certain that his enterprise would cease with a municipal theatre. The latter is not so impossible as the untravelled might imagine. The theatre at Manaus, on the River Amazon, and in just as hot a climate as this, is a magnificent one.

But to return to education; the Governor has realized the crying need of the country for a proper education, not a grafted one. By this we mean that if you take a mission-educated boy and throw him into the midst of advanced branches of higher education, you immediately produce the educated West Coast clerk, who rarely, if ever, writes clear English, but who is perfectly willing to do so if given proper chance and instruction. All this takes time, and one goes back to the original point, "catch them when they are young"; they are full of intelligence and brain power, only the motive force has hitherto been wrongly applied. Brilliant barristers have come from the Gold Coast—educated in Britain. Also excellent doctors, so we are told; but few if any of them owe their primary educational start to the schools

which were here standardized. And so back again to the "boys," as they are generally called here. Most of them good little chaps, faithful little chaps, and some of them would never desert one in any emergency. They only want the education to develop them into men with grit and backbone which any country might envy. True, they come from a different stratum from the Government clerk, who usually has had the advantage, or otherwise, of some sort of missionary education. That the latter is better than nothing will be admitted, but the thorough tackling of the whole problem spells advance.

CHAPTER X.

LEAVING Accra in the s.s. "Appam" for the port of Sekondi, whence runs the railway to Dunkwa, will long remain a vivid memory. The so-called wharf at the former place is the property of the steamship company, and they have evidently not had time during their occupation of over twenty years or more to do much for the convenience of passengers forced to land there. Baggage was dumped down in the sand and left till its distracted owners could either bribe or bully native labourers to put it into surf-boats. This absorbed time and temper! After a good couple of hours' perspiring endeavour we managed to get off to the ship, and there we wallowed and rolled in a heavy Atlantic swell until a ship's officer was considerate enough to let down the "mammy chair" to bring us on board. But the process took forty minutes, and the officer seemed hurt that we were not unruffled, and, in fact, agreeably surprised that he had been so quick.

Naturally, the Governor received better attention, but, speaking for the travelling public, really it is time that Messrs. Elder, Dempster came up against outside competition. There is nothing personal in this statement; usually we have received as much consideration as, or even more than others. It is merely the principle. The Manager of the Bank of British West Africa at Accra told us candidly that he rather welcomed the advent of the Colonial Bank there, as competition kept a concern alive, and forced employees to contrive, consider, and generally keep up to the mark. Monopoly will more quickly destroy initiative than anything else, and once initiative goes overboard everything else follows.

At Sekondi we remained only one night, attending

a concert in the evening at the Railway Institute. There is a regular colony of white men at the above town, and that which struck us far more than the music, which was above the average, was the fine physique and look of undoubted fitness, the audience—mostly railway-men—possessed.

Here again was evidence that the day of the bad old "Coaster" was rapidly passing. Twenty years ago this portion of the globe was regarded as a refuge of the destitute, the drunkard and the divorced. The alliteration is not ours; it was given to us to describe what "had been," by an old, old sojourner in these parts. Well, that has all been altered and swept away never to return, and as facilities for relaxation and amusement increase so will the last remnants of this old and evil reputation disappear. It seems to us as worth suggestion that all coast towns should have an institution along the lines of this railway institute at Sekondi.

At Accra there is nothing of the kind, merely a miserable little club, which lacks everything a club should possess except the hospitality of its members, which is proverbial. We are writing of bricks and mortar, and if the Government can find a cool million or more to spend upon public works, then surely they might find a few thousands to build a really good clubhouse for the benefit of all, but chiefly for the convenience of their own officials.

It was from Sekondi that we started on our tour with His Excellency the Governor through little known parts of the Western Province of Ashanti, and the Northern Territories. General Guggisberg is one of those who believes very strongly in seeing for himself. During the war his predecessor, Sir Hugh Clifford, for obvious reasons, was obliged more or less to remain as near telegraphic headquarters as might be. That meant that it was impossible for him to visit the outer confines of his little empire, for that is what it really is. For a fortnight (that may not appear much to the man in the street, but to a Governor it is a long time), he is out of touch with the world, and to send him information is a difficult and uncertain business. As in our case, he

simply dives off the plank into the sea of obscurity, and in due course emerges at the terminal, where he can gather fresh information and the latest news.

In war such an undertaking would undoubtedly be hazardous, and thus it was that Sir Hugh Clifford could never undertake this ambitious trip in its entirety and hence the Governor, in these remote regions, was a name rather than an entity. General Guggisberg wants to alter this and show himself as being very much alive, as being *au courant* with the local situations, as caring as intimately for the welfare of the native in the back blocks as for his top-hatted brother in Accra or Cape Coast; as being, in plain English, not merely a "figure-head." Accomplishing that is sound administration indeed, and in due course is bound to bear good fruit. But for the moment we prefer to place the political aspect of this journey on one side and describe at some length the ways and means whereby a party of ten Europeans, including three women, travel through an African jungle with a certain degree of comfort. Those good folk who make perilous pilgrimages to the South of France or who think nothing of going to "Lovely Lucerne" have, we venture to say, no idea of the amount of time, patience and labour which is expended on the successful pilotage of such a small party as ours in a country where the sweetness of doing nothing is carried to a fine art; where glib promises are as glibly broken; where the heat tries a white man's temper past description and where, truly, only the wicked are at rest. Dunkwa, midway between Sekondi and Coomassie on the railway, was chosen for the first stop, a sort of jumping off place, as it were, for our plunge into the unknown. We had cut down our luggage, had taken a tender farewell of Clarissa, and had been given an orderly through the courtesy of the Inspector General of Police at Accra. This orderly was a delusion and a snare. He was an enormous fellow whose courage was in inverse proportion to his size and the only time he was really awe inspiring was when he was in the throes of a nightmare. Then he bellowed like a bull and ground his teeth hideously. But the carriers openly scoffed at him, and his

only skill seemed to be that of eluding any work. With our own boys he was intensely unpopular after he took two of their vests to clean our guns. As we could not pronounce his name we called him "Koko," to which he answered very sulkily, and we discovered that in his particular language "koko" meant "hen." It was so appropriate and we had grown so callous to his feelings by that time that he remained Koko to the last.

From Dunkwa the following standing orders for the party were enforced, or perhaps we might say complied with as far as was humanly possible. But what is an easy matter with disciplined white troops becomes a nightmare when a heterogeneous body of carriers is concerned, and these excellent plans often went "agley" in practice.

(1) *Carriers*.—The carriers will proceed in two batches.

"A."—Mess stores, tables, chairs, lamps, cooking utensils, knives, cutlery, &c.

"B."—Personal baggage, bedroom furniture, &c.

"A."—Will proceed at an early hour.

"B."—When the remainder of the column leaves.

The A.D.C. and headquarters boys will accompany "A" in order to prepare luncheon and the next camp.

(2) *Loads*.—Europeans will not carry more than the following loads:—

Bath	...	...	...	...	...	1
Bed	...	...	...	...	...	1
Tin boxes	...	...	...	...	...	3
Miscellaneous	...	...	...	...	...	1
Boy's load	...	...	...	...	...	$\frac{1}{2}$

Care must be taken that these do not exceed 60 lb. in weight.

Boys have a habit of putting their belongings amongst their masters' after the load has been weighed; they must be made to understand that this must on no account be done. Half a load per boy is ample for their requirements and any surplus they must carry themselves. They must in addition carry one hurricane lamp.

The same carriers will be supplied daily to each European as far as possible so that they may know their particular loads.

On the march each European will send a boy or an orderly to march with his luggage.

(3) *Hammocks*.—Each European will be provided with a hammock. There will be six boys to each hammock. Spare hammock men should be employed in carrying any small articles such as gun case, water bottle, camera, &c.

(4) *Breakfast*.—Each European will be provided with crockery, &c., for breakfast, and will be responsible for carrying this amongst his personal luggage.

The private secretary will notify all in daily orders as to the time up to which breakfast can be obtained from the cook house; this must, however, be obtained by personal boys.

(5) *Escort*.—Officer commanding escort will assist A.D.C. with transport arrangements.

He will detail six men and N.C.O. to proceed with the advanced party and will be responsible for the baggage of the rear party.

He will detail one N.C.O. and three men to act as advanced guard to the main body.

One N.C.O. and three men as rearguard.

He will place the remainder of his men amongst the carriers in batches of two, whose duty it will be to keep the carriers closed up and prevent looting.

He will take up the position in the column which he deems fitting for the best supervision.

(6) *Headmen*.—One super headman will be in charge of carriers in the advanced party, one in the rear party.

He will march in rear of his carriers with any spare carriers he may have and will at once change the load of any man who is flagging.

(7) *Order of March*.—Advanced guard: one N.C.O. and three men G.C.R. 100 yards in advance.

His Excellency and staff.

Other Europeans.

Escort and carriers.

Rearguard, one N.C.O. and three men G.C.R.

(8) *Halts*.—The column will halt for 10 minutes at 10 minutes to each clock hour, when carriers will close up and place their loads to either side of the path.

At the hour the column will proceed.

(9) *Daily Orders*.—Daily orders will be issued by the private secretary stating time of start, time up to which breakfast may be obtained and time of luncheon, &c.

The "Europeans" of the party were His Excellency General Guggisberg, his A.D.C., his private secretary, a captain of the Gold Coast Regiment in command of the escort of thirty soldiers (black), a doctor, the wife of the inspector-general of police, whose long experience, good health, good humour and general ability made her a most valuable addition to the party, a female stenographer, and our two selves. Lastly there was what might be called a "floating population," which consisted of the Commissioner of that particular district in which we happened to be, and sometimes also of the Chief, or Acting-Chief, Commissioner of the province. The A.D.C. travelled ahead, and upon him fell the onus of preparing lunch against the arrival of the party, whatever that might be. It was naturally impossible to foresee causes of delay, and so he had to stand by and be on the *qui vive* and waiting. Not a very pleasant task either, with the thermometer wobbling about in the 90's, shade temperature! In addition, he had charge of all the stores, and had to check them and see none had been mislaid or stolen. Was it not Gilbert who wrote, "A policeman's lot is not a happy one"? Well, most assuredly, an A.D.C.'s is not. The public usually associate this type of official with a lavish display of gold lace and decorations, together with a heavy dragoon manner. Beloved indeed of the serial novelist is the A.D.C. Yet little they know! At the risk of dissipating fond illusions, let it be written that certainly the aide-de-camp of a West African Governor has a job which is as hard as any yet invented since the days of Adam. He is held responsible for every sin of omission or commission in his intricate department. He is briefly instructed by the Governor. He is then told off by the transport officer. He is next harassed by the superintendent of police. If any lady has a complaint, if she has lost while at Government House or on tour the most minute article, then she calls upon the assistance of the A.D.C. No matter how tired he

may be, she expects and receives attention of the most courteous type. He must exhibit the patience of Job, the justice of Solomon, and the psychic analysis of a Sherlock Holmes. He must never be tired; he must never lose his temper; he must not mind in the least if he mislays all his kit in an altruistic effort to save that of others he has never seen before, and will probably never see again, from losing theirs; he is in turn a greengrocer, a wine merchant, an expert upon fish, flesh, and fowl, and withal he is a conjurer of no mean ability, for woe betide him if he does not arrange a four-course dinner, and a good one at that, from a few mysterious tins. He is the plaything of circumstance, but one law he must obey, and that is smile, smile, smile.

The private secretary is a being on a different plane. He is a species of shock absorber for the Governor. His manner must be of that suave variety which will break the most irritating of news as though he were telling you that a rich uncle had died and had left you his fortune. He is never abashed, and with outspread hands will wave away any difficulty as being of no moment, though what his private opinion is would no doubt be interesting. At the same time he is always busy over something, and, according to his own estimate, is the one person who really works. And during the entire twenty-four hours it is a fact that he seldom has a minute he can really call his own.

So much for the two indispensable assistants a Governor must have, and, be it added, he could never get through all the ceremonial functions he must attend did he not have the help of such thoroughly efficient workers. The third individual to qualify for a halo is the Officer Commanding Escort. His hammock is merely to be seen, not used; his meals reach him at strange hours or not at all, and he exercises the brains of Machiavelli and the agility of that domestic animal, the flea, to be in "the best position in the column fitting for the best supervision" of the 400 carriers. The genus carrier is not what he used to be. Motor transport is, to some extent, the cause. But until this means of locomotion becomes universal there will be stretches of country in which loads will still be carried on men's heads. They

are now paid 1s. 6d. a day and given their food, but our four hundred were not satisfied with anything. In fact we were strongly reminded of Kipling's description of the commissariat camel—" 'E's a devil, an' a ostrich an' a orphan child in one." To obtain the lightest loads, to put heavy ones down in the track and vanish for ever, to gorge themselves to repletion on their rations plus food looted from the villages through which they passed, to go weeping and wailing to the doctor with scratched toes or "pain for belly" (this last the result of gluttony), to squabble amongst themselves: this was the life of our little army of human beasts of burden. Yet to do them justice, there were shining exceptions. We have seen hammock boys stagger up hills which looked formidable enough to the ordinary walker with never a word of protest, though with a human load of some considerable weight. Rain they mind not, sun they like, heat they endure; the only thing against which they protest vehemently is the blow of a white man who loses his temper and unjustly at that. Again, that is a phase which is fast passing. People lose their tempers the world over, and in the tropics naturally more than elsewhere. The nerve strain is greater and the will power less. That is one thing. But to strike the object of your anger is another, and time was when a carrier might expect little or no mercy if he dropped a load or even rested. That type of "Coaster" belongs to a bygone day.

Our difficulty with the carriers was only one aspect of the greatest problem with which the Gold Coast, in common with other countries, has to deal—namely, that of labour. The actual aboriginal is well enough until he comes in contact with the coast dweller, who regards manual labour as only fitting, apparently, for Europeans. He is willing to be educated up to a point, that he may become a lawyer, or a doctor, or a parson. But he has no conception or realization of the true dignity of labour. He cannot or will not grasp the fact that the man using the sledge-hammer is every bit as worthy of respect as his brother who takes iniquitous fees for pleading over twopenny lawsuits in the Gold Coast law courts. In this direction there seems no sign

of light in the darkness, and one morning these happy Utopians will awake to find a colony of outside workers, recruited from afar, established upon their territory and taking the wages which they could have had, and enjoying the prosperity they could have enjoyed, had they had the foresight to realize which way the wind must inevitably blow if progress and not stagnation were to result. We are no enemies of the coloured man.

We are pleased and proud to think that at Accra we left one or two natives of this land whom we might call friends. And to them we have said the same thing. Whether it be climate, environment, upbringing, we know not what, the result is the same; the native-born man tinged with education (mark the phrase) has no power of enterprise, application, or energy. He can use his brain: none better, when he wishes. But physical fatigue he loathes, discipline he resents, and manual labour he simply despises. The Governor has made a great stride in the right direction by encouraging cricket; it is a modest beginning, but one of us remembers playing a game of tennis at Heidelberg with some university students. That was one of the initial games in Germany over twenty-five years ago, and now it is as common there as football is with us. And so it may be upon the Gold Coast. The native may take to cricket, and then he will learn discipline—the law of give and take—and will realize that if he is fit to field during a long tropical afternoon for pleasure, then he is equally fit to go into spheres of life which hitherto he has studiously avoided. In this connection we cannot help recalling President King, of Liberia, when he said to us: “There is one type of immigrant we do not want here. We do not want politicians, and they are usually lawyers.” With due respect to the Gold Coast, they have lawyers in plenty and to spare, but technical experts none. By the time we reached Dunkwa we had witnessed two stages of native development. We had seen the highly educated product, such men as are elected to sit upon the Legislative Council, and whose advice is really of value. We had seen the semi-educated species in the eastern provinces—men who are literally coining money—who have only the most

rudimentary ideas how to spend it once it is in their possession, but who, none the less, have the glimmerings of an intelligence as to the part they might play in the destinies of their country, who realize in a vague way that a great world upheaval has just occurred, and is only now quietening down, and who are beginning—good sign—to be just a little jealous of their homeland. Then we saw the aborigines: people untouched, so far, by the long arm of civilization or education, dwellers in the lonely depths of the forest belt. We also met with isolated District Commissioners, to whom equally our visit proved an event, and who had not seen a white woman for longer than they cared to remember. Curious folk these; they must be buoyed up by a peculiar temperament. Mails very rarely reach them oftener than once a month or six weeks. Society none. Thoughts, one may imagine, plenty. Literally a year's service under such conditions is the equivalent of three years anywhere else. There is a story, a true one, and typical of these "Keepers of the King's peace," which will illustrate the frame of mind induced by such an existence. Two District Commissioners, each homeward bound from a long tour, met near the railhead. Neither of them had seen a white man for close on a year, and at sight of each other they were dumb. They had ideas, many of them, but they lacked the habitude of expressing them. For some time they simply stared at each other, and then the spell was broken and they burst simultaneously into speech. One discoursed fluently upon Burmah, a country he had never seen, but about which he had read much during his monastic life of the past twelve months. The other, totally ignoring his companion, descanted upon the charms of Honolulu, of which he was equally ignorant from personal experience. For the first time in many weary months they were able to translate their ideas into English words which would be understood by a companion; so they relieved their souls as a river long confined bursts its banks when the flood comes. Then there was another pause, and one said to the other: "Have a drink, old man." "Thanks," replied the second, "I think I will." And life for them resumed its normal course after the year of solitude.

CHAPTER XI.

By the time we reached Wioso we had covered nearly 100 miles of this wonderful forest belt, and were able to form opinions framed upon what we had seen. First and foremost, we were now under no illusions as to the discomfort or otherwise of hammocking. One could imagine tediousness, but in point of fact monotony counts as very little compared with the physical discomfort involved amounting almost to pain. Hence, whenever possible, we walked, and when starting in the early hours of the morning it is easy to cover eight miles or so before the sun gets its full strength, when, perforce, one must have recourse to the hammock. Reveille sounded at six in the morning, when the most trying time of the day ensued. There was terrific confusion: all the carriers shouting at each other in high-pitched voices; our senior boy entering into an argument with a headman about a load, and a scrimmage as result. Breakfast was actually a standing meal, all the chairs having been taken away from our hut by an enthusiastic hammock-boy, who was determined that, cost what it might, we should not labour under the stigma of being the last to get our loads away. Once under way, things improved. Providing the road be not too bad—as a matter of fact it was a native road, cleared somewhat for the occasion—it is pleasant enough to tramp along with one's thoughts as companions. Likewise, it would be unendurable had not one the gifts of meditation and observation.

Portions of the route had lain through tropical jungle as thick as we have ever seen anywhere, jungle untouched by the hand of man, untrodden, mysterious, almost impenetrable. The undergrowth was stupendous, and one could realize the difficulties experienced by the late

President Roosevelt when he hacked a way through just such forest when going from Paraguay to the Amazon. But let it be remembered that the British Empire is young in comparison with the silent depths of the uncanny belt through which we were passing. It represented century after century of untrammelled Nature, playing at will with its own creations, twisting and twining growths feet in thickness around one another, as though sardonically suggesting a puzzle for the one to separate itself from its unwilling mate. There is an intense silence in these areas of perpetual twilight. The sun loses its power, there is a curious coolness of atmosphere; one can walk without a topee, so thick is the overgrowth of the interlaced trees. But above all, and beyond all—the silence. Even the hammock-boys and carriers appear to feel it and hurry along, anxious to get once more into regions where the sun assumes its customary ascendancy, and has, so to speak, no further struggle with the powers of darkness.

All forests are mysterious, all forests touch some chord of the being, only in varying senses. Thus the lonely forests of Northern Russia, with their never-ending monotony of pine and spruce trees, breed intense melancholy. There is vastness illimitable; one feels that, all things considered, man is a very minute atom in the universe, and from that genesis springs the thesis that somewhere and somehow Providence has made a mistake over mankind. It is the melancholy of the Russian forest which inspired in its origin the tone of the genuine Russian outlook upon life, and has made of the Russian the fatalist he is.

Tropical forests breed a consciousness very different in its effects. Is it fear? One tries to penetrate the recesses of the undergrowth with no success. On either side of the path lies a deep, green-black wall, peopled one knows with animals and birds and reptiles, though none show themselves, wherefrom, one conjectures, emanates a curiously uncomfortable feeling of being watched. One attempts again and again to pierce the veil, and was it, or was it not, that one saw, or thought one saw, a pair of yellow eyes intently following one?

Suddenly the place seems chilly. A twig drops, and then a leaf from a cotton tree; both cause one to start at the terrible commotion these atoms make as they reach the ground. Supposing one lost one's way; supposing one had heart failure or something to prevent one from leaving behind these depths once and for all. One hurries along with the carriers, and feels inclined to join in their song as they once more reach the light of the burning sun.

Maybe the old scribes responsible for the Bible wrote of what they understood better than twentieth century theologians when they warned their following against "the powers of darkness." They may have seen untrodden, dense, silent jungle; that would have supplied the necessary key to their exhortations. And so, once again, the query: What is that sensation?—is it fear? Probably. There is, however, another aspect of the road. In sunnier places the eye is rejoiced and the heart gladdened by the most marvellous butterflies imaginable. Some are of brilliant blue with yellow spots. Some are red with a fantastic decoration of green, a sort of lacework, presumably designed by Nature as a species of camouflage when in danger from enemy attack. In size there seems no limit. There are little chaps who dance in the sun, specks of scarlet and gold so minute that they just dazzle the eye and are gone like the flashes they are. The big ones are very big; we noted one of a mottled greyish-brown, with deeper coloured spots, whose span from wing to wing could not have been much less than that of a swallow. Without doubt catching these with a net would be useless; they would inevitably be damaged, and therefore the only method would be to find a chrysalis and hatch it out in a greenhouse or similar place. The result would repay the trouble. Similarly with flowers. No one, as far as our information goes, has yet seriously studied the flora of this country. We have encountered along the road we have travelled some wonderfully vivid red lilies, known locally as "torch" lilies. With great care we dug up some bulbs of this species and sent them home; if they grow they will prove of interest. For some

reason bulbous plants seem to do well in this region; there is every form of lily imaginable in profusion, many of them of great beauty, though all must give place to the "torch." Sometimes one reaches clumps of bamboos; enormous growths these. Such is the irony of fate; transport them to the northern territory of this colony, and they would be worth their weight in gold for house building. Transport lacks, unfortunately. And so on, the catalogue of wonders might be multiplied.

But to come to hard commercial facts, here lies a veritable El Dorado for the enterprising timber merchant. The area of this untapped forest region amounts approximately to 40,000 square miles. From Wioso we could see clearly, miles away, the mountains of the French Ivory Coast. Between lay a vast sea of forest; the tops of the trees therein giving the impression of a succession of green waves breaking against the mountainous skyline. All absolutely untouched, virgin, wooded plain. There is mahogany galore. So much is known. Beyond that is largely conjecture. However, it is safe to hazard that here there is valuable timber of every conceivable species awaiting the woodman's axe, the enterprise of the capitalist, and, of course, the attention of the road surveyor and of the Government engineer.

At a village called Domenase we heard a wondrous story. Knowing something of native mentality, and of its instinctive dread of anything unusual, it may have little foundation in fact. Yet it is of sufficient interest to record, and the District Commissioner, who told it to the Governor in our presence, was plainly impressed thereby. Briefly, then, he said that he had been informed by many local inhabitants that at a distance from Domenase, "far small," as the natives say, was a village of dead men and dogs. Further questioning elicited the fact that by dead was meant that the men and dogs had become as stone, something after the fashion of Lot's wife or the more reliable Pompeii. It could only be approached by a hunter's track through the very densest of the jungle, and few besides hunters,

who belong to the élite as far as courage is concerned, had ever dared to visit it. "Far small" would represent about fifteen miles, which would be a good day's march over ground such as was indicated, and thus, with a time-table to work upon, it was unfortunately impossible for us to branch aside and spend two days or more in elucidating the mystery. Of course, it might be some long-since deserted village which the native mind has conjured into a bad "juju." On the other hand, how account for the men and, above all, the dogs. Might it not be the result of some volcanic upheaval? Might not this remote village have suffered the fate of Pompeii?

Lack of communication is here a veritable curse. Bridges must be made upon proper engineering lines. Roads fit for transport must be provided, and it is an anachronism that a political officer should be responsible for the roads within his territory, when, probably, he knows no more about road making than he does about Chinese music. Yet that is the system in vogue at the moment. It is playing with a serious problem. At home there is discontent because there appears to be no outlet for the energies of those in want of work. At the same time the demands of labour are increasingly imperious, foolishly so, as those who have travelled know. But the outlet for this energy, the salve for this dangerous malady in the body social, can best be found by utilizing to the maximum the latent forces within the Empire. It is useless to bury the "talent" in the ground, as the Bible uncommonly well emphasizes. Also, it is well to remember Lord Salisbury's dictum, "Before you argue over a geographical matter procure a large atlas." The words are not quoted precisely, but to their practical import. It is hopeless to leave a colony alone and expect results, even though a loan may be permitted to a certain amount, interest upon which must be guaranteed by the Colony's existing revenue. Common sense suggests a practical programme of development. One hears in England often enough of the wrong-headed parsimony of the Crown Agents. Without prejudice, if the gentlemen composing that department could be forced to travel for one year and imbibe real impressions, instead

of false ones, born in office armchairs, they might help the Empire instead of standing in the way of advance wherever advance is propitious. It is impossible to gloss over facts which hit one with such force, as facts must do when one travels as we did, through miles of dormant wealth, awaiting that intelligent operation and exploitation which would be a Godsend to the financial resources of the Empire, as well as providing the wherewithal for a reasonably comfortable living for those of her sons willing to take the opportunity when it comes their way.

Truly, Britain is a funny nation, or, rather, it suffers from an official myopia which naturally tries its citizens. Clear the aforesaid 40,000 square miles of timber, reserving such portions as might be thought advisable for afforestation by experts, and the land so cleared would suit cocoa admirably, or even rubber. It certainly could be utilized to good purpose, for of its richness there is no doubt. Introduce the white element, and, given a couple of white men working as partners, there is every reason for writing categorically that here lies at the front door, so to speak, profitable employment, with the added garnish of leave home after a year's work upon the plantation. Hence the two partners; turn and turn about would be the suggested arrangement. Finally, in connection with the vexed transport question, why not use the Décauville railway system? It certainly would link up many portions of the country where there are not too many hills, and would be cheap and practical. "Don't starve the West African Colonies," is the only advice we can tender to those who hold the strings of the national purse, since we have the right, in common with all taxpayers in Great Britain, to suggest proposals likely to benefit the Empire in course of time.

To return now to our journey, another point impressed us greatly. The natives we met in these parts are very much more independent than those nearer the coast and civilization, so-called. There is a dignity in their bearing which is all to the good. They are of material from which great things might be created, but that goal must be approached with caution, since experience has

taught the futility of taking intelligent material and attempting to graft thereon the latest fads of the latest fashionable scholastic idealism. Teach them to read and write, and with their common wit leave the rest in their hands. Do not attempt to take men of mature years and try to instil into them doctrines and dogma which require the growth of a generation properly to be appreciated. Such policy is a waste of time, money and energy. Western Europe represents the evolution of centuries, and a thousand years ago there were learned scholars in monasteries whose names have endured until now. Yet there are, to this day, illiterates in England. What, then, can be expected from the primæval savage within a generation? Some advance, certainly, but nothing in comparison to that fondly expected by those enthusiasts who neglect the study of elementary history because they are so overcome with the certainty of their own convictions. Such people are in reality a source of danger in exactly the same way that the seeds of the deplorable condition existing in Russia to-day were sown by the missionaries of the "To the People" movement in the late years of the nineteenth century. Unbalanced enthusiasm is a terrible error. Our advent in a village was something not likely to be forgotten, and also not without a certain humour.

Thus it was highly embarrassing for civilians such as ourselves to be mistaken for "the real thing," and after the firing of many "dane" guns and the cheers of the multitude, plus the singing of the National Anthem, to be obliged at considerable length to explain that we were just nothing, and that the Governor was behind, and would be up in a few minutes.

Disappointment was writ large on the dusky faces, and perhaps the gunpowder supply had suffered, as the gunners regarded the inroads made upon their ammunition with a mixture of alarm and regret. The warmth of welcome, however, was undoubted. Young men and maidens, old men and "mammies," thronged the meeting-place common to all in these villages, namely, under the shade of the baobab, which is invariably to be found in the centre of any township, and which

affords the only possible shade outside the native houses. And then there were the drums, of which we shall have more to say. The mechanics, as we are tempted to call them, were real craftsmen. They put into their labours more energy than a gang of navvies working upon a railway in England. They beat and rolled the drums to the manner born, as they indeed were. They can take the drumstick and draw it slowly along the parchment, producing the weirdest wail, and the doing of this looked so simple that we tried it, and were found wanting. They can make the good folk start dancing with a couple of beats of the drum, they can make them absolutely hysterical after a treatment of three or four minutes. Even the hammock-boys were not immune. Ours started as soon as they could hear the throb, and acted as though in a delirium. One had to exhort, threaten, and joke to get them to understand that being thrown out of our hammocks was attended with painful consequences, not alone for ourselves. Then the "dashes" started arriving. Invariably they were the same—live stock and the fruits of the land. They arrived in enormous quantities, and had to be recognized by return presents of the equivalent value. With the number of carriers and retainers we had on tour, the total gift rapidly diminished, and nothing makes the native more happy than "plenty chop." He certainly got plenty on this journey.

Upon the arrival of the Governor, were the village large or small, he never failed to address the assembled townsfolk and outlined in the simplest phrases his policy and that which he desired the headman of the village and his advisers to follow. Considering that to all in this portion of the country the Governor, the representative of the King, had for too long been merely a name, the good which was accomplished can be realized. It is one thing to sing "God save the King," and quite another to visualize for oneself the true aspect of the case, namely, that every inconsiderable village in a remote stretch of a far-distant land is, in all truth, an integral portion of the Empire, a cog of small dimensions in a mighty machine. At all hazards breed the Imperial spirit.

Wioso is a lovely spot, situated at the top of a hill, commanding wonderful views. It should be healthy, probably is. But we met a doctor, a pessimist of the truly genial type, who, taking our printed itinerary, went through it place by place with a running comment of a nature something like this:—"Wioso; pretty place, very; wonderful views. Tried to save a blackwater case there, but, of course, failed. Bibiani. Good heavens! are you really going there? Shocking trouble I had there. Cerebrospinal; youngster too. Couldn't save him. Oh Lord! and actually Wenchi. Well, I hope you will be all right. That is all I can say. But Wenchi is the last place on earth I ever wish to see again. Two Commissioners in a year, if you please, pegged out. But there, I don't wish to depress you," and so on.

He did not depress us, and the health of the party when we reached Wioso was still good. It was at Wioso that we were entertained by the children of the local school. The programme was a varied one, consisting of songs and recitations, the songs being rendered by a choir unaccompanied by music. This portion was worthy of notice, since the voices were really good, and it was evident that the master had spared neither time nor trouble in getting the best out of his charges. As a result, this choir of native children really sang exquisitely. On the other hand, the recitations suffered from a defect which is not confined to West Africa. The poems chosen were hopelessly beyond the comprehension of the reciters. For instance, what can "The Loss of the Royal George" signify to a native child who has never seen the sea, and whose knowledge of a boat does not extend beyond a dug-out canoe? Similarly, "The Homes of England" is a ridiculous item for one who regards a mud hut as the epitome of architecture! Yet those were two actual turns in the programme. One had a feeling that the performers were totally ignorant of the meaning of what they were saying, and their enunciation was exactly what it should not have been: it was, in fact, the enunciation of the horrible "pidgin" English which the Governor is anxious to eradicate.

Native children, if they are to accomplish anything, must begin at the beginning, and learn with simplicity. Nursery rhymes properly spoken would have been more acceptable fare for all of us than that to which we were treated.

And to continue the catalogue of mistakes, the prizes were really funny for those with the slightest sense of humour. One we noticed had to do with railways, and depicted scenes such as a dining-car on the Great Western Railway, with a newly married couple choosing their lunch from a menu-card, whilst an obsequious waiter, napkin in hand, stands awaiting their order. Remember that the school we are mentioning is a good hundred miles from any railway in the midst of the virgin forest, and that even then there is no such thing as a dining-car on the Gold Coast railways, and our stricture will meet with approval. At any rate His Excellency cordially agreed with us. In this connection we cannot help but recount how we enjoyed hearing a very diminutive black boy, the servant of one of the District Commissioners in Togoland, sing "Katie," to the accompaniment of a dulcitone. The Commissioner's wife in her spare time had taught him, and, what is more, had explained to him the meaning of every word. The result was that this extraordinary little boy sang "Katie, my beautiful Katie; Girl of all the girls I most adore," with a depth of feeling which would have rejoiced a London music-hall audience. It was an object-lesson in its way, since here was the raw material tuned up by commonplace patience and perseverance. Applied to those children about whom we have written above, the result might have been similar.

From Wioso we retraced our steps to a most unalluring spot called Sefwi-Bakwi, chiefly remaining in our memory on account of the awful heat coupled with a suspicion that the roofs of our huts were not sun-proof, and the intense pertinacity of the villagers to see a white lady in her bath. The lighter side of the picture was afforded by "Koffe," the boy belonging to one of our party, who ruled his master with a rod of iron. This

sort of conversation came languidly over the compound. "Koffe?". "Sah." "Bring me whisky sparklet." "No, Sah, I no catch sparkleg. You fit take baf (bath), now, Sah." "I don't want bath now, Koffe. If you no catch sparklet, bring tea." "Tea no lib, Sah. You take baf. By-um-by I catch tea." "Oh! all right." Sounds of splashing. Then—"Koffe, this bath is too cold!" "No, Sah, no be cold." A pause. "All right. Can I have some tea afterwards?" "Yes, Sah." Here it was also that we made the acquaintance of the only brass band between Accra and the Ivory Coast. It was a band worthy of more attention than could be paid to it. First it played what we subsequently learned was "Rule, Britannia," followed by "Marching through Georgia." There were four drums, four brass instruments of enormous size, which emitted equally enormous volumes of sound, and there was one minute cornet. It was an unfair competition from the start, and when the cornet threatened the bandmaster in the middle of the National Anthem because he was not given enough chance to make himself heard, our sympathies were cordially with him. Also the other wind instrument players were no sluggards. They bent double in fearful efforts to extract the last possible ounce of sound, if ounces may be used as measurement, and after all, what mattered most, they obviously enjoyed themselves. They also played the airs mentioned with the music upside down. Can acrobatics go further?

Our next stop was Pataboso where we were quartered in native huts. Possibly huts is not the correct word, for they consisted merely of four walls made of "swish" (mud mixed with dung and some other ingredient known to the natives), without a roof except over a species of dais where there was just room for two camp beds. "Suppose it rains!" said we, contemplating our ceiling. And it did rain. That night we splashed our way to the mess hut through mud and mire, and the Officer Commanding Escort, having been caught in a thunderstorm in the jungle, arrived drenched and starving at midnight. One needed the agility of a tight rope walker to undress and get under one's mosquito net without a

shower bath, and dressing the following morning, with the knowledge there was an eye glued to every crack in our fortress walls, was even more difficult. But one grows hardened to anything in time. Trekking day after day, getting up when darkness covers the land, and dressing hurriedly anyhow and anyway, breakfasting by dawn, which is daylight within five minutes in these regions, and then getting away with a fire of invectives addressed to recalcitrant carriers, makes a strain which tells. But, let it be written that the Governor showed the soundest of common sense in travelling through these rather unprepossessing and out-of-the-way districts. For he had the opportunity of deciding for himself two extremely important questions, namely, whether there is a promise for the future in this area, and what needs to be done to open it by road and railway. Now these questions are in themselves simple of theoretical solution, but the practical side is quite another matter. Thus there can be no doubt as to the potential value of this forest belt for every conceivable tropical crop, but obviously to remove the harvest accruing therefrom would need transport, which, in turn, spells money for roads and railways and a hundred and one other things not created by a wave of the magician's wand. Hence means must perforce be employed to obtain that money, and their very employment starts a whole crop of other perplexities which have to be overcome. The Governor of a country in a stage fit for exploitation must be, indeed, a many-sided individual.

We have emphasized in a previous chapter just what transport means to a colony like this. It may be expensive medicine, but if the patient is not to languish and become a nuisance to its neighbours, then, assuredly, it has a right to claim the very best of scientific attention. This has been denied to the Gold Coast in common with many other things. First and foremost, let the policy of the Colonial Office and of the Crown Agents be made manifest. A colony, that is to say a Crown colony, may borrow money if the Administration can show that the said colony is in a position to pay the interest upon the capital borrowed out of existing revenue. Mark the

word "existing," and then explain how any mine in the whole of the world, let alone any commercial undertaking, could ever have breathed the air of financial life had such a stifling clause been tabulated as a *sine qua non* of existence. Of course, Colonial loans stand as trustee investments, but times are altering, and it is the business, or should be, of the Colonial Office and their financial advisers to apply to such a colony as this the same common-sense that undoubtedly they show in dealing with their own private affairs. Hard words, maybe, but true. Happily, however, there are more ways of crossing a street than one, and private enterprise can accomplish that which apparently cannot be arranged with official financial assistance. There are three railways which must be constructed in this country if it is to develop as it should, and as its native inhabitants desire. The first is from Coomassie to Tamale, the capital of the northern territory. Secondly, railway communication must be made from Sekondi, or wherever the new deep-water harbour is located, to Koforidua, in the cocoa region, of which we have written, and thence to Ho in existing Togoland, the latter place being well within the British sphere of influence, no matter what may happen to the main portion of the country itself. The third is from Dunkwa, through the region we crossed, to Wioso and Bibiani, which would necessitate a junction at some convenient point, since the places named are at the opposite apexes of a triangle of which Dunkwa is the third. A glance at a map will show the direction of these lines and the country they would tap. At Bibiani, where we stayed for one night, is a disused and deserted gold mine. There is plenty of gold in it, but if the machinery must be split up into loads not exceeding 60 lb. in weight and carried eighty miles upon men's heads, then it becomes a simple mathematical problem to estimate the cost of one boiler plate. It is prohibitive even with gold as merchandise. And Bibiani is not singular; we passed several deserted mines suffering from an exactly similar complaint on our route. It really is deplorable. "Shall we starve in the midst of plenty?" these relics seem to say, and the answer

appears to be "Certainly. We do not deny that you have a right to exist, but it has been laid down in clause dash, sub-section dash, that a Colonial Government may not and shall not borrow money for development purposes, unless" and so on through the whole rigmarole of red tape dear to the mind of the official bureaucrat. Those deserted mines made an unforgettable impression upon us.

We stayed a night in a deserted bungalow, which once had been a very good one, but which creaked ominously when we walked around with sylph-like tread. We dined with the Governor at what had been the chief engineer's house, likewise deserted, and our nerves were shocked by the sudden disappearance of the butler through the floor. It was nothing really; merely a board or two had given way, and he had made his way to the basement without the aid of stairs! There were engines for winding purposes, and trucks and cages to be wound, rotting away in silence. There was a locomotive which once had run upon its rails and had emitted cheery whistles, no doubt, as it tacked to and fro around the mine precincts. As we saw it there was no delusion. Poor little fellow; it had fought a good fight, and was near its end, a forlorn structure of immovable scrap iron. Somehow, a locomotive seems so full of vitality that one was compelled to grieve over this lost and forgotten warrior. Nature had also done her bit, and had ferociously overgrown the aerial railway with a mass of creepers, which slowly and surely were eating away from the timber its heart and pride. Never was seen a more miserable epitaph on the supineness of any administration. No matter that the shareholders in this and other mines suffer. No matter that the gold supply of the world is short and that here is plenty. No matter anything, so long as the letter of the official law is followed and the bureaucrats in London are satisfied. They do say that the mine at Bibiani is haunted. The manager wisely died, and his subordinates faded away from ordinary material and traceable causes; but small blame to them if they do come back once in a while and in a sardonic fashion gloat over the wreck and

ruin caused by a "system." Happily, there is private enterprise, as we have emphasized, and that may turn the scale in the right direction.

His Excellency was kind enough to give us his views upon the subject. He favours a scheme whereby the lines enumerated should be given out to private contract, the railways being the property of the contractors concerned for the term of ten years, when they would be bought by the Government at a valuation. From what we have ourselves seen of the two last-mentioned, there are few constructional difficulties, whilst the Koforidua-He line would tap the cocoa region, the Dunkwa-Wioso-Bibiani looking for revenue from gold and timber. Uncommonly attractive propositions both of them; we might add there is room here for light railways along the coast, which would pay quickly. Using the "Decauville" system, the rails could literally be slapped down, and the thanks of the public in a plentiful pecuniary return would be the result. One of the greatest vexations in travelling through this section of the country is the lack of water, unless it be in the height of the rainy season. Having a bath in a fluid of the consistency and colour of pea-soup is not attractive after many hours spent in the sun, and when a plunge into a real hot bath is refreshment indeed. We were told that the reason of the discoloration was that we had so many carriers using the limited water supply at villages that they stirred up the mud. Were that actually the case, then all the more did those baths seem uninviting, as the genus "carrier" is not particular in his habits, and a few of them go a long way towards rendering the best of water bad. However, one becomes accustomed to most things when trekking as we did, and the impossibility of yesterday merges into the possibility of to-day, and is the fact of to-morrow. Experience of this nature is a wonderful leveller, and one quickly perceives what a very highly organized life we normally live. One learns to do without; one learns to make shift in every conceivable way, and it is only in extreme cases, such as when all the boys and girls of one village tried to come into our native hut to see us dressing that

the line had to be drawn. And yet withal there is a subtle fascination in finding out day by day how near Nature it is possible to approach without incurring the most deadly discomfort. A little touch of the Mark Tapley spirit and over the evening whisky and sparklet it is not difficult to put the daily trials all behind one and smile.

We have commented before upon the loneliness of the life lived by a District Commissioner in the more out-of-the-way stations of the colony, and, naturally, stories of all kinds centre in them. One that we heard is worth the telling, though those who want the facts "in extenso" will find them in *Blackwood's Magazine*, since Sir Hugh Clifford used them for a very uncanny story. All that we can aver is that we were told them at first hand by one concerned, and naturally that made a greater impression upon us than the mere recitation of hearsay. Briefly, then, the "boys" of a certain Commissioner, who was stationed in one of the districts we passed through, started laying an extra place at table at every meal. At first the official took no particular notice, since he was a hospitable soul, and merely thought that the boys, knowing that, had placed another seat on the off-chance of some tired stranger turning up. However, one day, out of curiosity, he asked one of the lads why he was so careful to have the extra place, and received as an answer: "I put un for the other white master I often see in dis house." Since the master had never seen anyone and since there was no white man on the station except himself, he made further inquiries, and found that everyone in the place had seen the uncanny visitor. Now it so happened that the officer's predecessor had died there, and it was pretty evident that here was an undoubted ghost. At first it did not greatly disturb the host, but as time passed it began to get on his nerves, with the result that ultimately he had to be relieved and sent home for a change. That is the bald story, but there is something in it which must not be overlooked. For some reason the native appears gifted with the most extraordinary second sight. He can sense the supernatural in a

moment, and, let white men say what they will, he is likewise a master of black magic. Time and again have we been told of occurrences which afford no normal explanation. Incur the hatred of a native, and, if so disposed, he can comfortably kill you at a distance when and how he likes. At least, that is the tenour of all we have heard, and the authority has always been of the highest. One case came to our own attention. A native clerk, a man of education, drawing a good salary from the Government, had only one eye. We asked him how it came about. Rather shyly he answered, "Juju." Of course, we smiled, and, noticing it, he reiterated the statement, adding that white people did not understand the subject. It appears that he had an enemy, who wrote and told him that he would go blind in one eye. At the time his sight was perfect in both. Naturally he paid small heed to the matter until one morning, sure enough, his sight in the left eye was a trifle blurred. Rather uneasy, he consulted a Government doctor who assured him that there was nothing in the least wrong. Reassured, he returned to his duties. But the eye steadily grew worse, and the doctor, frankly puzzled, called in a brother professional and carried out a most thorough examination. This time they could see for themselves that something was wrong, but what it was they could not diagnose. Other doctors then tried their hands, but all to no purpose. The sight of the eye was going steadily and perceptibly, without any known scientific *raison d'être*. And, eventually the clerk became stone blind in that eye. How explain it? Conceivably it might have been caused by some extremely rare defect or illness, but even then it might be expected that one medical man out of many would have been able to trace the cause. Besides, were this an isolated instance, it might be put aside as a chance happening. But such is not the case and one could tell tale after tale of the curious power some of these people possess. And, further, it may sound ridiculous, but it is a fact, that the average white man in his senses will never interfere with a native "juju." Their variety is without end, from a small bottle and

a lump of what looked like mud which ornamented a native hut in which we stayed, to a life-sized object representing either a man or a woman, which is often found outside villages, and which was erected to keep away the influenza when it was sweeping through the land. That it was successful in its operation does not seem to have been the case, but the native mind attached great importance to it, and, speaking personally, we would not care to damage one of these tokens.

CHAPTER XII.

ASHANTI gold! The phrase is an alluring one. It seems to open up vistas as enticing as the mines of Golconda or the cave of Aladdin. We thought of it and of the history of this warlike nation—one must give them the dignity of the title—as we crossed the boundary from the Eastern Province of the Gold Coast into the country of the Ashantis. Amongst tribes whose lack of courage, endurance and intelligence is conspicuous, the Ashantis stand out in high relief. In some ways they are comparable to the Sioux Indians of North America, whose determination, audacity and bravery made them more feared and at the same time more respected by the early colonists than all the others, but the Ashantis had the advantage of numbers and also were possessed of a passionate patriotism which made them, until very recently, a constant anxiety to the white man. As Dr. W. Walter Claridge, in his scholarly history of the Gold Coast and Ashanti, writes: “No one . . . can avoid feeling admiration and some sympathy for this remarkable people and Lord Wolseley, who had personal experience of their pugnacious qualities, pays them the following tribute:—

“From the Ashantis I learned one important lesson, namely, that any virile race can become paramount in its own region of the world if it possesses the courage, the constancy of purpose and the self-sacrifice to resolve that it will live under a stern system of Spartan military discipline, ruthlessly enforced by one lord and master, the King. In other words, if it be clearly recognized by any people that the interests and comfort of the individual, whether he be King or subject, should not be the first object of national solicitude, but rather that it should be the greatness and power of the state as a

whole, a greatness which brings with it national pride, individual security and also contentment, that nation will rule over its neighbours. . . . The Ashantio and the Fantee were absolutely of the same race. The former were a proud nation of brave and daring soldiers, living happily and contentedly under the most absolute of Kings. The latter, who lived and idled under the licence of our easy-going laws, were cowardly, lazy, good-for-nothing vagabonds, with all the vices of the Ashanti but with none of his manly courage." From this description one is tempted to compare the Ashantis with the Prussians (with apologies to the Ashantis), and the remark concerning "our easy-going laws" reminds us irresistibly of the criticism of a Prussian N.C.O., when, as a prisoner of war in England, he and his fellows enjoyed life under a kindly commandant. "The discipline of this camp," he said resentfully, "is far too lax. It would not be tolerated in Germany amongst our own people, far less with prisoners. Our men here will be demoralized by the time they get home."

But to return to the Ashantis. Like the Assyrians, they appeared from the North "like a wolf on the fold," and by dint of unceasing wars and superior powers of diplomacy either drove out or forced into allegiance the weaker tribes. By 1640 they were a power to be reckoned with, and could count on an army of close on 60,000 men should necessity arise.

In the reign of King Tutu, 1697, the seat of government was removed from further south to Coomassie, and it was also during his reign that the literal seat—or Golden Stool of Ashanti—was fashioned, that Golden Stool which was afterwards the cause of so much trouble. The exact date of the discovery of gold in Ashanti seems to be unknown, but up to 1630 iron was current coin. Slowly but surely, from 1697 to 1803, the Ashantis grew in power. Other tribes, Fantis, Assinis, Anamabos, Akims, Deukeras, aided half-heartedly by Dutch, Portuguese, French or English colonists in turn, had put their warlike mettle to the test time and time again, and with few exceptions the results were always favourable to the Ashantis.

