

so "elegant," perhaps, but it has the merit of being a little safer. One is then paddled towards the shore, and the journey through the surf is very alarming. Imagine an exaggerated water "chute" (with variations all its own) with all the fun left out, and real danger instead of imaginary; just as one thinks drowning is a certainty, the boat goes in with a terrific rush on the top of a big breaker, and you find yourself lifted out and put safely on the beach. One seldom, if ever, gets ashore without a wetting, and often the boat turns right over backwards. One Government official was drowned last month in the surf at Accra. All the time the "boys" are paddling they sing a song, which sounds like a hymn or an incantation to the god of the waves; I asked for a translation, and it ran as follows: "Plenty white man, plenty white 'mammy' (woman), we get plenty 'dash' (money given as a present). Buy plenty gin, 1 bottle, 2 bottle, 3 bottle gin," and so on, all over and over again—meaning that as they had a lot of white passengers, they would get money to buy gin.

We arrived at Kwitta March 19th, and got swamped just as we landed. Kwitta is the last town on the Gold Coast, and adjoins German Togoland. The town is built on a narrow strip of sand with the Gulf of Guinea in front, and a large salt-water lagoon at the back.

The Government offices—post-office, court-house, gaol, &c., are in the fort, which is strongly built of stone, and was purchased from the Danes in 1850. Our bungalow and the hospital are on the beach.

Just outside the town there is a Hausa camp or village. The Hausas are at once the warriors and craftsmen of the Coast. They are followers of Mahomed, and dress in long loose Moorish-looking robes. Some of their work is beautiful; they carve wood and ivory, make all manner of fancy and useful articles in leather, weave cloth, using native cotton and native vegetable dyes; besides that they make most excellent soldiers. Most of our West African soldiers are Hausas. They are also the herdsmen and butchers of the Coast. They are born traders, and it would amuse you to see our mode of buying. A Hausa brings a skin or curio; he will ask £1. You look and say "No good, no want!" and offer 2s. 6d., and walk away; the man goes away, and comes back next day with a look on his face as though to say you are robbing him. Being new to the Coast, you may feel some compunction at offering so much less than asked, and give him 3s. 6d., only to hear from another "Coaster" that he has bought similar articles at 1s. each. Truly there is no trader like unto the Mahomedan!

Besides the Hausa we have other tribes, who all speak a different tongue, and don't even understand each other. I have heard that they are considered to be the lost ten tribes. All I can say is that whoever lost them conferred a benefit on humanity, and they are not much of a "find" for the British Government.

It is very unhealthy here on account of the muddy lagoon at the back. We have had three Europeans die in the last two months. The funeral of a white man is very depressing; all Europeans attend, also the natives for miles around, and they regard it as children at home regard a circus procession. The coffin is taken to the cemetery on a gun carriage, and, after a very

short service, is lowered into a sandy grave; then we all go home, wondering who will be the next to go. The funeral follows death very quickly. In the last case, a German died at 6 a.m., and was buried just three hours later.

We have several factories, as they are called—in fact, they are trading stations; the natives bring in rubber, palm oil, ivory, skins, &c., and receive in exchange either money or cheap cotton goods, beads, or other "trade" goods. You would be surprised at the weights they can carry; everything is carried on the head (except the babies), from a single box of matches to a load weighing from 60 to 80 lb. The women are the chief carriers, and it is amazing to see them, with a great load on their heads and a baby slung on their backs, stepping along as though it were nothing.

We have two missions here—one German Protestant with three Sisters and three missionaries, the other French Catholic with three Fathers. They do very good work; they have schools for the children, and also teach the elder boys weaving, tinsmith work, &c. The English Government has no school in Kwitta, but gives large grants to the mission schools; the children are all taught in English.

The natives weave some beautiful cloths, which they wear draped, not ungracefully, something after the style of the Roman toga—I watched them weaving the other day. Their looms are of the most primitive description, but yet not at all unlike, in idea, the old hand looms once used in England. They can only weave strips about 4 in. wide; these they cut into lengths of 1, 2, or 3½ yards, according to the size cloth they wish to make, and sew them together. They use 10, 16 or 20 strips. The smaller size is for a child; the second they call a "mammy" cloth; the larger is a "man's" cloth. The price may range from 2s. 6d. to £10, according to quality. They used to spin and dye the cotton themselves, but, now unless it is for a very good cloth, they buy the different-coloured yarns from the factories, and only do the weaving. They are very fond of European clothes, and none are too old for their acceptance. I saw a big chief go by one day. A man walked in front carrying his stick, which was of ivory and gold; the chief followed wrapped in a beautiful silk native cloth and with a top hat on his head that an old-clothes man in London would not have looked at.

The flora of West Africa is not very good. We have, however, several very handsome flowering trees, and away from the sea, in the river districts, we have a few orchids and other tropical flowers. Around here grow the coconut, oil and date palms, also prickly pears, mangoes, pineapples, bananas and sugar-cane. At Aburi, near Accra, are the Government Botanical Gardens. They are devoted to the cultivation of economic plants, coffee, cocoa, &c. Efforts are being made to induce the kings and chiefs to grow cotton, which would mean a great trade for West Africa.

When I write again I will tell you about our hospital, which I have not been able to visit, but I am sure I must have quite overtaxed your patience by now.

I was most pleased to receive last mail the May number of our journal; it seemed to bring me in touch with you all, and one feels very far away from civilisation in West Africa (I nearly put "one feels quite out in the cold!").

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