

A HISTORY OF THE GOLD COAST
AND ASHANTI

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A HISTORY OF THE GOLD COAST AND ASHANTI

FROM THE EARLIEST TIMES TO THE COM-
MENCEMENT OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

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WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

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GOVERNOR AND COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE GOLD COAST

IN TWO VOLUMES, WITH MAPS

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DEDICATED TO
HIS EXCELLENCY
SIR HUGH CLIFFORD, K.C.M.G.
GOVERNOR AND COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF
OF THE
GOLD COAST
AND ITS DEPENDENCIES
TO WHOSE INTEREST AND ASSISTANCE
THE PUBLICATION OF THIS BOOK
IS MAINLY DUE

INTRODUCTION

SINCE the manuscript of Dr. Claridge's monumental *History of the Gold Coast and Ashanti* first came into my hands in the summer of 1915, its publication in suitable form has been to me a matter of keen personal interest. It is not often that one of our Crown Colonies has the good fortune to number among the officials serving in it a man who possesses so many of the qualities that go to the making of a really good historian—diligence in research, meticulous accuracy, a capacity for marshalling facts, the nice sense of proportion which allots to each question or incident its full, but no more than its due place in the general picture, a strongly critical habit of mind, and a thorough command of appropriate language. The exercise of all these, together with years of patient but enthusiastic labour, have been devoted to the production of the present work, and Dr. Claridge has thereby rendered to the Colony, with which he has long been connected, a service of conspicuous value.

In the past, too, it has not infrequently happened that when labour of this description has been performed by a servant of Government during his not over-abundant leisure, the result of his toil has been suffered to reach the public either at his own expense, or under the auspices of some learned body, whose imprimatur is apt to have upon the general reader an effect comparable to that which scare-crows are piously supposed to exercise upon the fowls of the air. In the present instance, however, the Government of the Gold Coast has succeeded in saving the author and his work from such unmerited obscurity, though with its characteristic vacillating caution (of

which so many notable instances are to be found recorded in the pages of Dr. Claridge's book) it has been careful to dissociate itself from any implied endorsement of the opinions expressed in these volumes.

It is in every way right that this work—which is now presented to the public under the guarantee of the House of Murray—should be placed in a position to make its appeal to readers in every part of the Empire, for it deserves the attention of all who are interested in the history of the over-seas possessions of Great Britain, of which it forms an unusually striking and instructive chapter. It illustrates with peculiar force the curiously haphazard fashion in which many of our tropical colonies have come into being ; the manner in which so often the Flag has followed trade, rather than trade the Flag ; and the frequency with which extension of control and jurisdiction has been gradually and reluctantly accepted, not as the result of an insatiable appetite for power and dominion, but in the first instance, as the only practicable means whereby peaceful commerce could be assured, and later because a newly awakened sense of responsibility toward the native races forbade continued toleration of savage and barbarous practices. It reveals, among other things, the ugly fact that the path to the establishment of a durable peace in semi-civilised communities is almost invariably paved with the victims of a series of devastating little wars ; and it shows how immeasurably the difficulty of avoiding such happenings is increased by an imperfect understanding of the character, the polity, and the outlook upon life of the peoples with whom, in tropical lands, Great Britain has had to deal.

I have not included an absolutely unbiassed judgment among Dr. Claridge's qualities as an historian ; for, as is the case with most Englishmen who have come into close contact with the Ashantis, the admiration excited by the courage and the many manly and chivalrous characteristics of this warlike people has engendered in him so strong an affection for them that he cannot invariably view all the incidents in their history with complete and dispas-

sionate impartiality. But such bias as he from time to time shows, is a generous bias, and lends to this book, in my opinion, a very special value. It is well that our national actions should be examined as much as possible from the standpoint of those who were affected by them ; and no intelligent reader can rise from the perusal of these pages without being conscious that their author has conveyed to him a deeper and truer appreciation of the peoples of the Gold Coast and Ashanti than has, in the past, been any way common, or without feeling that his sympathy with them has thereby been notably enlarged and quickened.

The records of a Colony, the earliest beginnings of which had their inception in the dark days of the slave-trade, cannot but hold many things that modern Englishmen must recall with mingled shame and horror. The reader will find much to deplore in the public and private acts of many of the white men who, in their time, made history on the Coast ; and some deeds were done which must for ever remain among the most bitter and humiliating memories of every Britisher who loves his country and is jealous of its fair fame. For these Dr. Claridge has done well to offer neither palliation nor excuse. On the other hand, it is at least open to argument that he has occasionally been somewhat harsh in the verdicts which he passes upon the policy of the Government and upon the actions of its servants. The historian is necessarily in the position of one who is wise after the event, but the large bird's-eye view which he is enabled to take was not at the service of any save very exceptional men among those who were the contemporaries of the events which he records. This must be borne in mind, for exceptional men are rare at all times and in all places, and few indeed found their way to the West Coast of Africa. Due allowance, therefore, must be made for the imperfect appreciation, which many public servants showed, of the situations with which they were confronted, and for the bewildering ignorance of the people with whom they were dealing, by which they were so frequently hampered.