It is remarkable that none of the Europeans in official capacity resident in the Gold Coast seemed to have appreciated the fact that, of all the tribes, the Ashantis were most worthy of conciliation, both from economic and political motives. Their country was the richest, as they themselves were the most reliable. It was this lack of comprehension which was the cause of the first English-Ashanti war (1806), and laid the foundation for future mutual distrust, misunderstanding and dislike which was to result in six more wars, some of considerable dimensions, between the proud and bellicose Ashantis and the English. The intrusion, one can hardly call it anything else, of the English into the domestic affairs of the Ashantis was the cause of the war of 1806. The Assinis, Fantis and Anamabos, all owing allegiance to the Ashantis became involved in a war with their masters. Retreating before the Ashantis' triumphant advance they sought refuge with the Governor at Cape Coast. This gentleman, deceived and misinformed by the chiefs and also alarmed at the proximity of the Ashantis, decided definitely and openly to defend the fort at Anamabo and to protect the three tribes. The siege of the fort lasted for two days and was one of those small pages of history one finds so often in the book of British colonial possessions. A minute garrison, panic stricken refugees, insufficient stores and flimsy fortifications on the one side, and a brave and numerically superior enemy on the other. The arrival of reinforcements from Cape Coast enabled the garrison to parley with the Ashantis without loss of prestige, and Colonel Torrane, the Governor, now seemed for the first time to appreciate the importance of standing well with this nation. He accomplished this in a manner one is happy to find seldom in that same book of colonial possessions. To ingratiate himself with King Tutu Kivanima of Ashanti, he delivered up to the latter's very problematical mercy the Assini Chief whose safety he had guaranteed. This poor blind man was, in fact, tortured to death, and the appreciation of Tutu Kivanima was of a sort to make the most hardened official blush. He said to Mr. Dupuis in 1821: "From the hour

Torrane delivered up Tchibbu (the Assini Chief), I took the English for my friends, because I saw their object was trade only and they did not care for the people. Torrane was a man of sense and he pleased me much."¹ Doctor Claridge tells us that Torrane also took the Anamabo refugees and sold them to the slave dealers. He was just in time! for less than a year later the slave trade was abolished by Act of Parliament.

The second Ashanti War, 1811, was marked by various outrages upon Europeans, including the murder of the Dutch Governor, Hogenboom, and the virtual murder of Mr. Meredith, Commandant at Winneba and the hero of the siege of Fort Anamabo in the previous war. He was taken prisoner by the Winnebas and died as the result of the terrible treatment he received at their hands. The whole country was in a state of uproar and the situation of the few Europeans was extremely precarious, but Governor White adopted such severe measures in return for the murder of Mr. Meredith that the coast tribes proceeded more cautiously for many years to come.

In 1816, after the third Ashanti war, the African Company decided to send a mission to the King of Ashanti, spurred to this decision by the action of the Dutch who were already negotiating with him in a manner which threatened British trade. Mr. Bowdich, a nephew of the Governor, who made one of the Mission, was much struck by the splendour of the Ashanti Court. It was the first time that any English official had penetrated so far inland and the contrast between the insignificant chiefs of the littoral and the magnificent King of Ashanti with his guard of 30,000 soldiers, was a revelation to them. The following reads like a page from the "Arabian Nights": "The sun was reflected, with a glare scarcely more supportable than the heat, from the massy gold ornaments, which glistened in every direction . . . The caboceers, as did their superior captains and attendants, wore Ashanti cloths of extravagant price from the costly foreign silks which

¹ Dupuis. "Journal of a Residence in Ashanti," 1824.

had been unravelled to weave them . . . and massy gold necklaces intricately wrought . . . Some wore necklaces reaching to the navel entirely of aggrary beads; a band of gold and beads encircled the knee, from which several strings of the same depended; small circles of gold like guineas, rings and casts of animals, were strung round their ankles . . . and rude lumps of rock gold hung from their left wrists, which were so heavily laden as to be supported on the head of one of their handsomest boys. Gold and silver pipes and canes dazzled the eye in every direction, wolves' and rams' heads as large as life, cast in gold, were suspended from their gold-handled swords, which were held round them in great numbers." Eventually a treaty was signed "in the name of the Governor and Council at Cape Coast Castle on the Gold Coast of Africa and on behalf of the British Government, with Sai Tootoo Quamina, King of Ashanti and its Dependencies . . .," whereby the Governor was to act as arbiter between the Ashantis and their foes when necessary, a British Resident was to be permanently at Coomassie, trade between the two signatories was to be fostered and encouraged and protection afforded to the Ashantis when in hostile territory on the coast. This produced a state of affairs very satisfactory to all concerned but, unfortunately, it was not of long duration.

In 1817, when Mr. Hope-Smith was Governor, a dispute arose between the Ashantis and Kommendas. It was referred to Mr. Hope-Smith for arbitration and he declined to interfere. Whether he was justified or no, is a difficult matter to decide. Contemporary documents are so full of personal bias that they offer no solution, and Dr. Claridge's admiration for the Ashantis carries him, we venture to think, a little too far on this point. However, the treaty was returned to Mr. Hope-Smith by a deputation from King Tutu Kivanima and the Ashantis consider to this day that they were in the right and that the Governor proved false, and have

¹ Bowdich. Quoted by Claridge, "History of the Gold Coast and Ashanti."

employed it as a "trump card" on occasion. Another treaty was irregularly drawn up by Mr. Dupuis, then the Resident at Coomassie, between whom and the Governor there existed bitter personal enmity, and the latter refused to ratify it. This still further incensed the Ashantis and the arrival of Sir Charles M'Carthy as Governor, in 1822, instead of improving affairs as it should and could have done, brought matters to a climax. Sir Charles was also Governor of Sierra Leone and knew nothing of the character of the people now added to his territory. He was without competent advisers, and the jealousy of the departing West African Company for this new era prevented any of its officials from assisting him with counsel or warning. He seems to have formed a low opinion of the Ashanti power and to have resolved on crushing it, beginning by indirect methods, such as repairing all forts, ignoring King Tutu and looking with a lenient eye upon the coast tribes in their rebellion against Ashanti supremacy. The temper of the Ashantis, never very patient, was tried beyond its endurance, and a mulatto sergeant who flagrantly abused their king to one of his subjects, was seized by the Ashantis, made prisoner and eventually killed. A punitive expedition was sent to Dunkwa by the Governor but it was ambushed and its main purpose was averted, with the cost to the British forces of six men killed, four missing and an officer and thirty-eight men wounded. Still, it woke the Ashantis to a full realization of the Governor's intentions and of the gravity of the situation.

In 1823, Sir Charles, content with the steps he had taken and fully satisfied that the Ashantis would remain passive for a time, returned to Sierra Leone, leaving about 500 regular soldiers on the Gold Coast. Immediately his back was turned the Ashantis began to march on the coast. This was the beginning of the fourth Ashanti war, the first in which regular troops had taken part, the first in which actual pitched battles in the open had occurred. Sir Charles M'Carthy, brave, deluded man, returned to the Gold Coast and was captured by the Ashantis at the battle of Insamankow and was either killed by them or committed suicide.

In this débâcle the British lost nine officers and 173 men killed and three officers and eighty-nine men wounded. British prestige suffered an almost irreparable blow, and at the same time the animosity, hitherto quasi-latent, between the Ashantis and the English grew and remained intense. But the war did not end with the death of the Governor. It continued with varying successes, until 1824, when, at the battle of Dodowa, when the opposing forces were nearly equal in strength, the Ashantis lost over 5,000 men and the English and their black allies were victorious. This defeat, combined with the advent of pestilence and famine, compelled the Ashantis to retire into their own territory, apparently with the feeling that their ultimate success was only postponed. Their satisfaction must have been great when they heard that the British Government actually proposed to relinquish the Gold Coast as a colony. The cost of the war, the catastrophes which had occurred (including the intolerable situation of knowing that the head of a British Governor had decorated the King's palace at Coomassie), and the rebellion which still seethed and bubbled through the country, led the Home Government to contemplate this rather ignominious step. Eventually there was a compromise and the administration of the colony was entrusted to a Committee of Merchants in whose hands it remained for fifteen years, 1828-1843. There were two acting Governors during this period, but the one Governor, George Maclean, captain in the Royal West African Colonial Corps, stands out as a colossus amongst his predecessors and many who succeeded him. By dint of firmness and diplomacy he concluded a satisfactory and dignified peace with the Ashantis, he brought about a decided alteration for the better in the customs of the tribes on the littoral, saw to it that justice (as far as possible in accordance with native ideas) was administered and enforced, and promoted trade. In fact, so great was his success, that the Home Government decided once more to take the Gold Coast under its paternal wing and appoint a Governor of its own, while Captain Maclean was retained as Judicial Assessor. Dr. Claridge says in his "History

of the Gold Coast and Ashanti": "Thus the long and eminent services of Captain Maclean at last received some official recognition." We are glad he did not say "adequate recognition."

Commander Hill, R.N., the next Governor, was another Sir Charles M'Carthy, and soon irritated the sensitive Ashantis. It must have been a form of mental torture to Maclean to sit by and watch the structure he had built with so much care during fourteen years, crumbling, bit by bit, under the clumsy hands of another. Fortunately for him, he died at Cape Coast in 1847, leaving behind him a record of which any man might be proud.

In 1863 the fifth Ashanti war began, the ostensible cause being the refusal of the Governor, Pine, to return to the King of Ashanti a runaway slave boy. This war, while not of long duration, was nothing but a series of disasters—some of them richly deserved—to the British arms. "Poor George Maclean," as the King of Ashanti had called him, would have found it difficult to restrain his just indignation at the density of the Home Government at grasping the situation, the wanton loss of life through disease and mismanagement, and the prompt lowering of British prestige to the point where it had been when he took up his burden. Lord Wolseley truly says that any "attempt to relate the history of our early relations with Ashanti . . . would certainly neither redound to the credit of our arms nor to the intelligence of our Home Ministers." Once more the Ashantis were nearly the means of the abandonment of the Gold Coast by the British, but again that project was relinquished and a change of policy took place. The colony, while considered as a dependency of Sierra Leone, had a resident Administrator whose directions were to educate the people to use those faculties which would enable them, in course of time, to govern themselves, thereby at some future date allowing the white administration to be eliminated altogether. A consummation devoutly to be wished but which is still unattainable.

The sixth Ashanti war, 1873-4, might properly be called a continuation of the fifth. Peace had never been

made, the fugitive, Janin, had never been returned to the Ashanti, and only internal dissensions had prevented the new king, Kofi Karikari, from continuing operations at an earlier date than 1873.

In 1872, an additional grievance was placed upon the Ashanti list by the purchase of Elmina, which the Ashantis considered their property, by the British from the Dutch; but even without this, the hostilities would have recommenced; and in January, 1873, an army of 12,000 men crossed the Pra and entered the Protectorate. "The Ashantis had caught the Government in its habitual state of unpreparedness. There were but 160 officers and men in the whole country, and even these were broken up into small detachments and scattered along the coast as garrisons for the various forts, while the reserve store of arms available for distribution amongst the protected tribes amounted to only 190 Enfields and 381 flint muskets."¹ This meagre support was rendered practically nugatory by the usual procrastination and vacillation of the Government policy, the retirement of one Governor, the almost immediate death of his successor, and the appointment of a third. Amongst both blacks and whites, the Ashantis had the great advantage of cohesion in time of stress and of burying inter-tribal and petty personal divergencies of opinion until some more fitting occasion. Reinforcements were sent from England in June; Elmina, which was in a state of disaffection, was bombarded and destroyed by British troops, and even the Home Government was roused from its comfortable apathy, with the result that further reinforcements arrived in July and August, making a total of 653 officers and men who were intended to stiffen the Fantis and other tribes under the ægis of the Protectorate. These were supposed to be "ample measures," according to an answer to a question in the House of Commons. Unfortunately, since the death of George Maclean, officials on the spot had not supplied the Home Government with accurate information, either through fear, jealousy or false pride, but at

¹ Claridge, "History of the Gold Coast and Ashanti."

last the true conditions had to be revealed, and Lord Kimberley, Secretary of State for the Colonies, and Mr. Cardwell, Minister for War, showed what it was possible to accomplish when two able men, one with a knowledge of local conditions and of past historical events, decided on prompt action. Sir Garnet Wolseley was made Civil Governor and Commander-in-Chief and was given a certain amount of discretionary power. He arrived at Cape Coast in October. The Fantis had a not unnatural distaste for war by this time. They had relied so often on the protection of the white men and had not found it either successful or prompt. Hence Sir Garnet received but scanty support from them, and requested three battalions of Infantry and some Royal Engineers and Artillery to be sent from home. Ashanti itself must be invaded if British prestige, already sunk so low that it was humiliating to contemplate, was to be retrieved. A few preliminary encounters had taken place since Sir Garnet Wolseley's arrival which had shown the Ashanti that they had in him a man of a different mettle from any of his predecessors with whom to deal, and they began retiring beyond their own boundaries. But more than this was needed if a peace of any duration was to be obtained. With his few regular troops, augmented by small numbers of apathetic and quaking Fantis and a fluctuating number of absolutely raw and undisciplined men from other tribes, the Commander-in-Chief did his utmost to harass the retiring Ashantis and destroy their morale. The Ashantis, however, conducted their retreat in so masterly a way as to rouse the admiration of their white enemies, and, at the same time, to inflict no small losses on them. By the end of December the reinforcements had arrived, 2,920 officers and men; arrangements for the invasion of Ashanti were completed and, for the first time, European soldiers were to do battle with the Ashantis in the latter's kingdom. The Ashantis were not jubilant. Spies and messengers had seen something of the British preparations, the sacred tree of Coomassie fell down early in January, 1874, and various other omens were not propitious for success to the Ashanti arms. A letter from Sir Garnet Wolseley to the King

brought consternation with it. After pointing out the futility of continuing the struggle, he offered peace on the following terms :—

(1) All prisoners, African and European, to be released.

(2) An indemnity of 50,000 ounces of gold to be paid.

(3) The General and an escort to enter Coomassie, hostages having been given for his safety, and a new treaty to be signed there.

It was the third clause which stuck in the throats of the King and his people. They were astute enough to see that the presence in Coomassie of a victorious force would tell to the world—their world—that the power of the Ashantis was gone. After that would come the Deluge! They temporized, and the British troops crossed the Pra. Unfortunately the hostages designated by the General were the heir to the throne, his mother, and four other princelings. All were important personages, and the two former could never have been surrendered by the Ashantis, so the troops pressed on, amidst skirmishes with the enemy, and won a hard-fought battle at Amoafu. Here the Black Watch particularly distinguished themselves, and the Ashantis, with everything at stake, were foes not to be despised. They retreated, rallied and attacked repeatedly, and it required the aid of artillery and four hours' hard fighting to bring the battle to an end. No one will ever know the exact figures of the Ashanti losses, but it is believed that they left between 800 and 1,200 dead behind them. Bekwai was then captured, and on the 3rd February General Sir Garnet Wolseley set out on a quick march for Coomassie, fifteen miles away. At Odasu the Ashantis made their last desperate stand and fought like rats at bay. Again it was the Black Watch which brought the fight to a conclusion and the description, taken from Brackenbury's "Ashanti War," as given by Sir Archibald Alison, is well worth inclusion. The Black Watch had been selected by the General to lead the way out of the village of Odasu and march straight on Coomassie. In pursuance of this the Hausa troops brought up a gun and fired down the bush path, and then, to the complete astonishment of the Ashantis, the

Black Watch charged. "On first debouching from the village, a tremendous fire was opened on the head of the column from a well-planned and strong ambushade, six men being knocked over in an instant. But the flank companies worked steadily through the bush; the leading company in the path sprang forward with a cheer; the pipes struck up, and the ambushade was at once carried. Then followed one of the finest spectacles I have ever seen in war. Without stop or stay the 42nd rushed on cheering, their officers to the front; ambushade after ambushade was successfully carried, village after village won in succession, till the whole Ashantis broke and fled in the wildest disorder down the pathway on their front to Coomassie. The ground was covered with traces of their flight. Umbrellas and war-chairs of their chiefs, drums, muskets, killed and wounded covered the whole way, and the bush on each side was as trampled as if a torrent had flowed through it. No pause took place until a village about four miles from Coomassie was reached, when the absolute exhaustion of the men rendered a short halt necessary."

The spirit of George Maclean must have looked with pride on Colonel McLeod and his men of the 42nd this day! Coomassie was occupied without opposition, the King had fled, and during the night the inhabitants silently packed up their valuables and departed.

As the King did not appear to treat with the Commander-in-Chief, in spite of sending a message promising to do so, the latter blew up the palace and burnt the town. This accomplished, and burdened by his wounded, and the rapidly increasing numbers of sick, he returned to the coast before the rains set in. One of King Kofi Karikari's chief adherents now offered his fealty to Sir Garnet Wolseley, and this, combined with the destruction of Coomassie, and the disturbing consciousness that the Ashantis were not invincible, caused King Kofi to come to terms. Thus at relatively enormous cost of human life, due more to disease than to wounds, at enormous expense in material, peace once more descended on the Gold Coast, a peace which might, had officials been more diplomatic and ministers at home

been less obtuse and cheeseparing, have arrived seventy years before.

And now with apologies to the reader for trespassing on his patience with this history of past Ashanti, and with acknowledgments to Dr. Claridge, we will turn to Ashanti of the present.

The account of the seventh, and, we trust, the last Ashanti war, and of the siege of Coomassie, we leave to another chapter. Our first stopping place in Ashanti was Tano Dumase. The pace had begun to tell by then, and one of us was enjoying an attack of boils in the armpits which made life seem rather grey and cheerless for a time. At Tano Dumase, the Governor held a large "palaver," or meeting of the chiefs, and it was both interesting and illuminating to contrast the attitude of these men of Ashanti with that of the other chiefs we had seen. There was undoubtedly a more virile atmosphere here. The chiefs listened attentively to all the Governor had to say, but not with an expression of fatalistic or sulky submission as though they thought "No matter what we say, this will be done." On the contrary, it was noticeable that, as point after point was enumerated, they were framing replies and were ready with suggestions, emendations and even opposition. After the Governor had finished, one chief after another rose to speak. There was a little man, more than usually ugly, with eyes sparkling with intelligence and determination, who popped up and down like a Jack-in-the-box, and whose gestures alone were worthy of a French tragedian. He did not like the paper money! No power on earth would make him do so! He was frankly sceptical of the Governor's assurance that coins would speedily be forthcoming. He wanted the amalgamation of two districts under one commissioner, and argued the point with logic and volubility. He seemed ready to keep on all day, until the others actually laughed at him and he desisted rather pettishly.

Here, in the River Tano, a delightful stream which reminded us of parts of the Dart, we saw the sacred fish. No one must catch or kill them, and they must live to a great age. It was rather an eerie spectacle:

grave old men and little boys stood ankle deep in the water, calling the fish by name to come and be fed. Eggs, plantains, and other dainties were held over the water to tempt the appetite of the holy ones. For some time there was no response. Then, watching closely, we saw a ripple in a distant pool, and the agitation of the natives became intense. "They come! The big one comes." "No, not the big one." "Yes; he comes!" And, sure enough, it was a very big one. He must have been quite 4 ft. in length, and resembled a peculiarly repulsive catfish. With one or two lesser followers he came boldly and confidently into the shallow water, and raised his ugly mouth, and swallowed two eggs in rapid succession. The others contented themselves with bits of plantain. No one would ever dream of disturbing these fish, and if it be true that some of the carp at Saint Cloud have seen "*Le Roi Soleil*," then, surely, the fetish fish of the Tano should not be cast aside as "a fish story."

Finally before dismissing this fascinating subject of fetish, it may be worth while recording that the Acting Chief Commissioner of Ashanti presented us with a very grim-looking "juju" in the shape of a stick which has been proven to have the miraculous power of killing any black man at whom it is pointed in anger. The manner in which the stick fell into British hands is as follows: A fetish man had been going around terrorizing the villages in Northern Ashanti. Complaint was made, and the man was forthwith arrested. Brought before the court, he boldly admitted the charge, adding that he would demonstrate his powers if ordered so to do by the Commissioner. The latter promptly said, "Try it on me." Whereupon the prisoner replied that, while he claimed no power over white men, he would rather not. The Commissioner then said, "Try it on my clerk." The clerk trembled and turned pale yellow with fright. "No," returned the fetish doctor, "He has his hand on the fetish book of the white men. I will try it on the whole court." Before the Commissioner could open his mouth the entire court was cleared; only himself, the prisoner and the black clerk, who by this time had the

Bible in his arms, remained. The object in question is about 18 in. in length, with the thickness of a walking stick. It is covered with dark blue, native-dyed cloth, and has a suspicious-looking lump in the middle. Of what that lump consists we should very much like to know, but our curiosity, although keen, is not sufficient to make us tamper with things we do not understand.

A point which must be made in connection both with Ashanti and the Northern Territories is that these Administrations are independent of the Gold Coast proper, except in so far as they acknowledge a common Governor who resides at Accra. They are also included in the financial estimates of the colony as a whole, and receive military aid if it is required. Of course, they work through the Secretariat, which is the channel of communication to the Governor. Beyond this they are free. They have their own courts, their own police, their own methods of administering justice, and their own internal administration. Now this may seem a small matter, but, in all truth, it is pregnant with importance for the future of this colony. The matter in a nutshell is the simple fact that the courts of Ashanti and the Northern Territories will not permit the employment of native or European barristers under any circumstances. They prefer, and quite rightly so, to deal with the native population, be they chiefs or labourers. Now the curse of the Gold Coast is litigation. Whatever may be said about the total population of the colony, there are enough lawyers in the three towns of Sekondi, Cape Coast and Accra to make a good-sized English country village. They fairly tumble over one another. Yet they are all prosperous, they all have their motors and send their daughters to places like Cheltenham to be educated. How on earth can it be done? is the natural query. The answer is that the gold mine they are tapping is the native chiefs. In this connection it must be remembered that, with very few exceptions, the word "chief," as here employed may mean little more than the headman of a village. For ever are these petty despots quarrelling over land questions, the delimitations of their boundaries, and so forth. In Ashanti

questions of this nature can be pleasantly, swiftly, and satisfactorily settled within an hour or two, perhaps, at practically no expense to anybody. Not so upon the Gold Coast. The "cocoa standard" has set the pace. All these little people have money, and as soon as they covet their neighbours' land they fly to a native lawyer, or a native lawyer, even more probably, flies to them, and the interminable game of litigation starts. It may last three months, or it may last three years, the latter if the lawyers think it worth while. Counsel are employed at altogether disproportionate fees over the most pettifogging of matters, and so it goes on until the rival claimants shake hands over having at least one thing in common, they are in bankruptcy. This is no exaggeration. In one case which came to our notice at Addah, the time occupied over settling a little dispute was a fortnight, and the defending counsel, who lost the case for his client, received as a fee the sum of £1,200. Another, a ruling chief who shall be nameless, since he occupies a very important position, has the doubtful pleasure of an overdraft of £8,000 at his bank, every penny of which has been frittered away over lawyers. Admittedly, here is a difficult problem to solve, and it does not come within our purview to suggest any solution. But, in the course of conversation, his Excellency did on several occasions discuss the question and deplore the fact. Perhaps time and experience will teach these litigation-loving chiefs the futility of their actions. Far better if they could be induced to combine to accept arbitration from the Secretary for Native Affairs. Against this is the insecurity of a chief on his stool. He is only there by popular election, and in the matter of legal actions, presumably, he must be guided by the wishes of his people. Altogether, it is an extraordinarily thorny problem.

From Tano Dumase we proceeded by slow stages to Coomassie, over roads (roads by courtesy only), which taxed our hammock boys to the utmost. It is a good plan, when making an early start, to walk in the fresh morning air for the first hour or so. It is about the only time a white man feels inclined for much exertion,

and he then has eyes to admire the majesty and silence of the jungle. After this spurt one tumbles into one's hammock with a sigh of relief and the continuous chatter of the hammock boys becomes a sort of lullaby. Our camps were most picturesque. Long, low, tent-like huts thatched and floored with banana leaves, with a large hut for the mess room. At one camp the carriers nearly caused a diplomatic "situation" by annexing and killing without ceremony the "dash" of sheep presented to the Governor by the local chief. The noise was terrifying and the commotion in the bush beyond our camp made one imagine a battle was in progress. The carriers, not being Ashantis, were scarcely popular and seemed to think they must live up to their reputation. The long trek by hammock was nearly over, and there could not have been one of the party who was not relieved. The A.D.C. and Private Secretary had left any superfluous flesh they might have had on the rocky paths of Ashanti. The rest of us were patently the worse for wear. Therefore it was a joy to climb into the inevitable "Ford," six miles from Coomassie, and tear at a hurricane speed along a broad, level road towards that historical city.

CHAPTER XIII.

At the present day Coomassie looks more like an Indian town than any other on the coast, and it is the pride of its residents that socially it is also like India. There are real grass tennis courts, a real regimental band, and, before the war, there was the best polo team in the colony. Such it is to-day, and yet, only twenty years ago, the quaint little fort in the centre of the town was the scene of one of the grimmest sieges of Britain's many frontier wars. Only the fact that all eyes were turned on South Africa at that time, prevented the siege of Coomassie from taking its proper place in history. The events which led up to this, the seventh Ashanti war, may briefly be summarized as follows: the Ashantis, although defeated by Sir Garnet Wolseley, were not crushed and longed for revenge. Matters simmered slowly, with scarcely-veiled insolence on the side of the blacks and an ill-advised mixture of severity and lenience on that of the whites. Quibbles and evasions on both sides brought about a unique situation in 1896, when Prempi, King of Ashanti, the Queen Mother, four other near relatives and four chiefs were handcuffed by the Governor's orders and in his presence at Coomassie. Under the astonished eyes of his own people who dared not attempt to rescue him, the King was taken to the coast and eventually lodged with his relations in Elmina Castle. This was, to the Ashantis, very much the same sacrilege as though the tomb of the Prophet at Mecca were removed to Paris. The sacred fetish tree at Bantamo—the St. Denys of Ashanti—was blown up and the village burnt, but the Golden Stool could not be found, and the mausoleum where the kings were buried had been emptied of its contents before the troops arrived and skeletons and treasure hidden else-

where. By thus deposing Prempi the British sphere of influence was greatly enlarged, trouble with Ashanti seemed to be at an end and that country, deprived at one blow of its leaders, became a species of British Protectorate. The only things which remained to the Ashantis were their unconquerable sense of nationality and a red-hot hatred of their "protectors."

Late in 1899, the Golden Stool very nearly fell into the hands of the British. An Ashanti boy came to Accra and offered to guide someone to its hiding place. But his courage failed him at the eleventh hour. Captain Armitage (now Governor of the Gambia), who went with the boy to Bali, was convinced that it was in that vicinity, but the lad's terror became so great that nothing could induce him to indicate the correct path, and the search had to be abandoned. The suspicions of the Ashantis had been aroused concerning this attempt to "steal" what in their eyes was only less sacred than the person of their abducted King, and therefore it was unfortunate that Sir Frederick Hodgson should have selected an early date thereafter to visit Coomassie. A fort had been built there. "It was about fifty yards square, with rounded bastions at each corner and loop-holed walls about thirteen feet in height. It was built partly of brick and partly of the stone used in the building of the old palace, was entered by a single steel-faced door, and in addition to quarters for the Resident, contained store-rooms, magazines and a well, and mounted five machine-guns and four 7-pounders. There was a garrison at Coomassie and the cost of its maintenance and provisioning had to come out of the exchequer of the colony, as the Ashantis only gave a grudging amount of labour as their contribution. It was with the intention of extracting from them a tax of some sort which might lighten the expense of the garrison and also to make a further search for the Golden Stool that the Governor made this expedition. His escort consisted of only twenty Hausas under a sergeant, and with him were Lady Hodgson, a doctor and the Acting Director of Public Works; not a large retinue for a Governor in the eyes of a people to whom

pomp and ceremony were the only visible signs of power. The Resident was on leave, the garrison was under strength by more than half, Great Britain, as the Ashantis knew well, was fighting in South Africa; in other words it was "now or never." The Governor's speech to the assembled chiefs, already on the verge of insurrection, was the last straw. He told them plainly that Prempi was lost to them for ever and that his powers were vested in the Resident, except in war. He demanded interest to be paid on the unpaid war indemnity and asked the whereabouts of the Golden Stool, saying that he, as the representative of the paramount power, should be sitting on it at that moment instead of on a chair. Pelion on Ossa! The fire was lighted with a vengeance. This was on March 28, 1900. By the 31st, when Captain Armitage and an escort went out to search again for the Golden Stool, the country was secretly arming and the first blood was shed on that day at Bali. The little column fought its way back to Coomassie and the information received by the Governor from native and white sources showed him that matters were very serious. Troops were ordered by telegram from Accra, Lagos, Northern Nigeria and Sierra Leone and a messenger sent to the Northern Territories. Negotiations proved fruitless, owing to the impossible position taken up by the insurgent chiefs, and by April 18 the Ashantis had surrounded the town and the occupants of the fort were virtually prisoners. Refugees by the thousand were encamped close under the walls of the fort to gain the protection afforded by its guns, while the Ashantis burned and looted the various mission buildings, soldiers' barracks, and the "Zongo" or Hausa section of the town. The rainy season had begun and tornados were of nightly occurrence, which increased discomfort and disease. Two relief forces had arrived by April 29, but they reached Coomassie with small provisions and scanty ammunition, so that they were actually a disadvantage, as food and powder had already become a problem. The unfortunate refugees were soon reduced to eating any roots and leaves they could find, for the Ashanti system of pickets was so

good that they were rarely successful in raiding near-by plantations.

On May 11, a truce was declared in order that the loyal chiefs might try to persuade the others to come to terms, and in the midst of this armistice the reinforcements from the Northern Territories arrived—days before they were expected—to the joy of the garrison and the fury of the Ashantis who not unjustifiably suspected collusion. This broke off negotiations at once, and the refugees outside the fort, who had been promised food by the besiegers, were in as bad a plight as before, and the food and ammunition brought by the new-comers was pitifully small in quantity. The rations of the defenders were reduced to a minimum and the ammunition was conserved as far as possible in case the garrison should have to fight its way out when supplies came to an end. Three or four sorties were made but they were unsuccessful, and it seems as though one on a larger scale would have been better strategy, as nothing was accomplished beyond depressing the black troops and encouraging the Ashantis. Small-pox also broke out amongst the refugees; men, reduced to skeletons, went mad or fell dead, and others preferring a quick death or slavery to this prolonged agony, left the shelter of the fort and deserted to their foes. At last, the state of affairs was so critical that it was decided to send the Governor and Lady Hodgson, and the missionaries and their wives down to the coast under escort, leaving only Captain Bishop, Lieutenant Ralph, Dr. Hay and Native Officer Hari Zenna to defend the fort with 109 Hausas and 25 carriers. It was difficult to say which was the more dangerous situation and the Governor undoubtedly thought he and his party were marching to their death. Fortunately, thanks to a certain amount of good fortune and also to the skilful leadership of Captain Armitage, his gloomy prophecy was not justified. Meanwhile the little garrison waited for the promised relief. It was Lucknow over again, only, thank God! without women and children.

“Ever the labour of fifty that had to be done by five,
Ever the marvel among us that one should be left alive,
Ever the day with its traitorous death from the loopholes around,
Ever the night with its coffinless corpse to be laid in the ground,
Heat like the mouth of a hell, or a deluge of cataract skies,
Stench of offal decaying, or infinite torment of flies,
Thoughts of the breezes of May blowing over an English field,
Cholera, scurvy and fever, the wound that *would* not be heal'd,
Toil and ineffable weariness, faltering hopes of relief.”

There is no need to dwell long on this. Words, even those of Tennyson, cannot describe it. Only let it be said that the hellish Indian heat is nothing to the real hell of West Africa.

On July 15, eighty-one days from the commencement of the siege, Colonel Willcocks, Commandant of the West African Frontier Force, reached Coomassie with about 800 men. They had fought against a numerically superior enemy in his own country, an enemy stimulated by repeated victories and with admirably constructed stockades at all tactical points, but they had won through. At first the silence of the fort brought the sickening sensation that they were too late. They could see only gorged vultures and putrefying corpses. As they neared the fort, however, they heard a bugle sounding the “general salute” and through the gates tottered the three white officers and the few ghostly remnants of the garrison who were able to walk. These three officers received the following recognition of their services: Captain Bishop was given a D.S.O., Dr. Hay, a C.M.G., Lieutenant Ralph received a direct commission in the Royal Fusiliers. We have heard it said that “they merely did their duty,” but it seems to us that such deeds in such a climate should have met with greater appreciation. All three are dead now, we believe, and whether the native officer died during the siege or “lived to fight another day,” we do not know. He, too, was a fine man. We honour the memory of the four who “merely did their duty.” Colonel Willcocks received the K.C.M.G., which he richly deserved.

After the relief of Coomassie, the campaign proceeded rapidly. Kokofu was destroyed and then the Adansis, a tribe which had supported the Ashantis, were defeated.

By this time there was an abundance of troops and munitions. Sikhs, half a battalion of the Central African Regiment, carriers from East Africa and practically all available troops and constabulary from West Africa, were pouring into the country. The Ashantis fought well and there were some considerable battles. At Aboasa, for example, the Ashantis repulsed three bayonet charges delivered with tremendous élan and fought fiercely in a hand-to-hand combat. It was not until they were out-flanked that they retreated. By the end of October the Ashanti chiefs had either surrendered or been captured, with the exception of a few fugitives in the north. Sixteen of the leaders of the insurrection accompanied the ex-King, Prempi, to the Seychelles, one was hanged publicly in Coomassie, and thirty-one more were imprisoned at Elmina. No one was allowed to carry a gun without a licence, the people were obliged to repair all the damage done to Government buildings and to build any military posts the Government considered advisable, and the original war indemnity had to be paid. The Bekwai people also received two Adansi villages. The seventh Ashanti war was over. Aside from the pecuniary cost, the losses were as follows: Out of 152 Europeans, 9 were killed in action, 7 died of disease, 52 were wounded and 54 were invalided; from the native force of approximately 2,804 officers and men, 113 were killed in action, 102 died of disease, 680 were wounded and 41 reported missing. The 15,000 carriers lost 400 from disease and one man killed in action. There was a cartoon in *Punch* in 1879. A copy—framed—should be supplied to the War Office, the Colonial Office the India Office and the Crown Agents respectively. It depicts John Bull, square, stout and prosperous, looking at a stalwart Zulu in full panoply of war who is chalking on a blackboard the words, "Despise not your enemy." How often have we "muddled through" because we have not learned this lesson! What was true in 1879 was true in 1900, both in South Africa and in Ashanti, and we have not learned our lesson yet.

Situated at a distance of about twenty miles from Coomassie is one of those remarkable formations which

puzzle the scientific investigator, and are naturally seized upon by the native mind as being the home of "juju." This is Lake Bosumtwi. In shape it is practically circular, with a diameter of some five miles. Surrounded completely by high hills (mountains in this country), its shores are fringed with reedy marshes, which we can certainly vouchsafe produce as fine a brand of mosquitoes as anyone could wish to see. So much is normal; what is abnormal is the fact that no one has ever yet been able to plumb its depths towards the centre, while, with the exceptions of a few paltry streams, it drains no watershed. It is, in fact, a miniature Lake Baikal, and it would repay careful investigation, without a doubt. But here the native steps in. It is "fetish"; no one may fish from a boat in its waters, though the wily angler of the region overcomes that difficulty by carrying on his operations from a log, and it was from a raft that such soundings as have been made were taken. Its guardians consist of seven native chiefs in the neighbourhood, who arrange the feast days and fast days of the fetish followers, and were absolutely horrified when an official of utilitarian mind suggested that it would make an excellent reservoir for the water supply of Coomassie. Curiously enough, however, the water is slightly brackish, and so it is reasonable to suppose that these worthy gentlemen will be left undisturbed for the nonce.

Illness prevented our seeing as much of Coomassie as we should have wished, and illness of another sort was raging in the Northern Territories. Spinal meningitis, or "spotted fever," that deadly scourge for which the most skilled have discovered no preventive, was decimating whole tracts of country. Towns were quarantined against it, carriers were dropping dead by the roadside, and countless numbers of unfortunates crawled into the bush to die untended. The Durbar arranged for the Governor at Tamale had to be abandoned, and the party cut down to its minimum. That the Governor went at all speaks for his consideration for the natives who were waiting to welcome him, and who would have been most frightfully disappointed had not he appeared. It

would have been misinterpreted, and, although shorn of all the magnificence which would have surrounded the proceeding had times been normal, General Guggisberg was very wise in making the journey. The Northern Territories are at present the least productive of revenue of all sections of the Gold Coast. The paucity of population, due to the constant presence of epidemics, the dryness of the climate, the immense distances to be covered, all tend to retard development. At the same time, with the construction of a railway from Tamale to Coomassie, which would permit of direct communication with the sea-ports, in course of time agriculture would develop. In the neighbourhood of Salaga, rice is already being grown on a small scale, and if that industry were sufficiently supported and the ever-present labour difficulty overcome, the import of rice into the colony would become unnecessary and food prices would drop, a consummation most earnestly to be desired. Similarly, around Tamale, experiments have shown that the ground-nut will flourish, and there are also vast areas from which shea-butter could be exported.

For the benefit of the uninitiated, shea-butter is one of the most useful ingredients of margarine, and has the peculiar property of preventing it from going rancid and keeping it sweet for any length of time. But all this is for the future. Labour, transport, finance—such are the three obstacles to much present-day advance. The problem is one well worth tackling, only for the moment there exists so much to be done in the south of the colony. Trains in the Gold Coast, or certainly on the Coomassie line, seemed to us to be deliberate inventions of the Evil One. It was a physical impossibility to leave without the most fearful scramble. The train from Coomassie to Tarquah left at the pleasant hour at 6.30 in the morning. Now remember that travelling in this part of the world is not as it is in England, and everything has to be taken with one, from beds to baths. This involved getting up at about half-past four, swallowing a hasty meal, superintending the “boys,” who otherwise pack everything wrong, hurrying down to the station as best one may, and then, if as fortunate as we

were in catching the train, finding the "boys" not on board. Having a tooth out is nothing compared to the trials of losing one's "boys." One is so absolutely dependent upon them. Our retinue of two were genial blackguards. Occasionally we came upon unexpected additions to our equipment, and on inquiring whence they came, the head boy, with an ingratiating smile, remarked, "Me go tief 'em, sah. Me tink lady go like 'em." The other boy, Tommy, from the habitual look of despair upon his face, must have been an acute sufferer from dyspepsia. Of course there were moments when both of them became positively infuriating; when, for instance, they packed a bottle containing an extremely unpleasant-smelling, thick brown shampoo upside down and without a cork amongst one's always insufficient clean linen. Then speech failed! But by and large our ruffians were very good, and, without exaggeration, it can be said that many a dose of fever can be averted by an efficient boy.

Tarquah, our next stop, is the site of the first gold-mining operations by Europeans in the colony. In the early days, about 1880, the Tarquah valley had the most sinister reputation from a health standpoint of practically any settlement, but that is altered now, and though the heat is still intense the death-rate is fairly low. As far as the gold mines at Tarquah are concerned, they are none of them very large or very deep, and bear a close family resemblance to all other gold mines the world over. There is nothing spectacular about a gold mine. There is a good deal of treading in muddy water and stooping sideways; there is the sight of black men working a drill, which reminded us uncomfortably of visits to the dentist; and, above all and beyond all, there is that choking, stifling smell of the dust which clutches at one's throat and makes one feel hideously faint. That is the origin of "miners' phthisis." Each mine has a club. Originally each club had a bar, but it was decided to discontinue the latter except for the sale of "soft" drinks as America knows the meaning of the word. The result is that the club has a neglected, rather injured air, strongly reminiscent of a similar place

at a once fashionable seaside resort which has now fallen into desuetude. In this connection there is a very good story told about a genial mine manager, one of the best of good fellows, who, however, had a fatal fondness for whisky, which he imbibed not wisely but too well—he it added, usually at someone else's bungalow. His boy noticed this peculiarity and questioned the doctor. "Why my massa always get drunk when he go odder massa's bungalow?" The doctor answered, "You savvy in your country when man fit for die all people get drunk." "I savvy, sah," said the boy. "You savvy that there be plenty big war now and plenty white men go die." "Yes, sah, I savvy," said the boy. "Well, continued the doctor, "it cost plenty money to get drunk, and white men here no catch plenty. So when white man lose friend or brudder he pay your massa, best past all for drink, to get drunk for him."

CHAPTER XIV.

IN spite of the presence of ice, soda water and electric light Sekondi is emphatically not a place in which to linger. Fate and illness compelled some stay, and we had every opportunity to study the town, such as it is. It is utilitarian, so much can be admitted. It boasts of railway works, wherein are carried on upon a small scale similar operations to those to be seen at Swindon or Crewe, neither of them more picturesque than Sekondi. Then, again, apart from the simply stinging heat, Sekondi is an epitome of noisiness. Try to rest in your bungalow and your lullaby is the sounds of hammering of the worst conceivable description. Stroll into the court-house and one wonders how on earth the overstrained Commissioners manage to administer justice with the terrific din from outside. Try the tennis court in the evening and there is no change. One might imagine that some stupendous work were in progress, something worth while in the making, and there is nothing! There is a half-finished breakwater and some superannuated cranes which need all the local talent available to keep them in working order. Beyond that there is nothing, and, as the Chief Commissioner remarked to us, "the only way in which to account for the incessant noise is that, for aught else to do, every native without a job bangs a piece of corrugated iron with a hammer." Hence even an enthusiast could not describe Sekondi as restful, neither is it surprising that the white population seemed more tired and more depressed than any we have hitherto met. Yet from the sea it looks picturesque. There is an old signal station on a bluff which winks its nightly message to the tramp steamer on the sea's highway. It also welcomes an arrival with a cannon shot; the community are cheered,

maybe, by knowing that a ship has found it possible to pay a visit. The boys in the surf boats chant their native melodies admirably. It would be of interest could someone capture those melodies and send them for reproduction at Queen's Hall.

The red corrugated roofs of the bungalows lend a splash of colour to the background of azure blue sea, only ruffled by a very occasional tornado, and looking all the hotter for the oily swell lazily rolling in from the Atlantic. The few ships at anchor seem to blister under the withering heat. Within the town proper unfortunates in offices groan audibly. They ruminate probably over the adverse fate which sent them thither. And then, when the evening comes, the young folks play at make-belief, and dance to a gramophone, and pass a few hours away in attempting to imagine that they are back in all earnest in the homes from whence they have come. From all of which it may be imagined what the port of Sekondi represents, and that it is not, we reiterate, a place in which to linger. Approximately about eight miles away, however, is the celebrated Takaradi Bay; that is to say, it may become celebrated as the new port of the Gold Coast. But there is one question in connection with the whole matter which must not be overlooked, and, indeed, must be faced in the most practical of ways. It resolves itself into one word—"labour." In this colony of the Gold Coast the labour question has reached a momentous condition. It threatens to undermine all that the Administration may attempt for the benefit of its inhabitants. Labour is demanding and receiving exorbitant wages, out of all proportion to what is accomplished. Further, even that supply is so fluctuating that no contractor could place reliance upon its steady continuance. Possibly cocoa may have something to do with this state of things.

The demand for labour in the cocoa plantations far exceeds the supply, with the result that wages have been run up to famine prices. Equally, also, the population of the colony is, for its area, very small, and with the increase of prosperity undoubtedly existing this has been

badly felt. The Governor is doing everything humanly possible to prevent the appalling infant mortality which occurs, but, granted it is modified, it will take at least twenty years to bring up the wage-earning population to normal. What, then, is to be done? Obviously the malady demands a remedy, and that speedily. Thus, for instance, the building of a navigable harbour in the colony cannot be stopped through any such cause. In addition there are the mines, also languishing for miners, ordinary workmen in point of fact. There can be no argument that the climate is not suited for a prolonged residence by a Britisher, hence no one in the Empire is losing any opportunity. Overseers, foremen, mechanics, craftsmen of all skilled types certainly will be wanted and be employed upon duty fit for them, and leave of service they must have if they are to keep their health. What is required is a stable working community, fit to put in three or four years' labour at reasonable wages without going home. Everything suffers if continuity of effort cannot be maintained, and the cost of every public work is multiplied to the "*n*th" degree. It has been suggested that the only practicable solution is assisted immigration. In Brazil it has worked wonders. The native Indian of Brazil is not capable, in his present state of development, of assisting in the exploitation of his country, which covers an enormous territorial area. With its untold riches, it was clearly realized that something must be done, and done it was—thoroughly. There was established an employment bureau in every large centre. Passages were given by the Brazilian Consuls to likely immigrants, irrespective of nationality, so long as they appeared able to face the climate, and the Latin races are able to stand the tropics more easily than others. And what has the result been? Great tracts of virgin Brazil have been opened up to the lasting benefit of not only the Brazilians, but of the world. Rubber, which would have lain untouched but for the hand of the new immigrant, has made it possible for a poor man to own a Ford car. These immigrants have delved and dug, they are every day making a new Brazil, where before a great, heterogeneous population

wondered what on earth to do with their riches. In the south of that country Germany saw her chance, and came in, buying farms and starting farming on scientific principles, employing as labour the Latins. And so the world runs along, the arid spaces become gardens, and civilization reaches out its long arm, irrespective of creed, colour or nationality, with the result that it becomes possible to translate a waste of nature seemingly into what the Deity meant it to be. But before Maltese or Cypriots are imported to the Gold Coast it will be well for those in authority to look to the future. Undoubtedly it is tantalizing to an ambitious administrator to see great possibilities just beyond his grasp and it is well to leaven practicality with idealism. But the Maltese and Cypriots have never been remarkable for vast energy in their own fairly temperate climates. How would they wield the pick and shovel and axe under the West African sun. How, in the eyes of the native, would the status of the white man be affected? Would the price of labour, already, as we have said, extortionate, be still further inflated? And what would be the cost of all the much-needed improvements if these Europeans were paid more than the blacks? There is something in the plan but it bristles with problems such as these.

Upon the whole of the West Coast it may be hazarded that only two ports are replete with the fragrance of romance, Cape Coast and Elmina. There is something about them which savours of the mediæval, they have behind them the legacy of tradition. Nine miles of decent motor road separate them, but, truth to tell, their charm lies in the fact that they are drifting away from the present rather than into it. The aforesaid motor road is practically all that they can claim of the twentieth century. Their castles are so picturesque that it is difficult to realize that from the point of view of modern sanitation they are anything but popular residences with those who inhabit them. They would infinitely prefer a nice modern bungalow upon a hill-top, a bungalow replete with all the so-called conveniences now provided for officialdom. Further, both of these castles can boast

of being haunted, Elmina to the extent of possessing a most unsavoury reputation upon that account. About it there are stories galore. Everyone is supposed to have seen something or heard something. One very naive official told us a thrilling story of how the door of his bedroom mysteriously opened, of how he cowered in sheer fright under his blanket, only to discover that a rising tornado was the responsible culprit. Another official barricaded himself in his room whenever duty called him to stay for a night or so in residence. And then there is the very uncanny and inexplicable though well-authenticated account of a bridge party upon the old ramparts which remind one to-day that the Portuguese well knew how to build and were craftsmen of no mean merit. The party consisted of one lady and three officials. None of them bothered about the supernatural or gave heed to rumour. They were merely keen bridge players and intent upon their game. Of a sudden the lady put her hand to her eyes as though dazzled. Asked if anything were the matter she denied anything wrong and continued playing. Followed a pause. Then again she clapped her hands to her eyes, gave an exclamation, and fainted dead away. Either she never would or never could tell what she saw, but being in perfectly normal health there must have been some *raison d'être*. The bridge party came to an abrupt conclusion, so much we heard at first hand. For the rest, report has it that a headless lady pays nocturnal visits to the room she once occupied.

People may say "rubbish," but is it? If the walls of a castle such as Elmina could speak what would they not tell? One can imagine that in those early days, upon a coast such as this, with naught to do but wait for the next relief from home and for companions, adventurers of a type now unthought of and undreamt, every manner of tragedy may have been enacted behind the walls of these pioneer strongholds. The Portuguese were no respecters of persons, neither were the Danes nor the Dutch when their turn came to figure upon the Gold Coast and make their mark upon West African history. And when the short, tropical twilight is upon

them, these castles resemble the embodiment of the romance through which they have lived. Only one place that we have ever visited quite seems to carry with it the same mediæval touch, and that is Heidelberg. A similar atmosphere pervades it, a touch of melancholy, a touch of faded magnificence, a touch of vanished hands and hearts which are for ever still. Heaven knows that the West Coast is the last place on earth in which to look for romance, and yet these two towns are replete with it. They stand alone in their significance in what has been rather unjustly called "Hell's Playground." And it is a great pleasure to us that our memory of the Gold Coast closed with a glimpse of these two strange old places. Truth to tell, life is not pleasant to live out there. Perhaps it is pleasanter if one is located in one environment, and has opportunity to make friends, to enter into the little round of social duties which are made possible out here, to drink in the traditions which are making and have made the official life at all possible upon short financial commons. *Esprit de corps* is certainly not dead in the Colonial service, when, under the weight of every worry conceivable, the young men and old carry on as they are doing and will do, and the inspiration emanates from the Chief himself. No Governor is ever popular with all classes of the community. Few with their own staff. Maybe it is better so. Administrators have a rough passage through their tour of service in such regions as these. They must commune with themselves, accept advice from all and trust none. Rival influences are too great. The great man stands upon neutral ground.

All countries, if properly appreciated, if understood, have distinct personalities, for all the world like human beings. Properly to be appreciated, the Gold Coast must be known from within; it is uncommunicative, dull, cruel to the outsider. But intimacy brings a change of feeling. One can appreciate the defects of a strong personality, and the Gold Coast is strong. Take away its defects, and it would really be colourless and lacking the first elemental to make it habitable. There is mystery in it to satisfy the most hungry. There is a

wealth of natural splendour in the little-trodden hinterland of the Western Province. For others there is the very real lure of money in abundance, of affluence beyond the realms of careers as lived at home in the comfortable regions served by fifty trains daily between the hours of seven and seven. It can offer the wonderful inspiration of ever desiring to go further, to see further, to learn more. There are regions in the north-eastern districts never visited by white men, areas in which game of every variety may be found, and which, in more habitable climes, would give the call to the big game hunter and the world tripper who of late has grown to be an institution in other countries. Its wealth is undeniable, it was not for aught else that the Portuguese christened it Gold Coast. Develop it along scientific lines, treat it as the modern ironmaster would treat a foundry in a new country, humour it, spoil it, see to it that it lacks no essentials to success, and like the personality it is, its temperament will respond. Realize its potentialities, do not make of it an *enfant terrible* amongst the colonies of the Empire, to be shunned, scorned, condemned, and nominated the playground of the lost and destitute. Give it a chance, examine it, study it, and our visit will not have been in vain.

CHAPTER XV.

LAGOS came upon us as a surprise. We had grown into tune with the West Coast as we had seen it. It had impressed us with a sameness of atmosphere, which, in spite of varying conditions, was gradually imbuing us with a slight sense of monotony. And then, as we steamed through the breakwaters which guard the harbour of Lagos, up the quiet waters of the lagoon, upon the shores of which the town stands, we realized that we were entering a new country with new people, new ideas, and one which carried with it new interests. Perhaps the better adjective would be "fresh," since most assuredly the native races inhabiting this vast territory, one-third the size of the Indian Empire, contain amongst them stock of such antiquity that their very origin is to-day still a matter of speculation. On the other hand, coupled with a civilization of such a type that British occupation has been able to teach it little except the most advanced arts and crafts, is to be found Paganism in its most revolting form, whole tribes to whom rudimentary clothing is unknown, and who even to-day are suspected of cannibalism. Slowly steaming up the lagoon we were both tempted to make comparisons which instantly presented themselves to us. "Norfolk Broads," hazarded one of us, as we glided past the floating dock: "the only thing false to the picture is that beastly utilitarian monster of ugliness which you emphatically do not find up Wroxham way." The other member of the party, as we swung round the signal station, exclaimed, "Why, there's Maidenhead, Guard's Club and all! It only wants a punt or two, a canoe with a flirting couple, some river girls as well, and a background of Skindles, and there you are." For West Africa the whole effect was astonishingly out of proportion with

preconceived ideas. No surf-boats here. No launch fluttering alongside and tediously bringing one to the shore. Not a bit of it! The landing was as easy as that at Prince's Landing Stage at Liverpool, shorn of some of its formalities. Not quite all! For the first time since leaving Liverpool, and after being upon Spanish and Liberian soil, we were politely but firmly asked for our passports. We did murmur that we were staying with Sir Hugh Clifford, the Governor, but the only answer we got was "It will be better so." That official must have felt that he was in effect a real cog in the machinery of the Empire. A short drive down the "Marina," a promenade along the foreshore comparable to most English seaside resorts, only more picturesque, brought us to Government House. This is a spacious, three-storey building with a *porte cochère* and the general effect of having been picked up bodily from a French province and placed, to its great astonishment, in West Africa. Here we had, for the first and only time, running hot water in the bath. Our head boy contemplated it with awe and, after putting his finger under the tap, announced reverentially "It be *hot*!" After which he probably added it to the list of "white man juju" and paid no further attention to it.

But to return to Lagos itself. If only seaside towns in England could afford to banish the boarding-house and its colleague the lodging-house from the front, then the millennium in sea frontage would have been reached, and municipal architects might find it worth while to come and study the effect here of gardens and pretty houses along a mile or two of excellent road. It is charming, and no wonder that, in spite of mosquitoes, which certainly do exist here in millions, in spite of a temperature which tries tempers and temperaments to an abnormal degree, the inhabitants of Lagos are most enthusiastic over their township. Half an hour after landing we were watching a "chukker" of polo, another half hour and we were the guests of the Tennis Club and imbibing every known species of cooling and refreshing beverage, and half an hour later and the most excellent band of the West African Frontier Force was playing to tired golfers and

others the latest tunes from the latest musical London successes. Truly, we thought, in spite of having experienced a very strenuous day, the lot of the "Lagosite"—to coin a word—does lie in pleasant places. This is along the lines of an Indian station in all truth, and poor little Coomassie, with all its delectable attractions is but a feeble imitation. To phrase the impression created upon us in a few words is merely to reiterate that we sensed at last the influence of old-established traditions upon congenial soil. The soil here is genial and the world wags merrily. After all, to live happily and experience all the little happinesses which can be found in places further from the Equator is one way of establishing a sounder foundation for health, which is what we all search for in these regions. Some opine that doctors are pessimists. We approach the point with open mind, with the one reservation that you must have congenial surroundings. In that direction Lagos has not failed, unless it be in the housing of her official employees, of which more anon. Lagos must be the biggest coast town, with the possible exception of Dakar, in French territory. The markets, and there are several, are astounding. They remind one rather of the bazaars of Constantinople. They cross and intersect and tangle themselves till it is a puzzle to divine whence one has come. Moreover, the wares exposed, which vary from a packet of fishing hooks—these latter we had not encountered elsewhere—to ornamented calabashes worthy of the sideboard in an English house, are all eagerly bargained for interminably in true Oriental style. It is not a matter of finance, one can but conjecture, so much as a species of pastime, a sort of poker along native lines, where the man who never moves a muscle of his face is likely to win the game. There is great animation in the streets, animation which recalled to us Colombo near the Grand Oriental Hotel. There are few native booths; the natives have given up that style of architecture, and now favour a mixture of what one may find in a Portuguese village and the stucco dear to those who designed German colonial buildings. Of course, there are slums—there must be; but during a motor drive

through the highways and byways of Lagos they were not apparent.

At Accra, outside the British segregation area and the educated native quarters, the town is an ash-heap, a depository for refuse, and in need of thorough sanitary overhauling. This will explain probably the prevalence of epidemics there, such as that of small-pox, which we left behind in full swing. There are epidemics here as there are in London or Hamburg or Buenos Ayres. But as far as the eyes of the uninitiated may guide, eyes, however, trained by experience in many countries, the whole of Lagos town is on a fair par with American towns of similar population in the southern portion of that continent. At any rate, the shacks we had grown accustomed to see along the coast were missing, and we penetrated where we would. And it might be added that the native population seem to "get busy" here, to use an Americanism, in sympathy with the ever-increasing demands of this capital of West Africa.

To understand better the significance of the future of Lagos, certain main features must be grasped. First and foremost, Lagos is an island. Where the town was founded the builders little recked that the time would ever arrive when it would outgrow its capacity to cope with the population and accommodation alike. It is in a small way on a similar plane to Manhattan Island, which houses present-day New York City. Only here the skyscraper is an impossibility, and expansion must take place along other lines. Time was when the mainland of what is actually Africa proper consisted of dense mangrove swamps, which harboured endless mosquitoes and accentuated the presence of the dreaded malaria, which is more or less endemic all over West Africa. In addition, at that time the Lagos railway was a very small proposition, with its terminus naturally upon the said mainland, and with seemingly little prospect of ever growing into the gigantic octopus it now is; for, be it remembered, the amalgamation of the two Nigerias and Lagos only dates from January, 1914. Thus for some years matters remained "in statu quo," business increased but leisurely, and the handicap of the transhipment of

goods across the lagoon from railhead to steamer wharf was but lightly felt. The amalgamation altered effectually the whole position, especially since the Lagos railway was extended, and by fresh construction linked up with the Nigerian railways, thus tapping regions which for centuries had lain remote from the influence of the outside world. True, the Niger River acted as a carrying medium for a certain amount of imports and exports, but on a minute scale. During the dry season traffic dropped to an infinitesimal level, and the route from Tripoli to Kano across the Sahara was considered by traders safer and speedier. Thus, what was of old "Northern Nigeria," with teeming population and untouched wealth, remained in stagnation until the magic wand of the railway opened the door of its prison and allowed the fresh and invigorating air of commercial exploitation to enter without let or hindrance. Within a matter of months trade increased beyond belief. Manchester cottons and Birmingham hardware suddenly became articles of necessity, one might almost write, and so, as often happens, the natives wondered how it was that they had ever managed before without such articles as were now becoming common. Then it was that it became more and more manifest that to cope with the ever-growing trade other methods would have to be employed than the cumbersome system in vogue entailing the transshipment of goods from ship to shore, a journey by motor lorry or barge to railhead and further labour in trucking the goods. What to do? How to conquer the mangrove swamps, especially since they were everywhere fringed by shallow water and oyster beds? Consideration followed, with the result that a very large scheme of reclamation was taken in hand whereby the shallow water was dredged and the mud and oysters pumped into the mangrove swamp. The result was little short of miraculous. The mangroves resented the intrusion and died off, while slowly but surely the swamp in which they were embedded was transformed into dry sandy soil. Perseverance told its own tale when we were shown over the hundred and odd acres of what is now a very good imitation of the Sahara on a small scale.

And still the work is going on. From powerful dredgers pumps are operated which force through pipes the mud and shells dredged up to a distance of 500 yards. Continuously day by day this sludge is being deposited farther and farther inland, making of that dangerous swamp a foundation whereon, in the course of the next year or two, will grow up warehouses by the score, fronted by a wharf nearly a mile in length with a depth of thirty feet of water alongside. In other words, two birds have been killed with one stone; a deep water wharf is being constructed while an intolerable swamp is being roped in to the service of the community. Work of that nature needs little encomium. Imagine what Lagos will spell within less than a decade. It will be by far the largest port on the whole of the West African Coast.

Sierra Leone, with its harbour of Freetown, is a wonderful natural expanse of water, which can comfortably shelter a large fleet of warships or merchantmen. But as Providence would have it, it serves merely as a coaling station, for the hinterland it drains cannot export raw material in any great quantity, since the territory it covers is small. But Nigeria, the largest of the Crown Colonies, is almost staggering in the immensity of its possibilities, nay probabilities. Remember that the great market of Kano is one of the most important in the whole of the African world. Remember that Kano is over 700 miles from Lagos, and then realize that to-day it is possible, in fact normal, to get into the boat train, with dining and sleeping cars, and furnished comparatively quite as well as the Cornish Riviera Express, and forty-eight hours later one finds oneself in that curious city, coloured with the romance of the Arabian Nights. It is worth while to recall also that only eighteen years ago Kano was almost as far removed from the visitations of white people as is the North Pole. It was then an independent Emirate, and it boasted of its isolation from the contaminating influences of modern civilization. It had its own traditions, which served well its purpose and provide a fascinating page of African history. In other words, in the judgment of those under the rule of the

then Emir, there was little about which to complain according to their ideals. But modern opinion thought otherwise, and the hermit kingdoms of the world must inevitably give way before the advance of that pulverizing power—evolution. And so Kano fell, as did Sokoto and Zaria; all of them principalities with histories and civilizations of their own. Romance has disappeared, maybe, with the banging of shunting trucks, with the shrill whistle of the locomotive, and with the clanging of the bell which announces the departure of a train. On the other hand, there really has been a corresponding gain. Thus, for instance, who would have imagined that the *jeunesse dorée* of the Fulani nobility, a nobility equal in antiquity and dignity to our own, a nobility who for long held absolute sway over Central Africa and the Western Soudan, would to-day be proving themselves extraordinarily apt with the theodolite, able to work out complicated mathematical problems with the assurance of a senior wrangler and fitting themselves to bring into their world, when fate calls them to take control, all the advantages denied to their fathers, and which they will now be in a position to hand on by proxy through other instructors to their people? Thus the problems facing Nigeria are entirely different from those which must be solved by governors of other West Coast colonies. And, in addition, there is the climatic question, which is worthy also of consideration since it is possible that experience may indicate that certain portions of Northern Nigeria, or of the Northern Province, as it is now called, may be quite as suitable for white men as corresponding portions of East Africa. Granted the approach may not be inviting, neither is Lorenzo Marques or the East Coast a health resort. The truth, as it appears to us, is that the medical profession as a whole along the coast are suffering badly from nerves. Or else, let it only be whispered, being human themselves, very human and very kind, they fear that if they balance the account on the right side, and say baldly that West Africa is as healthy as Costa Rica, Cuba, Manaos—the latter is much worse, as we know—or any Indian station, then leave to England may be cut down or the term of service pro-

longed. Personally, and without prejudice, one way or the other, we offer this solution. House your officials properly; let them lead lives which are not exotic—in other words, encourage a home atmosphere, see to it that, come what may, there is ice available at any point where it could be manufactured at a reasonable charge; spend a little money upon cold storage, and do not arrange your expenditure as did one Governor of whom we have heard. He blandly remarked, “I can’t get telegraph poles, but I can get any number of officials, hence telegraph poles are to me more valuable.” It was the remark of the pioneer rather than that of the administrator, and if West Africa, and especially Nigeria, with its latent possibilities dependent in the main upon human effort, be so treated, then advance cannot be expected.

Leaving these introductory remarks and reverting for a moment to the town of Lagos, one must not forget the really beautiful drive of some five miles along the front to the end of the breakwater. Polo, tennis, or golf may pall, but nature at its best is beyond that reproach. Arrived at the beach, one can bathe in the surf or wander along the firm white sand with the roar of the African breakers for ever in one’s ears and the wonderful, hungry, green-grey waves for company. Here there is no room for mere materialism, and one can forget the worries of the moment, the discouragement born of ill-health, the disappointment of non-receipt of letters from home—all those incidents which bulk so large when viewed upon the spot and appear so petty when examined at a distance in the proper perspective. Think of the monotony of some bush station, where the view is circumscribed, and where the only walk must be either along a bush path, with nothing to charm the senses, or around the limited area of the cantonment. And then, again, think of the great waves rolling in from the Atlantic, speaking of freedom, and bringing, as it were, promise for the future. No, Lagos is a very fortunate place, and all in all, even with a damp climate and mosquitoes, which are amongst the most hungry we met, it is actually attractive. No one in the world more enjoys a joke against himself than your West African.

A very senior official told us that he had a friend, who, having returned from a remote station in the interior, exhibited to him with pride a wooden head covered with skin, evidently a fetish of some kind. "What sort of skin is that?" queried our friend. "Human," was the reply; "isn't it wonderful, a wooden head covered with human skin? Bet you've never seen anything like that in your travels." "Rubbish," was his answer; "why, I see hundreds of them every day along the Marina." It only remains to be added that the Marina is where most of the Government officials are housed!

CHAPTER XVI.

ONE of the fondest delusions of the great British public is the firm belief that enterprise of the right sort is habitually absent from all our colonial undertakings. The Opposition Press are quick to make capital out of some error of judgment, however minute, but are uncommonly loth to allow that, as a matter of fact, our methods of colonial development are not only equal to those employed by others, but usually are actually superior. And similarly with what we may call the American fetish. People shake their heads in amazement because, in the words of the sensational papers, a town has been founded in a night, replete with hospital, hotel and police station, and this is taken to evidence how go-ahead other folk are and how slow and silly we are. For this introduction we make no excuse. It is born out of sheer admiration, plus not a little surprise, at what we have seen in Nigeria, and it is heightened because we have been able to realize what wonderful things have been accomplished in this vast territory in so short a time. For the moment we must deal with a few dates, which may serve to bring home what very recent Crown possessions Lagos, Northern and Southern Nigeria—now known as Nigeria—are in that great conglomeration of countries and peoples which go to make up the British Empire. Then it will be worth considering in what state these territories were when finally passed under the protection of the British flag, and what that flag has done for them in return. And after that, if the reader still adheres to his views as to American push as opposed to British sleepiness, it will be deliberate prejudice which obscures his vision. First of all, although as early as 1862, Lagos was recognized as a colony, its confines at that time were very circum-

scribed, and it was only in 1889 that Lagos was extended to the boundaries of what was then Northern Nigeria and to the border of the Niger Coast Protectorate, later known as Southern Nigeria.

In 1900 the British Government revoked the charter of the Royal Niger Company, which had trading and juridical rights along both banks of the Niger far into the hinterland. This company, after the manner of the old East India Company, had done a great work in opening up the Niger to trade and in penetrating into the mainland and subduing such truculent chiefs as that of Ilorin. But the time had arrived for a change; and very wisely, partially no doubt to avoid international complications, the Niger Company were bought out by the Imperial Government, and what were known as Northern and Southern Nigeria came into existence with separate administrations and Governors. This state of affairs continued until 1906, when Lagos and South Nigeria were amalgamated into one body politic, and were known as the Colony and Protectorate of Southern Nigeria. And, later, in 1914, it having been found that the administration of Southern and Northern Nigeria could more practically be arranged were there one homogeneous body, the two were amalgamated, and were designated Nigeria. These basic facts must be remembered if our subsequent chapters are to be understood, since sufficient time has not yet elapsed to allow of a complete consolidation in every direction, and, indeed, of itself that will never be absolutely complete, since in this vast territory there is such variety of race, language, religion and custom, the latter of transcendental importance when dealing with such races as Hausas and Fulanis.

Finally, to emphasize more easily to the general reader what the Governor of this colony has upon his hands, and since to many comparison with India conveys little, the area of Nigeria equals that of the United Kingdom, France and Belgium. Its greatest breadth is over 700 miles, and its length over 750. That affords some idea of the extent of territory now directly under British control, which looks for its future to British administration.

Lagos, of course, was an old-established trading station, and, as might be expected, was in a more advanced stage of evolution than her sisters when first declared a colony. Northern Nigeria was but a name, with little revenue and a heavy annual deficit, even upon an administration run on ultra-economic lines. Short-sighted people, even as late as 1903, talked of Northern Nigeria as a waste of money. It only shows how otherwise well-informed persons lack judgment over matters they are not really competent to pass judgment upon. Southern Nigeria made a good revenue, chiefly out of "square face," in other parlance, trade gin. This the pagan population absorbed to an alarming degree. Palm kernels and palm oil, aiding the finances of this colony, rendered it a paying concern, and, incidentally, gave to the West African trader the nickname of "palm oil ruffian."

So much by way of preface to modern Nigeria as we saw it. We left Lagos in a driving rain, motoring to Iddo, where the railway station platform was crowded with chattering humanity. It might have been an African Waterloo Station on a black Derby day, but it was the usual condition at Iddo, and no one but ourselves seemed to notice it. Abeokuta was our first stop. It is a large, straggling city, and can make the proud boast of being the only town in Nigeria, with the exception of Lagos, which has electric light and waterworks. And this was accomplished by native administration, with the example of Lagos as the incentive. Until a comparatively short time ago Abeokuta was an independent State, and proudly made and signed treaties with the British Government as such. But, in spite of the electric light and running water, the country outside the town itself did not flourish, and the Alaki, or Chief, and his people were gradually convinced of the fact that a little guidance and tuition, as administered elsewhere in Nigeria, would be to their advantage.

We were to have seen the Alaki, but his illness prevented the meeting, much to our regret. However, accompanied by the Acting Resident, we went to his palace. Such a strange mixture of the old and new! At least a dozen grandfather clocks told us their re-

spective and vastly different ideas of time, whilst carved juju idols leaned against the wall. In what might be called the audience chamber, one's eye was fascinated by reproductions of Marcus Stone's picture, "The First Quarrel," and Leighton's "Wedded," while below them squatted the council of lesser chiefs in the same type of robe which their ancestors had worn since the world was young. Three of the chiefs had crowns of such wonderful workmanship that we asked if we might inspect them. One was made of white beads in the shape of a bishop's mitre, except that it was decorated with chameleons, also made of beads. When asked the significance of this, the owner promptly replied that the wearer of the hat was supposed to absorb the properties of this interesting little animal—a thing, if he had realized its import, he would probably have left unsaid. Juju is not dead in Abeokuta. The Alaki was grilling himself between two fires, on a day when even the heat from a lighted match seemed unendurable, and several of his wives were rubbing him with juju medicine of the most approved variety. Certainly he must have lost weight.

Another instance of juju we saw later. A crowd of men, women and children, the sound of drums, and leading the procession a figure from a nightmare. Its head was covered with a bag, and a dead bird, probably a crow, dangled from the top. Bits of rag, fur and feathers ornamented the body, with the addition of a human skull, which hung from the waist like a grisly chatelaine. The hands and feet were also in bags, and the general effect was half ludicrous, half revolting. This charming individual purported to come from the spirits of the dead, and his avowed object—like that of most of us—was money. A silver coin was quickly picked up by one of his attendants, the drum was beaten in acknowledgment, and the crowd passed on. This particular form of juju is called "Egun-gun," and is looked upon by many of the Christianized natives with apparent contempt as a sort of African "waits," but we noticed that underlying this there was a soupçon of uneasiness, very similar to that of

the old lady who always bowed her head in church whenever the name of the Evil One was mentioned, "because," said she, "it is best to be always on the safe side." To give an instance of their attitude, we need only quote the words of a stout post-office clerk, with pince-nez and the latest thing in ties. "Juju," he said, magisterially, "is not black magic, I assure you; it is a science when properly understood." He died a week or so later.

Between Abeokuta and Ibadan the country was not worthy of especial notice. The trees were stunted and scrubby, and the cocoa plantations, of which there are many, were not visible from the train. Ibadan itself is interesting from its past warlike history and its present commercial prosperity. The town, now of huge proportions, was originally a camp for the soldiers of the Alafin, who lives, and rules with no uncertain hand, at Oyo, some thirty miles away. In 1897 the Ibadans, who seem to have a special affinity with the Ashantis, were fighting on four fronts simultaneously and enjoying every minute. The Abeokutas had their heartiest contempt. They would chase them up to the walls of their town, and then indulge in an artistic massacre of the unfortunates who were slow in flight. As the Abeokutas have no word for "brave" in their language, it is easy to see why the stalwart Ibadans were such facile victors. There is a story of a native barrister from Lagos, who, at about that time, had an interview with the Bale—a sort of lord mayor—of Ibadan town. He rashly asked what was the occupation of the Ibadans. This produced a great commotion when translated. When the hubbub died down the Bale rose and, looking scornfully upon his questioner, said: "He asks us what our business is. This is an impertinence. But I will tell him. We are rogues and vagabonds and robbers! We live by fighting and by rapine! We glory in it! Now let him return whence he has come and trouble us no more."

The present Bale is a fine figure of a man, but we rather doubt if he would be capable of such a confession of faith. When we saw him he received us in a large

room overlooking the red roofs of the town and the farms beyond. Through the open arches we could see the stiff lines of police belonging to the native administration, and the usual crowd of interested spectators. Chiefs and councillors sat on the floor in a semi-circle. Two men waved enormous feather fans gently to and fro. At the Bale's feet crouched his "slave," a euphemistic term for the position of a private secretary, and one not inappropriate in some other cases. Both here and at Abeokuta we saw for the first time on the Coast the Oriental prostration of respect. No one save the interpreter spoke to the Bale without throwing himself flat on the floor and touching the ground several times with his head. It is an impressive ceremony, and it is of interest to note that there is no loss of self-respect involved. It was here that we were offered kola nuts as refreshment, and truth compels us to say that they are a taste which we have never acquired. Two bottles of gin and two very fine turkeys were our "dash" from the Bale; the former declined with thanks, much to his surprise.

Lack of time prevented our visiting the Alafin at Oyo, where he lives in great state. Later in the day a deputation of native business men came to have an audience with one of us. First and foremost it must be emphasized that the Lagos trader, from long experience, is a veritable commercial genius. Report says that he is strictly honest, but drives as hard a bargain as the cutest commercial man in the City of London. The deputation consisted of six representatives, of whom one was a Mohammedan, who with dignity refused the cup of tea and cigar which appealed to the others. It was the commencement of the Ramadan, so our Mohammedan explained. After tea and inquiries about our respective healths and families followed the serious business of the day, alias complaints. The leading one was curious. As a private individual the receiver of the deputation shook hands with the members thereof. Whereon the spokesman said: "Sir, if you shake hands with us, why cannot the Residents? In this country they think we are poor clay. We are not. We are ignored; we

are not fit for the touch of the white man." Hurriedly it was explained that unofficials could shake hands with the devil himself, if they so desired, but official forms had to be observed, and that a white man seldom if ever had the opportunity of thus greeting the King. Apparently this explanation satisfied them.

Next upon this dreary list came roads; cocoa farmers suffered because there was delay in getting their crops away as quickly as might be. Considering that the province of Ibadan has a greater road mileage than any other province in Nigeria, this complaint was proof positive that, having made money, they wanted more. Give a native trader a taste of the sweetness of possession, ripened with the benign assistance of the powers above, and he will grumble because he cannot have the moon. These men, we learnt afterwards, were all practically millionaires, yet they expected improvement to come from the Government, and not through their individual efforts. An energetic farmer makes his own road if he sees profit therein, but naturally if he finds administrators willing to listen to every breeze which brings with it a whisper of grievance, then the result will be to make such administration paternal to the extent of stultifying original effort.

Waterworks were also clamoured for; in point of fact the Government has already a scheme in view which will cost at least £40,000, and which will be started as soon as the necessary material is on hand.

And finally the question of land tenure. Briefly, it amounts to this, that from time immemorial, since, in fact, the beginning of history as known to us in this portion of the colony, the Alafin has himself owned all the land within his own territory. Under advice from the English he has shown himself ready to lease land, but not to sell. To force him so to do would be to create a situation which might well take a serious turn with so pugnacious a people. Further, it would not be strict justice. The Lagos trader, on the other hand, wants to buy outright and possess freehold tenure, since he is well aware of the vast potential wealth of the region—*hinc illæ lachrymæ*. He may lease, but he may not

purchase. He will talk for hours concerning the hardship imposed upon his children after his death if the Alafin should terminate the lease. He becomes absolutely moist with vehemence—it is a hot climate—when describing all he would do for the property were it his own, and how he would help the administration and pay increased taxation, and a great deal more besides, if only he had his own way, which all goes to prove that your Lagos trader in Ibadan realizes a good thing when he sees it and wants to annex it now and for always. This is no uncommon trait amongst white men, truth compels one to write, and it is mentioned here to show how enormously a province such as Ibadan is advancing along financial lines, and how under British jurisdiction the native trader is benefiting himself, not at the expense of the actual native chief, but so far legitimately. British firms please take notice.

Our conference concluded with a little gossip over things in general. Then it was that one of the speakers remarked with unction, "Oh, I am a Christian, but you will not understand me, I am a polygamist. Yes, yes, I am a great believer in polygamy." At which remark he smiled fatuously at his colleagues, who all smiled in sympathetic response. Truly the "make up" of the educated West African native is a puzzle.

Ilorin was under what one might call a medicinal cloud when we arrived. One of us was suffering from ptomaine poisoning, the other trembling on the verge of dysentery. The Acting Resident was similarly affected, the doctor announced gloomily that his own complaint was either dysentery or typhoid, the police officer was recovering from small-pox, the Resident's wife had just been invalided home, and the Resident himself had rheumatism. In spite of these drawbacks we found Ilorin decidedly attractive. It is the first town we have yet seen where the usual dwellings common to the native on the littoral have given place to beehive huts thatched with straw and standing each in a walled compound of its own. This gives a peculiar aspect to a town. There is very little public life, or perhaps it would be better to say that there is much more privacy

in such a way of living. Except in the market and under the shade of an occasional cottonwood tree, which does duty as a club, one sees but few people. The market, however, more than atones for the empty streets, and one could easily spend many hours there. When we went, we were accompanied by ex-Sergeant Sanusi, of the Nigerian Regiment, a veteran of the Cameroon campaign, and a man, as he told us, "of great heart." We did not doubt his courage, but we had reason to be sceptical of his mathematical abilities. Ex-Sergeant Sanusi trying to drive a hard bargain in the matter of four baskets was a sight for the gods. He talked rapidly, waved a handful of the loathed paper shillings, gave two to one person, took one back, flourished four in front of another, forgot which man he had paid, and eventually overpaid one basket owner, who wisely took to his heels. Poor Sanusi! His honesty was as apparent as his incompetence. Baskets and pottery are both made at Ilorin. There are great red water coolers of the shape made famous by the "Forty Thieves." There are smaller and more graceful water-bottles, and quantities of the black pots and dishes which are fireproof. One particular shape is used to contain the grease which is to anoint the first-born son. Another is filled with water and taken to a juju priest when a woman desires a male child. The priest puts the requisite charm into the water, which is then thrown over the woman. There are no statistics available as to the efficacy of the charm!

At four o'clock in the morning a tornado swept over Ilorin. To be suddenly awakened by the sound of rushing wind, with the knowledge that torrential rain is soon to follow, is a trial both to nerves and temper anywhere, but especially so in a railway carriage in a siding. Shutters refused to shut, doors remained obstinately open; papers, normally secure, were having a *danse macabre* in mid-air, and there was general confusion. There was a sudden deathly silence when the wind paused to draw breath. Then came the rain! It beat through every nook and cranny where it could find entrance—and these were many—and through it

all the lightning flashes illumined our discomfort. Such thunder we have rarely heard before. It actually shook the coach, and even the knowledge that it was perfectly harmless could not rob it of its terrors. It is in times of stress like this that one gropes for the sparklet bottle and its companion the whisky, and heaves a sigh of relief when the last rumble has died away in the distance. Which reminds us of a story with a moral, like Miss Edgeworth's tales. A certain gentleman on this coast who was fond of his glass accosted a friend of ours with the remark, "My dear so and so, dreadful news this, isn't it? You've heard about it of course. Poor old Dash gone! It is a rotten climate!" To which our friend merely returned a monosyllabic "Remember!" accompanied by a charming smile, for he is a charming if sardonic man. Answered he who had made the first remark, with some heat, "You're wrong! He didn't die of that at all; he died of heart failure! Of course, the dead are always maligned out here. Look at this watch he gave me. There are my initials in his handwriting. Every time I look at them I feel wretched. What can I do?" To which our friend only replied with that sardonic smile he could so well wear, "I should erase them, and put in their place that one little word 'Remember!'" There is a delicate subtlety about that small episode which will make appeal to those with any sense of humour. But, as a matter of fact, it is not always "Remember" which kills; there are other causes.

CHAPTER XVII.

UNDOUBTEDLY dignity is the keynote of Nigerian Mohammedanism. It was at Ibadan that we first saw these flowing-robed turbaned followers of the Prophet and watched them greet each other. "Sanu," says one, crouching and touching the earth with his forehead. "Sanu," says the other, doing likewise. Then follows a lengthy variation on "Sanu," accompanied by prostrations, until every form of polite inquiry and good wish has been exhausted. There is, to Western eyes, an element of the comic in all this, but no one can deny the dignity and grace of the salutation. At Zaria we had an audience with the Emir, or at least the male member of the party was thus honoured. The female member sat outside the palace in a motor and was glad she was not a Mohammedan woman. It is against established custom for the Emir ever to receive in audience anyone of the opposite sex and to this no exception is made: the wife of the Governor is placed in precisely the same category as the wife of the humblest trader. It is as it should be. After all, these customs were not born yesterday—they are the fruit of century-long tradition, and vandal would be he who would disturb them.

The Serike Zozo, as the Emir is named, was waiting at the entrance of his palace to receive the Resident and the visitor. Be it said that the visitor and the Emir were old friends. Long ago they had been acquainted in different circumstances—circumstances of some anxiety, when a fractious Mahdi in Sokoto threatened the peace of the whole of what was then Northern Nigeria. And it is precisely in circumstances such as these that acquaintanceship ripens into friendship. Hence, without exaggeration, two friends of yore met.

The Emir is the great-grandson of Mallam Musa of the Mellawa, a Fulani family of great note, and it was he who first brought Zaria, by force of arms, under the suzerainty of the Fulanis, who conquered all this portion of Africa in very much the same way that the British overran Canada after the defeat of Montcalm at Quebec. The Fulani race was relatively small in numbers, but made up for this by its organization and the personal bravery of its leaders, plus, most important of all, the will to conquer. In parentheses, also, when one says "one of the Mellawas," one might as easily say in English "one of the Cecils," or one of any other great territorial family, so well known are these Fulani nobility. The reception took place in the large hall of the palace, a room of fine proportions, vaulted and only relieved here and there by native mosaics. Possibly some who read this may have seen a play called "The Drums of Oudh"; the scenery of that play as originally put on compares admirably with the Emir's reception room at Zaria. A few cushions covered with a fine specimen of a native cloth served as a couch for Serike Zozo, while there were the conventional drawing-room chairs for the white visitors, the only touch of vulgar modernity in the scene. Behind the Emir squatted his Wazir, or Home Secretary, and one body servant. Light filtered in from small windows above, rather after the style of a clerestory, rendering the shadows more apparent and softening the hard outlines of the Europeans, with their angular clothes; everything else lacked angles and blended into a sepia colour scheme.

After greetings the Emir dwelt a little upon old days; he had asked for the visitor often and had been told that he was travelling in many other lands. Was he well, and wouldn't he stay with him and let him teach him Hausa, as he had much he would tell him? A smile. No? Impossible? Well, no matter, he would be very happy if the visitor would see the town as it is and compare it with those days he might remember. Ah! He did remember them? So did he! Great days they had been, and he was glad to think that

his Emirate had asked the British to come in and help to develop the land since they had acted to him like a father and mother. And this must be added, that, in those long-ago days the visitor had reminded this self-same man of an oath he had taken to the Governor of that period to be loyal ever and always to the Great White King, and the answer he had received was in the tone of something like mild reproof: "Is not the oath of a Mohammedan as good as the oath of a Christian?" After which there was never any more doubt on either side, and England found as true an ally as she ever will while this world lasts. Then the conversation veered to the railway, which in this part of the world has so completely revolutionized commerce, and with justifiable pride the Serike remarked, "It was hard work, but my people did it. My population is under 350,000, but we made the embankments for the line from the boundary of Bida Emirate to that of Kano Emirate, a distance of 200 miles. Moreover, we did all the transport of the rails, and helped to place them in position. I think every able-bodied man was employed, and it was hard for them, very hard; but now they are glad, very glad." This was no exaggeration, since the Emir is by nature one who delights to see the fruits of progress, and who, moreover, has a remarkable grasp of the possibilities attendant upon modern engineering. Asked what his country most needed, he was prompt to answer, "Roads." This appears to be the common demand upon all sides, and it is worth noticing since it proves that at last the reserve of the native has been broken down, and he now desires nothing more than that the light and movement from the great outside world should pour in upon his abode and chase away for ever the shadows which obscure his advance in the world's commonwealth. And so our conversation drifted into the channels of simple friendship, the old gentleman insisting upon coming outside to say good-bye. He certainly did not look his supposed age of 76 years; in fact, he did not look a day older than in those remarkable weeks of 1906, but then it is difficult to judge. That he carried himself as superbly as of yore was at least evident. As the ruler

of 13,000 square miles of territory he is not rich. From the Government he receives approximately £2,500 per annum, whilst from the native Administration and his own private property he may get as much as £10,000, but of which, be it recalled, he spends at least half or more upon public works in his capital.

Comparisons are always odious, but having arrived only recently from the Gold Coast, one could not help thinking how very different the conditions were. In the latter colony we had ample opportunity to meet the leading native rulers, people like the various Fias and Omanhenes, who attend the Legislative Council of that colony and are able to speak good English, enjoy English books, and who are as at home in talking with a white official as they would be in speaking with one of their own race. That is one side. And the other? A man who sits squat-legged upon cushions, as his father did before him, and his grandfather, and his great-grandfather; a man who disdains to mimic the white man; a man to whom tradition is as sweet as it is to the most blue-blooded conservative-minded aristocrat in Great Britain; a man who reckons advance from the practical point of view—railways, bridges, roads, telephones, and who banks his income in a British bank but signs his cheques in Arabic. A man who drinks not, since he is a true Mohammedan, and to whom sitting at a table and sipping the finest champagne with a European would appear simply as very bad taste. A man who cannot help being a gentleman born, any more than the sun can help itself not being the moon. A man who appreciates simplicity, and is too wise to attach importance to outside show. A man who comprehends the difference between display in its vulgar sense and the studied splendour which wisely should surround a governing power. A man honest and sincere in his convictions, unswayed by the passing breezes of new thought, fresh policy, and the promises of new brooms. A man who can sum up with mathematical accuracy the value of the human instrument, black or white, with whom he is brought into contact. A man, who, in fact, is a man as

Providence desired a man should be—that is the visitor's modest estimate of his quondam friend, the Emir of Zaria.

The Treasury at Zaria is a modern picture in an ancient frame. There is a strong room made by a British maker of repute; there are ledgers which hail from Whitehall; there are receipts printed in Arabic which came from London; there are native clerks in flowing native robes, and who sprinkle upon their clothes a curious perfume faintly reminiscent of the bazaars in Stamboul; there are few chairs, mostly sofas and couches; there are rooms and rooms, courtyards and courtyards, all vaulted and built of the sun-dried mud which may be found by those who visit Timbuctoo and the region of the French Sahara. But in a corner a telephone tinkles, and a beautifully-gowned dignitary rushes thereto, and one hears the usual "Hallo! Who's there?" All that is missing is the Gerrard or Western or Kensington. A curious blending of East and West. The ledgers we were permitted to inspect, and we were told that the native mallams or priests had little difficulty in picking up the Latin alphabet. The Resident at all times has the right of an unexpected visit to the Treasury to see that everything is in order, and after a lapse of six months he paid a flying visit, and found the gigantic deficit of one shilling and threepence. Could an English bank do as well? Certainly not better! But the point we desire to emphasize is that with all that advance along the roads of up-to-date accuracy and organization not one jot or tittle of the original scheme of Mohammedan orthodoxy has been abandoned. "We wish to learn," they say, "but you must remember that we are not as you are; we stand apart, by race and religion and tendency of every kind. We respect your methods, we like to learn, but there it finishes: the gulf which divides us can never really be bridged. We will help you, work for you, and, if needs be, die for you; but we retain our own characteristics." How much better than slavish imitation!

The town of Zaria has altered considerably in the last ten years. To-day it might be mistaken for any North

African city. The horrible thatched abominations one sees nearer the coast have disappeared, the houses are practically all of the baked mud one finds fringing the Sahara, and, marvellous to relate, the town is as clean as the floor of an hospital ward. Thanks again to the Emir, who has grasped the fact that infantile mortality increases in the direct ratio to the lack of ordinary sanitary precautions brought into public use. He has his "Dogaris," or native policemen, who, apart from preventing brawls and running in the few, very few, pagan "drunks," have the task of supervising every quarter of the city and seeing that refuse is not allowed to accumulate, and that the elementary rules of sanitary science are observed. Zaria, in 1906, smelt like an exaggerated cesspool. To-day, one might be driving in Bond Street. Which proves that with Mohammedans, usually people gifted with intelligence superior to that inherited from pagan ancestry, where science leads they follow. The market is a large one; also prices are large. One cannot blame the native African for this. We bought a common Dietz (American) lamp for 8s. Price in England, probably 1s. 6d. But the European stores had none, and there were none at Ilorin, Ibadan, or even Lagos, and so naturally, "any port in a storm" being a sound proverb, we paid and were thankful. Similarly with cutlery. No European store possessed a knife or fork or spoon—things we had to have. We found them in the Zaria market; four forks, four knives, four spoons, as made for the native population, and nominally hailing from Sheffield—one guinea! If prices continue upon that scale, then, assuredly, Nigeria will be a resort only for millionaires. But, in point of fact, such prices are fictitious, and must drop once the railway is able to place its hand upon the new rolling stock, the "fons et origo" of the scarcity throughout the entire colony. Zaria has been surveyed, and its teeming narrow streets have been actually named, though the name-plates remain yet to be delivered. They are picturesque because of the life which throngs them. One passes a gaily-caparisoned horseman with a long sword, its sheath covered with red Kano leather, its handle cross-

shaped after the manner of those familiar to us from pictures of the Crusaders, mounted upon a pony which performs antics worthy of a circus as it sees our motor swing around the corner. Its rider sits erect as though made of stone, moving never a muscle, and apparently in perfect control of his steed by means of a curb alone (and what a curb), a piece of jagged iron for a bit, and some embroidered leather for rein, till, as we come abreast of him, he raises his hand high above his head in salutation.

What could speak more of a bygone age with a background of flat-roofed brown houses, for all the world as though taken bodily from some Old Testament setting. The women, with their graceful, swaying draperies, and the children tugging remorselessly at their mothers' robes, raising a howl of mingled fear and astonishment as our sturdy little Ford car swings along, also belong to the picture. Away westward the sun is setting, and banks of black clouds betoken the oncoming of the tornado, which at this time of the year is a daily occurrence. In the market stalls are being rapidly covered, the dust sweeps round the corners in eddies of ever-increasing violence. The wind sighs through the trees, birds become uneasy, and fly hither and thither as though in search, as indeed they are, of shelter. A few minutes pass, and there is a roll of thunder; the tornado is upon us. Streets teeming with life have emptied, the market is deserted, and as the first heavy drops of rain herald the storm the scudding Ford alone remains in the picture, and, truth to tell, its occupants are none too happy at the prospect facing them. An hour later, with the dust laid, the water gushing out of wooden drains into the main channel, the air freshened, and the birds, hitherto strangely silent, breaking once more into song, the native world again awakens to the business of the day, that business, half pleasure, which forms the mainstay of the Hausa's daily toil. Not such a bad life, one reflects, as smiling faces testify.

Away outside the city is a sad little community. It is approached by an unfrequented road, and one

senses subconsciously that one is nearing some abode of sorrow, maybe a cemetery or a native madhouse, or even a prison. But no; it is something quite different; it is the native leper colony. Chance had never placed either of us in such close contiguity with the real leper as on this occasion, and it left us with a species of pitiful horror that such things could be. It was scrupulously clean, this colony of the damned; the Emir sees to that. He is mightily interested in the cases of these unfortunates, and it is due to his initiative that so much has been done, for the services of an English doctor cannot often easily be spared. Natives chatter usually; these are silent. The ring of laughter is absent; even the children look serious as though computing the chances of their developing the plague which has laid their parents low, for, curious to relate, children often escape the scourge altogether though living in the leper settlement. Outside the huts sprawl the human wreckage, who may last for twenty years or more, wasting away literally inch by inch. We saw women with no fingers or toes, men whose faces had withered and shrunk from the ravages of the disease, children who had developed the dread sores which foredoom their owners to be for always outcasts amongst men. And yet it was not an uncheerful community. An old woman showed us her house, and was insistent that we should see how she lived and ate and slept. A youngish man shook his fingerless hand at us, and then demonstrated how it was feasible to do every manner of operation with merely a stump. He seemed to find it almost funny. And an old hag maintained that she was the mother of them all, and that she had been, according to her own computation, a leper for forty years or more. It is possible, we were told, only death is always waiting, and when it arrives is horrible. Your Mohammedan native is not unlike the Russian Moujik. In the sick and suffering, in the epileptic and the insane, he sees not something to avoid, but rather something worthy of respect, if not of veneration, something that has been fashioned by God for some reason of his own, and thus transcending all his other normal works. And

thus, beyond segregating these people at night, they are otherwise free, and even do they marry. The idea is not pleasant, but, as our guide said to us, "Why should we interfere with them? It is not their fault that they suffer. It is the will of Allah, and if they marry of their own why should we interfere?" Which brought out the astonishing statement that two lepers may marry and bring into the world perfectly sound children. An extraordinary fact if accurate, and one which should mightily interest those absorbed in the fascinating study of eugenics. We also learnt that with improved houses, more care for sanitation, and a general uplifting of the moral tone, leprosy showed signs of diminution, though it must be many a long year ere it is placed under control in its entirety. Meanwhile it speaks wonders for the care of the Emir for his people that, unasked and unaided, he has succeeded in thus far segregating these people, who, incidentally, come from all over the Emirate, being reported as unsound by their local headman. In addition, they receive a small subsistence in a financial way, and are at liberty to buy what they like in the local markets. After all, this is a much more practical way of offering charity than the hard-and-fast, cut-and-dried manner in which charity is so often extended in other countries.

To turn to matters more cheery. Exports from Zaria are largely hides and groundnuts. Cotton is on the increase; experiments have been made, and a special seed of American plus native origin has been evolved, with the result that annually the output is advancing by leaps and bounds. But there are still many thousands of acres untenanted which only need the minimum of cultivation to offer rich returns. What a pity that the climate should be unfriendly to the European! It is though, and in spite of cold nights and a high altitude black-water fever is more prevalent here than upon the actual coast, with its mosquitoes and damp, enervating temperature. It may appear presumptuous for the outsider to offer suggestions, but when one is touring through a country it is often the outsider who sees where practical amelioration might occur, and where

expenditure wisely applied might furnish the best results. Thus Zaria Province is undoubtedly suffering from want of population. The tendency is for the native to drift townwards, which in its turn serves to explain the high mortality amongst children, and the prevalence of disease likely to be harmful to coming generations. Sanitation can accomplish a great deal, but not all. Were it possible, a good British doctor attached to each Emirate in an official character, to study only native questions, to arrange native hospitals, and to teach the young idea elementary medical science, would be a veritable Godsend in this country. The regular Colonial service medical man has his hands pretty full with European patients, and really has not the time to give to the all-important problems confronting anyone dealing seriously with the native question. In Russia they have a system of uncertified medical men and women called "Feldshers." They have undergone a preliminary medical training, but have not passed examinations to qualify them as regular practitioners. But they accomplish wonders amongst the peasant population in the rural districts where the skilled man rarely penetrates, and where, owing to shortage of the skilled article, no one need be expected. Now, if a native can be taught to handle a theodolite and work out abstruse mathematical calculations, then assuredly the same material could easily be taught the use of a clinical thermometer, rough and ready surgery, and the diagnosis of the common scourges, such as small-pox, the various fevers, and venereal disease. Under a skilled medical man it would not be long before the nucleus of a useful service would be formed, which would be of assistance beyond words in combating the evils man is heir to, and would eventually assist in building up a sturdy, strong, and ever-increasing population, which some of the Emirates at present so badly need.

CHAPTER XVIII.

OF all the Nigerian Emirates, Kano is the largest and most important. Time was when it was the storm-centre of warlike tribes, but now, like most spots on the earth's surface, its history is commercial and uneventful. However, so prominent a place does Kano occupy in West Africa that it would be unkind entirely to neglect its past picturesque glory. It was a blacksmith named Kano, so says tradition, who first settled here in search of ironstone, and gave the town his name. Certainly, the descendants of the earliest inhabitants still follow that calling, but the legend is silent concerning the date of the founding of the city. It must have been before the tenth century, however, as then "foreigners" first came to Kano, bringing with them horses—animals never before seen in this part of the world. From this time Kano ceased to be a collection of houses peopled by the descendants of the first blacksmith, and became an important town, the capital of a province conquered by the invaders. The present palace, of which more anon, dates from about the time that Christopher Columbus discovered America, and at that period the power of the Emir of Kano had reached its zenith. The people were pagans then and worshipped trees and serpents, sacrificing black animals to their gods; but Mohammedanism was gradually reaching these heathen chiefs, and it needed only a short time to convert the countryside to that faith, although occasional lapses in times of stress were not unknown.

From the sixteenth century to the nineteenth the history of Kano is one succession of wars, during which the Emirate paid tribute to many chiefs of different tribes. Then, in 1807, the Fulani people, large numbers of whom had been in Kano for many generations, decided

to conquer Kano for the ostensible purpose of reforming the Mohammedan faith as practised by the Hausas, but actually for political and economic motives. The war lasted a year, and one great battle took place outside the walls of Kano. It must have been a wonderful spectacle! Imagine, one year after the battle of Friedland, a three-days' combat between men armed with bows and arrows and mounted spearmen in chain and quilted armour! If only Kano had had its Meissonier to paint the picture! Ten thousand spearmen formed the trained army of the defenders, supported by innumerable foot soldiers. The Fulani forces consisted entirely of bowmen, men used from infancy to the bow and arrow as a means of protecting their flocks and herds from wild beasts and raiding tribes. One can see the same type of bows to-day on the backs of wandering Fulanis and catch a glimpse of the poison-tipped arrows in the quiver at their side. In the end the Fulanis conquered, partially, no doubt, thanks to the superior discipline of their troops, but also thanks to the fact that the main part of the Hausa people had no particular love for the existing dynasty, and had nothing to gain by fighting. Suleimanu, the first of the Fulani rulers, is not the ancestor of the Emir of present-day Kano, but his successor, Ibrahim Dabo, starts the line of existing Emirs.