To-day most thinking men will readily subscribe to the opinion that the only justification for the presence of Great Britain in West Africa, and for the control which we exercise over its inhabitants, abides in our ability to govern the country in a manner more conducive to the common good and happiness, and with a higher regard to the rights and well-being of the weak and inarticulate masses, than would be possible to the natives themselves if left to their own devices. This theory, however, had not the remotest connection with the objects for the attainment of which the first European settlements were established on the Coast; and though Englishmen began trading with the natives of the Gold Coast as long ago as 1553, the publication of Dr. Claridge's *History* celebrates the centenary of the earliest tentative attempts of a British Governor to improve the lot of the people, or to save the weak from the oppression of the strong.¹ For many decades after 1815, however, the maintenance of uninterrupted trade-routes to and from the interior represented the highest ambition of the British Government on the Coast, and it was in order to secure this object that little by little jurisdiction was extended and an increasingly active part was taken in inter-tribal politics. Even after the national conscience had been sufficiently awakened to bring about the abolition of the slave-trade, the commercial interests of the British traders continued to be the principal preoccupation of the authorities on the Coast, and the assumption of responsibility for the welfare of the natives, whose world our coming had turned topsy-turvy, was shirked and evaded as much as possible. There can be no reasonable doubt that, if the British had not interfered, the Ashantis would have extended their empire over all the nations of the Gold Coast; but our disapproval of their invasions was due, in the beginning, not so much to any feeling of pity for their victims, as to resentment at the disturbance to trade which they occasioned. Thus the rôle of protector of the defenceless was more or less inexorably thrust upon us in the interests of our own commerce;

¹ *Vide* Vol. I., p. 279.

but once accepted, it could never again be wholly discarded, and thereafter our main object was to keep tribal warfare within some sort of bounds, and to shore up, as best we could, the tottering prosperity of the countries which the aggressive energy of the Ashantis was perpetually assailing.

After the characteristic fashion of our nation, we tried to accomplish this with the expenditure of as few men and as little money as possible, and a policy of hopeless vacillation and inconsistency of course resulted. Such a policy, equally of course, was quite unintelligible to the natives with whom we were dealing; and the Ashantis, at any rate, never knew what to expect of us—which was only natural, seeing that we were living, so to speak, from hand to mouth, and never knew from year to year what to expect of ourselves.

Looking backward from the standpoint we occupy to-day, it is clearly to be seen that anything resembling a permanent friendly alliance between a British Administration on the Coast and an independent Kingdom of Ashanti was unthinkable, having regard to the incompatible ideals and the wholly divergent views on a number of vital matters entertained by the two Governments. It may be that modern civilisation is the lion, and that barbarism is the lamb; but the two cannot nowadays lie down side by side. No Colonial Administration of our time, for instance, could long have maintained an alliance with a Power which regarded human sacrifice as an essential religious rite; and the records of West Africa show beyond dispute that the abolition of such practices can only gradually be effected even in localities where Great Britain exercises full executive authority. A Colonial Government, which in the beginning battered on the slave-trade, was itself, according to modern notions, in a condition of semi-barbarism, from which it had to emerge ere ever the assumption of responsibility for the regulation of the habits and customs of its native neighbours could be recognised by it in the light of an imperative duty. The white men of bygone generations, therefore,

whose aim was commercial expansion, not the moral improvement of the Africans, whose own standards of civilisation were still in some respects rudimentary, and who regarded a friendly Ashanti as the surest means of securing the ends they had in view, cannot fairly be blamed for having failed to foresee that their ideals would fall far short of the demands of those who would come after them. Thus the history of British relations with the peoples of the Gold Coast and Ashanti, rightly viewed, is the story of an attempt to secure our merchants' profits at the least possible cost to ourselves, and the gradual assumption of extended responsibilities undertaken in pursuance of that object. To a much later phase belongs the practical annexation of the whole country—a step which was forced upon us, not by any alteration in the habits and practices of its inhabitants, but by a change which, in the course of years, had been wrought in ourselves and in our conceptions of the moral obligations which our presence in their midst imposed upon us.

The passing away of an empire, which had risen to great power through the warlike genius of its rulers and people, cannot but occasion some sentimental regrets; and the dissolution of the Kingdom of Ashanti, like the destruction of the great military organisation which Chaka created in Zululand, seems to curtail the already dwindling domain of modern romance. No one, however, can find serious reason for doubting that the people of Ashanti to-day, who devote their energies to the cultivation of their food-plots and cocoa-gardens, and to the improvement of their towns, are not only a more useful, but on the whole a happier set of people than were their blood-stained ancestors, who spent a goodly portion of their time in ravaging their neighbours' homesteads, taking other people's lives, and enslaving their women-kind and their children. The contrary point of view—which much more accurately represented the truth when it was written, nearly fifteen years ago, than it does now—is ably set forth in the quotation from a despatch by Sir Matthew Nathan, which will be found on page 440 of the second volume of this book.