It is sad to relate that the bravery of the Fulanis suffered an eclipse during the nineteenth century. From being bold, hardy and valiant, they seemed to forget the aptitude of their ancestors for war, and their only successful campaigns were waged on unarmed pagans, whom they delighted to chase and kill. This is probably the reason why Alihu, Emir in 1902, played the part of poltroon and rascal when he heard that British forces were advancing against him. The old Fulani chiefs must have looked down angrily from their Mohammedan paradise on such a representative of their race. He knew—none better—that he had no chance of making any favourable terms with the white men. The information that he had received and honoured the Magaji of Keffi, the slayer of a British officer, had reached Sir Frederic Lugard. So he betook himself with a huge

retinue, to the Sultan of Sokoto. That stout-hearted old warrior, disgusted at his guest's cowardice, urged him to return and save his reputation if nothing more. Reluctantly he started back, but the news reached him on the way that Kano had already been occupied by the British. This effectually extinguished the small spark of courage so energetically fanned by his friends at Sokoto, and after a speech of tremendous bombast, in which he said that he would fight to the death, he took to his heels in the darkness, practically unattended. Eventually he was captured, and has passed the remainder of his life in exile at the town of Lokoja in the southern portion of Nigeria. And so came to pass the downfall of Kano as an independent Emirate. But its prosperity was enhanced a thousandfold, and one can still picture to oneself as one walks about the ancient town what it was in the Sultanate's remote days. The high mud walls with their many gates could tell their story of siege, assault and civil war. The galloping horsemen are unchanged from the time of Alwali, the last of the Hausas. The women of the better class are still "purdah," and little naked boys wear juju charms about their necks while they hold in chubby hands Mohammedan rosaries. About the streets lurk the same type of thin, furtive pariah dogs which used to swarm in Constantinople. Here they share their food with vultures, the most repulsive of winged creatures. But one must not shoot these birds—it brings bad luck. So they and the dogs act as street cleaners, and neither seem to grow fat on it.

As might be expected everything in Kano is upon a large scale. The city, though, to be sure, not so very thickly populated, covers the area of a circumference of thirteen miles within its walls. The houses are all flat-roofed and made of sun-baked clay which apparently is impervious to the sternest tornado that ever troubled this portion of North-Western Africa. Geographical position is a riddle to those unacquainted with the lore of maps. Thus Kano is equidistant between Khartoum on the east and Dakar, in French territory on the west, whilst the journey overland to the former by bullock-cart,

horse and camel is a matter of about thirty days. It is north of Sierra Leone, though getting thither entails the weary journey to Lagos, or some other coast port, and then a steamship journey of at least five days, and all the time one appears to be bearing northwards. It is the configuration of the Bight of Benin which is responsible for this strange illusion, one from which it is difficult to free oneself. In area the Emirate covers 35,000 square miles, and boasts of a population of over 2,750,000 souls—a bigger heritage for the Emir than that of the entire population of the Gold Coast, Ashanti and the Northern Territories combined. Following the course pursued at Zaria, the male member of the party was received by the Emir. There was a trifle more pomp and ceremony, Motoring to the city we were accompanied by a bodyguard of five horsemen, one in front, one on each side, and two behind. They were mounted on sturdy little ponies, which took our thoughts back to the Siberian steppes. Their uniform was anything but “uniform.” They were just splashes of delicious colouring—blues and reds and greens melting into a composite whole, relieved of any jarring effect by the action of rain and sun, which long since had softened the original crudity of effect. Swords dangled from their saddles; their spurs, after the Mexican fashion, were polished and burnished till the sun glinted upon them, and as a display of horsemanship the manner in which they effectively cleared the road of both people and live stock was in itself a small lesson. They might almost have been born upon their steeds, so wonderfully did the little beasts respond to the slightest desire of their riders. Outside the palace the Emir was waiting, accompanied by an enormous retinue of slaves. The latter term must not be misunderstood. Nominally slaves, these individuals often rise to considerable eminence and carry on intrigues worthy of some romance with an Eastern setting. There was an indescribable amount of bowing and vocal greeting. The slaves, gowned for the most part in “rigas” of great value—a riga is a voluminous robe, usually profusely embroidered and fashioned somewhat after the style of a kimono—set up a species of

chant, and the visitor to be received passed through the first of the massive ante-chambers which lead to the reception-room. These chambers are all of a type, vaulted and dark, with a small recess like a janitor's box, in which sits the guardian of that particular entrance. Every incomer is scrutinized, and unless approved would be either turned back or arrested. Considering that there must be at least three or four of these ante-chambers, it is obvious that the Emir or his entourage intend to leave nothing to chance, and unpleasant visitors cannot easily find an entrance. The audience chamber was very disappointing. There were two small rickety chairs and a divan covered with an imitation sheepskin rug. That was all the furniture, and there was a total absence of ornamentation, mural or otherwise, of any kind. Contrasted with Zaria's reception-room it was actually mean. The Emir himself, though not long in enjoyment of his present position, is an old man. In fact, he may not much exceed his "brother" Zaria in years, but he has no carriage, and his age sits heavily upon him. He walks slowly and with difficulty. Were one able to fathom the secrets of his mind one would be in no whit surprised to discover that his inmost thought was, "What a bore: here is a white man, and I have to listen to his tiring chatter for at least a quarter of an hour." From which it may be gleaned that he is not a diplomatist of the first water. We recall a particularly offensive diplomat belonging to a friendly Power, who, when he visited the Foreign Office in the old days, was always warmly greeted by one of the then Under-Secretaries of State renowned for his urbanity of manner under any and every circumstance. The latter told us that if ever in a difficulty as to what reply he should make, he always fell back upon one word, "quite," which, as he remarked, meant nothing. After a long conversation one morning the offensive diplomat departed and confided to a friend at the St. James' Club that he was afraid the Under-Secretary's brain was going; he only appeared to know one word, which he reiterated with such persistency that eventually he (the diplomat) felt constrained to take a comparatively speedy departure.

And so with the Emir of Kano! "Madillah" in Hausa means "Indeed," with an accent of delighted surprise, or equally it may mean "Thank God." Hence, when the visitor was seated and his mission had been explained, he was received with a perfect bombardment of "Madillahs." In fact, the number seemed for a moment to unnerve the accompanying Political Officer. Visitor opined that Kano was a very big and fine city. "Madillah!" Visitor opined that the palace was a wonderful testimony to the builders who fashioned it nearly five centuries ago. "Madillah!" (There are portions of the inside walls which actually do date back as far as that.) Visitor affirmed that the Kano market was the largest in Africa. "Madillah!" Visitor, getting slightly embarrassed, mentioned seeing brother "Zaria." Here came a slight bow, tinged with a sceptical smile, and the inevitable "Madillah!" In order to try a last desperate expedient, the visitor stated that that morning he had been privileged to inspect the native prison, that he had found it as clean as could well be expected, and that he was sure the Emir would agree with him that the object of imprisonment should be to cure a species of moral kink rather than to brutalize the individual; that in England our prison system was moulded along these lines, and that did he not think it was the most humanitarian way of dealing with enemies of the social order?

For once the Emir showed signs of animation. "Very good," he replied, "very good for some. But for the many, no! Punishment must be inflicted of such a nature that they will never want to do wrong again! Many natures are impervious to kindness; all the people, in fact, the visitor had seen that morning belonged to that category, and he considered that the heavier the sentence the better for the public." Or words to that effect. Whereon the visitor, greatly daring, mentioned casually that in going through the prison he had chanced upon a man "in articulo mortis" (he was in point of fact dying hard), lying upon the mud flooring with only a scanty native cloth under his head. It was due to the visitor that some alleviation of his lot took place. The

Emir's answer was what might have been expected, "Madillah." After which it was evident that further parley would be mere waste of time, and so, with many secret "Madillahs," no doubt, the visitor took his departure.

Now, allowing for the difference between the mentality of the European and the African, allowing for centuries of undisturbed prejudice and preconceived ideals, allowing for the ineptitude with which the new order must be received by the old, it was instructive to find such a thorough reactionary occupying the place in the most up-to-date and promising of all the provinces of Nigeria. Here is a semi-potentate with an income from the Government of £5,000 a year, plus that which he draws from his own private resources, moneys left to him by inheritance, investments, and so on. Yet his attitude of reaction is so marked as to be almost pitiful. He has never been photographed! "Brother" Zaria, as judges say on the British bench, gave his visitor two of himself. "Kano" apparently actively resented the suggestion that he had ever been so misguided as to allow himself to be perpetuated by a camera! Just outside the compound surrounding the palace is situated the treasury, a fine old building with huge panelled doors which must be of great age. Within these are dark, tortuous passages into which the light of day can never enter, with now and again small courtyards leading into mysterious little rooms wherein are carried on the huge financial transactions of the Kano Emirate. One long cloister-like hall needs special comment, however. Its proportions are really exquisite, and when it is remembered that the great pillars supporting the roof are entirely made of mud, and that the roof is extremely lofty, then it can be understood that the architects who fashioned it were master craftsmen. Twenty years ago this hall played an important part in the financial system, for it was the treasure house wherein were stored the many millions of cowrie shells which then acted as currency. Those must have been halcyon days for the "mammies" who had the counting of them, since by way of payment they could help themselves to a handful

or two, and no one could possibly miss so small an amount.

Without being an enthusiastic motorist, the Emir does not disdain on occasion to use this method of locomotion, and has a mud garage, which houses a couple of cars, built just outside the front gate of the palace. The Emir of Katsina, however, a subsidiary Emir within the Kano Emirate, has nine cars, constituting a record in automobilism amongst the Nigerian Emirs. Time prevented us visiting Katsina, which lies remote from the railway, and is additionally difficult to reach in the rains which were then upon us. But we heard from the resident that this Emir is a most enlightened individual, and a thorough-going sportsman to boot. Often, in the afternoons, when the work of the day is over, he will don the garments of one of his ordinary subjects, and accompanied only by a beater and a dog will wile away many an hour going after bush fowl and such, armed with the latest thing in hammerless ejector guns. He evidently belongs to the new school of Emirs, who, in time, should certainly become the equals in civilization and upbringing of such rulers as those in the Malay States. They have the birth and breeding which, in the long run, is bound to tell. They have age-long tradition and the foundation upon which to build sound and practical modern education. Hence, given peace, there appears every reason why this should be accomplished before so very many years slip away. To revert to Kano for a moment there can be no doubt as to the extraordinary wealth within the Emirate, which at the moment is blocked for want of rolling stock upon the railway.

Outside Kano station, as we saw it, were huge mountains of groundnuts covered with tarpaulins. It was estimated that they represented a total weight of 58,000 tons and this was last season's crop, of which, as yet, not a nut had been moved. Even the crop before had not been cleared, for there still remained several hundred tons for transport to Lagos. Skins and hides were suffering from the same trouble, and there seemed little hope of betterment for some time to come. At the

risk of being unpopular, however, one could not but think, and in point of fact the thought was endorsed by the business community, a more enterprising policy by the railway administration might overcome many of these difficulties. For, if England were too busy with orders for rolling stock, there was America, and had not Nigeria had twelve locomotives therefrom within a few months? Then why not trucks? No doubt the Crown Agents have an answer!

"Parthians, Medes, and Elamites, inhabitants of Mesopotamia, Judea, and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Lybia about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews also, and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians." This quotation could not fail to suggest itself to us as we stood in the crowded streets of Kano Market. There were Arabs from Tunis, Tripoli and Egypt. There were the shrouded Tuaregs, who wear the yashmak and carry swords. There were Fulanis, Semitic in feature, and several shades lighter in colour than the ordinary native. There were Hausas, people from the "coast," people from the "rivers," natives of French "Say" and "Zinder." All of them buying, selling, haggling, protesting, arguing, in many languages, and with many gesticulations. There was literally not room to walk, so great was the throng. We had to push our way through the massed humanity, which gave a little to allow of our passage, and then closed up again. And, when one thinks that this market is held daily throughout the year, and that the same crowd is always in attendance, one marvels what there can be left to buy in the countries supplying it. Truly, there is everything in Kano Market. Do you wish cloth? There is Manchester cotton, cunningly selected to please the local taste in colour; there is the native "Kano cloth," cream or blue. Do you wish a "riga" or any sort of gown? Buy your cloth and take it to any one of the hundred or more tailors who sit cross-legged in their stalls, each working a Singer sewing machine. He will turn you out the latest Mohammedan fashion and—shades of Mohammed!—these on an elaborate design in whatever colour you select. If, however, you are

prosperous you have your robe embroidered by hand. There are plenty of men skilled with the needle in other stalls who will do it. Some of the articles they use, the feminine member of the party was interested to see, have come from Arabia itself, and even from Bulgaria. Then you want slippers. Take your choice. There are red ones of Kano leather and dyed with the famous red dye of Kano, some with heels and some without. There are green ones, and others with as many colours as Joseph's coat; or there are sandals if you wish. Perhaps you wish a case for your Koran. Take your choice! Undoubtedly you will buy a native-made eiderdown, for the nights are cold now in the rainy season, even though you sleep with all your windows tightly shut, as is your custom at all times. And then, after providing for your own needs, you may perhaps think of the feminine part of your family. Purchase some baskets, big ones and small, so that your women can carry loads on their heads suited to their age and strength. Some wooden platters also, and some strings of (Birmingham) beads if you are feeling particularly gracious. Then, for common use, you will not fail to take home some "henna" for tinting finger and toe nails, sticks of antimony for the outlining of the eyes, and the flowers of the tobacco plant to chew. Do not forget a bottle or two of that especially strong scent which you like so much, and which tells of your coming long before you can be seen.

Your wife you will send to buy the foodstuffs. She will get meat in that odiferous section of the market where a European is inclined to hold a handkerchief to his nose, but where the natives sit placidly all day. She will bring back soya-bean cakes, guinea corn, red peppers, okra, dates and onions. And perhaps, if she is observant, she will speak on her return of a fine camel, of a sturdy donkey, or a fleet horse which may be had cheap. For this good service you will give her, as a reward, one of the heavy silver bracelets which are so temptingly displayed, and perhaps a nose ring for one nostril, if you are able to sell the horse at a fine profit to a white "Baturi" who plays polo. Be it understood, all this takes time. An Oriental market is not like the Stock

Exchange, though it exercises the same fascination on its devotees. The purchase of one minute horn bottle in which to carry snuff may take half an hour ! It is easy to imagine, and there is probably a great deal of truth in the surmise, that at least one-third of the people in the market merely "drop in" from force of habit, and without the smallest intention of buying so much as one bobbin of native string. There they stay, the whole day long, hearing the latest gossip the world over, and possibly going home with articles for which they have not the slightest use. As we were inspecting the horse market suddenly we heard a sound of shouting and the beating of many drums, and saw above the heads of the throng a white flag borne on a long pole. "What did it mean?" we asked. The explanation was a quaint one. "They search for unmarried men," said a tall old Hausa, with a twinkle in his eye. "No able-bodied young man has a right to remain unmarried; he should marry and have many children?" We queried. "He is pelted with mud and dust is thrown over him until he is so ashamed that he soon finds a bride." Not a pleasant custom if adopted in Western countries !

Passing from the market, with its noise and colour, one goes down narrow, tortuous streets to the prison, mention of which has been made. It deserves more than passing notice, however, as here one sees the comfort and discomfort of native methods well portrayed. The prisoners were all squatting in the prison courtyard when we arrived. Their uniform, like a Gruyère cheese, consisted mostly of holes, and the remainder was a coarse linen jacket without sleeves, and sadly in need of washing. That and a loin-cloth was the extent of their raiment, unless one includes the fetters. Two and two they are shackled, a ring on one man's leg being joined to a similar ring on his mate by a long chain. With the consent of the Governor the Emir has powers of life and death. Many of the prisoners we saw were serving life sentences, and many were confined there unjustly, and are soon to be released by order of the British Court. That is, to the native, the dark side of the picture. To offset it is the lack of discipline, the

glorious absence of ventilation in the long, dark cells, where they herd together like cattle, and the fact that they work very little. There is no inspection by a European doctor of the prison, and the native substitute—a smiling youth, in the dirtiest “riga” we had yet seen—did not impress one with his knowledge or with the vast amount of interest he took in the 300 or more souls in his charge. The women’s section was rather pathetic. We entered through a door propped open with a human shin bone, and after passing through several windowless rooms we came into a small courtyard, where, leaning against the wall in attitudes of deepest dejection, were seven women. Three had been convicted of murder and four were serving sentences for theft. One amongst them was a woman of the better class, and it was enough to wring one’s heart to see the way in which she tried to shrink away out of sight, ashamed that strangers should witness her degradation. We did not linger long. It is not pleasant to look at shame personified.

From such an habitation enforced it was a relief to turn to the Industrial School, run by the Government for the benefit of the youths of Kano Province. There is no obligation to attend, but, so great is the desire of the boys to learn a trade that a school three times the size could easily be filled. In point of fact, the Government allocates a yearly £1,000, which is supposed to be sufficient for the needs of forty pupils, but so well is the school run, and so high the standard of work accomplished, that sufficient money is made to provide for well over a hundred lads. They work in a large mud building, or, to be exact, in a series of mud cloisters, looking out into courtyards, which give the necessary light for their labours. From hammered brass trays and leather cushions to wardrobes and iron-work is a large range, yet we saw excellent specimens of all these. Imagine a large Morris chair, every inch of it made by a scrap of humanity aged 14! Writing bureaux, tables, beautifully panelled doors, were all in process of making, and a number of boys were industriously embroidering native robes because, for the moment there was a glut of

workers in the machine and carpenters' shops, and the wise instructor did not wish to send them disappointed away, as they had come from a far part of the province to learn "how the white man make plenty money with hands." Once the workers have become proficient, they return to their homes and carry on their trades there, where they make as they hope "plenty money." Breakfast was provided for us by the versatile superintendent of the school, in his house—an interesting specimen of native architecture. Room after room with domed roofs and arches instead of doors, a quaint mud staircase winding—rather uncertainly—up to the next floor; every room at a different level, every wall at a different angle; no window exactly in plumb. And yet the whole effect is charming. The native house builder is very fond of decorating the inside of the roof with bits of coloured china, or even with whole plates, if he can find them. Apropos of this, the agent of the Bank of British West Africa at Kano has a peculiar trophy. In the centre of the roof of his dining-room is firmly embedded a dinner plate with a crest in the centre. Curiosity prompted him to discover what it was. In vain he tried opera and field glasses, the light was not sufficiently good. At last he mounted precariously on a ladder and discovered that the plate bore the crest of the Cunard Steamship Company!

There is another school at Kano which is as interesting in its way as the Industrial School. This is the Survey School. As it was the month of Ramadan, the Moham-medan time of fasting, not all of the pupils were there, but we saw enough to impress us favourably with the mentality of the younger generation. Naturally, to use a theodolite and to be able to apply a certain amount of higher mathematics bespeak a better order of brain power than to make a hinge for a door or a brass candle-stick. The faces of the boys were strikingly intelligent, and we were told that they took great pleasure in their work, which was evidenced by the accuracy and neatness of their maps and the pride they showed in exhibiting them to us.

Kano in the old days surveyed its farm lands for the

purposes of taxation, but then a little "palm oil" from a rich farmer easily converted his large plot of land into a small one on the map. All that is changed now, and the boys turned out from this school are employed by the Government as competent surveyors.

With the exception of those who live in the town of Kano, all live in buildings near the school, and the younger ones are taught the rudiments of English. There is a rest-house inside the walls of Kano for the benefit of non-official Europeans, but it is not frequently used, judging from the ruinous condition into which it has fallen. It is a pity that, at a place the size of Kano, there is not better accommodation for the frequent travellers who are obliged from business reasons to visit it for possibly a week at a time. West African hospitality is proverbial, but the most willing heart cannot enlarge the cubic space of a house, and the unexpected visitor may have a rough time of it, particularly in the rainy season, when even the best roof has been known to leak like a sieve. This recalls to us a strange belief in this part of the world. Everywhere one sees crows—fine black fellows with white collars. All the natives, without exception, are firmly convinced that no crow lays an egg. When asked why and how there are young crows, he will tell one that the crows steal the eggs of other birds, take them up in the sky, and hatch them out into young crows. By what process of nature the egg of, let us say, a partridge becomes a crow they cannot tell, and the final retort always is, "Have you ever found a crow's nest? Of course you have not. No one ever has. So how do you explain it?" After which crushing remark there is nothing more to be said.

No account of Kano would be complete without mentioning the "M.I.," or Mounted Infantry, the *corps d'élite* of West Africa, and unique on the continent, inasmuch as the rank and file are all natives. And what wonderful horsemen they are! No picked men at the Naval and Military Tournament have better control of their horses. To see them on parade is a delight to the eye. At Kano there are four sections, each with horses of a different colour—black, roan, grey and

chestnut. Perfectly groomed and trained, they sweep past the spectator like shining clockwork, and seem to know the words of command as well as do their riders. The soldiers wear a blue and white turban and cummerbund, which at once differentiate them from the fezzed and belted W.A.A.F's. Before the war they were shod with native boots, which added to their picturesqueness, but that has had to give way, for purposes of economy, to the ordinary British cavalry boot, made even more hideous and clumsy to accommodate the native foot. But these atrocities are the only jarring note in what is otherwise as effective a little band of horsemen as can be found anywhere. There are, unfortunately, only 600 of them in all, divided amongst stations where the dreaded tsetse-fly does not make the existence of the horse impossible. Officers and sergeant-major all wear the crest of the Crown bird in their topees, which makes a badge at once simple and distinctive. The crest is like a small brownish brush with a base of soft black. Were there more Crown birds and were not the law against shooting them so stringent, they would soon become fashionable for hats of the opposite sex, for a softer, more delicate ornament could not be found. The bird itself is a species of heron, and there are a number of them, serene in their immunity, walking with long-legged dignity about the fields near Kano.

There has been some idea of doing away with the M.I., but it is sincerely to be hoped that nothing of the sort will occur. All the romance and colour is being exterminated from this practical world of ours, so, while the Nigerian regiment may murmur: "It costs £14,000 a year to keep up the M.I., not including their horses, and look at us—cheap and useful!" the sight of the long lances and the blue and white turbans is thrilling enough to stir the blood of anyone save a Treasury official. To revert once more to stern reality; it is a lamentable fact that the only properly equipped hospital for Europeans in the Northern Province is at Kaduna, 135 miles from Kano, 50 miles from Zaria, and close on 200 miles from the Bauchi Plateau, with its large population of miners and mine officials. There is a

hospital "of sorts" at Kano, but while one can do with makeshifts when in good health, a hospital "of sorts" out here is not desirable.

Illness in West Africa has a disconcerting way of striking without warning, and of prostrating in a few hours a man or woman who had previously appeared to be perfectly well. Even a hundred miles in a slow train with no alleviations, no provision for comfort, may spell the difference between life and death. Therefore at least two more hospitals are urgently required in Northern Nigeria, and it would also be practical politics to have an ambulance coach for each large town, with electric fans and other modern appliances, so that serious cases could be rushed down to Kaduna, or even to Lagos, should necessity demand. With increased prosperity comes increased responsibility, and it is neither wise nor diplomatic to hold human life so cheap as it was in the early days of the colony. We watched the semi-weekly train commencing to get ready to start on its three days' journey to Lagos, and the noise in the station was equalled only by that which attended the building of the tower of Babel. Hausas, with their inevitable blue tea kettles and huge bales and bundles of goods for sale at other markets, wedged themselves into the third-class carriages, in company with "mammies" and "pickens" of all ages and sizes. They each had a party of intimate friends to see them off who were not allowed to pass beyond the barrier, and to them they shrieked last words (extending over half an hour's duration) of counsel, admonition and jest. The friends replied in penetrating tones, to be heard above the bleating of sheep, the baaing of goats, and the cackling of hens, which resented their positions in the goods vans. Fat, important-looking black clerks, usually wearing spectacles, greeted each other in English, using words of many syllables. "Ah, my good friend, Mr. Green, I trust I find you enjoying uncommon health." "Such is indeed the case, Mr. Brown. You have suffered no inconveniences from your journey, I hope?" They shook hands repeatedly and uttered a stream of banalities, until a whistle warned them that it was time to take their seats in their first-

class coaches. The train rumbled out of the station, and the many spectators and loungers were obliged to find some other occupation until this supreme moment could be repeated three days later. Once more silence reigned, and the curtain of the past seemed again to fall upon Kano. A few camels lumbered in from the distant desert, an arab bestriding a diminutive donkey sped across one's vision. Modern Kano was gone.

CHAPTER XIX.

FROM Kano, with its teeming Mohammedan population, with its culture, and its traditions, it is indeed a far cry to Jos, which may justly be described as the capital of the great Bauchi Plateau. This tableland lies at a height of from 4,000 ft. to 5,000 ft. above sea level, and is approximately 200 miles long by seventy miles broad. It possesses two points of great interest; in the first place, it is the home of Pagan tribes, who are undoubtedly amongst the most primitive people in the whole of Western Africa; while, in the second place, the tin mines of this plateau rank amongst the most important of the world. There is no exaggeration in the statement that, given time and opportunity, a book could easily be written concerning the habits and customs of the Pagan communities. How they got there, from what stock they are descended, the history of their past, all is veiled in the profoundest secrecy. We were told by a political officer, who had taken an interest in the question, that he believed that they had formerly possessed a comparatively high state of civilization, and that gradually they had drifted, generation by generation, into their present condition. In support of his contention he instanced some remarkable stone remains which are to be seen on the northern fringe of the tableland, causeways, bridges, and viaducts, neatly fashioned from huge slabs of stone, and certainly beyond the constructive ability of any native race to be found to-day within a thousand miles of the spot. On the other hand, it appears equally likely that when the Fulanis, with their Hausa hordes, overran the Western Soudan, these born warriors—for such they are—took to the hills to preserve their independence. It is worthy of note that they retained this independence until the

discovery of the tin deposits led to active British intervention and the opening up of the plateau by the mining industry. Although the plateau, owing to its altitude, has practically a temperate climate, these people of both sexes despise clothing, and go about, to all intents and purposes, in a state of nature. The only exception which can be named is that women who are married wear what might be termed a very small "bustle," made of grass or leaves or plaited straw. But feminine vanity being the same the world over, and though these ladies do not spend a large dress allowance, as may be imagined, they still have their own ideas of fashion. Thus, some of them will paint elaborate garters in red pigment below the knee, while we have seen a veritable leader of society who had coloured herself blue from her hips downwards. Men and women shave their heads, and the "coming out" dress of the *débutante* is the simple addition to her toilet of a long straw stuck through the upper lip.

Before a young man may enter the bonds of matrimony he is put through a test of endurance to ascertain whether he is worthy of a mate and is fitted to be a parent of the next generation. The ordeal consists of standing before the elders and being beaten over the back, legs, shoulders and abdomen with sticks and leather thongs, several ribs being often broken during the proceeding. In the latter event, of course, the applicant for this unpleasant form of marriage licence is considered as useless to the community, as also is he who shouts from pain. Should he, however, pass his examination, he takes the lady of his choice without going through any formality, such as asking her permission, and she becomes one of the common wives of the family, for communism as practised here is carried to the extreme conclusion advocated by the Bolsheviks in the early days of their power—women as common property. It must be admitted that this curious state of affairs has apparently had no deteriorating effect from a physical standpoint, since both men and women are usually most magnificent specimens of humanity.

A noticeable feature about these tribes is the fact that

one never sees their children, who during their earliest years are cared for by the old women of the village, who are too decrepid to engage in manual labour. Men and women alike work upon the farms for the common weal, though members of the male population both hunt and fish. All are wonderful horsemen, and we were told that for three days one village put up a continuous fight against a detachment of native soldiers under British officers, who were armed with Maxim guns as well as rifles. To the credit of these people it must be recorded that, once beaten they bear not the least malice, and, as we can testify, all are on the best of terms with the mining community. As workers, however, they do not shine. In the first place money, as such, is of no use to them, with the single exception of that which they require for the payment of their annual tax to the Government. For this purpose they will deign to work in the mines for a fortnight, and even then they are not highly satisfactory, since, the mornings being chilly and clothing being absent, they will not leave the shelter of their huts until the sun is well up and the mists of the night have been dispelled through its agency. We visited one native village under the charge of an amiable old rogue of a headman, who made his menfolk part with some of their spears in return for despised currency of the realm, which, however, the headman evidently had some use for himself, since he collected it with the utmost rapidity as we doled it out to the rightful recipients. The huts were of clay, with the most minute doors, through which the owners literally had to wriggle upon their stomachs. It was explained to us that in their opinion this afforded them the maximum of privacy, since the operation of getting in and out was not attractive, and hence afternoon callers were unusual! Primitive humanity in some respects possesses a curiously sardonic species of utilitarian humour; those doorways form an example. The country through which we passed en route for some mines which we visited was liberally studded with native villages, each surrounded with a tall hedge of thick and prickly cactus, an excellent precaution against the raids of enemies.

When British troops encountered these obstructions during the Bauchi military expedition of 1906-7 the casualties suffered through their medium were terribly heavy, and it was rather surprising that they were still allowed to retain them, which only goes to prove how satisfied these pagans are with British rule, and how confident we are that they have no grounds for complaint and no desire to cause the administration trouble. In many respects the Bauchi Plateau reminds one forcibly of the West of Scotland. To a West countryman, again, it may speak of Dartmoor. There are vast hummocks of bare rock which might easily be taken for "tors." There are miles of magnificent pasture harbouring the famous Fulani cattle, which are not unlike the Highland breed. And, above all, in the early morning, when the mist is just commencing to rise, when nature is awaking to another day, and, except for the chirruping of myriad birds, there is the wonderful restful silence of the upland which can only be found in the upland and far removed from the hurly-burly of the plain. Then it seems as though in all reality the dear old West Country round about Hay Tor, or Widecombe, or Peter Tavy and his sister Mary had been transplanted for the nonce to far-away Nigeria. Alas, however, daylight and tin mines dissipate romance, and the countryside resembles, as indeed it is, a hive of industry. The largest undertaking in connection with the plateau is without doubt the great Ropp Tin Company, situated about forty miles from Jos, and reached by an admirable motor road, constructed in the bad old days of faulty administration by this enterprising and go-ahead corporation.

It is pleasing to be able to state that the Government has now taken over this commercial artery, which, apart from the mine, taps a portion of the country rich not only in minerals, but in farms formerly stunted by lack of communication. Considering that, during the war, tin was as scarce as could be, that it was most urgently needed, and that this undertaking is the fifth in the world as regards tin production, then what can be said for an administration which deliberately ignored



Native Women of the Jos Plateau.



Native Hut, Togoland.

request after request for a road, and contented itself with the retort, "If you want one, make it yourselves." Comment is hardly necessary, but enterprising administration it emphatically is not.

A few figures concerning Ropp may not be without interest. Royalties to the Government from 1912 to 1919 reached the respectable figure of £45,000. Roads cost about £22,000; railway freightage the abnormal sum of £70,000. And spent in Nigeria was a total sum of nearly £300,000, all money, be it remembered, going into the country and helping its finances through various diverse channels. Yet the one request for the aforesaid road was refused! During the period under consideration the tin produced amounted to 4,180 tons, which, at £450 a ton, represents a value of over £1,800,000. Now, things seem to be altering for the better, although the old adage, "Put not your trust in princes," might be safely applied to Governments and their policy. Certainly, many changes, beneficial to the mining community, are under consideration, and not the least of these is the question of railway freightage.

As an example of how to discourage an industry of vital importance to the Empire the following may be aptly quoted. At Ropp there is an oxy-acetylene welding installation of inestimable value in repair work upon the great dredgers employed on the river. The oxygen for it costs the moderate sum of 5s. a cylinder in England. The freight to Ropp, or rather to rail head at Bakuru, whence the mines' own lorries transport it to the works, represents £4 3s. a cylinder! In other words, the freightage amounts to over sixteen times the original value of the article for a journey by sea to Lagos, and thence by Government railway to its terminus. And there are those who seriously affirm that the railway was constructed as an Imperial measure, as a link of Empire, and not, as with a private company, as a money-making and profiteering concern pure and simple. Let it also not be forgotten that there are plenty of other commodities which pay similar exorbitant freightage, which are absolute neces-

sities for the carrying on of the tin industry, and that upon the plateau there are numberless small concerns paying a reasonable dividend to their shareholders, but to whom expense of this sort spells virtual extinction. Ropp happens to be wealthy, but in justice to its less happily situated neighbours it has made the strongest representations to the Administration, and there is every reason to anticipate a radical change in the near future. Which is all to the good, for it is of no use to write in blinkers, or to turn a deaf ear when one is travelling through a country of potential value to those in search—as most are nowadays—of a decent livelihood, after all the be-all and end-all of Imperial acquisition. And the feeling between the mining community and the mining administration has been very acute, though definite promise of reform has dulled temporarily that strong suspicion that promises are often merely pie-crust. Handle the miners with sympathy, administer in a broad-minded fashion, and break the pedantic and high-flown attitude of the official of the past, and the rest will be easy. Then there will follow further exploitation, to everyone's advantage.

Having suffered disillusionment in seeing gold mines on the Gold Coast, we were not prepared to find anything wonderful in tin mines in Nigeria. And yet, to a certain extent, there is an element of the dramatic about the Ropp mine. There, in the heart of this pagan country, miles away from civilization, is the most up-to-date electric plant anywhere to be found. To look at the enormous driving wheels and to realize the distance they had to be transported before the present motor road was in existence, makes one marvel at the sublime audacity which carried through such an undertaking. The plant controls the two dredgers which work the river bed for tin, thus expediting the work and minimizing the amount of manual labour. Practically all the tin mines on the plateau are alluvial, which accounts to some extent for the number of sunstrokes amongst the white miners, for although this tableland is cool, the sun's rays are more deadly here than on the damp sea-coast where they are not so direct. At Ropp, however

there is only one grave. It is on the slope of a hill below which a river rushes in gentle cataracts to the plain, and one can see range after range of mountains stretching away, strangely distinct, to the horizon. A peaceful and pleasant place in which to rest! And in the grave lies a white woman, the wife of a mine manager, who succumbed to influenza during that awful period in West Africa when black and white alike dropped in their thousands before the pestilence. There are always flowers on the grave, placed there by those who knew and loved her, and by many to whom she was only a name. Exile, whether it be voluntary or enforced, brings out the tender side of man's nature as well as the rough.

There is another mine, about thirty miles from Jos, which does not possess the Ropp motor road, Truly, we felt it somewhat in the nature of an achievement to go there and return without mishap, although with the most skilful of drivers. Imagine motoring for twenty miles over ploughed fields, interspersed with gullies just wide enough to rack the springs of any car and the occupants thereof. The road, which was rather like an imaginary line between two points, was lost and found a dozen times during the journey. Pagans working in the fields looked at us in wonder. They have grown accustomed to seeing the white man flash by on a smooth road, but that he and his "juju" should venture over such country as this caused them to pause a moment in their labours. And we, bouncing and bumping on our way, and wondering how much longer the tortured springs would last, felt that they were right to marvel. It was with relief that we finally arrived at the mine manager's house, where we were greeted by his "boys," who, quite unperturbed by the advent of four unexpected guests, said they would soon have lunch ready for us all. A black cook is rarely upset by the unforeseen, and the way he can conjure sufficient food out of a desert is worthy of notice by the Indian jugglers who produce a flowering tree before one's eyes in ten minutes. This particular mine was not large; there was only the one white man there; the country round

about looked as promising as the Giant's Causeway ; yet "Ibrahim," the cook, served us and his master the following lunch : Chicken soup (tinned), salmon rissoles, mutton cutlets and yams, chicken fricassé (tinned), cherries and fresh lettuce, cucumbers and coffee. Perhaps we lingered too long at this hospitable shelter. Certainly tornadoes overtook us on our way back, and the discomforts were increased by the rain, which rushed like mountain streams down the previously dry gullies, obliterating the marks made by our wheels in the morning. Three separate and distinct tornadoes gave us the benefit of their company before we reached Jos. The thunder and lightning amongst the ironstone hills was truly appalling, and even the remark of one of us that it was exactly like a bad storm at Drury Lane failed to reconcile us to the risk we ran. But everything comes to an end sooner or later, and in spite of ominous skids when we reached the high road once more, in spite of rushing through water so deep that the spray was flung high on each side of the car, in spite of being, like Mr. Mantellini, "demned, demp, moist and unpleasant bodies," we eventually reached Tuton-an-Wada, the home of our kind host, Colonel W. Laws, C.M.G., D.S.O.,

Colonel Laws may be justly described as the pioneer of Nigerian tin. We have known him for many years, and we can remember how, in 1905, alone and unaided, he prospected the Plateau for the Niger Company. Maybe some day he will write his reminiscences. We have urged him to do so ; it would make the best of good reading for the schoolboy, or, for that matter, for the grown man who has the call of the wild and the demand for adventure, in his blood. Suffice it to chronicle here a mere historic fact ; alone, as far as white company was concerned, and with the magnificent escort of eight soldiers—the most the "Doubting Thomases" of the Administration would permit—this gentleman invaded the plateau on his own initiative, so to speak, overcame resistance with diplomacy, or mock force, harangued peoples whose language was a closed book even to native interpreters, the said haranguing

being mostly by signs, presents, and the methods which may have been used by such explorers as Clapperton or Mungo Park in their wanderings in Africa, and in the end succeeded in getting what he wanted. A very fine performance, worthy of the explorers of a past generation, and promising a similar fulfilment for the coming.

Like most mining centres, Jos itself is not attractive, and is most costly. The railway might be expected to serve the community there, but that question deserves a chapter to itself, for the Nigerian railway system as a whole demands attention, and, one might add, provides some amusement to all concerned unless they be ill, when it becomes tinged with inevitable tragedy. The Bauchi railway touches many points whence fresh food might be easily obtained, but the freightage rates are so prohibitive that a chicken at seven shillings is usual, the same at Zaria—140 miles away—being eighteenpence. And if the scale of living at Jos rules high, then assuredly further afield it becomes simply enormous, practically ridiculous. Local legislation, of which also more anon, has robbed the mining man of his liquor, though not the administrator to the same extent. At the moment, these facts are mentioned in order that the reader may visualize a small community in a very lonely situation which is deprived of practically any common or garden alleviation of its lot through the silly administrative ordinances. And it must be remembered again that a mining official in such conditions demands higher pay, dividends become less, and the ultimate effect must be to send up the price of tin, which is most undesirable. If a mineral can be produced cheaply under given conditions, then this is for the benefit of the world at large, provided the conditions are not harmful to others. There can never be any harm in fair criticism, and it is well that these salient features, in a country entering into what one might not inaptly call "intensive development," be clearly grasped.

It was while visiting Colonel Laws that we witnessed one of those minor, but infinitely pathetic, tragedies of the West Coast—the separation of a dog from his master. "Belabi" was a large, red animal, the size of a full-

grown retriever, of no known breed, but possessed of a capacity for suffering we have rarely seen equalled. He was a "bush dog," pariah, what you will; but since he was a baby he had lived with his white master, sleeping by his side at night, receiving his food from those hands, walking at his heels by day. And at the end of a year his master had gone home, leaving Belabi in the charge of Colonel Laws. Food he had in plenty; the best cushions and the most comfortable chairs were at his disposal; kind words and sympathy were lavished upon him. But to Belabi nothing mattered, save that he no longer saw the one who meant all the world to him. Every time a motor drew up at the steps of the bungalow he dashed out to it and was in a moment sniffing the seat, pushing aside its occupants with his great bulk. Every morning he entered our bedroom, previously occupied by his master, and hunted for him. He was gentle, ate a little when coaxed, and accepted caresses with a mournful patience, but at intervals the soft red forehead would wrinkle into a puzzled frown and he would raise his head and howl. They feared he would go mad from grief, this poor devoted mongrel. One wonders what he would have done had he known that his idol never intended to return. Wasn't it Georges Sand who said, "The more I know men, the better I love dogs"? We have never heard the fate of Belabi, but we will never forget him.

The market at Jos, and though we seem to write indefinitely about markets, it is there one sees the life of the people, was interesting though small. Naked Pagans, Hausas in their voluminous robes, and Fulani women with long braids of horsehair added to their own wool, elbowed each other with sublime unconcern. Our "boys," however, who had been in a state of ill-concealed terror ever since they had reached Zaria were vastly intrigued. Feeling the cold of the Plateau acutely, they could not understand how the Pagans managed to exist without many wraps, though the Eve-like costume of the ladies brought from Ansumanah the remark: "Their husbands no pay plenty money for dress for them, so they fit catch plenty wife cheap."

Alas! it is not always true that the less one wears the less expensive it is. Let husbands seeking the ideal state of things migrate to the Bauchi Plateau and become Pagans! The little stools on which the women sit in the market attracted our attention. About eight inches high, they are elaborately carved and painted black, and make for a European delightful footstools. One stout dame removed her stool from beneath her and held it out for inspection or sale. At hearing the price offered she indignantly popped down on it again; the most definite negative imaginable. Eventually, however, we acquired two of these trophies, from one of which its late owner asked that she might remove a string of beads as they were her especial juju.

It was with regret that we left this invigorating air and packed ourselves into the train for Zaria. As M'Praeso on the Gold Coast is to Accra or Sekondi, so is the Bauchi Plateau to the rest of Nigeria, and it seems a waste of opportunity that the Government does not here establish a hospital and sanatorium. Officials might be admitted cost free; outsiders might well pay a reasonable fee in order to feel that they were not actually recipients of charity, which would be most undesirable. The ground necessary could be secured at small cost, the expense of the buildings would not be dreadful, and many a life could be saved which otherwise, unfortunately, finds its finis somewhere north of the Canary Islands, with a piece of canvas and a few fire-bars as shroud and grave. Judge not the West Coast mortality by official returns. They are correct in themselves, but it is possible to burke the truth in many ways, and if the individual is placed on board a ship "in extremis" there is no reason to include him or her as a guest in the "port of missing men" from Nigeria or the Gold Coast or any other West African Colony. The plateau is undoubtedly the most healthy spot one can find in these regions; it is nearer the source of trouble than the Canary Islands; it does not offer the danger of travel to England in overcrowded steamers with doubtful medical attention, and if the railway be improved a little it is easily approachable.

CHAPTER XX.

MOST of us have been motoring along the wonderful English lanes with every now and again a turn or twist bringing us upon the unexpected, maybe a piece of wind-swept, gorse-bloomed common, maybe a solemn, tree-crowned hill dark with the mystery of age-long growth, and then, as suddenly, the eye has been arrested. By what? Out of the beyond has arisen, without apparent rhyme or reason, a curious edifice, possibly a monument alone in its solitude; possibly a spurious monstrosity fashioned by folk who knew not Byzantine architecture, but thought they did; possibly something belonging to a school of thought which must have been inspired by Heath Robinson. And wondering, who has not leaned over to the chauffeur, greatly versed in the local lore, and asked, "What on earth is that?" The response has always been the same, with slight variations: "Never heard of Rackham's Folly, sir? Well known this way, sir. They do say he went off his head after his wife died, and that's her memorial." Or else, "That's Tomkinson's Folly. He built it because he thought it would be a sort of landmark for folk what lost their way; at least that's what they do say, but, Lord bless 'ee, it only be local gossip." And so on. With all due respect for its founder and the genius which directed him, Kaduna very strongly reminded us of one of these mental idiosyncrasies. And thereby hangs a tale. When Northern Nigeria that was, was a mere infant in arms and was looking anxiously for something tangible which it could loftily term its "capital," the story goes that a party of Government engineers were sent out into the bush not far from Kaduna's River to find a suitable site. It was hot. The engineers and accompanying surveyors were thirsty,

tired, and generally "fed up." Said one: "Well, for goodness sake, don't let's wander for ever! We've got to find a site somewhere, and let this do." There was no cogent reason for saying "No," and so the little band retraced their steps, saw the then Governor, Sir Frederick Lugard, and behold! Zungeru was born.

It must be explained that Zungeru was the old Northern Nigerian capital of pre-amalgamation days and it was always a source of wonder to newcomers why it had been permitted to bloom in all its apparent splendour. It led nowhere in particular, its communications by water were erratic, to use a mild term, and in the dry season practically ceased, and, needless to say, in those long-ago days, railway connection with the coast and Lagos was unknown. And so, for some years Zungeru continued to flourish like some forced hot-house plant, till growth of trade, prospects of amalgamation, and demand for something more convenient as headquarters became dominant factors in the situation. In parenthesis let it be granted that as a station Zungeru was not at all bad; there are trees, some shady avenues, a nice roomy hospital, and a convenient cemetery. But the change had to come, and with the arrival of Lagos and Southern Nigeria as partners in the scheme of the greater Nigeria, a new site had of necessity to be located. People call Kaduna, which was the result of these changed circumstances, "Lugard's Folly," or, alternately, Goldsmith's "Deserted Village," the latter after the Lieutenant-Governor of that name, a most charming man, whom we met, and who put up a very good defence on behalf of his protégé. But, first of all, the "cons." Kaduna lies, as did Zungeru, in the middle of nowhere. Its population is official practically solely. It is miles from any large town, and it appears to the outsider as though some "genie" had said with a wave of a wand, "There will be a township here, and pretty soon." It arrived in so short a space of time that, frankly, few people in Nigeria appear yet to have discovered the fact. If you say to any Nigerian, "Have you been to Kaduna?" the mere expression of the eyes of the answerer is sufficient to explain what passes mentally. "Certainly not! Why on earth go there?"

At Kaduna there is a Government House, rarely, very rarely, visited by the present Governor, who is frank in his opinions about it. It is the headquarters of the commandant of the Nigerian forces—an excellent choice, as we shall show. There is a magnificent-looking hospital in course of erection when we saw it to serve a territory which ought to have its own local hospitals were money forthcoming. There is an ice plant, a polo-ground, a cricket pitch, a golf course, a race track, and miles of beautiful macadamized roads—the best we ever saw in West Africa, outside of Togoland. Each European bungalow is surrounded by a compound or garden—which you please—of great size, an excellent idea if continuity of occupation could be ensured. People in West Africa are similar to those elsewhere, and they appreciate as much as others vegetables, fruit, and flowers—perhaps flowers most of all, they are humanizing. But if after ten months of careful attention necessity and orders force the occupant to surrender his or her garden, then naturally a feeling will be born that it is not worth while to do anything except to “carry on” so far as gardening is concerned. For, be it remembered, even this little piece of garden costs money to keep up, and people do not come here for pleasure. And so the large gardens of Kaduna are a weary-looking commentary upon the fallacy that it is possible to make bricks without the necessary straw. They seem to cry aloud and say: “Do come and look after us, and we will do our best for you.” The new hospital aforementioned will be a fine building. We went over it. There are ramps to the floors, preventing the jolting that inevitably occurs when stairs must be climbed to bring a “case” to a first-floor ward. There are rooms to hold only one person, with four windows and two doors, thus ensuring ventilation which should, from the unpractical lay-mind, be a boon never to be forgotten in a sweltering climate such as this. That this opinion does not meet approval from medicos or nurses at Kaduna moves us not a whit. No one approves of anything in Nigeria unless they have fashioned, framed, and constructed it themselves—inci-

dentally a fundamental error in administration where perpetuity depends almost entirely upon loyalty to the preconceived convictions of those who have gone before. It is so easy to destroy and so easy to condemn. It is so pleasant to surround oneself with a barrage of what one is going to accomplish and so gratifying to realize that one's predecessor fell far short of performance which would have benefited policy, people, and public. Kaduna Hospital promises to be one of the finest in this portion of Africa; such, at least, is our unbiased opinion.

And now to turn to our main theme: Was Kaduna such a bad place to choose as nominal capital of united Nigeria? We have pretty thoroughly exploited the *cons*; may not the *pros* exist in spite of prejudice? Why, certainly. The Lieutenant-Governor, a practical man in many respects, showed us a map of Nigeria as it is to-day. He gave us a pair of compasses, and asked us to try whether Kaduna was more or less the centre of the colony. We tried, and we found that actually such was the fact. He then reminded us that Nigeria was not a homogeneous whole, that there were many conflicting interests, religious, territorial, and racial, and finished up by pointing out that if Delhi had been chosen capital of India for territorial reasons, if the new capital of Australia was not to be situated at Sydney or Melbourne, but elsewhere, then why should Nigeria have its administrative centre at Lagos, a much more ridiculous proceeding than having the capital of England and the Empire at Penzance. This sounds like hard common sense. There must inevitably be some central zone, and history has shown the futility of attempting to administer a country from its confines.

Surely one of the causes of the Tsarist downfall, and here we are both on solid ground, came from the very fact that Peter the Great never comprehended the prime factor in the question of government, namely, facility of access to the capital. How many subjects of the great Emirates of the north of this country can afford to visit Lagos? What do they know about the Government there? What do they care if they are

told that a Governor, whom they have seen for one minute when he speeded by in a motor car on one of his periodic tours, represented the King. It means nothing to them, and if these things must be made patent to the native they must be administered in large, soul-satisfying quantities. And if this applies to the Mohammedan, how much more to the Pagan in what was Southern Nigeria, who stands still steeped in his slime of pestilential indifference to aught save his own fears. Open up things and banish the fiction that because Penzance has a pleasant if enervating climate it need be the centre of the mechanism of a large undertaking. It is not. Other countries are grappling with problems larger than this, and it must be insisted that if Sir Frederick Lugard, one of the greatest British Pro-Consuls who ever breathed, erred in method, in comprehension of the human "ego," in the sympathy which usually accompanies the pioneer, he arrived with a shrewdness surprising in its intensity at the one cardinal factor which makes native administration at all possible: "Do not judge by preconceived conclusions of anyone. Judge them by first-hand evidence." And for that Kaduna was built. Similarly it may be rightly insisted that as the military centre of Nigeria, the focal point of military action when the first axiom is to strike quick and hard, Kaduna has a great deal to be said for it. In fact, it would be difficult to discover a situation occupying a better strategic position.

So much, then, for our visit to Kaduna. But there still remains one point which must receive due consideration, since upon it depends not only the health and welfare of all officials, but their contentment; we refer to the ever-vexing housing question. At Kaduna we were permitted to inspect bungalow after bungalow, built for all the world like so many peas in a pod, so alike were they. A bungalow of this type consists of one central room of fair proportions with a verandah running around its four sides. The occupant may use his own ingenuity and cut up this verandah to suit his own fancy. He may make, as we saw in a bachelor's lodging, an office, a bath-room, and a dining-room of minute pro-

portions, whilst by dividing the large room two small ones may be made of it. This accommodation is impartially bestowed upon married and single alike. In the case of a married couple could anything more uncomfortable, more lacking in privacy, more tended to produce all the ailments which the West African medico spends his time in fighting, ever have been devised? Further, and of this point we were again and again reminded, these bungalows are not even sunproof; the wretched occupants, while the sun is up, actually are obliged to wear solar topees the entire day. It may be argued that some people feel the sun more than others, and that a proportion of the Europeans never bother about such matters. True. We have seen a man at noon-day walking about in the hottest part of Lome, the hottest town upon the West Coast, with only a cloth cap upon his head. But he was the exception which proves the rule, and it must be allowed that the sun affects some more than others. But a corrugated iron roof painted red, even when lined with felt underneath, is a deathtrap to the many. The usual plea of economy was offered to us as an explanation. Economy, forsooth! Poor economy when it is remembered that the efficient official who can keep in good health and good spirits in the West African Colonies is about as rare as the great auk's egg. In the way of housing and material comfort nothing can be too good for these frontiersmen of Empire. Even in a temperate climate there are essentials for all human beings, if they are to be useful citizens, morally, mentally and physically. These three essentials are privacy, light and space. And if privacy, light and space are necessary in temperate climates where the heart does not have to work so furiously, where the petty worries of life are mitigated by pleasures, where one can be clothed yet comfortable, how much more are these essentials of paramount importance in the tropics. On the Gold Coast some of the houses are excellent, and if any increase should be made in the length of tour (as has been rumoured), nothing can be expected from it but an increase in the sick list, unless houses such as one finds at Accra are constructed.

About the worst possible specimen of building we saw at Lagos—a monument of “Mid-Nigerian” architecture as distinguished from the mud huts of Early Nigerian type, and far less comfortable. This was a Government Rest House, and is known locally as “The Chest of Drawers,” presumably because so much is packed into so little space. It is a shocking building in which to house white men, many of them obliged to pass a whole term of service within its walls. Each occupant receives one room in which he must exist, except when he is at work or is having his meals in the stuffy little common mess room. The well-to-do may belong to the club and have meals there, and to some extent make it an outside home, but all this costs money, and the average official is not a rich man—to be precise, he is worse paid than a miner at the present day in England; we wish miners would note that—whilst he may have responsibilities at home which also cost money. Hence, after working hours, he may find distraction at the tennis court, listen to the band for a while, and then go back to unadulterated discomfort and slovenliness, for it may be accepted as an axiom that the native boy will not take trouble where he sees that no trouble is being taken. We were told of one official who had spent three tours in these precise surroundings, and were asked whether we were surprised if a man under such conditions should develop, if he did not find some other much worse malady, neurasthenia. The answer, of course, is in the negative. Housing is just as important in the efficiency of the entire administrative organization as medical attendance; they are certainly interdependent, and the one might go far to render the other less necessary.

After this digression, for which the bungalows at Kaduna are responsible, we must revert to that place. Situated about a mile from the Cantonment is the Botanical Garden, whence is sent away every species of fruit and flower trees suitable for planting in the whole of the vast area of Nigeria. Officials buy their young trees or plants, but for the Emirs and minor native rulers inducements are held out to get them to plant along the roads in their towns trees which in time might

acquire economic value, such as pawpaw (a species of melon), bananas and such like. It is a pity that there is not more response, but the education of the native has not yet gone as far as teaching him the nutritive and medicinal value of fruit, whilst as for vegetables, he seems still to be satisfied with the everlasting yam and okra, with which he flavours his fourrah or porridge. But these are only matters of time and patience, and there is no reason why in due course the native towns of Nigeria should not be possessed of avenues lined with all the fruit-bearing trees suitable to the country, at once an asset of commercial value and a factor in the beautifying of what otherwise is apt to become ugly and dusty roadways. Further, at the Kaduna Botanical Gardens are carried on experiments in the shape of grafting such things as the West African mango, a rather poor fruit, upon the West Indian, its succulent relative. The result is amazing, and now there is no reason why mangoes fully equal to the Jamaican variety should not be as common in Nigeria as the proverbial weed. Flowers receive attention, and many a lonely bungalow is made homely by growths of plumbago, bourgainvillia, and even roses, all the direct product of this garden, founded in the most humble of fashions, and now bidding fair to outgrow the reputation of the well-known Botanical Gardens at Victoria, Cameroons, the pride and boast of the Germans when they held sway over that country.

We had a delightful tea with the presiding genius of the Gardens, which was still further enlivened by the presence of three nurses attached to the Kaduna Hospital, one of them just out from home. How fresh and pink her skin was and how untired were her big blue eyes! But the rest of us, yellow, tired creatures that we were, had our revenge, for she promptly fell a victim to the everlasting "yam" joke. Why is it that the word "yam" conjures up visions of fish, flesh or fowl, but never a vegetable? It is always so, and the fate of the nurse at Kaduna who feared to go into the bush lest she be bitten by a wild yam was listened to with rapt attention by this "tenderfoot" who asked breathlessly, "And was she?"

Stories about yams would fill a book in themselves, but one we must give as it redounds to the credit of the Royal Navy. Not so many years ago H.M.S. ——— was off the West Coast of Africa, having amongst its complement of officers two midshipmen. These two youngsters expressed a wish to go on shore and do a bit of shooting, and the Captain, who was fond of his joke, solemnly told them that they had his permission to shoot all the yams they could find. Not knowing in the least what manner of animal a yam was and being too proud to ask, they left the ship accompanied by the grins of those who, in their time, had also "been bitten." At nightfall they returned, hot, tired and empty handed. "Where are those yams you promised us?" inquired the Skipper. "We shot one, sir, but it fell into the river and we couldn't get it," was the astute answer. And no one knew whether they had discovered the plot or not, for those worthy representatives of "the silent navy" kept their own counsel concerning their day's sport.

We had had a busy day, and after a cordial farewell to our kind guide through the garden, were not sorry to return to the Lieutenant-Governor's delightful house for dinner. The word "house" is used purposely, since Mr. Goldsmith, our host, having the desire to live life as he thought it might be lived even in the tropics, had added on to what was an unpretentious bungalow another storey, had fashioned the inside of the house to resemble a regular country home in England, and had spent time and ingenuity in making a really good English garden. It was almost hard to realize that, as we ate our dinner, we were far away in the middle of great unknown Nigeria. Unknown, why? The answer, we suppose, is that the climate is against tourists and fashion with a capital F. Folk at home we thought at the time, and it has since proved true, "will ask us the same old banalities on our return." "You've been to Africa, we hear. Did you see our first cousin So-and-So? He's doing something at Nairobi; couldn't have been far from you," and so on and so on. It seems almost impossible to implant in the conception of the great British public

that there are four Africas as there are four sides to a square, North, South, East and West. And who shall say that the least of these is West.

A tornado was threatening as we said farewell to our good host. Thoughtful always, he pressed upon us a magnificent turkey to carry us along in the fresh-food line for our journey to the River Niger and down it to the township of Lokoja, once important as the port of entry to Northern Nigeria, now merely a hospital base, and a centre for a few soldiers, but on the direct way seawards. The rainy season was starting, hot and heavy. As we reached our sleeping quarters a terrific thunderstorm burst over us, and in a minute our coaches, in spite of all the exertions of the boys, were literally afloat. Not pleasant, but one grows accustomed to little inconveniences such as this.

CHAPTER XXI.

THERE are three thousand miles of the River Niger. Its source is in French Guinea, north and east of Sierra Leone, and thence it wanders, in a truly African and haphazard fashion, north-east, south-east, due south, south-east again, and finally empties itself through many mouths fringed with mango swamps, due south once more into the Gulf of Guinea. It is oily and sluggish like the natives along its banks, and, like them, when roused it is swift and terrible. Until the railway came it was a pack-mule among rivers, bearing the commerce of the country, its people and their chattels up and down its broad surface. It is mentioned by Herodotus and by Pliny who speculated on its relationship with the Nile and knew not if it flowed east or west or whether it it ended or began in the thirsty sands of the Sahara. Many are the tragedies connected with its exploration. The first known to us is when John Ledyard, who had won his spurs as an explorer with Captain Cook, was sent by the African Association, a society formed for promoting discovery in that country, in 1788, to bring information concerning this river, and died at Cairo in the same year. Then followed Lucas in 1789 and Major Houghton in 1791. The former's data was unreliable, and the latter, after ascending the river Gambia, was deserted by his party and perished miserably. In 1795, Mungo Park made his first expedition, following in the footsteps of Major Houghton, whose body he discovered at Jarra. At last he reached the Niger after incredible difficulties and bodily suffering. The river, as he saw it, flowed from west to east, and the theory was then advanced that the Niger and the Congo were one and the same.

In 1805, Park started on his second expedition, taking

with him a number of Europeans including his brother-in-law, Dr. Anderson. By the time they reached Sansandig, 300 miles as the crow flies south-west of Timbuktu, Dr. Anderson and almost all the other white men were dead and there were still many miles to traverse. But Park's indomitable spirit was unbeaten. In one letter that he wrote at this time he said, "Though all the Europeans that are with me should die, and though I were myself half dead, I would still persevere, and if I could not succeed in the object of my journey, I would at least die in the Niger." It was in November of 1805 that Park left Sansandig, in H.M. schooner "Joliba," actually a couple of native flat-bottomed canoes, converted and mended mainly by his own efforts. "In some respects it deserves to rank with the voyage of Columbus across the Atlantic. The bourne was equally uncertain, the distance not so very much less, the perils quite as great. . . . Columbus, too, had always the option of turning back. For Park there was no such door of escape. Success or death was his only choice, and even success might mean captivity or worse. . . . For sole means of carrying out this wonderful enterprise Park had nothing better than an unwieldy, half-rotten canoe, and a crew consisting of an officer wholly unsuited to the work, three European privates, of whom one was mad and the others sick, and lastly, Amadi Fatuma, the guide, and three slaves—nine men in all. With this 'sufficient force to protect me from insult,' the canoe had to be navigated without a pilot for hundreds of miles along a river studded at parts with dangerous rocks, and everywhere infested by equally dangerous hippos—a river whose banks were occupied for much of the way by fanatical Moors and Tuaregs, while beyond were unknown tribes of cannibal savages and other bloodthirsty natives."* It was at the Boussa Rapids that the end came. Can you picture it? Hostile natives leaped in their war dance upon the banks on either side, screaming and shouting to the beating of drums. Down the river rushed the poor canoe, its few

* "Mungo Park and the Niger," Thomson.

occupants seeing their doom either in the cruel rocks on either hand or from the poisoned spears which rained upon them. The canoe hit a rock. It stuck fast. Everything of weight was thrown overboard and they plied their paddles desperately. But the boat refused to move. Then the four men, the last remnant of the expedition, jumped into the water together, and Park's wish was realized. The Niger claimed him.

After Park's tragic end came Captain Clapperton, R.N., in 1825, who had penetrated to Sokoto in the previous year. He adopted a different route, and, having by good luck hit upon one of the mouths of the Niger, ascended it as far as the spot where Mungo Park had lost his life and then went by land to Sokoto where he died in 1827. Then came Richard Lauder, Clapperton's servant on his final expedition, and after that the work of the geographers was no longer a matter of mere speculation. In connection with Lauder, however, it is instructive to read the letter addressed to him by Mr. R. W. Hay before he left England:—

DOWNING STREET,
December 31, 1829.

SIR,—I am directed by Secretary Sir George Murray to acquaint you, that he has deemed it expedient to accept the offer which you have made, to proceed to Africa, accompanied by your brother, for the purpose of ascertaining the course of the Great River which was crossed by the late Captain Clapperton, on his journey to Soccato.

After giving minute instructions regarding the information desired, the letter continues—

You are to take every opportunity of sending down by the coast a brief abstract of your proceedings and observations, furnishing the bearer with a note, setting forth the reward he is to have for his trouble, and requesting any English person, to whom it is presented, to pay that reward, on the faith that it will be repaid to him by the British Government. For the performance of this service, you are furnished with all the articles which you have required for your personal convenience, during your journey, together with a sum of two hundred dollars in coin, and in case, upon your arrival at Badagry, you should find it absolutely necessary to provide yourself

with a further supply of dollars, you will be at liberty to draw upon this department for any sum not exceeding three hundred dollars.

During the ensuing year, the sum of one hundred pounds will be paid to your wife, and upon your return a gratuity of one hundred pounds will be paid to yourself.

All the papers and observations which you shall bring back with you, are to be delivered by you at this office, and you will be entitled to receive any pecuniary consideration which may be obtained from the publication of the account of your journey.

I am, Sir, &c., &c.,
(Signed) R. W. HAY.*

Comment on this document, teeming with generosity, is surely needless! Government departments have not altered since 1829. To the white man there has always been a fascination about West Africa, even though he may know that death is waiting for him around every bend in the road. And the lure of the bush is as nothing to the lure of the river to a Briton. Hence it was that one of us, who had only seen the Niger at Jebba, counted the hours that must pass before Baro was reached, and the other looked forward to reviving old memories. But probably of all the minor tragedies of life none is more poignant than actual realization after long days of sanguine expectation. We knew that at Baro we should find awaiting us a river steamer which would take us down to Lokoja and thence onwards to Onitsha, where we proposed stopping a day or two. Presumably we had visions of the steamers upon the Siberian rivers in the old days. Then life was really happy. A comfortable cabin, deck chairs by the chart-house, and the never-ending, never-changing steppe as company. But that we have dealt with elsewhere.

From Kaduna to Baro should be a matter of a night's journey. In our case it was magnified into about twenty-four hours, because the train was unwilling and the flesh of the engine driver was evidently weak.

* "Journal of an Expedition to Explore the Course and Termination of the Niger," Richard and John Lauder.

Bluntly stated, the engine and three coaches were derailed a few hundred yards after crossing a bridge, and it was a miracle that nothing worse happened. We felt exceedingly sorry for the engine driver. As for ourselves, it merely meant a shaking, a delay in reaching Minna—the junction for Baro—and a scarcity of water for a short time. Anyhow, we spent seven hours in the midst of the bush, and we can place it on record for big-game hunters that the triangle Zungeru, Minna, Baro is exactly what it was represented to us as being, one of the finest territories in which to find game—excepting elephants, giraffes and suchlike—in the world. Within a minute of our leaving our carriage a most splendid buck bounded away, and would have been a very easy shot had we been prepared for it, which, to our chagrin, we were not. At Minna we had a visitor—the black postmaster. One of us had done him a trifling service in the old days, and he had learned of our presence in the country and came to the station to greet us. To be postmaster at Minna is an important post, and we rejoiced that the merits of this friendly soul had received proper recognition. He presented us with a live turkey of enormous size, so we now had two—Mr. and Mrs. Gobble-gobble, we called them, to our boys' great delight.

In due course we arrived at Baro, and are able to confirm the Lieutenant-Governor's remark, that Baro was like the inside of a teacup full of scalding tea. Certainly it was very hot! And then it was that we cheerfully assured each other that things might be much worse, and that the journey down river would be a perfect picnic. Awaiting us was the Nigerian river steamer "Vulture," twin-screw, triple-expansion engines, and reported the fastest boat on the Niger, with a species of flat-bottomed houseboat lashed alongside of her. Technically, this kind of craft is called a canoe, but it is very different from the native canoe, or so-called "dug-out," in which one of us has travelled many, many miles upon the Niger. A native canoe is not so bad as it sounds, as most political officers can certify. Even in travelling from the French frontier at Illo, through Jebba as far as

Lokoja, though the speed used not to be exactly abnormal, there was some sort of comfort. In those big native canoes there was ample room for a deck chair, one's boy sat behind, and at meal times it was very easy to run on to a spit of sand in order to have a bite, or even to anchor thereon for the night, which reminds us of one of the most celebrated characters Nigeria has possibly ever produced.

In the early days there was a Swedish captain employed by the Nigerian Marine. He was the best of good sorts, and having found the discipline of the Swedish Navy somewhat irksome, he had thrown in his lot with the other adventurers in West Africa. To-day one would call him a "hard case." He would drink unadulterated Niger water and unadulterated whisky with a smile and say that filters were all rubbish, and that whisky was good for the liver. When, as was not remarkable, he was sent home to England by a benevolent administration to be treated in a Harley Street nursing home for kidney trouble, and when the specialists and nurses were congratulating him upon his wonderful recovery, he produced from under his pillow a booklet upon the outside of which was the caption, "Every picture tells a story," and then infuriated the doctors by telling them that he believed in a certain kind of patent pills. Well, he put his fate to the test on the River Niger not far above Jebba, to be precise, at the Boussa rapids, where Mungo Park was drowned. Nothing could dissuade him from shooting them with all his kit, his stores and every article that he possessed. It was in vain that the political officer remonstrated with him and told him not to be silly. His reply was very similar to that he gave to the medicos about the pills. It was, in effect, "You do not know everything." The political officer went overland and met the genial captain at the bottom of the rapids. He was smiling as usual, and his raiment consisted of one solar topee. Everything else, clothing, stores, etc., had been lost, but he was cheerful, extremely cheerful, and emphasized the fact that he had accomplished something that Mungo Park had failed to do. Men of that type built the Northern

Nigeria as it was then, and following in the footsteps of the pioneer is not so difficult and usually is far more remunerative.

One must be forgiven for reminiscences, for little does the world know of the early days when Sir Frederick Lugard, casting nominal discretion to the wind, captured for the Empire those vast Emirates which make up the great Mohammedan world of West Africa. His motto might have been "Hit hard, hit quick, and don't tell anyone." His tactics were almost Nelsonic.

Well does one remember, after about fourteen days in the quiet of a native canoe, arriving at the town of Jebba, which represented the first glimpse of civilization to those who had been for long strangers in a far land. The Jebba of that time seemed to us political officers a great place. There was a Niger Company's store whereat one could buy things like tinned asparagus. There was a resident who occupied what had been Government House. And there was a hospital with actually white sisters who must have been amongst the most spoiled mortals the Almighty ever sent on earth. Times have, however, changed, and to use a Hibernianism, the Jebba of to-day is not so modern as the Jebba of those days. Certainly the railway now passes it, crossing the Niger over a superb bridge, and there is a wonderful railway station—in appearance a cross between a mausoleum and a reservoir. Otherwise, thanks to the railway, the importance of Jebba has dwindled to vanishing point. Government House, which used to look down importantly on the river and the native town, is now a crumbling heap of ruins, and the other official buildings have long since been obliterated by encroaching bush. It was the ever-absorbing health problem which caused Sir Frederick Lugard to transfer the seat of Government elsewhere, and Zungeru was the next choice. Jebba has always been frankly unhealthy, both for white and black, though from different causes, as we will indicate.

When we passed through on our way to Zaria, a railway official told us that the shade temperature in his bungalow had been 107° for weeks. That was in the

dry season. When the rains come and the malarious mists rise from the Niger, and mosquitoes breed in undiscovered pools and also in the swampy ground, the daily dose of quinine can never be omitted. So between heat-fever and malaria "you pay your money and you take your choice." The natives, who thrive in the sun and pay but scant attention to the dainty but deadly "anopheles," attribute all their misfortunes to the celebrated "juju" rock. This cliff, which looms conspicuously above the lesser hills, is situate about half a mile from the native town and on the other side of the river from the former segregation area. Cone-shaped, its harsh grey stone sparsely covered with scrub at the base, it gazes placidly at its reflection in the Niger, as though it ignored its sinister reputation. According to the natives, and to many Europeans also, the man who climbs to its summit will surely die before twelve months have passed. Probably in the old days, which, after all, are not so many years ago, human sacrifices were made there. Other explanations are the long arm of coincidence and the many secret methods of the "juju" priests for eliminating enemies. Much may happen in a year! While the railway was building, at least three Europeans employed on the line scoffed at superstition and made the ascent. One is known to have died within a short time, and another is believed so to have done. Personally, we felt in contemplating the rock from a distance, that any one who attempted such exertion in that climate deserved all that was coming.

The native town of Jebba is built upon an island. On the one side it struggles up to the base of the hill whereon the railway passes, and on the other it struggles down to the sandy river bank. It is not a large town, and, as we previously remarked, the advent of the railway has damaged its commercial importance. River-borne traffic has diminished; shea nuts and shea butter, onions and cotton, can all be carried more cheaply, safely, and expeditiously in goods trains than in native canoes. So only the fishermen remain. As the sun was setting we saw a little encampment of these nomads on

one of the artificial islands formed by the shrinking Niger. Their huts of woven grass mats were shaped like houses of cards. Their long canoes were beached, showing their black ungainly shapes. Smoke from their fires rose in the still air, and round the huts and fires we could see the slim black figures of the fishermen and of an occasional "piccin." In a few days, when the supply of fish in their district was exhausted, they would transfer huts and families and canoes and settle temporarily elsewhere.

In Jebba itself there is nothing of special interest save two bronze figures, about 3 feet in height, and obviously fashioned in another part of Africa, or possibly Asia. These figures, man and woman, are the chief "jujus" of Jebba, and stand outside the "juju" house, under a neat roof of thatch. The man is in a coat of mail; the woman, gorgeously attired, carries a mirror. One of us (the most inquisitive) was about to lay an impious finger upon the lady, but was hastily reminded that this was a breach of etiquette by the fearsome scowl which decorated the face of the "juju" priest who was present. Then we were told that some years ago an enterprising political officer desired to add these statues to his collection. The wish was father to the act, but the outcry from Jebba was so terrible that he was obliged to send them back, and now they are jealously guarded even from the touch of a "white mammy"!

To revert to our journey in the Vulture, we certainly managed to travel from Baro to Lokoja in twelve hours. Truth compels us to say that, the deck-space on the steamer being very limited, we were compelled to spend the time in the canoe, which occasioned disaster for one of us. It was grillingly hot, with no breeze except that made by the boat in its passage. In such circumstances even a topee becomes an exquisite torment, and, imagining that the canoe was sunproof, it was laid aside. Sunstroke followed for both, and the two days' stay at Lokoja certainly possessed little interest for one of the party. As a matter of fact, though the pristine glory of Lokoja as port of entry, Customs station, and

deputy-capital of Northern Nigeria has gone, it still remains one of the prettiest towns in West Africa. It is built on slightly rising ground, with at its back Mount Patti, a forest-clad hill which is a landmark for travellers; whilst riverwards the eye can travel over miles unmeasured of what was once literally the "no-man's land" of Northern Nigeria—a rich country, too, rich in timber, palm kernels and cocoanuts, rich in guinea corns and yams, and the abode of as bloodthirsty a set of cannibals as the most enthusiastic seeker after excitement would care to find. We were told that, to this day, the place possesses a bad name, and it seems only yesterday—to be precise in 1904—that O'Riordan and Burney, political and police officers respectively, went to the most horrible doom that can await living man. Burney was lucky. He was shot dead by the first volley of poisoned arrows, whereas his comrade was captured alive, and, after suffering horrible torments, was massacred to provide a feast for his foes. Reminiscences of such a type make for reflection.

From Lokoja as one glances over the Bassa of to-day it looks so peaceful. Thanks to the Niger it is more or less evergreen, and one can almost imagine it peopled with happy, thriving settlers from the Old Country were it not for that dreadful bar, the climate, and emphatically it is not well in this country to dwell too much upon the morbid. Whatever else may happen in West Africa, there is no doubt that the sense of humour of the individual, be it natural or acquired, saves many difficult situations. Thus it was also in 1904 that the following occurred. In a moment of extreme temper—not uncommon, be it said, in these parts—the captain of one of the Government river steamers threw the black mate overboard, when he was promptly eaten by a crocodile. Upon arrival at Lokoja the captain was placed under arrest on a charge of wilful murder. Rightly or wrongly, all the white population were entirely with the defendant. Hence, since from headquarters a trial had been ordered, the political officer suddenly found that he had urgent business elsewhere and proceeded on tour. The officer commanding the troops was taken ill

with fever. The officer commanding the police complained of blackwater. The medical officer, in reply to an urgent telegram saying that he must try the case in default of the others, tersely replied that he was too busy looking after his patients; and thus, having gone through the entire station from the point of view of seniority, it was eventually decided that the storekeeper should administer justice.

In those days juries and counsel were unknown, and there was a beautiful atmosphere of informality about all such proceedings. The storekeeper, however, who incidentally was a Scotsman, rose to the dignity of the occasion, and, after hearing the evidence, said something like the following: "Well, my lad, I've heard all the evidence, and there is no doubt in my own mind that you have committed the worst of all crimes, that of wilful murder. Therefore, it is my duty to pass sentence of death upon you in the form which the law orders." Whereon followed sentence of death, delivered in the best Old Bailey style. "But," he concluded, "taking into consideration the provocation you received and the fact that this is no country for white men, I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll give you the option of a fine of £1." He has long since joined the majority, but they say that he received immediate promotion for his remarkable decision.

Lokoja is also the focal point of the whole of the Nigerian river system. About a mile up river, the Niger's greatest tributary, the Benue, joins it after traversing some 600 miles of territory, having its birthplace in what was the German Cameroons. If the Niger is lonely, and undoubtedly it is, the Benue is fifty times more so. As far as the Cameroon frontier, a distance of 480 miles, it would be no exaggeration to state that there are no more than twenty officials and perhaps the same number of traders. Can it be wondered at that for many temperaments the loneliness becomes almost intolerable; that even the most hardened optimists become at first depressed, and then drift into backwaters of life which should never have been? One can write of such things with experience behind one, but it is a fatal error which permits

the young to be left alone. It is an error which should have been recognized long since. The French, however, always have two men on a station together, and the same applies to German administration that was, both governmental and mercantile.

Upon this subject we shall have more to say. At the same time there is every promise of a change for the better, whilst now that Lord Leverhulme has acquired such a preponderating influence in mercantile Nigeria, and since he has shown so much understanding over the betterment of his employees in England, one may confidently expect that he will insist upon radical alterations in his new sphere of operations.

There is no doubt about the potential wealth of the whole area; what must be done is to attract the right sort of individual to develop the latent riches of this vast country, and, in so doing, allowing for climatic disabilities and difficulty of access, render the life of the temporary sojourner possible, if not pleasant. That, so it seems to us, is the keynote of the whole situation. From Lokoja we continued our wanderings down river to Onitsha, in the same *Vulture*. South of Lokoja the river widens, and certainly becomes more interesting. The flatness of the plains is past; on both sides of the stream there is rising ground, and native settlements become more numerous.

By the time we reached our destination we had acquired a great respect for our native captain. As Americans would say, "He was some sailor-man." His trousers were of the true navy cut, and he carried with him all the dignity that the black man can feel when he knows that he is the skipper of the fastest boat on the Niger. Navigation on the Niger, however, is not a thing which is taught in text-books. One can but imagine that instinct enters very largely into the mentality of a captain thus concerned. At low water in the dry season sand banks crop up with a most amazing irregularity, and what was, the night before, a perfectly good channel, on the morrow becomes nothing more nor less than dry beach. Hence we stuck frequently, and once, when the proverbial tornado arrived, very nearly

lost our canoe. The captain was in a hurry, the *Vulture*, as before stated, was very fast, whilst the tornado was a stinger. We drove head on into it, and in less time than it takes to write everything was awash. There must have been at least three feet of water in the canoe, and the only unperturbed person was our boy, who was busily occupied in making curried eggs, and who merely remarked, "This no be plenty bad, sir; boat he no fit sink," and went on cooking in the most unconcerned manner. That our bedding was soaked and some of our personal effects ruined, mattered not a whit to our cheery optimist. Curried eggs were his pre-occupation, and though he was wet up to the middle, and the water had begun to put out his fire, he emerged smiling with his dish, and didn't we enjoy it? People may write what they like, but the West African boy is a faithful creature, and will endure a great deal so long as he thinks that his "massa" and "missus" appreciate his services.

The *Vulture* was run on to a sand bank, the water was baled out of the canoe, and we waited for the waves to subside. It sounds absurd to talk of waves on a river, but the Niger at this part must have been three or four miles across, and in a boat whose gunwale was only a foot above water it did not require a very heavy sea to make progress dangerous. As we sat in the bow, rather wet but thankful that nothing but our soap had been thrown overboard by the enthusiastic balers of the canoe, the fireman and engineer built a fire on the sand from burning logs from the engine-room, and Captain and crew curled themselves up beside it and went to sleep. It was dark and we could dimly see the shore and tiny specks of light which marked a native village. The tornado had cooled the air somewhat, and little waves, small children of those which had threatened to sink us, lapped gently against the side of the *Vulture*. After the heat and turmoil of the day, it was infinitely restful and we grudgingly departed. By cutting corners and going through unfrequented channels we made Onitsha, in what was practically record time.

On our arrival, whatever may have been our physical

discomforts, and we were neither of us well, a warmth of welcome awaited us which went far to dissipate our past inconveniences. Onitsha lies on the left bank of the Niger, some 200 miles from the sea. It is a pretty little town, and, apart from the official buildings, can boast of a fine bank, quite a number of stores, and one of the oldest Catholic missions in West Africa. Truly a book might be written about the Catholic missionaries who come out to this unpleasant country literally to spend their lives. Thus, for instance, we met a priest who had been twenty-three years there without going home. He certainly looked hale and hearty enough, and the query naturally arises: "How is it possible for men such as these to carry on their duties year in, year out, and not suffer in some way or another?" Of course, they do suffer; they often have fever, but they have learnt how to live. Their residences are airy and spacious, they are spared the worries which assail both the official and the trader, and, in colloquial parlance, they do themselves well. Mostly French, their centres send them out plenty of the good wine of France, which, as we have often been told, is one of the finest antidotes to malarial poisoning. Although literally strangers in a strange land, and probably speaking English with difficulty, they are extremely popular with all classes. And well may they be. For was it not good Father Zappa, vicar apostolic of the Lower Niger at the time, who displayed so much gallantry when attacked by a peculiarly venomous native secret society known as the Ekumeku, or the "silent ones," that the none-too-generous Niger Company presented with a gold watch, whilst the officers of the West African Frontier Force gave him a gold-mounted revolver with which in future to protect himself?

The story is an old one, but it may be worth retelling. The Ekumeku had long been a thorn in the flesh of British Administration, and many had been the abortive punitive expeditions sent against them. But they were a truculent lot, and what upset the Hausa, the native "Tommy," was the fact that their ethics of fighting included absolute silence whilst doing so. White officers

have often told us that the effect was so uncanny that it upset everyone's morale. On this occasion, having wiped out several villages, massacred the small military force on the spot and destroyed all the factories, they advanced upon the Catholic mission at Onitsha, then inhabited by Father Zappa and a brother priest who was dying. To his lasting credit Zappa was not in the least perturbed ; surrounded as he was by hundreds of spear-armed savages, who circled round and round the mission, making never a sound but showing by their gestures that they meant business, he went out and harangued them. First of all, he told them he was unarmed, and that therefore they could kill him with the greatest of ease. Then he told them, within the mission lay a dying man, and would they not permit him to go to his Maker in peace ? Silence. The natives merely closed a little. The strain becoming unendurable, he next taunted them, and asked them whether they were afraid of an unarmed man. Still silence. Then he resorted to other methods. He told them they were silly. He reminded them that the white man had a long arm, and that their actions would be visited upon them by the destruction of their own lives, their villages, and even possibly their wives and children. And finally, as nothing seemed to happen, he told them semi-jocularly to go home to their mummies and to be good children, that palaver was no good for anybody, and that he was quite certain that their mummies would support his theory. Marvellous to relate, without a single sound, the band of attackers disappeared into the bush as silently as they had arrived, leaving Father Zappa certainly the moral victor of the day. Moreover, it is credibly stated that after that episode the last sign of rebellion flickered and died. Truly such a man deserved well of the British Empire.

Some hundred miles to the east of Onitsha is situated the valuable coalfield of Udi. It is almost impossible to over-estimate the importance of this undertaking to West African industry as a whole. Naturally, the Nigerian railway system depends upon it, and now it is usual for ships to bunker at Port Harcourt, which lies up one of the many creeks of the Niger delta.

The coal is of good quality, and the supply is supposed to be almost inexhaustible. But, and the inevitable "but" comes in, there is the question of labour. Strike succeeds strike with lamentable frequency, and it seems as though there were no method of ever satisfying native miners. And the trouble does not end there. Taking a leaf from the older civilization of Great Britain, they have learnt the strength of co-operation, and if the miners come out the railway men join them, followed by the stevedores, longshoremen, and dock labourers at Port Harcourt. The poison of labour unrest has certainly penetrated into the native body politic and found there a happy germinating ground, which leads us to make a point which should be clearly understood and appreciated in Great Britain by all who are interested in the advancement of British West Africa. It is this: Let it be grasped that there are many educated coast natives, chiefly recruited from the Gold Coast, who are naturally peculiarly suitable for the clerical positions which they occupy in commercial or administrative undertakings. These men read the English papers. Although they have never been to Europe they fancy they can visualize the position of the working classes, and they argue that what is sauce for the white goose is equally sauce for the black gander, and when they read the inflammatory speeches of certain Labour politicians reason is thrown to the winds, and temporarily they become first-rate rebels. Purposely is the word "temporarily" used. With rare exceptions, at heart they are all right, but their temperament is mercurial, and passing excitement will sway them as easily as a gust of wind bends a field of corn. However, the results are patent to any observer, more particularly to one who can look back fifteen years and compare that era with the present. We write this with all seriousness. If labour unrest continues to spread, if the native agitator with his light leaven of so-called education and fed upon the unhealthy theories now being propounded by some sections of British labour, continues to flourish, then assuredly the day will come when we shall be face to face with a

situation in West Africa, and more especially in vast Nigeria, which will certainly cause grave anxiety to those who are responsible for its government.

From Onitsha our way lay down river to Forcados. Our stay at the former had been overshadowed by complications and yet we were sorry to leave. Kindness we had met with everywhere; some of it perfunctory, most of it, we are happy to say, spontaneous and without thought of return. Truly does Robert Louis Stevenson call physicians "the flower of civilisation," and at Onitsha we met one of the finest amongst the many fine specimens that it has been our good fortune to encounter. He and the Resident and the latter's wife did all that was possible to make life bearable for two very weary mortals. And we were not the only ones who benefited by their presence. The whole tone of the station was finer, saner and happier than any other we have seen. A moral disinfectant need not be unattractive. Certainly this one was not. It was as though feminine charm and "womanliness" in its true sense, added to manly truth and courage, had swept away all the ugly evil crawling things which lurk in dark corners ready to bite and sting. To these three we can never repay the debt of gratitude which we owe to them, but we thank them and they will understand.

CHAPTER XXII.

SINCE it is impossible for anyone to visit the West Coast of Africa and not be drawn into conversation, heated or otherwise, upon the ever-present problems concerning health and missionaries, both certainly deserve more than passing attention. In one of our other chapters we hazarded the opinion that cheerfulness of disposition, determination not to worry, and a certain spice of pluck went a long way towards combating what undoubtedly is a terribly trying climate. That opinion remains good so far as we are concerned. But there are puzzling factors in the case which need thoroughly to be understood when West African topics are being examined.

The most elementary form of sickness which the white man encounters is fever. Now it might be supposed that, with the advance of modern science and the careful attention being paid to-day to tropical disease, the cause, treatment, and cure of fever would be a simple matter. Such, however, is not the case. It is no exaggeration to write that there are as many different species of fever endemic to this coast as there are opinions as to their treatment held by qualified medical men. To give an example. Everyone knows, broadly speaking, that quinine kills the microbe of malaria. Hence, in all Government text-books, the new-comer or the old-comer alike is recommended to take 5 gr. of quinine daily. Out of interest we have made a point of asking the opinion of every medical man we have met out here, and they have been many, his considered opinion on the point. It is a most remarkable fact that no two opinions ever coincided. One old stager with twenty-three years' experience of West Africa behind him averred that 5 gr. daily was bad for the system,

but that he could ensure anyone immunity for six months if he would take 30 gr. daily for a fortnight. Poor patient! We somehow felt that his immunity might be permanent! Another man with considerable experience who had the care of the occupants of a certain Government house shook his head over the 5 gr. a day theory, and said, "No! no! 5 gr. Saturday and Sunday night, and be particular that it is taken at night time." Another boldly plumped for no quinine, adding that he knew it upset the digestion and that he believed it was the cause of blackwater, the most dreaded ailment of all, and as deadly as cerebro-spinal meningitis, which annually carries off hundreds of native victims.

Further to quote medical theories and opinions might be tedious to the ordinary reader, and most assuredly we are not writing for the medical profession. All that we are attempting to do is to emphasize the extraordinary diversity of views held by those with experience upon the prime and radical cause of West Africa's bad name. And, equally, it may be that what we are writing may inspire some of the rising and more enterprising students of medicine seriously to take up tropical research. The field is unlimited, and, alas, the workers are few. Take the case of blackwater; one is frankly told on all sides that its origin is unknown, though there are theories galore. The percentage of recovery nowadays may be a fraction better than what it was years ago, chiefly due to better means of transport, though it is not uncommon for West Africans to develop it even after their arrival in Great Britain, and we personally know of two cases, both fatal, one of which occurred in England and the other in Ireland.

We have referred to cerebro-spinal meningitis; a dreadful outbreak of this malady much spoilt the great good which General Guggisberg was doing by his all-embracing tour around his territory. As we were privileged to accompany him we can state with authority that the doctors were literally at their wits' ends to know how to cope with the outbreak. Segregating camps and burning villages may be preventive measures, but

they are not cures. Not long since a most distinguished medical commission was sent to the Gold Coast to find out whether, in their opinion, yellow fever existed in West Africa or whether what was taken to be that complaint was merely a variation of malaria. Their investigations covered a considerable period, and their findings were embodied in four closely filled volumes. The verdict for the West Coast was "not guilty." A fortnight after the departure of the commission both the Governor and his wife were down with undoubtedly yellow fever, and now as we passed Accra homeward bound the yellow flag was flying from the fort and a strict quarantine was in force.

Now, although there is such dissimilarity of view-point amongst the medical fraternity upon these and kindred questions relating to tropical disease, upon one subject they are unanimous; for some reason they cannot explain, wounds will not heal satisfactorily on the Coast. If an operation has to be undertaken, get the patient somehow elsewhere, if it be only to the Canary Islands. Given a good hospital, the best instruments, white nurses, and the necessary articles of diet for a surgical case, and there is not a West Coast doctor who will willingly undertake a major operation. Why won't the wounds heal? That must be for research workers to explain. Which brings us step by step to the real crux of the whole matter, which, of course, is money.

The West African medical service is at present hopelessly understaffed. Writing from memory, we believe there were thirty-six vacancies in the Gold Coast medical service alone. We can claim as a personal friend a cheery optimist who had the sole charge of the health of the whole of the European and native community in the British sphere of influence in Togoland, and that presumably not being considered enough for him, his duties took him as far as the mouth of the River Volta. A glance at a map will show that he had an impossible task. For some reason which is beyond our ken, doctors are not included in the new schedule of pay drawn up for all white officials in Government departments. This is not to say that increases of pay and better conditions of service

are not in contemplation. We understand they are. Until their realization, however, the supply of candidates to fill West African vacancies will never approximate to the demand. There is a world's dearth of young medical practitioners suitable for such service, and until conditions are made more attractive it is a fact that they will not come forward. Granted, then, that there is no exaggeration in the above statement—and assuredly we believe there is not—how on earth can much research work be expected, and how is it to be encouraged? The Governors of the various colonies, both in public speeches and despatches, are continually pointing out the crying need for this most urgent of services, since upon it depends the efficient and smooth working of the whole administrative machinery.

There are two schools of tropical medicine, one in London and the other at Liverpool. They can boast of a band of devoted workers, but the call is ever for more recruits and more money. It is a curious commentary upon British mentality that while we are the greatest Colonial Empire in the world, with regions deliberately inviting the skill and attention of medical scientists and pathologists, we should be hampered for funds. We are certainly the last people in the world to decry libraries, public parks, or even the garish memorials which ornament our principal cities and speak of the benevolence of some departed benefactors. What a wonderful memorial it would be if some millionaire—and there appear to be plenty—would erect to himself a lasting monument by handsomely endowing and placing for all time beyond financial embarrassment a suitable school of tropical medicine and research, an ample hospital for tropical disease, and an endowment to render independent or combined investigation possible upon the spot!

From all of which it must not be imagined for one moment that the coast medico is a grouser or a sad-faced moper. Far from it. He is the cheeriest of individuals, and one of the busiest. "Let others be ill" might well be his motto, "but I haven't got the time." He puts up with the most irritating of circumstances with the most

wonderful philosophic calm. One of our friends was called to a case eighty miles away, through a country where there were no roads but plenty of rivers, which were not pleasant objects to encounter as it was the height of the rainy season. It took him three days of really strenuous going, and when he arrived at the station, tired out and drenched to the skin, his first words were, "Where's the sick man?" "Oh!" was the nonchalant reply, "you've come up about M— have you? There he is," pointing to a contented-looking man smoking a pipe and imbibing mahogany-coloured whisky and sparklet. All the so-called sick man volunteered was, "Sorry you've had a rough passage, Doc., I'm as fit as a fiddle now, only didn't know how to stop you. Have a peg?" What the doctor thought history does not relate, but he had two pegs.

Another delightful friend we made was looking, we hoped with admiration and envy, at our medicine chest, which we flattered ourselves was replete with medicines for every possible contingency. He examined it with the greatest of attention, and then remarked dryly, "Jolly good case for lay-folk like you people; of course, as a medical man, I only carry two medicines, salts and quinine."

There has recently been a discovery that the intravenous injection of antimony *may* cure sleeping sickness, but the cure is still in its infancy. As we have said before, the work of Dr. von Raben in Togoland has been discontinued and we very much doubt if the over-worked physician at Lome has any of this drug in his dispensary. It is easier to get a Ford car sent to the West Coast than a fresh supply of drugs, and in that climate deterioration proceeds rapidly.

Another aspect of a doctor's work is the tact and patience he must employ with the natives. The frequenters of a slum dispensary are enlightened compared to these dusky children of Africa. The "trouserred native" will spend the major portion of his salary on quack medicines from "home," it is true, but the more ignorant prefer their own "juju" and can at times show such wonderful results of faith-healing as to

cause the doctor's insecure influence to waver and fall. One morning, looking out of our window at Koforidua, we saw the Chief Commissioner's orderly seated by the side of the cook house with his feet in hot water while the sympathetic cook was plastering his legs with some peculiar mixture. He had been, it seemed, much crippled with rheumatism and had been in hospital for treatment. Then he had found a native "doctor" who prescribed the juice of a certain leaf in hot water and an ointment consisting mainly of dung. For this prescription the orderly cheerfully paid £3, and after one application declared he was much better. Naturally, so-called "doctors" of this description bitterly resent the intrusion of the white man who will deprive them of their lucrative practice, and work against him by fair means or foul whenever they can. Patience is not the native's strong point. He must be cured rapidly or he loses faith. The "juju" priests, with their spectacular rites, impress him far more than the shorn and shaven European physician who administers a simple pill or powder without any beating of drums or rattling of bones. As for infection it would require, as Sydney Smith said, a surgical operation to get such an idea into their skulls. One of our "boys" was discovered to have a peculiarly loathsome and infectious disease. Having sent him, much against his will, to hospital for treatment we tried to explain to the other that he must not use X's mosquito net, on which he had already cast a covetous eye, without boiling it in a disinfectant. Laughing and showing his perfect teeth he made reply, "I no fear. I be clean boy." He was made to boil the net but his attitude was plainly that "white man be fool man," and this was a lad of comparative intelligence who had been to school at Freetown.

Therefore, when folk complain, as we have often heard them do, of the West African Medical Service, they should bear in mind the following: The scant means at the disposal of the doctors, the difficulties of all sorts under which they work, the small salaries in proportion to their services and the obstacles which are placed in the way of improvement. All honour to them!

we say, and may they in the near future receive their just reward.

Of all the controversies which arouse misunderstandings followed by enmity, none is more dangerous than that of missionaries. We approach the subject, therefore, with trepidation, but in defence we must first of all plead that we have travelled pretty widely over the world, and nothing broadens one's views more than travel or renders one more temperate towards the opinions of others. At present West Africa as a whole is attracting a tremendous amount of missionary effort, Christian as well as Mohammedan. As we shall show later, unless we are careful it may also attract Bolshevik intrigue through the Mohammedan community, as already that Russian poison has infected the Mohammedan world of Central Asia, Afghanistan and Asia Minor. But that is another story. It is beyond argument, however, and a greatly preponderating majority of those acquainted with native administration will support us in this: First, that it is practically useless to offer Christianity to the Moslem in place of his own belief; and, secondly, that Mohammedanism is far more easy of assimilation by the Pagan than Christianity. West Africa is an object lesson to those who are not fanatical extremists, but are prepared to balance the pros and cons of a policy. Very wisely Sir Frederick Lugard laid it down as an axiom that missionaries of any denomination should be discouraged from going to the great Emirates, where their activities would most likely be productive of misunderstanding leading to disturbances. Fancy permitting a Sinn Fein missionary to preach in the open air in a Protestant section of Belfast! The cases are really analogous, for though the Emirs themselves are friendly and discreet enough to tolerate the uninvited visits of these gentlemen they cannot control the actions of the more fanatical of their followers, and Mohammedanism breeds fanatics as all the world knows.

Sir Frederick Lugard's decision caused fearful heart-burning, and we were entertained by reading dreadful diatribes both upon him and our old friend, Mr. Temple,

who was then Deputy Governor of Nigeria. One regrets to say that the publication which issued them was Canadian in origin. On the other hand, a very honest gentleman, a doctor and a missionary combined, stated that after a year in one of the great Mohammedan centres, he had made one Christian convert from the Moslem faith, and added, "But I don't trust him."

Furthermore, the presence of a white missionary of any denomination is liable to cause, at any rate, superficial friction between the political officer and the Emir. The former always lives at some distance from the town. The missionary, on the contrary, resides in the town, and unless he be a diplomatist of the very finest quality, is only too apt, day by day, to hear native gossip and tittle-tattle, and unknowingly and indirectly engender a feeling that "Here is a white man who will support upon occasion the man against his master," which, assuredly, is a very dangerous game to play between a Mohammedan ruler and his people. Briefly, that is the situation, and it is intensified in a country like Nigeria, where the power of two-thirds of this vast area is in the hands of some twenty Emirs.

To bring the matter home a little more forcibly; the Emir of Kano has under his control a population bigger than that of the whole of the Gold Coast, with its vast administrative machinery running into hundreds of officials, whilst Kano province is politically administered by about six white men, a handful of soldiers, and a few doctors and Treasury officials. In other words, British rule throughout all the Emirates is supported and upheld by the Emirs themselves, and once their dearest convictions are tampered with, the whole fabric of rule in those latitudes is completely undermined. So much, then, for the Mohammedan side of the question. With the Pagans it is entirely different, and the policy of all Governors has been to admit, irrespective of denomination, all those who ventured so far afield as apostles of their respective beliefs.