The dragging across the face of any primitive country of Jagannâth-car in which is borne aloft the great idol we name *Pax Britannica*, entails the demolition of many romantic things. It necessitates the substitution of the commonplace for the exotic, the tameness and safety of ordered modern life for the excitement and the perils of primordial existence, and the drab of every-day wear for the highly coloured hues of barbaric display. Incidentally, however, it affords to the individual human being—the average man who, in the past, was at best a successful looter, and at the worst mere food for powder—an opportunity to live his own life in peace and quietude, and in a manner chosen by himself. It once fell to my lot to bear the tidings of an outbreak of war through the villages of a country whose people were famous for their bellicose and blood-thirsty reputation. The men wore grave faces as they looked to their weapons and patiently resigned themselves to the inevitable; but the wailing of the women still sounds in my ears. Kings and chiefs, on the other hand, stood to lose much, and to gain little or nothing, by the establishment of a lasting peace and a well-regulated administration; for it has usually been the peculiar privilege of the great ones of the earth to thrive at the expense of their subjects, and to combine the excitements of war with a comparative immunity from its dangers. It is not possible, however, to legislate for a minority; but experience would seem to show that it is a mistake to suppose that the average man of any race, who has tasted war in real earnest, has thereafter an overpowering love of it.

It is to be regretted that Dr. Claridge has not seen his way to carry on his record of the history of the Gold Coast and Ashanti beyond the dawn of the present century, for whereas the story that he has to tell relates to the almost uninterrupted wars and disturbances which culminated in the final campaign of the British against Ashanti in 1900, it is during the past decade especially that the fruits of the peace, which was then established with so much difficulty, have been made manifest. Even now the potentialities of the Gold Coast and its Dependencies have

only begun to be fully appreciated, and the phenomenal prosperity of its people is the growth of the past few years. Never, until quite recently, have the natives of the Gold Coast and Ashanti been afforded an opportunity of developing their ancestral property in peace and security, free from the fear that the accumulation of wealth might excite the cupidity and invite the unwelcome attentions of some powerful neighbour. Little more than a dozen years have elapsed since this possibility dawned upon the bulk of the population ; yet to-day the Gold Coast and Ashanti alike are inhabited by a sturdy race of peasant proprietors who, among other things, produce annually more than a fifth of the total cocoa-crop of the world. British energy and a careful management of the financial resources of the country are beginning to overcome the appalling transport difficulties by which West Africa is still shackled ; the development of the gold-mining industry is due to British capital, enterprise, and science ; but the enormous agricultural expansion of the last ten years, which has revolutionised the conditions of life on the Gold Coast and in Ashanti, is the work of the natives themselves. It has, of course, been aided and stimulated by the Government, but no one can doubt that a people, who have so promptly and eagerly availed themselves of the chances placed within their reach, can look forward with confidence to a future marked by increasingly creditable achievements. And though, alas, the mistakes which the British have committed in the past in their dealings with the peoples of the Gold Coast and Ashanti have been both grave and numerous, and though the African's instinctive suspicion of the white man has all too frequently been justified, the essential soundness of the relations which in our time subsist between ourselves and the native population has recently emerged triumphant from a very searching test.

When the great war broke out in August, 1914, the military forces of the Gold Coast invaded Togoland, the adjoining German colony, in the interior of which had been erected a huge wireless installation of immense

strategic value. In less than four weeks the Germans had been compelled to surrender, and there can be little doubt that the knowledge that, whereas the natives of the Gold Coast were doing all in their power to aid us, the natives of Togoland had everywhere welcomed us as their deliverers, helped them to the conclusion that their position was desperate. A month later it was found possible to despatch to Duala, to aid in the campaign of the Allies in the German Kameruns, nearly all the men of the Gold Coast Regiment of the West African Frontier Force who were not required for the occupation of the conquered territory. The denudation of the Colony and of Ashanti of practically all the troops which, in time of peace, are ordinarily maintained in them, was rendered possible by the enthusiastic loyalty to the British Throne and to the Government which was manifested from end to end of the country. As an additional proof of the sincerity of this feeling, subscriptions to the Patriotic Fund, initiated by natives and mainly received from native contributors, amounting to over £25,000, were rapidly collected and placed in my hands for transmission to the Secretary of State. It is pleasant to recall that, at this time of national crisis, the chiefs and people of Ashanti displayed as keen a desire to assist and support the Government as any that was shown by their neighbours on the Coast.