Ap[ro]pos of missionaries, here is a story too good to miss and is related by a missionary himself, C. H. Robinson, M.A., in his book on Nigeria. Some Bristol

schoolboys were told to write an essay on a British colony, and the following pearl came from one of them : "Africa is a British colony. I will tell you how England makes her colonies. First she gets a missionary. When the missionary has found a specially beautiful and fertile tract of country, he gets all his people round him and says, 'Let us pray,' and when all the eyes are shut, up goes the British flag."

Aside from political reasons for the prohibition of missionaries in the Hausa territories, it would seem like carrying sand to the Sahara when one reads their religious literature. That they do not invariably practice what they preach is a failing not confined to that portion of the globe. But what could be finer, and in places more poetical, than the following examples ?

"Whoever works without knowledge works uselessly."

"The son of the ignorant is a beast and a fool; he destroys himself, he knows nothing at all."

"The son of the wicked man is the friend of the heathen, the brother of the Jew; the day is coming when they shall meet with God."

"Whoever chooses this world rejects the choice of the next; he seizes one cowrie, but loses two thousand cowries."

"We have a journey before us which cannot be put aside, whether you are prepared or unprepared. Whether by night or just before the dawn, or in the morning when the sun has risen."

"Mother and daughter, you cannot choose between them, you know you cannot marry them both; so, too, earth and the next world; you know you cannot bring them together so as to retain them. Look carefully then, thyself, as to which of them thou wilt choose."

"He who fasts, but at the same time eats in secret, I have no doubt but that you may call him a heathen."

"And concerning evil living without marriage, God shall cause those who live thus to be blotted out."*

It may appear invidious to draw comparisons, but obviously the so-called industrial mission must accom-

* Specimens of Hausa literature.

plish more than the purely spiritual. The fathers of the Roman Catholic Church and what was the Basel Mission (a German organization now taken over by the Scottish Mission), stand in the forefront of introducing useful labour first and then building upon that foundation Christian teaching. On the whole, both have been very successful as far as success can ever be obtained in this most thorny of undertakings. A Jesuit priest of very great experience in East India, East Africa, and British Guiana, enunciated to us his own personal theory, and it will be allowed that, by training, Jesuits are most expert observers. In effect he said, "I am not in the least surprised that people prefer non-Christian servants to Christian. Christianity with natives eradicates from their systems such crimes as murder, human sacrifice, and that fanaticism which is productive of murder. In place of these they develop the minor but extremely unpleasant qualities of lying and thieving. I estimate that it will take 300 years before a Christianized native community will be formed which will show the same belief in the efficacy of Christianity which is to be found often in the depraved of our own colour."

It is also undeniable that the abundance of various Christian denominations puzzles the African mind. One of us once had a very faithful clerk, who hailed from Cape Coast Castle. To use a colloquialism he was a treasure. His wife having presented him with a little son, he was asked whether he would like it baptized by the Church of England Missionary Society clergyman. He hummed and hawed a little, and then said, "Well, sir, the fact is I was baptized a Wesleyan, but I always attend the Roman Catholic services; and on the whole I think it would be just as well if my boy were baptised by a "Mallam" (a Mohammedan priest). Such a case is by no means exceptional; in fact, it is common; but it must not be taken as representing anything derogatory either to the good faith or the self-sacrifice of those who believe they have had a call and respond thereto. After all, allowance must be made for temperament, and no one has a right to impugn the good faith of anyone who believes that what he is doing is what

his Master would wish. At the same time, that same individual may prove a fearful administrative embarrassment, and in this materially-minded world of 1921 that aspect requires a good deal of consideration.

To give an instance of this sort of thing, a friend of ours who led the two Tanganyika Expeditions told us how a zealous missionary nearly cost the white men the support of an influential chief in Central Africa. He was an old acquaintance of our friend and they were on the best of terms. Some years elapsed before they met again and our friend soon saw there was something wrong. He and those who accompanied him were treated with less respect and courtesy than of old, and he promptly tackled the chief on the matter. After the usual African evasions the chief came brusquely to the point. "I think less of you white people," he said, "since I have heard what manner of God you worship. We poor black men would never so demean ourselves, and there you are—worse than we." "What can you mean?" was the astonished reply. "We have been told that you bow before a curly pig," was the answer; "a white man came here and told us so. It is the truth." After a few more questions the actual facts were made clear. A missionary had visited the Chief and had unwisely attempted to use the expression "Lamb of God." As the people in those parts had no sheep and had never seen one, the words for sheep and lamb were not in their language, and the missionary had done his best—or worst—by converting Lamb into curly pig, and the prestige of his countrymen had suffered accordingly. It required lengthy argument and persuasion to convince the Chief with tact that an error had been made.

We remarked that the Roman Catholic priests and the Scottish missions are industrially carrying on a great work. Many a West African exile owes a real unpayable debt of gratitude to the Church Missionary Society, whose missionaries are nearly always doctors and to whom, equally with the official medical service, the gratitude and affection of every West Coaster should go forth. Alas! however, the list does not end there,

and as a worried official remarked at Lagos, "What on earth are we to do with people who come out here so ill-equipped and ill-prepared that their coming is virtually suicide?" What, indeed? Two such instances were forced under our immediate notice. We forbear giving the name of the mission, merely because there is no doubt in our own minds that they reckoned that they were doing the correct thing, even though to us materialists it seems misguided.

One girl, by trade a stenographer, was going out to Nigeria at a microscopic salary under four years' contract. After three years, even the most flinty-hearted London firms always send their employees home on long leave, while the Government is very much more generous. The girl suffered from goitre and heart disease, and when she embarked upon her mission from Toronto she was never so much as medically examined, although she was going to what is always reckoned one of the most dangerous climates of the world. Such an action may speak to some minds as magnificent heroism, "*mais ce n'est pas la guerre*," neither is it business. That young woman, it is not unsafe to prophesy, will return to her relatives a virtual cripple, without having accomplished a fraction of the good she might have found it possible to bring about in some other sphere of action.

The other case was that of a young woman, Canadian likewise, who was going out to act as a matron to a native hospital run by missionaries. She regarded New York as being a very, very long way from home, so what she thought of the Niger can be left to the imagination. Her equipment was of the most limited character, and she laughed about the dangers of the sun until she had reason to feel its potency and realize that tropical Africa is not London, Ontario. She, also, was under a contract for four years, and, though one can admire the genuine pluck which made her say "I will go," it is quite reasonable to consider that those who sent her in such a state of pristine ignorance were wrong.

As we have written above, it is a thorny problem, and

we have attempted merely to place before the reader in as unprejudiced a way as possible some of the existing facts of missionary work in West Africa in order that when the mud is so freely thrown, as it is by missionary enthusiasts, upon the so-called misdeeds of Governors and their officials, it may be realized succinctly that there is, in point of truth, another side.

CHAPTER XXIII.

It is a commonplace that the most certain method by which the peaceful government of what, to all intents and purposes, is a new country can be most easily attained is by railway construction. In spite of its many faults, Russian administration in the old days was responsible for opening up the whole of Central Asia by that stupendous line connecting Orenburg, in the south-east of Russia, with the Khanate capitals of Tashkent and Bokhara, skirting the frontiers of Afghanistan, passing through Merv, and eventually reaching the shores of the Caspian Sea. It required the monumental enthusiasm and imagination of an empire builder to conceive such a project, surrounded as it was with every imaginable difficulty. Its conclusion marked a reign of contentment for the region traversed until the dark days of the Tzar's downfall. This is mentioned by way of a slight preface, in order to appreciate the better the splendid temerity of Sir Frederick Lugard, who stands as godfather to the existing Nigerian railway system and to its suggested extensions, which, if carried out, really do seem to offer potentialities such as may in time encourage European immigration into the remoter portions of the Colony, which are at present inaccessible owing to lack of transport facilities.

In the first place, let it be understood that the line connecting Kano with the Lagos frontier, when Lagos and Northern Nigeria were amalgamated, was not a capital expenditure which could be taken from an existing revenue. The money had to be borrowed, and there was even fierce criticism as to whether it was worth while to construct a railway through what uninformed critics were pleased to call the "desolate Nigerian wastes." Sir Frederick, however, was not

discouraged by opposition; your born pioneer never is; in fact, he thrives upon it. And so the work was pushed ever onwards, and now Lagos and Kano, 704 miles apart, are linked up by a 3-ft.-6-in.-gauge railway, upon which it is possible to run the most up-to-date and commodious composite dining and sleeping cars. Connecting therewith are a few minor branches, which need not occupy the attention of the reader. Of the same gauge there is also a line connecting Port Harcourt, the new harbour, with Udi, the centre of the coal mines. Of course, in this world, it is impossible to guarantee human foresight. When a mistake is made it is very easy for the critic to shake his head and say, "So-and-so ought to have known better than that," and hence it is that the line connecting Zaria with the Bauchi Plateau, the home of Nigerian tin, and the most important feeder that probably the Kano-Nigerian Railway will ever possess, at present 143 miles in length, is of a 2 ft. 6 in. gauge. Needless to say, this has proved a severe setback to the traffic department, owing to the transshipment of goods which must take place at Zaria. On the other hand, be it understood, the administration itself was not responsible for this light railway. In its origin it was the conception of the Niger Company, by whom the necessary capital was found. Why some understanding between the company and the administration was not come to we cannot pretend to say, but one suspects that there was more than a little jealousy on one side coupled with financial stringency on the other. However, it is now agreed that one of the first operations which will have to be undertaken is the widening of this gauge, and the replacing of its rails by those of a heavier type. It is many years since the Government took over this line, and presumably because of the war, beyond keeping the permanent way in such a condition that the chances of an accident are not more than even, nothing appears to have been done to it.

We travelled upon the line from Zaria to Jos, a full day's journey sufficient to break the heart of the most hardened explorer. One leaves Zaria, nominally, at ten minutes past seven in the morning and arrives at Jos at

nine o'clock at night, to use a colloquialism, "worn to a frazzle." That journey is regarded with horror by everyone who is compelled to make it. The vibration can be imagined when it is stated that it is impossible to drink a cup of tea or to read a book, and often barely possible to retain a seat in a deck chair, for usually one finds one's own furniture for the first-class carriages. Speaking from experience, being in the ward-room of a torpedo-destroyer in a gale is nothing to it. Many are the stories which one hears about it, but one we can verify, namely, that a miner suffering from phthisis was recommended by the doctor to go home as soon as he was fit to travel. Under ordinary circumstances this end would have been achieved, but the Bauchi railway intervened, the terrible jolting brought on hæmorrhage, and his last resting-place is Zaria. We mention this merely because it is of the most vital importance that before aught else is attempted in the way of transport development this railway should be rebuilt completely, thereby encouraging mining and other industries on the plateau, and at the same time rendering it accessible as a health resort to all Europeans in this portion of Africa. On the main line things are totally different, and there is a "train de luxe" which meets the incoming mail steamers and is known as the boat express. This leaves Lagos at nine o'clock at night and reaches Kano at 6.44 in the evening on the third day. This, it must be admitted, does not represent an excessive speed; including stoppages, it averages fourteen miles an hour.

Against this it must be mentioned that north of Jebba the weight of the rails is only 40 lb. per yard, and between Jebba and Lagos it is 10 lb. more. As a method of comparison, the weight of the Great Western Railway is 90 lb. per yard. Yet between Ilorin and Jebba we timed some of our running and found, that without excessive vibration, we were travelling at a steady fifty miles an hour. Sometimes, with a heavily-laden train, the speed may drop as low as nine miles, while at "banks" it is no unusual thing for the train to go backwards and forwards until the engine gathers enough speed to carry it on to the other side. The rolling stock

is good, or, perhaps it would be better to say, has been good. It is admittedly difficult to train the native mind to understand those niceties which go to make railway travelling in the tropics as little uncomfortable as possible. It almost appears as though the West African mind was physically incapable of grasping those salient features of hygiene which every European instinctively comprehends. In Brazil, in Ceylon, in India, in East Africa, to mention other railway systems within the tropics, the trains are usually clean, there is always a sufficient water supply, and the greatest care is manifested over the all-important question of sanitation. We wish we could write the same about the Nigerian Railway system, but we cannot. Not one but almost every traveller we met, official or otherwise, complained of the truly impossible and unhealthy conditions prevailing. As before remarked, it is no fault of the construction of the carriages, but it is the fault of the natives, who are not adequately supervised. This possibly arises from want of sufficient staff, but again, if we may hazard an opinion, an influx of new and enterprising blood would be all for the good of the Nigerian Railway administration. Officials there are not a whit different from officials elsewhere, and there will always be a percentage, who, taking no particular interest in their work, will allow things to jog along in the happy belief that no complaints will be forthcoming. This is particularly the case in an enervating climate. Also, although *de jure* the native is "a man and a brother," *de facto* he is not a brother with whom one wishes to travel cheek by jowl from Lagos to Kano. At present any native who can pay the price can ride in a first-class carriage for seven hundred and four miles or any part thereof. This is as it should be, but white men should also be able to travel by themselves. In none of the other West Coast colonies are the complaints from officials so bitter on this subject, for the simple reason that Nigeria is so far the only country where it is necessary to sleep on a train to arrive at one's destination. Many a time have we heard laudations of the "good old days," when a man with his score or so

of carriers left Jebba on foot and marched or rode to his station, when he could get a proper bath at night and ate clean, decently cooked food and slept in his camp bed in the rest house without any companions (animal or human), save, possibly, a man of his own race. But the Nigerian Railway may safely say: "Nous avons changé tout cela."

Another point which calls for improvement, is the provision of carriages for ladies on the line. In Nigeria there are many white women, wives of officials, traders and miners, nurses, missionaries and others. Many of these women arrive in the country, or leave it, alone. We heard of one case, for the entire accuracy of which we cannot vouch, where the daughter of a missionary, under thirty years of age and a pretty woman, travelled from Lagos to Minna in a compartment with three black men. If this be true, it should never be allowed to occur again, and we cannot imagine the blunder which allowed it ever to occur.

We recommend to the consideration of the Nigerian Railway the excellent plan of the Governor of Sierra Leone. As far as we know, it is this: Carriages are to be constructed with a number of *unfurnished* compartments in which one camp bed, or even two can be set up, leaving room for a couple of chairs and possibly a small table. These can be booked in advance on payment of a small sum, by a white man or a native (preference should be given to the white man, in our opinion), and the journey made in relative cleanliness and comfort. Ninety-nine per cent. of the white population of Nigeria would, we are sure, gladly pay the difference, as the alternative, particularly when the traveller is a woman, who usually has great prostration on arrival and may have to spend a day or so in bed, with the doctor in attendance. Owing to the war there is undoubtedly a shortage of wagons, which adversely operates upon the takings of the railway. Also the existing main line is a single track, though with sufficient sidings. We have ourselves seen vast quantities of raw material awaiting month after month transport to the sea. We have also seen line after line of empty wagons

in sidings. The explanation given us was that there were no locomotives ; and so the vicious circle is formed. The traders complain of the railway ; the goods officials blame the locomotive department ; the locomotive department blame the war, which really has been convenient in that it is blamed for everything ; the steamship companies blame the administration because freights are hard to get ; and the steamship officials, in their comfortable chairs in Liverpool or London, in turn blame their captains, write letters to the papers condemning everything wholesale, and deploring the unsatisfactory state of affairs. And yet it seems to us humble outsiders, who certainly had the opportunity of observation, that the basis of the whole trouble is the lack of really first-class railway initiative coupled with too much bureaucratic centralization. It would not be difficult to find further criticism, but we do not wish to appear ungrateful. Only it is one of the errors into which a traveller is only too likely to fall, that of painting everything "*couleur de rose*" when in his heart he can very easily lay his fingers upon the defects of a system. In fair criticism there can be no harm, more especially when it is quite devoid of personal bias, and more especially when it is tempered by the memory of many friendly actions tendered to us by those who neither knew nor cared who or what we were, but merely extended their hands as one sojourner in a far land to another.

Of the future of the Nigerian railways, however, we are entirely enthusiastic. There is no question about it that railway conquest is extraordinarily fascinating, and we are looking forward to the time when the railway system of Nigeria will not amount to 2,000 miles but to 20,000, and when its ramifications will be trans-continental. These are not fantastic dreams, for did not Sir Frederick Lugard, as long ago as April, 1919, sketch out in his report of the amalgamation of Northern and Southern Nigeria what might be done in the way of railway construction in the near future? In support of what we have written regarding railway administration, he said: —

"It is true, as I have said elsewhere, that an inadequate sum has been spent upon railway maintenance during the war, and a considerable sum must therefore be added to the capital account for additional rolling stock, workshop equipment, and, in some sections, for the renewal of rails, but considering the increased cost during the war of fuel and all materials and of war bonuses to the staff, the financial position of the railways must be considered as eminently satisfactory. There is, moreover, every prospect of a large increase in earnings as soon as the removal of war restrictions and an adequate supply of shipping render the expansion of trade possible."

As far as cargo is concerned, the steamships are there. It is now the land transport which is at fault. Above we have made reference to the Port Harcourt and Udi railway, which at present is able to supply steamers at the harbour terminus with coal, though that necessary for the main Nigerian railways and industries has to be sea-borne to Lagos and then transhipped, a lengthy and expensive process. Sir Frederick clearly grasped this important point and cordially approved of a line connecting Udi with Bukuru, the terminus of the Bauchi line. This would offer no great engineering difficulties with the exception of crossing the River Benue, would open up a part of the country which at the present moment has been scarcely scratched, and would afford the Bauchi tinfields a speedy and cheap means of getting their ore away to the coast, whilst it would enormously facilitate the import of machinery. In fact, so unsatisfactory are the conditions to-day in the tinfields that we were told in all seriousness, owing to the cost of transport, that it had been proposed to send the tin overland by carrier or by donkey to Loko, on the Benue, thereby avoiding the existing railway. Naturally Sir Frederick's scheme would depend upon the alteration of the Bauchi narrow gauge to the Nigerian standard gauge. From Bukuru, a line could then branch away to the town of Maidugari not far from the western shore of Lake Tchad. A glance at any map will show the vast possibilities of such a connection, running as it



The Lower Niger.



Native Market Place.

does through a country little known, but where lead and silver are both supposed to exist, let alone tapping the great northern prairies of the province of Bornu. Further, he conceived another necessary connection which must come in due course, namely, a line between Kano and Maidugari, which would thus link up the Nigerian railway system into one gigantic triangle.

Although no exact figures are at present available, it is estimated that annually 20,000 tons of merchandise reach Kano from this portion of Bornu, which either come in bullock-carts or are head-borne. Considering that the load carried on the head by porters is only 60lbs., and the cost of portage is no longer as cheap as it was in the old days, it can be grasped with ease that the merchandise is both plentiful and remunerative. It is but reasonable to suppose, as has always been proved to be the case, that the advent of the railway would bring increased population, and would attract to it many of those nomads who actually belong to the country, as apart from outsiders, and who make their homes temporarily here and there over the illimitable grass plains which constitute the main feature of this interesting region. It is here that lately experiments have been made in the way of cattle farms through British enterprise, the largest of which, at a place called Allegnu, has been started by the powerful African Association. It follows closely the lines of the Argentine estancia, and with the opening-up of the country—but it must be opened up—should become a paying proposition. For the moment the difficulty appears to be to supply water in the dry season, but in South America this difficulty was fought and overcome by the sinking of artesian wells, and one cannot but imagine that it would be money well spent were experts financed by the Nigerian Government thoroughly to explore the territory and to report upon the feasibility of such an operation.

In previous chapters, again and again, we have emphasized the fact that it is not fair for the political officer, who is expected to be an encyclopædia of general knowledge, to make a report upon such abstruse matters, and for the world to consider it as expert opinion. And,

when one considers further the congested state of the British Isles, which, in spite of the war, becomes daily more and more apparent, the unemployment and the hopeless search after a living by those who gave the best they had for the Empire, then surely it becomes a duty of the Government or of any Colonial administration to test its resources to the utmost degree in an endeavour to find an outlet for the latent energies of those who are its own citizens. It is a mistaken policy at this time of day, we certainly believe, to lay down a hard-and-fast law that we administer territories solely for the benefit of those who occupy them. It is a specious piece of pleading which makes an appeal to the well-to-do sentimentalist. But if, by opening up the country and introducing modern methods the addition is made of a leaven of white enterprise, intelligence, and education, then assuredly the original holders of the land have small cause for complaint against that administration, which has for its ideal the social and economic welfare of the native races under its control.

Another badly needed addition to the Nigerian railway system is that which would travel due north from Kano to the frontier of French Zinder, and thence on to the capital of the same name, the frontier being equidistant from the two points. By this means Nigeria would capture a very large portion of the freight travelling across the Sahara to Zinder, and thence through French territory to Lake Tchad, for ultimate delivery at Maidugari. Sir Frederick Lugard estimated that the present caravan trade from Zinder to Kano approximated 1,000 tons a month. The line would traverse a very thickly-populated country, and would be able to handle all the traffic of the French territory, which at the present moment has no outlet to the sea. The export thence of hides and skins is enormous, and, obviously, the French merchant would prefer the Lagos route to Zinder rather than the uncertainty of trans-Saharan transit. The French have in project a trans-Saharan railway from some point upon the Mediterranean to Zinder. But that is not yet. However, it opens up a fascinating dream of what undoubtedly will in years to

come be a great trans-African thoroughfare. It will then be possible to land at Algiers and buy a through ticket to Lagos, traversing some of the most unknown, and, consequently, most romantic parts of Africa, which must make appeal to the imagination of those who feel the call of vast spaces, unwritten history, and the ever-recurrent "beyond."

Finally, there remains for a later period another line from Kano or Zaria to Sokoto, the Mohammedan headquarters of the whole of Western Africa. The Sultan of Sokoto wields an enormous influence over the whole of Mohammedan Africa, second only to that of the Sultan of Turkey, and the opening up of his city to outside influences would undoubtedly be of great administrative importance. But that is rather for the distant future. There is so much which needs more urgent attention. With the exception of its unfortunate climatic reputation there is really no reason why, with better railway communication, a considerable number of travellers on business or pleasure bent might not be annually attracted to Nigeria. It is really rather pathetic to read down the shipping columns of the papers and see advertised the dates of departure together with the names of the steamships concerned to every known part of the globe with the one exception of West Africa, which, for aught the reader knows to the contrary, might not exist. That very small fact speaks for itself, and shows that hitherto the invitation to come and judge for oneself, to see what there is to see, and to break fresh ground for those who are smitten with the fever of travel, has not been understood or has been ignored. In many countries railway systems are responsible for hotels, and in practice it has been found to be an immensely paying proposition. The Canadian Pacific Railway, though not a Government undertaking, is a case in point, and there appears to be no reason why, in a legitimate desire to open and advance the prospects of a new country and outside enterprise being lacking, a new Government railway might not take upon its shoulders hotels at certain points, either on its own initiative or by subsidizing to some extent those to

whom such undertakings are familiar. It does seem absurd that, after the enormous amount of money which has been lavished upon West Africa, not only one, but all these territories should remain remote from the immediate influence and interest of the Briton. It is a curious apathy which seems to envelop the whole coast, and it is no exaggeration to write that the average Board school boy could tell more about Patagonia than he could about Nigeria. The best cure for such a state of things is to improve the railway and steamship travel.

CHAPTER XXIV.

WHEN Horace Greeley, the great American publicist, was asked by the rising generation for his advice as to what they should do, his invariable answer was, "Go west, young man! Go west!" It seems scarcely necessary to point out that he was not referring to West Africa, but to the western States of his own country. At the same time, it might not be wholly inapt to apply the injunction to certain sections of young Britain, and suggest their casting their eyes towards West Africa as a means whereby they might quickly assure themselves of a comfortable independence. Advisedly have we written "certain sections." Dealing first with the commercial careers open to the hardy and enterprising, certain points must be emphasized, and these we have made fairly clear in our preceding chapters. But let us epitomize them again. Of a certainty nothing could damage present-day West Africa more than an influx of young men totally unsuited by physique or temperament for the hardships and rigours which they will inevitably be called upon to encounter. Therefore it becomes an axiom that the candidate for this promising field of labour must enjoy the best of good constitutions, must be level-headed, and possessed of that ballast which can best be gained by mixing with others and noting from what causes success or failure has resulted. The university student, for instance, is as a rule doubtful material. In the majority of cases, certainly in the older universities, he has been brought up to depend too much upon the advice of others; he has been carefully shepherded upon his short journey through life, and therefore he lacks that initiative which is a prime essential for success in the West African colonies. It is not only business initiative. It is the instinct of knowing what

to do and what not to do in every department of life from health to recreation. This, in turn, will bespeak considerable strength of character. Nowhere in the world does the adage, "*Facilis est descensus Averni*" more fully apply. Temptation of every conceivable description does not wait to be looked for. It will greet him with outstretched hands, whether it be in the form of congenial companions, cards, gambling, or the whisky bottle. Those are the difficulties which test the man and prove his mettle. But if, after digesting the above, a young man communes with himself and says with confidence, "I can do this and more. I am physically as strong as a horse, and to make a financial success I am prepared to take risks which, after all, thousands have done before me. I have had to knock about in the world as those who have been born with silver spoons in their mouths have not. I possess a decent middle-class education, and I am determined to build a future for myself."

Without hesitation, one may say that, barring the inevitable accidents of life, that youth will succeed; and what is more, West Coast firms of repute are waiting to welcome him with open arms. Be it said, not all West Coast firms are trustworthy, but any reputable paper dealing with West African affairs will always be ready to give the neophyte straightforward and frank advice upon the matter. Time was when companies bearing honoured names were not ashamed to entice into their employ clerks who were to receive the munificent salary of £50, £60 and £70, with free board and lodging and free passages out and home, for the first three years of their service. This was a disgrace and a shame. It was a deliberate incentive to dishonesty, more especially, when coupled with the invitation was the hidden implication that providing the returns showed so much per mensem in the company's books, no questions would be asked as to any other money which might be made "on the side." The effects of such a system were obvious.

It is absolutely impossible for British administration to check every dealing which takes place between the white man and the native. Human nature being what it is, it became the rule rather than the exception to

browbeat, bully, or swindle the native agriculturist over his rubber or palm kernels, which were obtained at about a tenth of their real value, or, worse still, a working arrangement would be made with some half-caste black-guard who would act as intermediary and share the profits with the white man. West African history teems with such incidents, and they were, in no small degree, responsible for the latent antagonism which used to exist between the administrator and the trader. Even in our own travels most remarkable are some of the situations which have been brought to our notice. One particular case comes readily to our memory. A small firm with a reputation which might be described as somewhat cloudy, forbade its clerks ever to associate with the clerks of any other firm, and, what is more, forbade them even to walk out alone. They were always accompanied by some senior member of this remarkable undertaking. Having signed contracts, and being without the funds to enable them to get home, they were obliged to put up with this perfectly wretched existence, than which nothing more horrible could be imagined, and to which prison would have been a pleasant change.

Happily, however, there is another side of the picture, and the young man who can join companies like the African Association, Millers, Swanzy, the Tarquah Trading Company, and Holts, will find himself well looked after, and given every opportunity to make a way for himself. We have been guests at many of their bungalows. We have seen how the junior clerks live and how they fare, and it is very pleasant to be in a position to testify that they are at least as well looked after as they would be were they in their own home country occupying similar posts of responsibility. Within limitations bounded only by common sense they may practically enjoy anything in the food line which the stores may have in stock and in the way of beer, soft drinks, and spirits they are supplied with a very liberal ration. If this leads to any sort of abuse the privilege is necessarily withheld. Should they be ill the best medical attendance is available, and firms of standing such as we have mentioned see to it that their employees are

not out of pocket should the hospital claim them as temporary visitors. The worst that can be said is that the hours are rather long, and that the first term of service is usually about three years, according to the exigencies of the situation. Once, however, that period of probation is past they may confidently look forward to a perpetual rise in salary and an honourably earned commission upon sales.

Many of the best buildings upon the coast, and some are really beautiful houses, belong to such agents and their assistants, who are provided with motor-cars, belong to the local clubs, enjoy life as well as it can be enjoyed, and eventually arrive at the Legislative Council as official members. Neither need their operations cease there. The African and Eastern Trade Corporation, formerly the African Association, has tentacles everywhere, as far afield as Baghdad, Constantinople, Alexandria, and East Africa, offering promises of better climate and more congenial employment to those who have shown their mettle.

A story might well be written of the organizer of this vast undertaking, who started as a very small boy in a very humble position in West Africa and is now a Major-General in the British Army for services rendered during the war, and who can count his income in tens of thousands.

Perhaps we have written enough to show in as succinct a manner as possible what commercial openings exist in West Africa for those suited to a commercial career, and who have the courage to go in and win.

The Government service has opportunities for those who have no leaning towards the commercial world and look forward principally to an assured income with a pension at the end of their term of service. Like most Government employment, the emoluments are not large—in fact, they were so small that vast dissatisfaction has arisen amongst Civil servants generally employed on the West Coast. The imagination of the Treasury has never been its strong point. Necessarily, it is concerned with cutting down national expenditure, but it is ridiculous that, while millions are being frittered away upon

hair-brained schemes of doubtful benefit to the country, its servants, especially in West Africa, have been put into such fearful financial straits that the Governors of the respective colonies, to their lasting credit, protested in the most forcible terms to the Colonial Office, practically demanding a definite and reasonable increase.

That discontent was rife may be gathered from a committee report which, in its concluding paragraph, states as follows: "This dissatisfaction is intensified in some quarters by scarcely veiled distrust of the intentions of the Government in regard to the remedial measures that may be under consideration. So acute is the present tension of expectation that we have no hesitation in saying that any undue postponement of the final decision will seriously increase the volume of discontent by creating a further pretext for open agitation."

Thanks in no small degree to Lord Milner, the ex-Colonial Secretary, salaries have been improved, and in future the budding political officer will start with an initial salary of £500 a year, which will be increased, should he show ability and should vacancies exist, to as much as £960 before he becomes a second-class resident.

Nothing will be gained by harping on bygones, but if means had been intentionally sought to discourage young men from joining the administrative departments of West Africa, after having taken into consideration the abnormally increased cost of living, nothing could have been better devised! If an officer, after fourteen years' service had only about £60 a year to allow his wife and two children in England, and if an officer, newly appointed, had absolutely nothing to give to his wife in England after paying for his outfit and living expenses for four months, then something must have been "rotten in the state of Denmark."

These cases can be substantiated. At the same time, with the alteration in salaries (which will still further have to be augmented to maintain a satisfactory service), the West African Civil Service may now be said to offer a promising field for the energetic man of good education. For it must be remembered, in spite of all this

argument about salaries—most justifiable argument as we consider it—the Government servant has certain advantages which the trader has not. Thus his term of service at the moment (and let us hope for the future) is nominally only one year, after which he has five months' leave on full pay and a first-class passage out and home. By the new scheme his wife also is to be assisted to join him, since it is manifestly impossible for a man with no private income and drawing, let us say, £700 a year, to keep up two establishments, as he otherwise must, and to entertain officially, as he is frequently obliged to do. The entertainment allowance sometimes granted is wholly insufficient, and we have been at a station where the unfortunate official, happily unmarried, was obliged to keep regular open house. This problem also, however, is in a state of flux, and owing to that determination which characterizes both the Governors of Nigeria and the Gold Coast, a remedy is certain to follow.

We have dwelt upon the "has-been," since the cause of dissatisfaction of Government employees has drifted home, and was voiced in no uncertain degree in the British Press. Giving a dog a bad name is liable to prejudice the dog, and since it is of vital importance that the Civil Service on the West Coast should go up and not down, and that the candidates for it should be of the best material available, it appeared to us only discreet to present both sides, the past and the present, and hopefully to prophesy of the future. There actually is no reason why the West African Civil Service should not line up with those of the Malay States and India, thus giving it a standing and prestige which as yet it lacks.

In due course the introduction of a qualifying examination must undoubtedly develop competition, which will broaden the ranks of available candidates and make the opportunities of the Service better known and more highly appreciated.

We have mentioned that the Governmental tour is only a year, nominally, with leave at the end of that time, as against the average three years of the young trader. This needs a word of explanation. As we have

emphasized, the clerk in one of the first-rate stores has not to consider what one may call the finance of food.

He can live upon the best which is obtainable. Not so the junior Government official. He has to consider his purse, and also pay the exorbitant charges of imported articles of diet, groceries, household necessities, and what not, which are kept at an absurdly inflated price, owing to import duties which serve to bolster up the revenue of the colony. This is poor finance, and it is exceedingly unfair when the young Government officer is obliged to pay import duty upon the stores he may bring with him from England. Steps to remedy this state of affairs, we are given to understand, are already in contemplation.

Efforts are continually being made by some Governors to lengthen the tour, their plea being first, that they must have continuity of service, which is sound policy if feasible; secondly, that a lengthened tour is perfectly reasonable if proper housing accommodation for officials is forthcoming, if proper food, recreation and social surroundings can be provided, and if—a necessary corollary of the preceding clause—sufficient emolument is forthcoming. It must be admitted that the suggestion is based upon a formidable battery of "ifs," and there is much to be said against the proposition under any conditions.

It seems to be forgotten by the advocates of the lengthened tour of service that those born and bred in temperate climates seldom, if ever, become thoroughly acclimatized to an intemperate tropical climate. A large proportion of official West Africa is drawn from those who have been born in the West Indies, or, less often, in India. These stand a much better chance of not feeling the strain of West Africa, so much so that we have met many who heartily disliked the idea of spending their whole leave in England. Similarly, it is very easy for one in the situation of a Governor, or head of a department, to plead for a longer tour. Those in exalted positions are apt to forget that their subordinates are not surrounded with private secretaries to run hither

and thither at their beck and call, who have servants without number to keep away from them all the petty worries of housekeeping which become so exasperating in such a climate, and who, metaphorically, live upon the fat of the land. This lack of proportion not seldom leads to misunderstanding and dissatisfaction, especially when the dicta of these autocrats is given in direct opposition to the best medical opinion available. In point of fact, it is seldom that officials get home to time. Hitches constantly occur. Also it is an unfortunate thing that the long and devoted labours of the depleted staff of officials during the war should now be cited as proof that they are quite able to stay longer in the colonies. It is as though when a woman, nerved by grief or courage, has carried—let us say—the inert body of her husband a distance of many yards, she should be thought capable of repeating this feat in cold blood. Many of us worked like Trojans during the war, and wonder now how we did it! And those whose war-tours in West Africa lasted twenty-two and twenty-six months on end, doing the work of two or three other men as well as their own, may well wonder if their reward is merely to be “*da cape alegro un poco agitato.*”

It is impossible to foresee accidents, and the roster of any department is seldom so complete that the absence of even one individual upon temporary sick leave does not in a greater or lesser degree involve all the others in that department.

Whilst not subscribing to everything which is written in the following letter, portions of which we will quote, and which was published in that widely circulated paper *West Africa*, yet the writer, who is an M.R.C.S. and L.R.C.P. of considerable West African experience, deserves attention as being one who can speak with authority: “Why lengthen the tour when so few survive to enjoy the pension at present? One will answer that health conditions have much improved now. Yes, in very localized areas, but of that later. Is it not true that many of those who are in favour of lengthening the tour have immediate commercial or Governmental in-

terests to serve, which interests may—it is only human—obscure their viewpoint concerning the after-effects of West Coastal service upon the great majority twenty years hence? A wealthy business man went for several thousands of miles into the very heart of Central Africa on a river, in a superb river steamer, specially fitted for him, and accompanied by a physician who would not allow him to drink water from the ship's filter without its being tested. Life in the 'bush' was absolutely unknown to him experimentally, and such were the conditions under which he travelled that a mosquito would have found it difficult to have got near enough to him to insert its proboscis. Upon the return to England of this same traveller he dilated upon the good and healthy conditions of life in Central Africa, and remarked that he would rather sail a yacht on the River Congo than he would on the Mediterranean. Well, those of us who have lived three or four years in that country without leave could tell a different story. . . . Knowing this fact, the optimism of the remark upon sailing the yacht on the Congo in preference was a pill bigger than I could swallow, though I am in the pill trade. Let us not be mistaken. Let us look at the subject broadly and completely. The newcomer has to accommodate himself physiologically to new conditions of atmospheric temperature and moisture, food and water. He is cut off from the pleasant surroundings of civilization, which probably have been the mainstay of his mental temperament. . . .

Again, owing to the separation of the newcomer from his usual friends and pleasurable surroundings, he is apt to become discontented, fretful, sleepless, agitated, and eventually he is labelled 'neurasthenia,' and sent home as unfitted for tropical residence or not suitable for the job.

It is remarked, 'But what about the excess for which the men, and not the climate, are to blame?'

My remarks above have been made on cases excluding diseased ones, but is the man altogether to blame? I maintain that he is not, only partly to blame. If that man had not been removed from his usual courses of

friendships and attractions and brought into the tropics, the probabilities are that he would not have become diseased at all. It is because he is in tropical conditions that he surrendered himself to excesses and became diseased. He is partly to blame, but so are West African conditions. . . . Health conditions on the Coast have improved, there is no doubt about that. Yellow fever and malaria are much less prevalent than they were, and hence the mortality amongst Europeans is less, too, and a very necessary improvement it is. . . . Many Coasters, however, are away in the 'bush,' far removed from civilization, proper houses, comfortable bedding, properly cooked food, adequate pure water, and at the mercy of the insect world—if insects have any mercy in the bush. Such is the lot of surveyors, builders of railways, and all pioneers, as this country must have for many years to come. . . .

To be quite candid, the writer would not object to doing five years continuously on the Coast, provided that he was living in a good house, in a civilized and sanitary centre, with good servants and congenial society. . . . These conditions are only available for the few."

We make no apologies for quoting that valuable opinion, and when the conditions of life mentioned are obtainable by the many, then West Africa will certainly deserve to lose much of its bad name. In the meantime, however, with the goodwill of those in authority, governmental and commercial, West Africa, even now, offers opportunities to those who, having read and learnt, are prepared to face facts as they are.

CHAPTER XXV.

FROM Onitsha to Forcados under favourable circumstances is a matter of two days' full steam. The river broadens, rising ground disappears, the bush-clad banks take on a deeper green, and their dense foliage speaks of paths untrodden by the white man and not often by the black. As one churns along through the muddy water seawards, now and again one catches a glimpse of what looks like a tributary, but in reality is only one of the thousands of small creeks connecting up the labyrinth of the water channels in the great Niger delta.

We were fortunate in catching the stern wheeler, "Mungo Park," a comfortable boat when under way, but when she tied up for the night a little inferno of heat and mosquitoes. However, it is of those wonderful creeks that one would fain speak. Heaven alone knows their number. One can well believe that many of them have never been disturbed by the screw of the white man's launch or the pole of the white man's canoe. They traverse hundreds of miles, and it is possible, though presumably a wearisome journey, to travel from Lagos to Old Calabar through these hinterland waterways, occupying about five days over the job. The creeks are monotonous to the verge of exasperation. As far as the eye can wander there is nothing but mangrove-lined swamp with roots protruding from oozy slime, festooned with myriads of small oysters. We heard that the natives, who all through the delta are very primitive Pagans, and not long since were man-eaters, regard these oysters as delicacies, but we never heard of a white traveller being quixotic enough to try them. They look too forbidding for one thing, washed as they are with the rising tide by the sullen oily black waters of the

river. With the ebb mud banks appear, and then it is that through the steamy mist one often sees huge, ugly crocodiles sunning themselves in the warmth with one eye watching incessantly for the over-venturesome child who has wandered down to the stream from its home amidst the mangroves, to find itself a victim to one of these horrible reptiles. No wonder the natives fear and loathe them.

Needless to say, here and there there are promising settlements even amidst this waste of mud and water. Thus, Warri and Sapelli are both up-to-date little townships, possessing quite a number of factories, resident administrative staff, and all the appurtenances which belong to a settled community. As we did not visit them in person, we can only speak from hearsay, but the bank manager from Warri, a naive Scotsman with the most remarkable faculty of losing money at "freeze out," which may be described as the national card game of Nigeria, assured us that life there was not half so bad as might be imagined. He explained at great length that, owing to its geographical position, Warri was most certainly not on the highway to anywhere, and hence both officials and traders—and bank managers—were to a large extent spared the painful and oft-recurring visits of their superiors. And since in the tropics, especially in tropics of this nature, exercise is as necessary as quinine, tennis courts had been laid out, and they could even boast of an improvised golf links. The trade is lucrative, palm kernels and rubber chiefly, together with any amount of mahogany, which at one time was an export of great value—though apparently since the war its market price has decreased.

Making the best of a bad job is one of the best traits in these rather forlorn communities, and then, as our bank-manager friend remarked: "You've got to think of your increased salary all the time."

Teneriffe, Orotava, Santa Cruz, and Las Palmas are delightful places, all of them; but, as our canny Scot affirmed with a satisfied smile, "They don't pay managers in those places like they do me up at Warri." That is, of course, only one side of the picture; there

are others not so pleasant. To those with imaginations there is a certain rather morbid fascination about these solitary, gloomy waterways, where often the only sound which breaks the silence is the screech of the offal-hunting birds which haunt the mangroves. No wonder the Niger delta is so full of grim and uncanny tales of black-man magic. For the following we can vouch. The narrator is still in the land of the living, and instead of healing white men and black of nature's ailments in the Niger delta, is back in his own country amusing himself with healing the ailments of the various erring motor-cars which are now his prime consideration. He was stationed in a little backwater, in which there was one store, with one white man in charge, an officer in command of a small military escort—for this was an unruly portion of the hinterland, and that represented the entire white community. Rarely, very rarely, did they get their mails or news from the outside world, which all goes to make the European "jumpy." The actual work of unloading the incoming cotton goods and other imports and sending away the rubber and palm kernels was all done by Kroo boys recruited from the Liberian coast, and who were relieved once every three months and sent home. Their presence can be explained by the fact that the native Pagans, whilst ready to trade and barter, were most assuredly not ready to assist in the way of manual labour. The point is worth making, because, in what follows, it can be affirmed with certainty that, as the conjurer says, "there was no collusion." The Kroo boys lived in a shack, and were under the medical supervision of the doctor. The black headman had complained, certainly; he had nothing definite to state, but merely expressed a forcible opinion that it was "no good place." One morning a Kroo boy was reported dead. This was not uncommon, and caused no particular comment—though, to be sure, a post-mortem revealed no apparent cause of death. Next morning two men had departed this life, and again post-mortems revealed absolutely nothing. The Kroo boys, however, muttered. On the third morning four men were dead, and there was something like a panic. Since the post-mortems

again revealed nothing, a consultation was held, and, without more ado, the whole gang were transhipped to another station. In due course a fresh batch of Kroo men arrived, and were housed in the same sinister shack. Naturally they knew nothing of its history, and, as is the nature of Kroo boys, they arrived in the most cheerful of moods. The first night one of the number died. No cause of death was ascertainable, and this time it was the doctor who was perturbed. The second night two more men passed away, and the Kroo boys looked worried. The third night four men went to their last account, and white as well as black became panicky. What to do? A conference was held, and it was decided there and then to burn the shack down. A match was applied, and in a few seconds the dry thatch was a roaring mass of flame. Then it was that something fell to the ground and was seized by the headman, who rushed up to the doctor, shouting, "Here be plenty bad thing, sah! Fit to kill all men, sah!" He held at arm's-length two human finger bones which had been tied together with a bit of native twine in the shape of a rough cross. With gesticulations and frenzied shouts they all gathered round and said they would rather swim away from the place and risk crocodiles or drowning than have such a horrible thing in the station. The question that then arose was what to do with it, and at the instigation of the doctor a deep hole was dug far down in the sinking slime, and the relic, "ju-ju," or whatever it may be called, was given an effectual burial. The curious part is that those men then returned to another shack built on the same ground, and, as the story books say, "lived happily ever afterwards."

Sceptics and cynics may smile the smile of great superiority and say, "Of course, coincidence! Very curious and interesting, but coincidence. Granted things like that don't happen every day, but coincidence does play odd pranks, and this was one of them." These same people, however, do not know the black man as he is in the coastal regions of West Africa. They cannot grasp the meaning or possibilities of black magic, but there are plenty of those who, having seen, believe, and

could place on record story after story admitting of no satisfactory explanation. In witness whereof, let the interested inquirer peruse the books of Captain Amaury Talbot, at present Commissioner at Benin City.

Writing of the lower Niger reminds one that in pre-war days the Southern Nigeria that was then was indebted to Germany for a revenue of nearly £1,200,000, which was derived from the sale to the natives of trade gin commonly known as "square face." This popular name was given to it because the bottles in which this pernicious poison was sold were square in shape. Of its effects upon the native population anyone with the least imagination can surmise.

If vodka, which after all is a perfectly pure spirit, was credited with undermining the character of the Russian peasant, then what can be said of a beverage which was anything but pure and contained many of the same ingredients which are found in the furniture polish which one reads is so popular in the "dry" United States? It was no uncommon thing to see canoe men paid off in "square face" in place of coin of the realm, and it was quite usual to see a bottle poured straight down the throat of an individual, who, as may be imagined, was useless for some days after.

With the war the trade annually slackened, and once Sir Frederick Lugard was in a position to control matters himself, he saw to it that if the natives must have liquor, and by no means did he say they should not, he determined it should be good liquor. To that end he heaped up the duty, and trade gin, which in 1913 cost 9s. 3d., rose to about 16s. a case. Put in another way, the pre-war import was 4,600,000 bulk gallons, which sank to 260,000 gallons. This was undoubtedly due to the increasingly heavy duty. This loss to the revenue is being gradually recouped by the obvious fact that the natives have now more spending money, which they invest in Manchester cottons, and other harmless aids to their personal adornment. At the same time Sir Frederick introduced further legislation and created what he called "the prohibited area of Nigeria."

By the Compact of Brussels in 1892, nominally, no

liquor was permitted to be imported into the then Northern Nigeria, except for sale to Europeans and certain favoured natives such as Government clerks and those employed in stores. Apparently there was considerable leakage. At least, so the supporters of the latter enactment affirm. Hence followed a Government ordinance, prohibiting absolutely the sale or importation of liquor into the northern provinces of Nigeria for both white man and black alike. If a white man, official, trader, or miner wants liquor at the present day he must first of all apply to the local political officer, who signs his requisition, which must then be sent to the Secretary of the Northern Provinces, who in turn countersigns it, and then, and only then, is the order sent on to Lagos to the firm to which the order is made out. Naturally this occasions great delay and an uncommon amount of irritation amongst the white population. Again and again did we hear the most acrimonious criticism of this arbitrary ruling. It often happens that, between the signing of the original order and the receipt of the goods, as much as six months may elapse, during which a whole community may be enforcedly "dry." This was never intended. Sir Frederick Lugard himself wrote: "Total prohibition of imported spirits for the natives accustomed to their use for decades, while admitting spirits for Europeans (and they should not, I think, be prohibited in West Africa), would violate the principle which forbids class legislation and would be unjust." The Mohammedan religion insists that those who adhere to it strictly should be teetotallers, though experience has shown that this tenet is very frequently broken by the followers of the Prophet in the Emirates. But, be that as it may, the restriction was first introduced for the benefit of the Mohammedan conscience, but did not take into consideration the enormous number of Pagan natives and others who dwell in those latitudes.

We hold no brief for either side, though we do suggest that, as evidenced both in the United States and Russia, a substitute for bona-fide liquor can always be found, and also that the native population are adepts at manufacturing the most deadly intoxicants which, from their

impurity, are very pernicious to the human constitution in a far greater degree than the imported beverage would be.

We cannot recall without a smile a most genial host of ours who affirmed that he was never short of whisky. He was a man of scientific mind who enjoyed a glass or two. We tried his whisky, and its potency was undoubted.

Perhaps Sir Frederick Lugard may remember with amusement a little joke against himself. He was sent two bottles of this liqueur for his opinion, and pronounced it the best he had ever tasted. Inquiry followed, and, behold, it was home-brewed!

However, to return to practical politics, this enactment needs revision, since we heard, not from one but from many authorities, that it is accomplishing practically no good, merely because, as has been proved elsewhere, total prohibition is a failure at the present moment owing to the fact that it is so simple to manufacture something to take its place.

Before one arrives at Forcados, the mouth of the Niger, one is perforce obliged to stop at Burutu, assuredly one of the most desolate places planted by the hand of God on the whole of the globe. It must be admitted, however, that the hand of man has had something to do with it, since, before the Niger Company took the place over as a river station, it was pure, unadulterated mangrove swamp. To-day it is a very small islet carefully sheltered from every passing breeze, and literally surrounded on every side with stagnant water and foul swamp. The Niger Company had enormous stores there, together with engineering and repair workshops. These were recently all burnt down, and they form a monument of charred woodwork, twisted iron girders, and rusting machinery which it will take many a year to obliterate. Beyond that there is a bank and a cemetery, together with a small native market possessed of an unenviable reputation. If a vagabond population of whites is a tough proposition to face after dark, then assuredly a vagabond population of blacks is worse.

One can recall the incident of a youngster coming out to join a trading firm, who, against the advice of everybody, wandered ashore in the gloaming, "just to see what it looked like," as he himself phrased it. It was the last journey of exploration he ever made. Two days later his mutilated corpse was found waterlogged in the sinister mangrove swamp. Emphatically, Burutu is no good place in which to remain. To Forcados it is about an hour's steaming. One rounds a bend in the river, and, right ahead on the left bank, one sees the corrugated iron roofs of this little river settlement and beyond it the expanse of the ocean. It is hot, very hot, but withal there is an uncertain breeze borne in from the sea; one can watch the white combers breaking upon the usual West African bar, and, on occasion, the eye is delighted and the soul gladdened by the sight of what seems to one, after months inland, of an ocean-going steamer of enormous size. Forcados is human. Elder Dempster has made it, not figuratively, but actually. Dredgers pumped in clean sand from the sea-bed and reclaimed the horrid swamp, providing a more or less satisfactory foundation for the buildings which one finds there to-day.

The Elder Dempster's offices are really excellent, and, except for the inevitable loneliness and the obvious difficulty in getting fresh food and vegetables, there are many worse places in the world. There is even a club of sorts, a tennis court, while those who are fond of the sea can employ their spare time fishing and boat-sailing. On the whole it is a cheerful little community. The principal personage is undoubtedly the doctor. He is full of reminiscences, all of which are tinged with a peculiarly sardonic humour. Thus, if one questions him he will tell you with a smile that he always endeavours to "plant"—note the term—his hopeless patients out at sea. In other words, by hook or crook, he tries to manage so that as few burials take place on shore as possible. In his own words, "Funerals at Forcados are a great nuisance. If one tries to make a grave of respectable depth, one may depend upon it that, once one digs through the sandy sheath of the upper ground,

one comes to the inevitable water, and it is then necessary to stand upon the coffin to keep it down while the few words of the burial service are hurriedly read over the dear departed." Maybe it is not a pleasant picture, but it is all on a par with the actualities of life in West Africa.

And before leaving Forcados we must recall one incident. We met a lady who, we gathered, knew Nigeria well, and she spoke with enthusiasm of Forcados and its surroundings. She explained at great length that it was not half a bad place, that she had never had a spare minute; that being the only white woman there, she had had a simply ripping time with tennis every afternoon and bridge every evening; that it was rubbish to speak of life in Nigeria as being any worse than life in England; that the social amenities were observed just as they were in Surbiton, and that really she would much rather be out there than she would be in the home country. She greatly impressed us, and we thoroughly believed her. Picture our chagrin when our good friend the doctor remarked, "You don't mean to tell me that hardened travellers like yourselves believe all those fairy tales? Why, she and her husband have never been to Nigeria before, and they only stopped at Forcados ten days, just long enough to get an up-river steamer." And it is upon this sort of comment that reputation is founded. Personally, we were only long enough at Forcados to have a hasty look round. The universal complaint seemed to be that the inhabitants never got any news of the outside world except by mails, which came very irregularly. There is a telegraph communication with Lagos, and hence Reuters do come through, but they always appear for some unknown reason to be belated. And so this little forlorn body of white men, marooned, so to speak, upon a self-constructed island, live the little round of their daily life till such time as the welcome letter arrives informing Mr. So-and-so that he is due for leave, and that a passage has been secured for him by the next mail steamer from Lagos.

Unless there happens to be chance communication by sea to Lagos his troubles are by no means over, since by

hook or crook he must find his way up river to Lokoja, and then up river again to Baro, and then make a long and tedious railway journey via Minna Junction to Lagos, where, upon arrival, if it is possible he will find that, owing to the exigencies of the moment, his berth has been taken. He then returns by the same route to await better luck. We met one such case ourselves. The Niger Company's steamer, "Mungo Park," was a great contrast to the speedy little "Vulture" with its minute accommodation. It recalled to us a childish rhyme which relates—

"Now Captain Parker Pitche's sloop
Was called the cosy chicken coop.
A truly comfortable craft
With ample state rooms fore and aft."

Actually, the "Mungo Park's" ample state rooms were amidships, and forward there was a large dining-smoking-sitting-room where our own chairs could be put up. There were also two bathrooms and a kitchen. The most striking resemblance to a cosy chicken coop was on the lower deck where one would hesitate to estimate the number of men, women and children who swarmed like flies wherever there was room to stand, sit or lie. They were a happy lot, particularly the naked brown babies, and we liked to go amongst them and exchange smiles with the women and nods with the men. One man we noticed, who had an extremely inflamed foot tied up with a dirty rag. An interpreter was found, who said it had been cut with an axe some days before, so we took him in hand, made him wash the ugly cut in clean water and then in disinfectant and provided a spotless bandage of which he was as proud as Punch. After that we were considered to be healers of the first water and relays of men with varying complaints were brought to us by the interpreter-chaperon. Resinol was greatly in demand for skin troubles and we had the satisfaction of knowing that it could at least do no harm and certainly seemed to do good, while the demand for fresh water increased enormously. The Captain of the "Mungo Park" was also ill. He told us plaintively that some one must have

poisoned him, but his trouble "easily yielded to treatment," as the doctors say, and the gratitude of this black skipper was touching. Having heard one of us say we wanted limes, he managed, after many vain attempts, to obtain a large quantity for which he refused payment. It was a simple, patriarchal sort of life which we led for two days on the "Mungo Park," and one which was a welcome change after our previous strenuous weeks.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE problems confronting a Governor in West Africa are so many and varied and so complex that, after our small glimpse of the subject, we wondered how any man would undertake the task. He has four distinct sections of the community to consider—his officials, the merchants, the educated and the uneducated natives, not to mention the Crown Agents and the Secretary of State for the Colonies. Whatever he does he treads on some one's pet corn. He is either too slow or in too much of a hurry, too extravagant or too close-fisted, too pro-native or the reverse, in the opinion of these various sections. Without tact, patience, good temper and a level head he may find himself in the unenviable situation of the old man with a donkey in "Æsop's Fables," who, trying to please everyone, fell into the river. What must be the sensations of a Governor who sees his officials badly housed and underpaid and unable to extract from the Home Government the wherewithal adequately to better their conditions of life? The imaginations of Secretaries of State and other Olympians are not notorious for their elasticity, and it is admittedly hard for a man who goes in his motor to sit in a cool office in Whitehall to realize the conditions under which some of the Colonial work is being done. Also the less drain a colony is upon the Imperial Exchequer, the greater the kudos to the Governor. The merchants, also, cry "Give! give!" like the daughters of the horse leech. They want better landing facilities, better transport, more concessions from the natives, more of many things, and to them these are of greater import than the official requirements. And what do the natives want? Those who have been given the doubtful blessing of white man's education want social and official equality; the

others merely object to taxation and to interference where interference does not suit them. In other words, they wish the privileges of civilization without any of its penalties.

It has been seen in Russia with what fatal results a smattering of education has been attended. The quick, untutored mind eagerly grasps certain points in the universal scheme and, unless carefully trained, makes its own deductions, which are usually only superficially correct. Dr. Claridge, in his "History of the Gold Coast and Ashanti," sums it up most ably. "It is impossible to hurry a race forward in the course of a few years to a stage which it would not otherwise have reached for several centuries, except by paying the inevitable penalty for interference with any such natural law. The civilization acquired or imposed by such artificial means is for the most part no more than a veneer, which is easily peeled off and has the terrible disadvantage of adding to the vices and defects incidental to the new condition without having first eradicated those that previously existed, while it also tends to destroy those better qualities that were inbred in the subject in his natural state. There are, of course, occasional but very exceptional instances of men who survive this process and appear at first to justify it; but they are examples of the survival of the fittest, the giants of their race, who would inevitably have come to the front by the very force of their own stronger characters. These rapid transitions from a barbarous or semi-barbarous state to a far higher plane of civilization are harmful, and the only sure means of attaining the object aimed at is to allow Nature to follow her own methods. The process must be a gradual one and cannot be hurried, though it may be assisted and accelerated by tactful encouragement, sympathy and example. The race must advance as a whole, and no matter how rapid its advance may be, it must tread every rung of the ladder. The unnatural elevation of a small number places them at a disadvantage. It is equivalent to forcing a handful of plants into premature bloom . . . But the people themselves cannot be blamed for these unnatural condi-

tions produced in them. The fault lies rather with those whose ill-advised attempts at improvement were responsible for their production. They may be studied among the people of those towns that have been longest occupied by Europeans, and better still in Sierra Leone, where the process has been carried further and its effects are therefore more pronounced. The moral is undoubtedly to give the people more time and to aim at improving them in ways that are suited to their own surroundings, preserving all that is good and only eliminating what is bad in their own institutions, instead of destroying everything of their own and then forcing on them the manners and customs and religious beliefs of a civilization that is the outcome of centuries of life in a different climate and under different conditions, which are quite unsuited to the African." This is the judgment of a physician, a psychologist, a historian, who knows whereof he speaks. We ourselves contrasted the "trouserred native," as he is called in Nigeria, with his brothers of the loin cloth or the Manchester cotton "toga" and with the gowned Hausa and Fulani. There you have an interesting comparison. Hausas and Fulanis are Mohammedans. They are educated—well educated—according to Oriental standards. The "bush man" has no education at all. But commend us to either of these rather than to the native with a veneer of Occidental civilization, save for the few "exceptional instances."

It did not take long for us to see that the position of a newly-appointed Governor is veritably not a bed of roses. There is a species of lull pregnant with expectation. The older hands smile superciliously and talk of a new broom. The younger ones are filled with hope that changes will be effected which will render their duties more palatable, their material positions more comfortable. From this suspense speedily emerges the governing factor of the situation, whether the newcomer is content to adopt the policy of his predecessor—a comfortable proceeding—or whether he proposes to think and act for himself. The Governor of the Gold Coast had commenced by eradicating the old system of centralization

of administration by the up-to-date method of inaugurating a policy of decentralization.

Without much exaggeration it might be said that the former arrangement, with its intolerable delays, its pigeon-holing of grievances, its baleful effect upon enterprise, its clogging of progress, economic, social, and commercial, was the means which brought Imperial Russia to an end, since Tsardom was the very epitome of bureaucracy with its attendant evils. Similarly, in a country such as this, where communications leave much to be desired and mails are slow, unless initiative is encouraged the whole administration suffers. Little by little the poison is absorbed into the system, until an Assistant District Commissioner will decide nothing without referring it to his superior—the District Commissioner—who in turn refers it to the Chief Commissioner, who sends it to the Secretariat, which transfers it to the Governor. It is the story of "The house that Jack built" reversed. By the time that the point at issue has been decided, and the verdict has travelled back through the same channels, the originator of the pother will have gone on leave, and his successor will put it on one side to await his colleague's return or for "a more convenient season." It is truly wonderful that anything ever gets done, and it is not wonderful that, after a treatment such as this for some years, a man becomes an automaton. It would be a marvel did he not. In the Secretariat at Accra no fewer than 3,600 minute papers are received every two months. It is a staggering figure; sixty a day. No wonder the story is told of the official who, having spent the night in a rest-house which leaked badly and sent in a minute thereon, found the same old thing in circulation two years later, when the original complaint had become merged in the interesting question of how many Wesleyans there were in the Gold Coast Regiment. Meantime, of course, nothing had been done to the rest-house. All this is now to be altered, and the most junior administrative official is to be encouraged, in matters affecting his own area, to deal with officials of other departments to be found therein. Thereby will be created so many self-contained districts,

which will only consult their parent district over matters of considerable moment, and so on up the scale to the final appeal to the Governor. Thus, if a road is required, the A.D.C., as he is termed locally, will ascertain how much money has been allocated to him for public works, and will then consult with his own local public works official, and with him decide what is to be done and how. In addition, the personal question comes in. Armed with powers such as these, any official is bound to put more heart into his work, and will become genuinely interested, whereas under other conditions it is to be feared that he often regards his duties as a means to the end of getting home on leave and having a good time. It will also effectually prevent parochialism. He will have more to think about, and will be stimulated to come out of the groove into which so many sink, and view things all round from a different standpoint.

There is no reason why, because a man is stationed in a lonely place, he should grow to ignore everything connected with the outside world. It is a very poor policy for Empire-building. In his spare time, when there is naught to do, no shooting maybe in the neighbourhood, the companionship of a paper is better than nothing, but often, with steamer delays and suchlike, mails get held up, and hence there is no paper. Foreign news, Colonial news, anything and everything outside his immediate surroundings form a valuable mental tonic, and included in the news may well be the latest doings of the colony itself. Now to this his Excellency had also given thought and had evolved a scheme for a weekly paper which should circulate throughout the colony, or even beyond, and should be the medium not only of disseminating items of world-wide interest, but of bringing officials closer together by making known happenings in the various districts.

We were much struck by a political officer in one province who had no idea where Koforidua, a very important centre in the Eastern Province, was situated. True, there was no special reason why he should, only one would have thought that the geography of one's own colony would come before aught else. Further,

the paper would be printed upon one side in the vernacular, and would thus be brought within the reach of the native population. Its value in that direction would be inestimable. At present the native press is very poor. The one consistently loyal paper contains chiefly advertisements, and leads a very precarious existence. The others are uncommonly prone to attack. All of them suffer further from being written in execrable English, and a paper such as the Governor had in mind would thus form an educational medium. It may be idealism, but in our humble opinion it is practical idealism, and would pay large dividends imperially, if not self-supporting financially.

General Guggisberg quickly grasped the fact that today, more than ever before, owing to the war, has the power of a well-organized Press become established. If the native is to be taught to think Imperially and to study conditions and con over in his mind how in a reasonable way he may improve his social surroundings, then the surest way to that consummation is through such a journal. At present, even educated natives are visionaries beyond the wildest flights of the imagination.

There is a lagoon near the town of Quittah, connected with the sea by a small channel. This lagoon at a moderate estimate is eight miles across and about nine miles from end to end. Yet we received a deputation of the leading merchants in the town—native merchants, of course—who earnestly asked that we would petition the Government to have it filled up! That proves conclusively the lack of comprehension in the native mind of what is within the realms of the practical and what constitutes material for Jules Verne. They know no better because they have no paper from which they can deduce facts, except the aforesaid local sheets, which, beyond attacks on policy and reports of criminal cases, confine themselves to deaths and marriages. There, then, is the *raison d'être* for the foundation of a "weekly" upon the lines General Guggisberg favoured.

In this connection there is one other point continually brought to our notice. There is an efficient "Reuter" news all along the coast cabled so many times a week.

It is looked forward to with interest, and great is the heartburning when, upon perusal, the sheet is found to contain, let us say, a long paragraph about the Czecho-Slovaks, another about the French policy in Persia, another about the illness of the Greek Premier, and a couple of lines dealing with the coal strike in Wales. No sport news! No football or cricket results! There may be an epoch-making prize fight, or a boat race, or some classic event upon the Turf. Overlooked! To wanderers like ourselves, the ordinary news of the outside world was what we wanted, since we may be in Paraguay or Patagonia this time next year. But the man on the spot, be he official or trader, is much more interested in the local events in England or matters affecting the Empire than in a revolution in Peru. After all, it is very comprehensible. His home is in the British Isles, and that his favourite choice won "The Oaks," or that Wells beat Carpentier in ten rounds, really forms a topic of conversation for himself and his friends, while the other news does not. It is only a matter of editing, and Messrs. Reuter have such a very old standing out here that it seems but natural to bring the small point to their notice.

It is impossible to paint in dull enough colours the monotony of residence on the West Coast, and even a small thing such as this relieves it a little. The foregoing may all have appeared very dull to the average reader, but if a colony is to be described faithfully, the plain facts of life, administration, and so forth, cannot be overlooked. Even were the country redolent with the perfume of roses and jasmine, were song-birds for ever singing and the whole of creation speaking of Paradise, still there would always remain the something which would more or less spoil the picture. And this country is not like that. It is hard. It is money-grubbing—people do not come here to do aught else but make money, and plenty can be made. Small blame to them if they do not stay longer than is necessary. But the official—he is in a different position; it is his livelihood, and his one chance of getting away is promotion elsewhere. Surely, then, everything imaginable should be done to make things bearable. Therefore the salary

question must receive attention. Time was when the political officer started at £300 a year, not a princely sum in this climate. War came, prices soared, and it is actual fact that when the time arrived for him to take his leave he had to run into debt to do anything at all in the way of recreation at home. Here, recreation, in the proper sense of the word, does not exist. There is tennis, and sometimes golf; both are duties in order to keep as well as possible. There may be some sort of a club, generally not. Beyond that there is nothing. If on the top of that you pile financial worry, no insurance company in its senses would give him a policy at any price.

Thanks to the Governor, war bonuses have been granted to all officials, but with prices as they are these are actually insufficient for the needs of living in a proper way. The official has some sort of position to keep up. He may have a wife at home; pray heaven he has no children if he be a junior! Upon the hill stands the bungalow of the trader who has done fairly well; only fairly well, mark you. He will be in receipt of an income of perhaps £4,000 a year; his official counterpart will be making his £470, since the war bonus is £170 per annum. This is no exaggeration. The trader can do what he likes, wear what he likes, work how he likes. The official must always be spruce and neat. He cannot transact his business in pyjamas, as traders often do. He must belong to the club if one exists; at any rate, he must entertain a little, must buy an occasional drink for the passer-by, and show good-fellowship. Were he to live the life of a hermit, he would quickly either go the way of all flesh or lose his mind. This is no country for that form of exercise known as cheeseparing. The aforementioned £170 war bonus sounds a very pleasant addition to any small income. Yet consider the facts. Admittedly, prices have more than doubled all round, considerably more than doubled. Hence were the junior official to receive £600 where he had only received £300 before the war, he would still be no better off, and probably worse off, since it is merely on an average that prices have doubled. In point of fact they fluctuate in the various stores in the various districts

according to demand. Thus, in one place a bottle of whisky may cost 10s., in another it may cost 15s., and we have seen it sold over the counter time and again for £1. The answer is always the same, "If we can get it, we naturally do. We are not controlled from London and Liverpool as to maximum prices, only as to minimum. And we are not here for pleasure, remember." That being the attitude of the trader, it is not surprising if some of them are not very popular. A bottle of beer costs anything from 1s. 3d. to 3s.; this is the very light beer which in England would cost, retail, perhaps 6d., or something in that region.

A few more examples. A packet of the most inferior matches which were ever intended to lighten the darkness is 1s. A Dutch cheese costs one guinea, and butter is 7s. a pound. Twelve common cotton collars run to 15s. These prices are taken at hazard; there may be more costly articles. Of course, there is an import tax of 20 per cent. upon everything except books entering the country, so legitimately the trader can in a measure blame the Government which takes away the war bonus by its own taxation, an admirable example of robbing Peter to pay Paul. And, further, we happen to know that there are many uncommonly kind firms who assist their unlucky official brethren by granting the longest of credit and the easiest terms of payment. It is the system which is at fault, and not the individual.

We have been told semi-officially that a further increase of salaries all round is in contemplation, and may be expected almost at once. Then let that increase be of the most generous nature. We have studied at first-hand, and can vouch for the fact that, unless a junior official has private means, it is not within human power to bring a wife out here, look after her properly, and have a sufficient reserve in the bank for the rainy day which comes into all our lives when illness demands extra care, and perhaps a passage home by the next steamer. Imagine the anxiety bred by such circumstances.

Admitting, as all observers do, that the presence of women has a refining influence upon a community such as this, admitting that a wife is an incentive to her husband to work hard with the prospect of a jolly evening

at the end of the day, is this right? If the new world is to be productive of the reforms which one reads about a good deal, start in by giving West Coast officials of all grades salaries which shall compensate them for the acute discomfort of their surroundings, and give, in addition, a financial grant sufficient to pay a wife's passage at least one way. The service will benefit all round.

All over the colony there is great need of some centre where tailoring of European type could be undertaken. At Coomassie we were told that if a white tailor settled there he could be busy all the time, and need look nowhere else for work. The climate plays havoc with clothing of every kind, and it has continually to be replaced or repaired. Boots are mended in the prison at Sekondi, but they are not made there that we are aware. A barber who was also a chemist, and could make up prescriptions, would do well. A bookseller who kept, besides the ordinary novels, works by standard authors, really good writing paper, all the minor accessories of the writing table, and combined therewith a first-class circulating library, with good solid books collected from remainder lists of secondhand book stores, and was prepared to send them by parcel post to various districts in the colony, would, in our belief, do well. We offer the suggestion to Messrs. Boots, who could then combine the chemistry business, the book-shop, and the barber's shop under one roof. This is not a fantastic dream; it is actually the result of ideas formed upon the spot. Why is it that of all the world, West Africa should suffer from this extraordinary business shyness? As a place of residence, certainly not the Gold Coast. As a commercial milieu it is a sound proposition. A year's work and six months' leave is desirable, but during that year it is safe to hazard that the enterprising shopkeeper would make a larger return upon his capital outlay than he would in twelve years at home. There are those who prefer the humdrum life of a great city, with an occasional glimpse of a green field on bank holidays, and such time as they can afford to get away from their daily task. To them it would make no appeal. But there are others, and it does seem an anachronism that,

in a budding town, such as Accra, it should be necessary to try every little native store in the town for some common commodity like a padlock or blotting paper; that if a man wants a barber he must take any one he can find; that if a prescription has to be made up it must be done in the spare time of the native pharmacist at the native hospital; and yet that a dress suit is "de rigueur," that ladies must be gowned in the latest mode, and that the artificial semblance of modern society must be maintained. Truly, it is an amazing paradox! The Governor of Nigeria has the same problems "only more so." To begin with, he has a Civil Service with traditions and an "esprit de corps." In the old days Northern Nigeria looked down on Southern Nigeria and they united only to gaze contemptuously at the Gold Coast. There is a trace of that remaining and it requires tactful handling, for properly applied, it is good, and misused it may give rise to jealousy. He has also a diversity of native races, from the "head hunters" of the south to the Mohammedans of the north, which demands such versatility as is rarely to be found in one man. The Emirs of Northern Nigeria more closely approximate to the lesser Rajahs of India than any other native rulers in West Africa, yet even these Emirs do not possess the mental calibre of the higher caste Indian. This is an error into which those coming from India to West Africa are very prone to fall, and it seems to us that appointments of higher officials in the latter colonies could wisely be made from the excellent body of men who have spent many years on the West Coast, and who know its intricacies and recognize its elusiveness. Possibly the Colonial Office has appreciated this specification, as shown by the appointments of General Guggisberg to the Gold Coast and Captain Armitage to the Gambia. Of the latter colony we know little or nothing, so we do not venture to discuss it. To Sierra Leone we paid only a fleeting visit and the little we have to say about it and its hard-worked Governor we have left to another chapter. An Irishman was once heard to say to another, "For a nate, clane and aisy job, give me a bishop's." We cannot say the same about the West African Governor's.

CHAPTER XXVII.

WE are all told from our earliest childhood that comparisons are odious. It is possible, however, that they may be helpful. We can generally learn from our rivals something which has not occurred to us before, some outlook upon life which is strange to our temperament, but which may have a very real influence upon our subsequent actions. It is readily granted the world over that Great Britain is the pre-eminent colonizing Power of to-day, though the average man in the street is apt to forget that long before Great Britain played such a star part there were other great countries, particularly Portugal and Spain, which opened up the world to the influence of the civilization of their period. One might mention the Dutch, the Genoese, the Venetians, and go back still further into the realms of history to find vast empires which swayed the world, but are now no more. But, as a nation, we lack a proper sense of historical perspective. We are inclined to live for to-day, to judge by to-day, to ignore the past, and to regard the future with a certain snobbish complaisance. Criticism is hated, although it may be helpful, and your true patriot is the gentleman who bangs the tub hardest and shouts that Great Britain can do no wrong. Such a person is, in point of fact, a very poor friend to his own country, and is suffering from such a bad attack of mental indigestion that he deserves the sympathy of those who realize that the truest form of patriotism is to profit by the policy of others and to weigh well the differences of administrative treatment incidental upon differences of temperament.

It will be admitted that nothing in this world framed by human hands is free of fault. British colonization in West Africa has, on the whole, carried with it the

traditional treatment of fair play and justice to the native population. Exceptions there have been, but actually they are not very significant. A section of the native community will always and under all circumstances be against white dominion, in the futile belief that the native can manage affairs very much better for himself than under the supervision of the European. That this is entirely false in practice can be judged by the hopeless muddle existing in the Republic of Liberia, with its opera-bouffe Government and its completely undeveloped resources due to lack of local initiative. And the same may be said to apply to Haiti and San Domingo. Therefore, it must be allowed that the whole of the West of Africa has benefited in a greater or less degree by the advent of the white man. Let it be reiterated and emphasized that scandals have occurred, that regrettable incidents have taken place, and that there has been suffering inflicted upon the black man in some parts of the coast. But as one swallow does not make a summer, then assuredly it is ridiculous to condemn the whole of European administration, as some of our newly-born fanatics do, for incidents of only local importance. Therefore, we have no hesitation in deliberately stating that the white rule along the coast, while open to argument regarding the ethics of local administration, has been beneficial on the whole, and this applies to British, French and even German organization. Naturally, they all differ in the ethics which govern them. Thus, from a financial point of view, England has looked after the native at the expense of the British taxpayer. Her policy has been distinctly pro-native, and in the process vast quantities of money have been literally thrown into the sea. This was no fault of the Governors, except for the fact that they did not comprehend the African character. Men of the highest integrity, they did not come to West Africa with West African experience. They arrived full of theories based upon previous experience in other tropical dominions. But it is a curious fact, one very well worth emphasizing, that, with the exceptions of General Guggisberg and Sir Frederick Lugard, for many years Governors have been drawn from outside sources.

To continue, Great Britain has certainly lost sight of one of the features which, small in itself, mean so much in the aggregate. During a journey of many months and many thousands of miles it is difficult for us to recall a single town, station or settlement in British territory which made any appeal to the natural instinct of a white man. No hotels, poor clubs, unprepossessing streets, no advantage taken of Nature's attractions to make the place as like home as possible, except Lagos, though even there hotel accommodation is conspicuous by its absence. Taking in turn the French settlements, what does one find? Our minds wander back to a certain day in June, 1914, just before the cataclysm of war overwhelmed the world. We were the guests of the Governor of Vologda, in Northern Russia, and in replying to a deputation of municipal delegates he said: "The great thing to do in all town-planning, gentlemen, is to make boulevards. Let in the air. Have trees and shade and shrubs in plenty. It goes a long way towards making life tolerable." The French West African Administration might almost have been listening to his words, for without exception they have seen to it, cost what it might, that their settlements on the coast were in themselves acceptable to the tired eyes of the European. Even in a little place like Grand Bassam, where ships do not often call, which is far more remote and lonely than any of our coast ports, the town has been laid out with a thoroughness and a care so unique that, as a passenger remarked to us, "It might be a little Paris." It must be understood that the buildings are not ostentatious. The white population is perhaps fifty. Yet the streets are boulevards, there are two hotels, an open-air café, a "Grand Place," with a monumental clock-tower and lighthouse combined which would do credit to any British seaport, a club, and, last but not least, a band which plays very often. And the expenditure incurred has been after all very little. It is a question of system. The Frenchman likes to smoke his cigar and have his glass of lager beer in pleasant surroundings, which encourage a social atmosphere amongst the population, and are certainly better for the morals

and temperament of everybody concerned than sitting in the stifling verandah of the little clubs to be found in British coast towns.

On the other hand, it may be argued that the French do not cultivate sport to the extent that the British do, and that so much attention is not paid to that department of what really is tropical hygiene. And then another point crops up, and this applies to what is French territory and what was German alike. If one asks any Elder Dempster captain what he thinks of the French and British African ports he will invariably plump for the former. Surf is a bugbear in West Africa. It makes landing perilous, and the handling of cargo a matter of interminable delay. Ships will lie off a town like Accra for three weeks or a month owing to the fact that all goods have to be carried piece by piece through the surf. At an enormous cost a breakwater was constructed which certainly was money thrown into the sea. No doubt it provided employment for a hundred of experts who gave their widely divergent views upon what was to be done, and the result has been lamentable. It is quite useless.

Presumably another even more expensive scheme is to be taken in hand, and a harbour is to be constructed at Takoradi point, at the cost of a few millions. Those who know the coast will certainly watch the experiment with interest. Such politics are not practical. At every little French or German port one will always find a common or garden pier running out sufficiently far into the sea to avoid the surf, and equipped, at any rate, with a tramway of sorts for the transport of sea-borne cargo. Three captains who have been trading along the West Coast of Africa for the last twenty years gave it as their opinion that two piers at Accra, one for incoming cargo and the other for outgoing would save millions of money to the Administration in the costly schemes they have in hand, as well as being of real assistance to the ships of the world which are unfortunate enough to lie off Accra. The same might be written of Secondi, Saltpond, Winnebuh, or, for that matter, of any other of the British West African ports with the exception of Lagos, as already

stated, and of Freetown. The outsider will naturally raise the query, "Well, why on earth wasn't it done before? It certainly seems simple enough, and from the point of economy, advisable." That is a query which we ask ourselves, which every Elder Dempster captain and mate asks himself, and which every trader in a foreign ship echoes. The answer is unknown to us all.

The German has a habit of building to impress the native. He will put up a vast Government house or an enormous cathedral regardless of cost because he thinks that thereby the black man might be struck with admiration for the efficacy of German administrative method. But, if the German had only realized it, what struck the black man more was the fact that, as at Lome, a puffing locomotive with a string of wagons behind waited at the end of the pier for ships' cargoes, and then made its noisy progress through the native quarter of the town, stopping at the various warehouses, and delivering the goods with as much regularity as the native postman did the letters. True, a portion of the Lome pier was washed away on one occasion, but it was speedily rebuilt at a very small cost, and is in as good condition to-day as ever it was. It is worth while adding that the surf at Lome is infinitely worse than that at Accra. Mention of Lome brings to our mind the fate of this portion of Togoland.

The latest issue of "The Statesman's Yearbook" gives a map of the new French territory, stating, "The British have now obtained about one-third of the country, 12,500 square miles, bordering the Gold Coast territories, but no part of the sea coast." Our French friends will assuredly not take umbrage if it is pointed out that this division of the spoils of war is an uncommonly advantageous one to them as they get two quite good harbours in the aforementioned Lome and Anecho. It is highly probable, however, that these advantages will be offset by the disadvantages of being compelled to keep the peace in the hinterland, no easy matter, since many of the tribes are divided, being now half under British and half under French rule, which has caused a great deal

of dissatisfaction amongst them. It is impossible to travel through the country and not be aware of the discontent which prevails. It is quite comprehensible, for, like white people, the native does not like being changed backwards and forwards between two masters. In the Cameroons the French have been equally fortunate, and have received by far the larger slice, including another excellent harbour in the shape of Duala. Therefore, it is no exaggeration to state that, with Conakry and Dakar (both almost first-class naval bases), as far as West Africa is concerned, they have a very good chain of harbours.

A glance at a map shows the enormous extent of French West African possessions. Their hinterland is continuous from St. Louis, in Senegal, as far as the Egyptian Soudan. With their railway advance, which is progressing rapidly, they will soon link up this vast territory, while in addition they are making a particular point of the construction of motor roads in every direction.

The study of geography seems rather neglected in England, but a great deal may be learnt from the intelligent comprehension of a map. We make no claim to have any knowledge of the guiding factors in the game of international politics, but having travelled in many countries, we have attempted to observe and to understand. Poland may seem a far cry from West Africa, but is it possible that one of the factors which swayed French politicians in supporting Poland against the Bolshevik regime was the knowledge that what these agents of unrest were attempting to accomplish in the Khanates of Central Asia and of Afghanistan they might attempt not only in French West Africa, but in all portions of the continent where the Mohammedan creed is to be met? It is common enough to meet the Mecca pilgrim in the regions around Lake Tchad, as well as in Senegal and the British West African littoral. They come from afar, some upon ostensible business, others with no satisfactory explanations to give of their presence unless it be to proselytize, of which a great deal is being done. Any stick being good enough

to beat a dog with, and the Bolshevik being anything but the illiterate fool some people imagine, they might here find an excellent lever with which to add to the difficulties of regularly constituted European communities. A series of risings throughout Mohammedan Africa would prove a very serious contingency to meet at any time, but more especially just at present, when the minds of all thinking people are focused upon a sentence of two words, "What next?" Being forewarned is being forearmed, and the more light which can be thrown by the responsible Press upon the sinister possibilities attending the Bolshevik movement the better. With Turkey in a state of chaos, Persia and Asia Minor honeycombed with intrigue, emanating whence only the few know, but many can suspect, the opportunities for mischief are so immense that they cannot for one moment be ignored. This is one more reason why those of our country who are recruited for the ranks of the British Civil Service in West Africa, and particularly in the political and police departments, should be men of exceptional breadth of intelligence, keenly aware of international movements, and not concerning themselves solely with the routine work which awaits them in their offices.

We have often mentioned what a pity it was that West Africa was not better known to the general public, and for this purpose we offer a further suggestion which may be favourably considered, or, at any rate, considered by the Colonial authorities. Surely the time has arrived when either collectively or singly the West African colonies might have agencies in London, and, if that proved successful, in other large towns. The cost would not be prohibitive, and it would open people's eyes to the latent possibilities of these colonies, and most assuredly would encourage commerce and trade development. There would be no necessity for elaborate offices of the most expensive type, but let them contain exhibits of local industries, photographs in plenty, maps and literature. Those responsible would naturally have to know a certain amount about native laws and institutions, they would have to understand how mining

leases and timber concessions were granted; in fact, they would have to be able to give comprehensive information upon every subject connected with the particular colony to which they were allocated. This would mean a special local knowledge born only of practical experience on the spot.

From personal experience we can assert that the West Coast official, who in due course gets his pension, is often hard put to it to meet his expenses at home, and as often as not becomes disgruntled and miserable by whiling away day after day in some cheap boarding-house time which might otherwise be well spent. Such folk would jump at the opportunity of adding to their income by finding employment in one of these agencies, and naturally from their years of service none could be better suited for the job. Furthermore, such agencies would form a meeting ground for coasters; they would read the latest papers and have a smoke and a gossip without being put to the expenses incidental to joining a club. The average coaster, as may be imagined, does not travel thither for amusement, and although he may have money "to go on a 'splurge' with when on leave," to use a colloquialism, yet there are very many who are married and have responsibilities which oblige them to consider every penny they spend. To such as these an agency run on the lines suggested, with its friendly atmosphere, would be a veritable boon and a focal point to which all in search of information of any sort could find their way. As far as memory serves us, the French have such a place in Paris. If we mistake not, it started in a very modest way as a sort of reading-room in the office of the Chargeurs Réunis Steamship Company. We are, however, proverbially slow in doing anything radical, and it always appears to be left to somebody else. But there can be no harm in suggestion, and we have now seen so much that we have no hesitation in hazarding one.

Thanks to Elder Dempster's agent, we were able to catch the ocean boat from the funny little harbour of Forcados. It is certainly not a place in which to linger, but our plight would have been rather tragic had no

steamer come in and we had had to go all the way back overland to Lagos and possibly wait there for an indefinite period. We have briefly animadverted upon the lack of hotel accommodation in all our West African possessions. Though the hospitality in these parts is proverbial, yet there comes a period when people must shift for themselves; a week or a fortnight even, and one is a welcome guest, but after that period, with the kindest intentions in the world, what with the prohibitive cost of living, the difficulty in getting provisions, and the lack of accommodation (for no one is singular in this respect), one becomes an actual embarrassment, awkward for one's host and infinitely more displeasing for oneself.

If a large organization such as Messrs. Lyons would go into the matter seriously we confidently believe they would find it worth their while to send out someone, in whose professional skill they had confidence, to make a report for them. Freetown, the Clapham Junction of the West African trade; Sekondi—the terminus of the railway from the minefields; Accra—the capital of the Gold Coast; Lagos—capital of United Nigeria—all are shouting for hotels run upon clean and respectable lines, and, with due regard to local contingencies, at as reasonable a cost as possible. We fully believe that the profits would be stupendous. Nobody minds paying good money for those requirements, but in an atmosphere of squalor such as is to be found in the only so-called hotels existing, more like shacks in mining camps in Colorado in the bad old days than places of refreshment and rest, for white women and men alike in a tropical country, anything is costly. No wonder the British traveller, who, after all, is an asset of immense value to any community, as is proved by the annual income derived by the Italian Government from the British tourists, hesitates at the idea of paying a visit to West Africa unless he be an official guest.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

IT is doubtful whether any part of the world produces such distinct and clear-cut human types as West Africa. The traveller may make his way from end to end of its various colonies, and yet he will never be mistaken for the real article. There is something indefinable which marks a "Coaster" down as such, a something born of lengthy experience in this elusive portion of the globe. And at once let it be clearly understood that the old-fashioned ideas of the lives lived by official and trader alike are hopelessly out of focus, as some of our previous chapters will have emphasized. Human nature is just the same here as elsewhere, only perhaps it errs in the best direction in which human nature can err, namely, in that there is, "*au cœur*," a deep bond of sympathy cementing all these varying elements into one homogeneous whole when "Coast" interests are under the fire of criticism. People quarrel here as they do at home; maybe they gossip more, if that be possible, than in the average cathedral town in England; the population is smaller and the relaxations are less. There are no more saints and sinners than in any other Imperial possession, only the fierce light lit by the encouragement of enterprising publishers has served to illuminate the black spots when they do exist, to the exclusion of the dull, monotonous grey lived by the many—grey because truly it is existence only, to the temperament of many. They live on from day to day and from month to month because they have responsibilities which they admit and the price of which they willingly accept. Hence, to preface these few remarks, one point may be recognized—a spirit of uncomplaining pluck. West Africa has for so long enjoyed, or rather suffered from, unmerited stigma that it has undoubtedly made of those who belong to it a class

to themselves, not a little suspicious of foreign eyes, as well they may be after so long a period without any championship. It is evidenced by the fact that one London club almost universally affected by the Coaster is the Sports. There they foregather, and it is impossible to enter at any time and not hear Coast talk, drink a Coast cocktail and hear of the latest appointments. Frankly the official classes provide the fewest types of interest. They are usually caught young after leaving the University, and becoming imbued with a certain sameness of vision concerning most matters, they share with other professions a fondness for talking "shop." Still, here and there, one encounters individuals who would delight the heart of any novelist.

We once met a political officer, years ago, who in his spare time had learnt the whole of Thackeray's "Vanity Fair" by heart. All one had to do was to open the book at any page, give the immediate context, and he could rattle on "ad infinitum." He had besides this book only two others in his perambulating library, the Bible and Whitaker's Almanack. Asked why he had not learnt the former by heart, he explained that it would deprive it of its freshness, and that it made a change to turn from its pages and ascertain from Whitaker such facts as the rainfall in English towns or the world's birth-rate. "It keeps one's mind in working order," he would assert; "if one is ill one is ordered change of climate and diet and so on. Then why not have change of mental diet? I can't afford to carry books about with me, but with these three I am well provided."

On the other hand, we met an engineer of a different type altogether, one who might be aptly described as a mechanical snob. He had the reputation of being a capable man; he certainly did not possess a fascinating manner. We mention his type because it emphasizes a point which must be made. This man's mind consisted of cogwheels, crankshafts, and bearings. For aught else he had supreme contempt. He asserted to us, not very politely, that writers of any kind were unnecessary evils, that papers never told the truth, that music was effeminate and had never done any good to any one, that pictures

and art were rubbish, and that he could not understand how it was possible to admire a view, a flower or a seascape. He had overlooked the possible power of the Press, the effect of military bands, the influence of literature, and the stimulus in every direction of art in all forms. On a coast such as this, where materialism plays havoc with morals and even physical health, such views are dangerous.

Happily, the Governors of the colonies, through whom must filter some influence to the outside, are men of no ordinary ability in just those directions our friend derided. Sir Hugh Clifford, of Nigeria, has written a number of books. General Guggisberg, of the Gold Coast, is miserable without music and told us he hoped to have an orchestra before long. He is a musician of comprehension, moreover. Governor Wilkinson, of Sierra Leone, is a "savant" who, had he not arrived at his present eminence, could easily have occupied an important "Chair" at any University. These are three contradictions to the theory formulated against those who are interested in the Arts. Shorn of such relaxations, life here would resolve itself into work, tennis, and a "gin crawl," as it is appositely named in these regions. In point of fact, this was the only instance we have met of the materialist run riot, but it was easy for us to see how harmful influence such as this might be to newcomers. The man who has no use for children, music, books and the more spiritual side of life is one to avoid. But as a type, like a flea under a microscope, he is of value, for he illustrates the latent dangers in his composition. In the old days traders were called "palm oil ruffians." For aught we know the name may linger, but, speaking as we found them, they were all courtesy and kindness personified. Two we make mention of again as types. They may even recognize themselves; one thing is certain, we shall not be sued for libel.

Imagine a very tall man of gigantic proportions, and a smile which never fades. A tremendously hard worker, he expects and receives from his staff the same amount of work in proportion to that accomplished by himself. He pays well, he treats his underlings with a considera-

tion rare to find in these days, and he is a born disciplinarian. In the evenings he hammers away with no mean success at his dulcitone, and one of his employés has a fine tenor voice, which he encourages him to use. His hobbies are the most harmless in the world—fishing and the breeding of Irish terriers. He has made his money honestly, and he deserves the pleasures he has at home due to it. To label a man such as this a “palm oil ruffian” has its edge taken off, since he knows that he is one of the most popular people on the Coast, and one of the most respected by all, from the Governor downwards.

Another type. This time a hard-bitten little “ruffian” with a most lovable individuality. He has travelled the wide world over and lost money in most places. He has always come up smiling, and to-day is the possessor of a very large fortune. Essentially a business man, he can find time to look after a sick priest—himself not a Catholic—and to assist a struggling Catholic mission. And on occasion, as we well know, he has motored over 150 miles of broken road to bring into his home and nurse a white man he has never met before and whom probably he would never meet again. He also is a “palm oil ruffian” of the type of which the world would be the richer were there more.

Around folk such as these, with their large possessions, there must inevitably linger something of insinuation from those who are jealous, be they officials or rivals in business. That is inevitable, but that is found the world over, and again the West Coast is not exceptional; it is only showing how truly human in the pettifogging sense it can be, and will be, like all the rest of the world, till the end of time. At any rate, we can count these two types amongst our friends. Of course, there are exceptions to the rule: there always are. But, bye and large, as sailors say, the trader is a good fellow at heart, and would no more think of deliberately doing an unkind action to a subordinate, or, for that matter, to a stranger, than he would think of flying. There is only one respect in which some of them may show a lack of discretion, and this is penned only with the

friendliest intentions. Likewise, if those who have read our preceding chapters wish to understand the true psychology of the coastal entity, wish to understand some otherwise inexplicable theories held by high officials and to fathom to its depths just what the West Coast spells, then it is obviously useless to ignore obstinate facts which face one. The greatest danger here for the newcomer and old hand alike is not drink, as people usually suppose, but unmistakably gambling. In its essence there is not the least harm in it. No earthly harm is done by bridge or poker, or even baccarat, when the players know with whom they are playing. But, unfortunately, a novice comes along and plays with those by whom he has been shown courtesy. Understand, please, they do not want him to gamble; they presume that he has sufficient sense to stand out, if he considers it is wiser so, or to put a limit on his losses. No one we have ever met would blame him for such an action; they would applaud it. But be it remembered that amongst the trading community there is a tremendous amount of money, they are virtually coining it, and if a couple of hundred, or, for that matter, £500 change hands in the evening amongst such people, meeting the liability is easy. But the youngster comes along, or the inexperienced elder, which is also not unknown, and having lost, plays to retrieve. For that purpose he borrows money, willingly lent at the table, and when the morning comes and the sultry West African sun begins its daily "hate" he realizes what the night before has meant to him. This is no mawkish sentiment; it is hard common sense, to which all reputable West Africans will subscribe. We personally have seen a host take a man aside, and afterwards he told us he had implored him, to use his own words, "to quit." But does any sane person in the world suppose that such an admonition carries any weight when the night is growing old? Of course not. If only some of the tragedies which do occur here, as elsewhere, could be traced to their origin, it would be found in many cases that "pour passer le temps" the gambling table has made its call, and the resultant

effects have been disastrous. With which few words let the subject be dismissed. Only it may explain why, when we write of distractions, of music, or a theatre even, it is not idle idealism or rubbishy sentimentality; it is penned with a knowledge of facts which really need alteration and amendment.

There is also the type which loves West Africa with the love of a husband, a father and a son. To him every aspect of it is either delightful or interesting and he would ask nothing better than to be laid, when the time comes, under his favourite cottonwood or baobab tree. Some one has truly said: "Home is not the place where we lay our heads, it is the place where we lay our hearts." And though West Africa may shrivel the skins and waste the flesh of her ardent lovers their hearts are hers. To our thinking, these men are poets without voice. They are worshipping an unkind mistress, truly, but they have eyes to see her in her few moments of responsiveness and the more she flouts them the greater is their love. We have met them, have seen their eyes as they took a reluctant farewell of what they held so dear before sailing for England, never to return.

Another type which is to be found is the "Boaster." We give him a capital letter and richly does he deserve it, for he is own brother to Baron Munchausen, of historic memory. Nothing is an obstacle to the "Boaster." He tells you of his present affluence—*vide* his racing stable at home and his newly purchased ancestral acres, all situated in a mythical county. He then relates how he has skilfully kept *just* "within the law" and hints at many doubtful transactions. He describes the fear in which native chiefs hold him, through some cunning and timely employment of ju-ju. In fact, no bow is too long for him to draw. And, as a rule, he is really a perfectly honest employé of a perfectly reputable firm, whose wife and children live at Surbiton and possibly keep a pony and governess cart or a Ford car of an early vintage.

It is only after being some time on the West Coast that a peculiar lack of something begins to make its presence felt. There are no children here! Black babies

there are in plenty—solemn, little, sleepy things that nod on their mothers' backs; black boys and girls, too young to carry on their heads anything heavier than an empty pannikin, walk sedately along the roads. Black children never seem to laugh or cry or play, and they mature early. But there is no childish laughter and no patter of baby feet on the wooden floors of the bungalows. This dearth of youth becomes at last almost oppressive, though it is a stern necessity. Only in parts of Northern Nigeria is it safe to risk the presence of a young white life, for there fresh milk is obtainable and the heat is not so trying. We saw one enchanting baby of five in Northern Nigeria. Thanks to the climate and to the unremitting care of her mother she was well, but her mother was a wreck. Children cannot be left to the black boys, however well intentioned they may be, and there is no such thing as a native ayah. To bring out a white nurse presents the following problems: The nurse may fall ill, when her mistress will have her and baby on her hands; she must either take her meals with her employers, which might not suit either side, or she must have her meals alone, thereby requiring extra work from the servants; or, ten to one, she will get engaged to an impressionable railway employé or clerk in the Board of Works, and give notice without a qualm. We saw one other white child in our travels. It was pathetic in its pallor and apathy. Its little legs, which should have been plump and sturdy, were merely sallow broomsticks. And this in spite of the most devoted mother and tender care.

Truly, the life of a mother on the West Coast is no bed of roses! But it must not be thought that existence among the feminine element is a sad one. There are many wives who trek with their husbands into out-of-the-way portions of their districts and who enter into the discomforts and even dangers of the journey with positive zest. We recall one athletic, fair-haired girl who thought nothing of rising at four in the morning, slipping into a "bush skirt," breeches, and field boots, and trudging along by her husband through hunters' paths until the rising sun compelled her to take to her hammock. Her pet monkey and parrot

always travelled with her, and were as skilled at making themselves comfortable as she. Long practice had made her an adept at what might be called the "multum in parvo" type of luggage, and she could always produce a dinner gown and accessories out of a microscopic bag when necessity required. When we asked her if she would not prefer to be in one of the large ports where bridge and dancing were the order of the evening, she bluntly said that she was fed up with that sort of life, and that she preferred to shoot for the pot rather than to chase golf balls, and to sleep the sleep of healthy fatigue in a palm-leaf hut in the bush than to jazz to a gramophone until the early hours of the morning. That is one way of helping one's husband upon the coast. There is still another! It consists in doing most of his work for him until he sinks into the status of a cheerful nonentity, and is known merely as "Mrs. X's husband." Masterful women there are in plenty all over the world, but nowhere is it so easy for a masterful woman to grasp the reins in her own hands as on this coast. "Take the line of least resistance" is an insidious doctrine easy to adopt out here, and if the work is done, well, what matters whether Mr. X. or Mrs. X. is responsible? We have known wives who signed their husband's official documents, others who seemed to forget that a woman should not take a military salute, and others who spoke of "the soldier in my company." These ladies, as a rule, are not good housewives. They are short tempered with the black boys, and are too interested in what is really not their province to pay attention to the problems of the home. We were taken to call at one house of this sort where six bottles half-full of flat, warm beer was the only refreshment available, and where our hostess wrathfully slapped the head boy for his neglect, though the fault was really her own. Black servants are quick to take their cue from their mistress, and if she is lax they become so likewise. Again, there are other women to be found who resent the presence of any increase amongst their own sex out here. They like to be the only ones in a community of attentive men, even though they may be devoted and

loving wives. In their own country, unfortunately, the feminine element predominates, and they enjoy the novel sensation of being undisputed queens—even though their kingdoms may be small. One such was known contemptuously to refer to each new arrival as “one more hussy,” until someone asked her what the others might perchance call her. There is also the butterfly wife, who, until she finds her soul through sorrow or illness, dances the hours away as though Nature were not waiting to exact the inexorable penalty. For one cannot burn the candle at both ends with impunity on the West Coast, as men and women have both learnt. These little Undines usually realize their mistakes early, and settle down into the best of wives and mothers. Which brings us once more to the problem of children. Hard though it may be in India, it is still more bitter here. No white child must be born in these regions; no wise mother brings out with her a daughter under the age of eighteen or twenty. Therefore, she must make her choice. Shall she leave her children to the care of relatives, seeing them for four to six months yearly, or shall she herself superintend their upbringing and be content with her husband’s society only during his leave at home? Either way there are strings pulling at her heart. Either way there is anxiety and possible tragedy. The mail steamers are both longed for and dreaded, and sometimes those women a stranger might condemn as frivolous are actually plunging into gaiety to provide an anodyne against thought. Therefore, taking them as a whole, all honour to the women of the West Coast. One must not grudge them their small pleasures nor be too severe upon their weaknesses. Amongst them there are many heroines, true pioneers, like their men-folk. We have met with genuine kindness from every one of these types we have attempted to describe, kindness which expected no return and asked for none. So, if we have committed them to paper, it has been “with malice towards none.” But, as before remarked, to comprehend such a complex territory as that embraced by the term “West Africa,” every side of the question must receive attention. This is what we have attempted to do in the foregoing chapters.

CHAPTER XXIX.

WE left Forcados in the midst of the regular tornado one must expect at this time of the year. Leaden skies seaward heralding a crest of foam quickly transformed into spindrift, a fluttering of canvas weather-guards, a few moments of suspense as we breasted unpleasant breakers, and the mammy chair speedily took us on board. Truth compels us to say it was a relief. Within three minutes we were friends with the Captain, within five with the chief engineer, and within ten with that most important factotum upon all steamships the world over, the chief steward. The comfort of our large cabin was indeed a blessed anodyne to the various worries we had encountered in Nigeria. Kind friends came to see us off, and rather enviously wished us a quick passage and a safe one to the old country. And here let us chronicle two things; the first, the never-ending kindness we have received from the captains of the Elder Dempster boats in which we have travelled. Names like Milson, Shooter, and McDowell may not be known to the express-travelling public, whose business it is to get home in the quickest possible time. But to those who prefer comfort, consideration, and we might add, friendship, commend us to the "E" boats of the Elder Dempster Company. They make no show. They do not carry more than sixteen passengers. Also their duty necessitates their calling at many odd ports, and thereby making their run home longer than it is by the regular mail boats of the company. But to those who appreciate camaraderie and "homeliness," then give us an "E" boat every time. Which leads us, being reminiscent at the present moment, to our second statement. What a blessing a banker is! And what a blessing is a cheerful one!

During our tour, covering over eight months, of necessity we have had many dealings with the managers and staff of the Bank of British West Africa. In every case we met not only with a warm official welcome, but what to us seemed more important, a warm personal welcome. If the tone of an organization is absorbed from headquarters, then assuredly the manager and assistants of that bank in London, manager and assistants whom we have never met, must be uncommonly kindly and helpful folk. Eight months in West Africa teaches one to comprehend how much forethought represents, and to what a great extent one is dependent upon the little things of life which go to make up human kindness, and relieve a sometimes rather sordid world and its never-ending rush after the elusive dollar. So much we can write from our hearts about the Bank of British West Africa. In parenthesis, with other banks we were never brought into contact, but we imagine that throughout the principle is the same.

We passed up the coast, grown so familiar to us, without incident until we put into the harbour of Cape Palmas, the southernmost port of Liberia. Arriving there took a considerable time. It is a port in name only, and ships lay out about three miles from the shore. It is a rocky promontory, with apparently some good houses on the point, the so-called harbour lying to the eastward, guarded by the usual surf and a forbidding reef of rocks. From the sea, in spite of an occasional tornado which swept across the ship and obliterated the mainland, it looked rather attractive. But the two passengers we embarked from this delectable spot speedily assured us that all is not gold that glitters. From all that they told us, it reminded us forcibly of that old picture in *Punch*, where the chatty man and the silent passenger are closeted together in a first-class carriage on a non-stop train from Paddington to Reading. They were just passing Hanwell lunatic asylum when the chatty old man remarked pleasantly, "How beautiful the lights of Hanwell look from the train!" The only answer the

silent man gave was, "Not half so beautiful as the lights of the train look from Hanwell." And so we understand it to be at Cape Palmas. White people resident there apparently are under no delusion, and it may be news to those interested in Liberia, that the inhabitants of Cape Palmas are rather a truculent lot, who are loth to acknowledge the supreme jurisdiction of the Liberian capital, Monrovia, and are at the back of a curious black fermentation which is going on in the United States to-day for another independent black republic in the Liberian zone.

That this is no myth can be proved by the fact that a native owned and manned steamer was captured during the war by one of our cruisers and taken into Sierra Leone. It may have been opera bouffe, but, be that as it may, her mandate was the settling of native immigrants upon the western shore of Africa, and where else could that be except Liberia? No one wishes to decry the efforts of a young community, but why cover up its defects with a gloss of sentimentality? Those who know Liberia, American officials included, will support us in saying that all is not right there. Let it pass at that.

At Freetown, where we had been for a brief spell previously as guests of Governor Wilkinson and his wife, we found ourselves in the middle of the rainy season. A steamy mist hung over the harbour. There were occasional glimpses of sunshine, but they were few and far between, and then the rain came down again in torrents. Yet we should like to join issue with a recently published handbook dealing with West Africa. This states: "Considering its importance, Freetown is very disappointing in its appearance. As yet it can only boast of one hotel. Little amusement is afforded beyond the botanical gardens, the occasional picture shows, and Wilberforce Maze, which is at Hill Station, some few miles outside Freetown. Known in the olden days as the 'White Man's Grave,' Sierra Leone is perhaps even to-day one of the most treacherous places on the coast, though medical science has done much to relieve the prevalence of disease as hitherto."

We should be very interested to learn from that writer what other British West Coast community offers even the doubtful amusement of botanical gardens, occasional picture shows, and a maze after the style of Hampton Court. It is non-existent. Further, from what statistics did he glean the fact that Sierra Leone to-day is more unhealthy than the Gold Coast or Nigeria? This is giving a dog a bad name with a vengeance, and it is much to be regretted that the date of the publication in question is 1920. Since the administration of Governor Wilkinson, roads have been constructed on a scale which is simply unparalleled, and it is perfectly feasible to ride an ordinary "push-bike" for many miles around the town, whilst the fortunate owners of motor-cars at Freetown can travel fifty or sixty miles along roads which are only comparable with those we found in Togoland. So much for the efficacy of hand-books.

Further, the motorist may enjoy something which is almost unique in any British colony in the world. He may travel down to the seashore along a perfect road about five miles from Freetown and there find a miniature Palm Beach as at Florida. He can motor along hard sand for many a mile, with, on one side, the green of the African shore, and on the other, the lazy rollers breaking in from the Atlantic, and occasionally lapping over the tyres of his car. This is an experiment not likely to be forgotten, and it easily outmeasures anything we have ever seen elsewhere on the whole of the West Coast of Africa. As for climate, Messrs. Elder Dempster's agent has been a resident for many, many years past. The health of the officers stationed in Sierra Leone is on the whole excellent, and it is not long since an old Coaster, who preferred the climate of Sierra Leone to England died there—not from malaria, or any kindred cause, but from mere old age.

It may be interesting to peruse the subject a little farther. The difficulties besetting the Governor of Sierra Leone are totally different from those confronting others elsewhere. In Freetown itself, we were told that, apart from places like Penang and Singapore, there were more nationalities to be found than anywhere else in the

world. Every known race of West African native can be seen upon the crowded harbour front. In the town the interested may find the nationals of all the Eastern countries of Europe, all nominally engaged upon business, but many upon one knows not what. We can readily believe that the Chief of the Sierra Leone police has one of the most difficult jobs to tackle which can be found in any British possession. Freetown, being a great shipping centre, is the attraction for every sort of marine riff-raff; it is the care of the Administration to watch over these unwelcome sojourners and see that they neither come to harm themselves nor bring harm to others. A most unenviable undertaking. Even the actual natives born in the land have intermarried to such an extent that they have lost all the virtues of their forefathers, and are now merely imbued with the manifold vices which they have picked up from other races and other lands. Indeed, the most difficult problem to solve is that of doing justice to all concerned.

Let it be clearly understood that there is no stagnation in Sierra Leone. The Governor has seen to that. No man has had a more difficult row to hoe or has faced it more characteristically. We can bear witness that many an evening after dark his Excellency, accompanied solely by his A.D.C., has gone out in his motor-car and driven slowly through the highways and byways of the port of Freetown in order that he might see for himself whether there was any racial disturbance likely to take place, and, were there one, personally to use his own influence to stop it. It is not within the scope of this article further to emphasize this aspect of Sierra Leone and its Governorship, but we should be indeed churlish if, having seen for ourselves, we did not place on record the plain facts as they are, untinged with any prejudice on either side. Continued rain, incessant rain, rain which might remind one of the Old Testament flood, that is Sierra Leone in the wet season. And, frankly, we were not sorry when our good-hearted friend the Governor strongly recommended us not to go up-country, since, as he said, "you could not see

anything." Our memories, however, of Sierra Leone will long remain with us.

Leaving Sierra Leone, the spirits of the homegoers steadily rise. The lights astern flicker away, one by one into nothing, and the Coaster begins to look up his clothes with a view to future eventualities ; but in a boat such as ours, not yet is the promised land. The mail-boats run from Sierra Leone to Liverpool in ten days, without stopping at any intermediate ports, but not so ours. Personally, we were rather glad of it. For who would not care to while away twenty-four hours in Santa-Cruz de Teneriffe, surely one of the most beautiful places in the world, and drink in to the full what it means to go ashore, have meals at a regular hotel, shop in regular shops, tip a laughing cab-driver, and, perchance, as we did, go a little farther afield up and up and up till one arrives at the town of Laguna.

It all seems so remarkable — this change from the tropical to the semi-tropical, from the land of the black man to the land of the white. It is so refreshing to give an order, even in broken Spanish, and be understood and answered in good Spanish. It is so refreshing to be able to drink of water which needs no filtering, to have a glass of wine native to the country, which costs only a nominal sum, and to scan the wonderful profusion of flowers and fruit which, continuing the whole year round, make of Laguna a little paradise on earth. To us it is extraordinary that more people do not venture thus far, not as guests of the few hotels, but as householders. And there perhaps we are giving a secret away. Think of £45 a year for a furnished house, furnished it is true with bare necessities, but still furnished. And moreover there will be an inevitable garden, a mass of bloom, and with every sort of hot-house fruit growing wild and at its leisure. In addition, servants are easily found, their wages are small, whilst marvellous beyond everything else, rates and taxes are insignificant. It is the business of an hotel, naturally, to pay its staff, and make a profit upon capital outlay. Yet we had an excellent luncheon at the Pinso de Oro, a hotel managed by Messrs. Elder Dempster, a luncheon beautifully

served and cooked, all for the modest sum, as far as our memory serves, of 3s. 6d. Therefore it can be left to the imagination what the cost of private housekeeping would mean.

The ship was sailing in an hour and the decks were thronged with just such a medley of hucksters and touts as one sees in Colombo, only of a very much lower quality. Everything was to be had from Maltese lace to Zodiac rings. Frankly everything was cheap and nasty. Yet what did we hear? The mail-boat "Appam" rather unusually had called there homewards, and a Maltese vendor, throwing up his hands to heaven with a gesticulation of gratitude, said, "Ah! That was a great day. She left behind in the town no less than £2,000." One can only think, "Poor people." They certainly cannot be blamed; homeward bound after months of separation from everything which is really worth while in the world, their pockets full of money, they certainly spent without discretion. They could have got exactly the same thing in Regent Street for about one-third of the price, only, of course, minus the glamour of a wonderful sky, a deep blue sea, and a lot of gesticulating, picturesquely garbed ragamuffins.

There is not much romance in an electrically lighted sale-room and a few frock-coated shopwalkers. And so, in the evening, when Santa Cruz was looking wonderful in its attractiveness, we once more put to sea, this time not to stop until we reached the Mersey bar. Ships are funny things. Those who understand them will understand what we mean when we say they have essential personalities. The "Prahsu" was very friendly to us. We had grown accustomed to her and she to us, and with every throb of her propeller, much like the pulsing of a human heart, there seemed to be a message, a species of good-bye.

Many a tale might be written round West African steamers. They contain so much of the elemental side of life not to be found elsewhere. As England approaches one can almost tell the story of one's fellow passengers, even though they have not been particularly communicative upon the journey. The little man in the

corner is a mining engineer, going home because his health has given out. He says little, but he thinks a great deal, and the nervous twitching of his fingers makes one realize that responsibility and worry await him. The boisterous young man, a sort of devil-may-care free-lance, who, as all the ship knows, has been sacked by the company which employed him, and who has kept himself going through a species of forced joviality, feels somewhere deep down the loom of the land. He was going home to be married, and he is figuring out as he nears the Scillies how it is going to be done.

There is the typical West African adventurer, a fat cheery man, with a smile and a laugh for everybody, the worry of all the Administrations, and the hero of many a time-worn tale; he, also, is putting behind him for the moment West Africa and all its works, and is taking far more interest as to how he is going to find comfortable winter quarters for his invalid daughter. Our doctor talks of marriage, the chief engineer talks of his children, and the captain produces a photograph of his little daughter looking like some small sea-sprite in an oilskin and sou'-wester. She will be on the wharf to meet him. In fact the human side of nature becomes emphasized. In England one exists in the rarefied atmosphere of unreality. It is like breathing day after day a steady current of "forced draught" in a stokehold. It exhilarates for a time. Everything is banished until tomorrow, but the true aroma which should make life really rather fragrant is lacking.

As we sit in the captain's cabin nearing Land's End the first mate suddenly pokes his head through the doorway and says to the skipper, "Just been passing the 'Egba,' sir. She Morsed to know if the Lethbridges were on board, to which I replied 'Yes.' Her answer was 'Captain Milson's compliments, and good luck.'" One of us murmurs "Ships that pass in the night," and that was our good-bye to Africa.

CONCLUSION.

AT the end of a long journey one always has regrets. First of all there are the inevitable goodbyes which are particularly unpleasing when they are spoken in West Africa. To be sure life is uncertain anywhere, but in West Africa "the Elusive" which beckons its lovers back to it like moths to a flame, life is more uncertain than aught else. Then again one regrets lost opportunities. The whole of West Africa literally teems with possibilities from the point of view of penmanship and time alone prevents a fuller elaboration thereof.

Poor old misunderstood West Africa, your very name seems to speak of forlorn hopes and spoilt careers. Yet it is not so. To those who have seen and understand you there comes a knowledge that in reality, in spite of your years, you are yet young, that your sons are in truth gentlemen and brave (to whom this book has been dedicated), who knowing the risk they ran, whether they were officials or traders, cheerfully undertook the responsibilities of the situation and did their bit and are doing it still in cementing into one cognate unit the British Empire.

That West Africa will ever be colloquially a white man's country, is doubtful. Medical science advances, but very slowly judged by the span of man's life. And the West African climate is undoubtedly puzzling beyond the limits of the medical mind. Literally, for apparently no known reason, people are here to-day and gone to-morrow. This uncertainty, as might be expected, has results in every direction. It leads to a certain amount of recklessness which is evinced in all spheres of society. "Eat, drink and be merry, for to-morrow we die," is the species of motto which apparently governs the Coast. Only too frequently it does not

prove to be accurate. But much may be forgiven those who knowing the risk have taken it. And if at times the boredom of loneliness overtakes the weaker and they drink to find forgetfulness and they gamble to find change of atmosphere and they do unholy things, which they would not do were they back in London or Liverpool, they must be forgiven; for West Africa is not as other countries are. With its heat and its horror, it is in truth a pariah. At the present moment thus it must remain. The world to-day is overcrowded. West Africa in spite of physical disabilities owns brains and initiative. Given these she will advance and prove to the world that the dog with a bad name—to use an Americanism—can “make good.” One of the Governors on the West African Coast wrote to me recently that his colony was financially in sore straits, and that even though he was husbanding all his resources, he was puzzled as to how he was going to produce a satisfactory balance-sheet at the end of the year. Now that colony is a very rich one, but it wants development, which has been held back in no small part by fears regarding its climate. Given that the conditions permit an influx to what may be termed civilized society, given the restraining influences which follow education and the healthy atmosphere engendered by social propinquity, by which is understood the necessary tightening of bonds between man and man and woman and woman, which otherwise become slack, then all will be well in that colony.

And it remains for us to say something of paramount importance, and rather like the postscript to a woman's letter, it comes last in this book. Quite recently a letter came to us from an unknown writer—he had read our articles in the *Daily Telegraph*—asking for advice over the matter of outfit. Not too well furnished with this world's goods he had gone to some advertising outfitter and had been supplied with an estimate of necessities, which ran, literally, into hundreds of pounds and included articles which were not only not essential but which were ludicrous. Let the intending Coaster-to-be consult any of the three following firms, and if experience ever teaches anything, we can most confidently assert

that not only will he not be robbed but he will be told exactly what it is necessary for him or her to take and will not be overcharged. The Army and Navy Stores are of course well known; Messrs. Thresher and Glenny in the Strand have literally centuries of experience behind them and can be trusted to guide the uninitiated; whilst Messrs. Fortnum and Mason of Piccadilly, known the world over as provision merchants, have recently opened the West African Branch, and can supply everything from a camp-bed to a trousers button. We trust that these hints may be of some service to the West African recruit; we think they will be. And now the time has come to put away the pen and say au revoir—we hate the word goodbye—to those many friends we hope we made and whom we have left behind.

INDEX.

- Abeokuta, 154
 Aboasa, battle of, 131
 Accra, cocoa industry, 33, 34, 35
 —, embarkation difficulties, 81
 —, food, clothing and commodities, 32, 33
 —, Government House, 30
 —, handling of sea-borne cargo, 286
 —, life and social conditions, 23, 29, 31, 82
 —, prosperity and development, 28, 29
 —, proposed railway from Coomassie to, 47, 53
 Adansis, defeat of, 130
 Addah, 51, 52, 57, 58
 —, condition of, 52
 Administration, alterations in policy by successive Governors, 274, 275
 —, British, influence and results of, 284
 —, dangers of lack of initiative in, 275
 —, decentralization supplanting centralization, 255, 274
 —, German methods, 287
 —, Gold Coast, 137-139
 —, influence and results of, 284
 —, reforms in, 275, 276
 Afram Plain, 45, 47
 — —, bauxite riches of, 47
 African Association, 210
 African and Eastern Trade Corporation, 253, 254
 Agu, Mount, 74
 A.D.C., exacting duties of, 86
 Akuse, 49-51
 Alihu, Emir of Kano, 173
 Allegnu, cattle farms at, 247
 Amoafu, Battle of, 119
 Anamabo, siege of, 111, 112
 Anderson, Dr., Niger explorer, 211
 Anderson, Major, 9
 Armitage, Captain, Governor of Gambia, 127, 129, 282
 Ashanti, deposition of Prempi, 125
 —, independence of, 123
 Ashanti, journey to, 121
 —, tour through Western Province of, 82
 — chiefs, conference with, 121
 — —, personal characteristics of, 121
 — Wars, 112-119, 128-131
 Ashantis, defeat of, at Coomassie, 119
 —, golden stool of, 127
 —, history of, 109, 121
 —, racial characteristics, 109, 110
 —, siege of Coomassie by, 128
 —, war indemnity of, 128
 Atta, Nana Ofori, Omanhene of Kibbi, 44
 Attititi and Lome, need for railway between, 57, 58
 —, journey from Addah to, 54
 Awunagah, 55
 Awunas, Fia of, address by, 55
 —, claim for British administration in Togoland, 55, 56
 —, gift of cloth by, 59
 Baika, 63
 Bali, 128
 Bank of British West Africa, 302
 Bantamo, sacred fetish tree at, 126
 Barclay, President, of Liberia, 9
 Baro, 213, 214
 Bauchi military expedition (1906-7), 192
 Bauchi plateau, 189
 — —, description of, 192
 — —, exploitation of, by Colonel Laws, 196
 — —, healthy climate of, 199
 — —, suitable for hospital or sanatorium, 199
 — —, new railway necessary for, 241, 242
 Bauchi railway, 197
 Bauxite industry, 47
 Bekwai, capture of, 119
 Benue River, 220
 Bibiani, gold mine at, 103
 —, suggested railway to, 103, 105
 Birth charms, 160

- Bishop, Captain, 129, 130
 Black magic, 263, 264
 Blackwater fever, 228
 Bolshevik movement, sinister possibilities of, 97, 289
 Bornu, 247
 —, cost of transport of merchandise from, 247
 —, suggested railway to, 247
 Bosumtwi, Lake, 132
 Boussa Rapids, 211
 British colonization, influence and results of, 283, 284
 Bukeru, suggested railway to Udi, 246
 Bungalows, 204, 206
 Burutu, 267
 Business openings and opportunities, 252, 253, 281

 Cadell, Major Mackay, 9
 Cameroons, British and French administration in, 288
 Camping, on trek, 125
 Cannibals, 219
 Cape Coast, 28, 139, 141
 Cape Palmas, 302
 Cardwell, Mr., 118
 Cargo, sea-borne, difficulties in the handling of, 286
 Carriers, 84
 —, pay of, 88
 Catholic Missions, 223, 236, 237
 Cattle farms, 247
 Cerebro-spinal meningitis, 132, 228
 Children, climate unsuitable for, 298, 300
 —, illegitimate (native), 66, 67
 —, native, education of, 76, 97, 100, 191
 Christian denominations, 236
 Christianity, 233
 — among natives, 236
 Christianborg, Castle of, 30
 Church Missionary Society, 237
 Civil Servants, advantages of, compared with traders, 256
 —, governmental tour of, 256, 257
 —, inadequate salaries of, 206, 279, 280
 —, increased expenses of, 279, 280
 —, lack of initiative among, dangers of, 275
 —, leave, 256
 —, life and habits of, 279
 —, mental recreations of, 294
 Civil Servants, red-tape and routine among, 275
 —, types of, traits and characteristics, 293-297
 Civil Service, improved conditions in, 255, 257
 —, increased salaries in, 255, 279, 280
 —, openings and careers in, 254-260
 —, reforms in, 279
 Clapperton, Captain, Niger explorer, 212
 Clerks, in West Coast firms, 252, 253, 257,
 —, leave of, 256
 —, life and social conditions of, 253, 254
 Clifford, Sir Hugh, 82, 83, 294
 Climate, 149, 227, 259, 260, 309
 Coalfield of Udi, 224, 225
 Coasters, characteristics and spirit of, 4, 5, 292
 —, mental relaxations of, 294-295
 —, outfits for, 310
 —, proverbial bad habits of, 82
 —, psychology of, 292, 296
 —, types of, traits and characteristics, 2, 215, 293-297, 308
 Cocoa industry, 30, 33, 34-36, 38
 —, demand for labour in, 137
 Coconut, 219
 Colonial enterprise and development, 152
 Colonial Office, policy, 102, 103
 Commerce, *see* Trade
 Commercial careers and openings, 251-254
 Commodities, 257
 —, absence and scarcity of, 282
 —, increased cost of, 197, 279, 280
 — in Nigeria, 167, 180, 181
 Conakry, 288
 Coomassie, 126
 — and Accra, projected railway between, 47, 53
 —, occupation by British Forces (1874), 120
 —, relief of, 130
 —, siege of, 126, 128
 —, suggested railway to Tamale, 103
 —, train journey to Tarquah, 133
 Cotton, cultivation in Zaria Province, 170
 Cottonwood trees, 64
 Creeks of River Niger, 261
 Cult of dislike for West Africa, 1, 2

- Currency in Togoland, 58, 59
 Cypriots, suggested importation to Gold Coast, 139
 Dakar, 288
 Decauville light railway system, 105
 Disease, 227
 District Commissioners, life of, 43, 90, 106
 Doctors, 229
 —, aspects of the work of, 230-232
 —, "native," 232
 Dodown, Battle of, 115
 Domenase, 94
 Duala, 288
 Dunkwa, 83
 —, suggested railway from, to Wioso and Bibiani, 103, 105
 Dupuis, Mr., Resident at Coomassie, 114
 Edjuanema, Mount, 47
 Education, 76, 79, 97, 99, 100
 —, industrial, 183
 —, native, difficulties in administration due to, 97, 273
 —, native, influence of newspapers on, 277
 Egungun, 155
 Ekumeku, native secret society, 223, 224
 Elmina, 26, 139, 141
 —, bombardment and destruction of, 117
 —, ghost stories of, 140
 —, purchase by British, 117
 English language, neglect of, 76, 78
 European civilisation, influence of, 166-169
 Fatuma, Amadi, 211
 Faulkner, Mr., Mayor of Monrovia, 14, 15
 Fetish, 122
 —, of Lake Bosumtwi, 132
 Fever, prevalence of, 227
 Fish, Sacred, of the Tano, 121
 Food, increased cost of, 197, 257, 279, 280
 Forcados, 226, 268, 269
 Forest jungle, 91, 93
 Freetown, 148, 303
 —, amenities of, 303
 —, development of, 303-305
 French West African possessions, extent of, 288
 Fulanis, 149, 153, 163
 —, fighting characteristics of, 173
 Fulanis, Hausas conquered by, 173
 Gambling, 296
 German influence, 65, 66, 68
 German-speaking natives, 76
 Germans, sisal industry founded by, 72-74
 Gin, 154, 265
 Gold, resources, 103, 104
 Gold Coast, administration, 137-139
 —, assisted immigration, 138, 139
 —, becomes a Crown Colony, 28
 —, climate and health, 1, 6, 309
 —, cocoa industry, 30, 35, 36, 38
 —, commercial potentialities, 95, 137, 142
 —, condition of roads in, 45, 46, 54, 124
 —, District Commissioners in, 90
 —, dormant commercial resources of, 95, 96
 —, early trading stations and settlements, 26-28
 —, effect of British rule in, 284
 —, Governor of, 78
 —, history of, 26-28
 —, idleness and ill-discipline of natives of, 89
 —, labour question in, 34, 36, 88, 95, 137
 —, lack of social amenities in, 4
 —, lawyers' and litigation in, 123, 124
 —, life and conditions in, 141, 309, 311
 —, native chiefs of, 165
 —, natives of, lack of discipline in, 89
 —, natural resources of, 30, 35
 —, neglect of transport facilities in, 102
 —, "pidgin" English in, 76
 —, prices and wages, 33, 34, 36
 —, progress and development of, 28, 29, 137, 138
 —, retarded development of, 138, 139
 —, schools and education in, 76-79

- Gold Coast, social improvements, 4
 ———, staple industries and ex-
 ports, 30, 35, 36
 ———, suggested railways in, 103,
 105
 ———, suitable port necessary
 for, 30
 ———, timber resources of, 94, 96
 ———, travelling and transport
 difficulties, 83, 91
 ———, unpopularity of, 1-3, 309,
 310
 Gold mines, 134
 Golden Stool, 127
 Goldsmith, Mr., Lieutenant-
 Governor of Kaduna, 203
 Goldsmith's "Deserted Village," 201
 Government Administration, *see* Ad-
 ministration
 ——— Officials, *see* Civil Servants
 ——— Service, *see* Civil Service
 Governmental tour, 256, 257
 Governor, administrative changes by,
 255, 274
 ———, duties of A.D.C. to, 86, 87
 ———, exacting nature of the duties
 of, 141, 272, 282
 ———, Private Secretary to, 87
 ———, problems in administration
 confronting, 141, 272, 282
 Grand Bassam, social amenities of,
 285
 Grand Canary, 5
 Ground-nuts, 170, 179
 Guggisberg, General, Governor of
 Gold Coast, 78, 79, 82, 83, 86,
 282, 284, 294
 ———, on the value of a well-
 organised native press, 277
 ———, visit to Tamale, 133
 Guinea Company, 27
 Gunpowder, profiteering in, in Togo-
 land, 58

 Hammocks, and hammock boys, 46,
 85, 88, 91, 125
 Harbours, need for construction of,
 286
 Harding, Col. Colin, 37
 Hausas, 153, 187
 ———, conquered by the Fulanis, 173
 Hay, Dr., 129, 130
 Health and sickness, 187, 227
 Health conditions, 187
 ———, Nigeria, 149
 ———, housing in relation to,
 205

 Health conditions, improvement in,
 150, 205, 258, 260
 ——— Officers, need for, 171
 Heat fever and malaria, 217
 Hell's Playground, 141
 Hemp rope industry, 72-75
 Hides, 170, 179
 Hill, Commander, R.N., Governor of
 Gold Coast, 116
 Ho, suggested railway to, from
 Koforidua, 103, 105
 Hodgson, Sir Frederick, expedition
 to Coomassie, 127
 Honeymoon House, Kluto, 70
 Hope-Smith, Mr., 113
 Hospital at Kaduna, 202
 ———, Bauchi Plateau suitable for,
 199
 Hospitals, need for, 186, 187, 231
 Hotel accommodation, lack of, 285,
 291
 Houghton, Major, Niger explorer,
 210
 Housing-question, 204-206
 Howard, Captain, 20
 Huts, native, 101, 125

 Ibadan, 156
 ———, Bale of, 156
 ———, growth and commercial pros-
 perity of, 156-159
 ———, land tenure in, 153, 159
 Iddo, 154
 Illness, 187, 227
 Ilorin, 159
 ———, basket and pottery industries
 at, 160
 Immigrants, commercial openings
 and careers for, 251, 254
 ———, hints to, 251
 ———, suggested Government assist-
 ance to, 138
 Industrial School at Kano, 183
 Industrial strikes, 225
 Industries, hampered by transport
 difficulties, 241, 244, 246
 ———, Gold Coast, development of,
 hints on, 138
 ———, Nigeria, 170, 179, 193, 224
 Interpreters, 77
 Intoxicants, 265, 266

 Jackson, Major, Commandant of
 British Forces, Togoland, &c.
 Jajade, 46
 Jebba, 216, 217
 ———, climate of, 216, 217
 Jos, 189, 197, 198

- Jos, high cost of food and commodities at, 197
 —, railway journey from Zaria to, 241, 242
 Juju, 95, 107, 122, 132, 140, 155, 217, 232, 263
 Jungle, travelling through, 83, 91-93

 Kaduna, 200, 201, 204
 —, Botanical Garden, 206, 207
 —, formerly capital of Nigeria, 203
 —, foundation of, 201, 204
 —, hospital, 202
 —, housing, 204-206
 —, social amenities, 201, 202
 Kano, 172
 —, area and population, 175, 234
 —, buildings and accommodation, 178, 180, 185
 —, Caravan trade from Zinder to, 248
 —, Emir's Palace at, 175, 176
 —, exports—ground nuts, skins and hides, 179
 —, history of, 172-174
 —, Industrial School, 183
 —, market life, 180-182
 —, prisoners and prison life at, 182
 —, railway to Lagos, 241, 242
 —, railway station, 187
 —, rapid development of, 148, 149
 —, suggested railway to Maidugari, 247
 —, suggested railway to Zinder, 248
 —, Survey School, 184
 —, Emir of, 173, 175
 —, income of, 178
 —, reception by, 175, 176
 Kano-Nigerian Railway, 241
 Katsina, 179
 —, Emir of, 179
 Kibbi, 42
 —, climate, 45
 —, District Commissioner at, 42, 43
 —, Queen Mother of, 44
 —, Omanhene of, 43
 Kimberley, Lord, 118
 King, Hon. Charles, 10, 17
 —, inauguration as President of Liberia, 20-23
 Kluto, 70
 —, healthy climate of, 70, 71
 —, Honeymoon House at, 70
 Koforidua, cocoa industry of, 33
 —, Omanhene of, 37
 —, police court at, 39-42
 Koforidua, suggested railway to, from Sekondi, 103
 —, value of land in, 38
 Kokofu, destruction of, 130
 Kola nuts, 157
 Krobo Hill, 49
 Kroo labour in Niger delta, 263

 Labour, 88, 95
 —, in Gold Coast, 34, 36, 88, 95, 137
 —, in Niger delta, 263
 —, Nigeria, 191, 225
 Lagos, 143, 285
 —, attractions and social amenities of, 144, 145, 150, 206
 —, description and condition of, 146, 150
 —, extension of boundaries of, 153
 —, Government House, 144
 —, Government Rest House at, 206
 —, growth of trade and commerce, 147, 153
 —, history of, 152
 —, land tenure in, 158, 159
 —, markets of, 145
 —, native traders of, 157-159
 —, railway to Kano, 241, 242
 —, railway extension in, 146, 147
 —, rapid development under British rule, 144-147, 152, 153, 154
 —, transport improvements in, 147
 Laguna, 306
 Lake Bosumtwi, 132
 Lake Tchad, 248
 Land tenure, 158, 159
 Las Palmas, 5
 Lauder, Richard, exploration of River Niger by, 212
 Laws, Col. W., 196
 Lawyers and litigation in Gold Coast, 123, 124
 Ledyard, John, Niger explorer, 210
 Leper colony at Zaria, 169
 Leprosy, 170
 Leverhulme, Lord, 221
 Liberia, S, 302, 303
 —, British influence necessary for prosperity of, 22, 25
 —, commercial stagnation in, 9, 10, 22
 —, development of, 12, 13, 22, 25
 —, Frontier Force and Militia of, 9, 19, 20
 —, Germans and German influence in, 17
 —, inauguration of President, 19-23

- Liberia, life and social conditions in,
 14-18, 23
 —, natural resources of, 12
 —, President of, 10, 11
 —, projected reforms — adminis-
 tration, hygiene, roads, trans-
 port, 22, 25
 —, Spanish traders in, 17
 —, U.S. projected loan to, 21
 Life and social conditions, 309-311
 — — — — —, how improved, 4,
 150, 278, 285
 Liquor, duty and revenue, 265
 — in Southern Nigeria, 265
 Litigation in the Gold Coast, 123,
 124
 Living, increased cost of, 197, 257,
 279, 280
 Loans, Colonial, 103, 104
 Locomotives, shortage of, 245
 Lokoja, 209, 218-220
 —, river journey to, 218
 Lome, 287
 — and Attititi, claim for railway
 between, 57, 58
 —, churches and schools in, 66
 —, climate, 68, 69
 —, commercial importance of, as
 seaport, 64, 65
 —, German influence and improve-
 ments in, 65-68
 —, housing in, 67, 68
 —, life and social conditions, 65,
 66
 —, neglected condition of, 57
 London, suggested establishment of
 W. A. Colonial Agencies in, 289
 Lucas, Niger explorer, 210
 Lugard, Sir Frederick, 173, 201, 216,
 284
 — — — and Nigerian railway
 system, 240
 — — — — —, attitude to mission-
 aries, 233
 — — — — —, liquor duty imposed
 by, 265
 — — — — — on railway construc-
 tion, 245, 246
 "Lugard's Folly," 201
 Lyne, Mr., sisal planter, 76
 M'Carthy, Sir Charles, Governor of
 Gold Coast (1822), 114
 Maclean, George, Governor of the
 Gold Coast, 115, 116
 McLeod, Col., of the 42nd Black
 Watch, 120
 M'Praisio, 45, 46
 M'Praisio, journey to, 45
 Maidugari, suggested railway to, 246,
 247
 Malaria, 146, 217, 227
 Maltese, suggested importation of,
 to Gold Coast, 139
 Mandingoes, 9
 Mangrove swamps, 261
 — — —, reclamation of, 146, 147
 Market life, 167, 180, 198
 Marriage customs of Pagan communi-
 ties, 190
 Medical men, 229
 — — —, aspects of the work of,
 230-232
 Medical Service, difficulties of, 232
 — — —, need for, 171
 — — —, understaffed, 229, 230
 Medical training, 171
 Medicine, need for research institute,
 230
 —, tropical, 228
 Meredith, Mr., murder of, in second
 Ashanti war, 1811
 Miners' phthisis, 134
 Minna, 214
 Missahohe, 63
 —, spring water at, 69
 Mission work, 66
 Missionaries, 223, 233-239
 —, specimens of literature of, 235
 Mitchell, Mr., Controller of Customs
 in Liberia, 16
 Mohammedanism, 233, 249
 —, Nigerian, 162
 Mohammedans, and Christian
 Missionaries, 234
 Monrovia, 11
 —, accommodation in, 14
 —, Customs House at, 14
 —, election of President of, 8
 —, German bombardment of (1914),
 17
 —, life and social conditions in,
 14-18, 22, 23
 Monte, Grand Canary, 5, 6
 Mortality, of Europeans, reduction
 in, 260
 Mount Edjuanema, 47
 Mount Patti, 219
 Mungo Park, Niger steamer, 270
 Music, native, 101
 Native Chiefs, of Gold Coast and
 Nigeria compared, 165
 — children, education and schools,
 99, 100
 — labour, 34, 36, 88, 95, 137

- Native press, condition of, 277
 ———, potentialities of, 277
 ——— traders, 157-159
- Natives, advance from barbarous to civilized state, 97, 273
 ———, British administration beneficial to, 284
 ———, dangers of enforcing European customs and religious beliefs on, 97, 274
 ———, education of, 76, 79, 97
 ———, education of, difficulties in administration due to, 97, 273
 ———, idleness and ill-discipline of, 89
 ———, mental development of, factors in, 89, 97, 273, 274
- Natural resources, development, transport necessary for, 102, 103
 ———, Nigeria, 148, 219
 ———, unknown to general public, 289
 ———, vast wealth of, 94, 96
- Newspapers, potentialities and value of, 277
- Niger Company, 153
- Niger delta, black-man magic of, 263
 ———, imports and exports, 263
 ———, labour in, 263
- Niger River, 147, 153
 ———, condition of, 261, 262
 ———, craft on, 214, 218, 270
 ———, creeks of, 261
 ———, explorers and exploration of, 210
 ———, journey down, 214-226, 261-267
 ———, navigation on, 221
 ———, settlements on, 262
 ———, source and course of, 210
 ———, tornado on, 222
- Nigeria, amalgamation of Lagos and, 146, 153
 ———, area of, 153
 ———, climate, 149, 150
 ———, coalfields, 224
 ———, development under British rule, 152, 153, 154, 284
 ———, fruit and vegetables not appreciated by natives, 207
 ———, future problems in, 149, 248, 249
 ———, high prices and scarcity of commodities in, 167
 ———, history of, 153
 ———, housing question, 204, 205
 ———, industries and exports, 12, 13, 170, 179, 193, 224
- Nigeria, labour question in, 191, 225
 ———, lack of hospitals in, 186, 187
 ———, Lagos or Kaduna as capital of, 203
 ———, liquor prohibition in, 265, 266
 ———, military centre of, 204
 ———, Mohammedan natives of, 162, 169
 ———, missionaries and religion, 233, 234
 ———, mounted infantry, 185
 ———, native chiefs of, 165
 ———, natural resources of, 148, 219, 248, 249
 ———, opening for immigrants, 248
 ———, railway system of, suggested improvements, 243-245, 246, 248
 ———, railway travelling, discomforts of, 242, 243
 ———, rapid development of, 149, 152, 154
 ———, river system of, 220
 ———, South and North, amalgamation of, 153
 ———, tin mines of, 192-197
 ———, transport difficulties in, 164, 245
 ———, underpaid Government officials in, 206
- Nigerian Mohammedanism, 162
- Northern Territories, independence of, 123
 ———, retarded development of, 133
- Odum trees, 42, 64
- Onitsha, 221
 ———, Catholic mission at, 223, 224
 ———, river journey to, 221, 222
- Pagan tribes, 189
 ———, huts and villages of, 191
 ———, marriage customs of, 190
 ———, religion of, 233
- Palime, 69
- Palm kernels, 154, 219
- Palm oil, 154
 ———, increasing export from Gold Coast, 30
 "Palm oil ruffian," 154, 294
- Park, Mungo, death of, 212
 ———, expeditions to River Niger, 210-211
- Pataboso, 101
- "Pidgin" English, 28, 76
 ———, examples of, 76, 78, 101
- Piers, need for construction of, 286
- Pintado, 27

Place names, 43
 Poole, Capt., District Commissioner,
 Quittah, 58, 59
 Popularization of West Africa to
 British public, 289
 Port Harcourt, 224
 —, railway to Udi, 241
 Ports, suggested improvements of,
 286
 Prempi, King of Ashanti, deposition
 of, 126, 131
 Press, native, condition of, 277
 Prices of food and commodities, 167,
 197, 257, 279, 280
 Prisoners and prison life, 182, 183
 Private Secretary to the Governor,
 87

Quacks, native, 232
 Quinine as specific for malaria, 227,
 228
 Quittah, 57, 58
 —, address of local chiefs at, 60
 —, condition of, 60

von Raben, Dr., 71, 231
 Railway carriages, improved type of,
 244
 Railway travelling, discomforts of,
 242, 243
 Railway wagons, shortage of, 244
 Railways, necessary for development
 of natural resources, 103
 —, suggested construction of in
 Gold Coast, 103, 105
 —, Nigerian, 240, 243
 —, —, suggested improvements
 and extension, 243, 244
 —, rolling stock of, 242, 243, 244
 Ralph, Lieut., 129, 130
 Religion, 236
 —, aspects of, 233
 Religious customs, 162
 Reuter news, 277
 Roads, bad condition of, 45, 46, 95,
 124, 164
 —, Freetown, 304
 —, Gold Coast, 45, 46, 54, 95, 124
 —, Nigeria, 164, 195
 —, Togoland, 63-65
 Rope industry in Togoland, 72-75
 Ropp Tin Company, 192, 194
 Royal Niger Company, 153
 Royal West African Company, 27
 Saharan Railway, 248

St. Paul River, Liberia, 24
 Salaga, rice industry of, 133
 Sansandig, 211
 Santa-Cruz de Teneriffe, 306
 —, —, social conditions in,
 306, 307
 Sanusi, ex-Sergeant, 160
 Sapelli, 262
 Schools, 76, 78, 99, 100
 —, industrial, 183
 Scottish Missions, 236, 237
 Sefwi-Bakwi, 100
 Sekondi, 81, 82
 —, life and social conditions at,
 136
 —, railway institute at, 82
 —, suggested railway to Koforidua,
 183
 Serike Zozo, Emir of Zaria, 162-164
 Settlers, careers and openings for,
 251-260
 —, hints to, 251
 —, outfits for, 310
 Shea-butter, 133
 Shopkeepers, openings and oppor-
 tunities for, 281
 Sickness, 187, 227
 Siege of Coomassie, 126, 128
 Sierra Leone, 148, 303-305
 —, —, climate of, 303, 304
 —, —, social conditions in, 304,
 305
 Sisal fibre, 72
 —, —, output and manufacture,
 73, 74, 75
 Sisal plant, cultivation of, 73-75
 — plantations, 72-75
 —, —, commercial and financial
 aspect of, 73, 74
 —, —, labour on, 73
 Slave trade, beginnings of, 27
 Sleeping sickness, 70, 71, 231
 Social amenities, how improved,
 150
 —, —, lack of, 285
 Sokoto, suggested railway to, from
 Kano or Zaria, 249
 —, Sultan of, 174, 249
 Spinal meningitis, 132, 228
 Spirits, prohibition of, 265, 266
 Spotted fever, 132, 228
 "Square face"—liquor, 154, 265
 Steamships, West African, life on,
 307, 308
 Strikes, industrial, 225
 Surf boats, 13, 24, 81
 Survey school at Kano, 184

- Takaradi Bay, 137
 Talbot, Capt. Amaury, 265
 Tamale, Durbar at, 132
 —, suggested railway to, from Coomassie, 103
 —, undeveloped industries of, 133
 Tano Dumase, 121
 —, conference with Ashanti chiefs at, 121
 Tano River, 121
 Tarquah, gold mines at, 134
 —, train journey from Coomassie to, 133
 Temple, Mr., 233
 Timber, vast resources of, 94, 96, 219
 Tin industry, 192
 —, hampered by freightage and lack of Government support, 192, 193, 194, 197
 —, hampered by lack and cost of transport, 246
 —, output and financial aspect of, 193
 Tin mines, Imperial importance of, 193
 Togoland, development of resources, 56, 57
 —, French and British administration, 287, 288
 —, German-speaking natives, 76
 —, German road construction, 64
 —, gunpowder profiteering, 58
 —, hemp rope industry, 72-76
 —, native claim for British administration, 56
 —, paper currency, 58
 —, "pidgin" English, 76
 —, popularity of the British, 56
 —, sisal plantations, 72-75
 —, state of roads, 63, 64
 —, traffic and transport difficulties, 57, 58
 Tornadoes, 160, 168, 196, 222
 Torrane, Colonel, 111, 112
 Towns, general lack of accommodation and social amenities in, 4, 150, 285, 291
 Trade and commerce, development of, hints on, 137, 138, 239
 —, hampered by transport difficulties, 241, 244, 246, 286
 —, encouragement of, by exhibits of local industries in British towns, 289
 Traders' at Lagos, 157-159
 —, Government officials and, incomes of, 279
 Traders, openings and opportunities for, 252-254, 281
 Trading stations, early establishment of, 26
 Transport difficulties, 95, 102, 104, 105
 —, Nigeria, 164, 195, 240, 245, 246
 —, suggested improvements, 286
 —, Togoland, 57, 58, 63, 64
 —, trade and commerce hampered by, 102, 104, 105, 286
 Travelling, camping during, 125
 —, difficulties and discomforts of, 83, 88, 91, 95, 102, 105
 —, humours of, 88
 —, railway, 241, 242, 244
 Travelling party, organisation and standing orders for, 84
 Tropical medicine and disease, 228
 —, need for research institute, 230
 Tsetse-fly, 70, 71
 Tuton-an-Wada, 196
 Tutu, king of the Ashantis, 110, 111
 Udi, coalfield of, importance to W.A. industry, 224
 —, railway to Port Harcourt, 241
 —, suggested railway to Bukuru, 246
 Vais, 9
 Vegetation, Gold Coast, 42
 Volta river, 51, 52
 —, claim for railway on, 57, 58
 —, condition of, 52, 54
 —, journey down, 51
 "Vulture," Nigerian river steamer, 214, 218, 221, 222
 Wages, 137, 138
 Warri, 262
 Water, 70
 —, lack of, 105
 West African Agencies, suggested establishment of, in London, 289, 290
 West African Company, 112, 114
 Wilkinson, Governor, of Sierra Leone, 294
 Willcocks, Col., relief of Coomassie by, 130

- Windham, Capt. Thos., first English settler in Gold Coast, 27
 Wioso, 94, 99
 —, suggested railway to, 103, 105
 Wives of Government officials, 298-300
 Wolseley, Sir Garnet, 126
 — — —, arrival at Gold Coast, 1873, 118
 — — —, peace terms of, to Ashantis (1874), 119
 Women, European, 3
 —, types of, 299, 300
 Yams, 207, 208
 Yellow fever, 229
 Zano, Emir of, personal characteristics, 177
 Zappa, Father, Catholic missionary, 223
 Zaria, 162
 Zaria, exports from, hides, ground-nuts and cotton, 170
 —, high cost of food, 197
 —, influence of European civilisation, 166-169
 —, health and disease in Province of, 171
 —, leper colony, 169
 —, life and social conditions, 165-169
 —, public improvements, 167-168
 —, railway to Bauchi Plateau, 241
 —, — journey to Jos, 241, 242
 —, Treasury at, 166
 —, Emir of, 162-164
 —, —, income of, 165
 —, —, personal character, 164-166
 — —, reception by, 163
 Zinder, caravan trade to Kano, 248
 —, suggested railway from Kano, 248
 Zungeru, 201