There is one subject upon which I feel constrained to break a lance with Dr. Claridge. His book will tend, I fear, to confirm the popular belief that the "climate" of the Gold Coast is one of the deadliest in the tropics. I regard this opinion as at once unsound and unscientific. Speaking as a man who has spent more than thirty years in tropical lands, east and west, I regard it as an axiomatic proposition that the climate in any part of the heat-belt is strongly inimical to the health of Europeans. It cannot be otherwise than enervating to be in a constant state of perspiration; and those whose skins are not provided with wide-open pores really suffer more than do men who possess this healthy but inconvenient equipment. As tropical climates go, however, that of the Gold Coast is at

once less hot and less damp than those which are to be found in many other parts of the world. This is not a question of opinion, but of fact, proved beyond dispute by the readings of the thermometer and the rain-gauge ; and no one who has lived both in the Gold Coast and in, say, the low country of Ceylon, in the Malay Peninsula or Archipelago, in Cochinchina or in Kambodia, can entertain a doubt on the subject. Yet it is an incontrovertible truth that the ravages wrought in the health of Europeans, and especially in that of newly arrived Europeans, by a sojourn in the Gold Coast, have from time to time been greater than any which are recorded in the localities above enumerated. This is to be accounted for not by " the climate "—which, as I have said, is merciful, as tropical climates go—but by the virulence of the insect and water-borne microbes which have their home in West Africa.

It will perhaps be said that, if the result is in either case lethal, it does not greatly signify whether sickness or death is induced by the climate or by microbes ; but the fallacy of this will be recognised when it is remembered that, though mankind has not yet obtained a mastery over climatic conditions, a successful war against microbes is something well within our power. Were the " climate " of the Gold Coast the primary cause of disease, we should be unable to effect in it even a slight improvement ; but if, as has now been proved to be the case, infection is conveyed by the bites of certain insects or the drinking of impure water, it will at once be realised that preventive measures are more nearly within our reach. As it is, however, it is neither more nor less accurate or logical to blame " the climate " for cases of yellow fever, malaria or dysentery than it would be to hold the climatic conditions of India accountable for the injuries which a man had sustained in an encounter with a Bengal tiger. In each case the person affected has fallen a victim to the onslaughts of the local fauna, which chance to require a tropical climate for their comfort and well-being.

Accordingly, if in the light of the knowledge we to-day

possess concerning the causation of tropical diseases, we were to analyse the statistics quoted on page 165 of the second volume of Dr. Claridge's *History*—which show the casualties from sickness among the Europeans engaged in Lord Wolseley's march to Kumasi in 1874—we should have to admit that, on the face of them, they constitute no specially damaging case against "the climate" of the Gold Coast. We should ask, for instance, how many of those invalided had dispensed with the use of a mosquito-net, and how many had drunk water which had not previously been boiled and filtered. In other words, we should eliminate all cases of avoidable tropical disease, such as yellow fever, malaria, and dysentery, and when this had been done it would be found that a surprisingly small residue remained to be laid at the door of "the climate."

For the invisible and aggressive organisms of the Gold Coast, to whose assaults the death and illness of Europeans in that country are almost entirely to be ascribed, I do not desire to be understood as holding any sort of brief. It is true that mosquitoes are here far less numerous and persecuting than they are in many other countries—the Malay Peninsula, for instance—but that renders them all the more dangerous. When these insects swarm in myriads,—as they did on the Pêrak River in Malaya or in Georgetown, British Guiana,—a comparatively small percentage of them are usually infected, and an elementary desire to avoid being eaten alive compels even the most careless of Europeans to protect himself from them. In the Gold Coast a man may easily be tempted to pass the night outside his net, for the sake of coolness, and the mosquitoes will not usually be sufficiently numerous to break his sleep; yet the bite of one of them may compass his undoing.

The attack is, therefore, more insidious in the Gold Coast than it is in other tropical countries, and it is also far more virulent. The malarial mosquito is here neither more nor less dangerous than his fellow in Malaya or Ceylon or elsewhere in the tropical zone—which means that he is a pretty deadly enemy to Europeans; but it is only of very recent years that it has been recognised and ad-

mitted that yellow fever, which is conveyed by the bite of the common house mosquito, is endemic in West Africa. Ere long it will probably be a generally accepted theory that the West Coast is the original habitat of the as yet unidentified organism which, passing from the mosquito into the blood of a human being, causes this disease ; and that it was from across the Atlantic that it was imported into the West Indies and South and Central America with the cargoes of slaves, some of whom carried the infection in their veins. The extraordinary virulence of yellow fever, when it first appeared in those countries, would seem to indicate that the germs were let loose among a population which had never acquired any measure of hereditary immunity from them, or which, in the case of the descendants of the African slaves, had lost that immunity. Similarly, it has now been ascertained that though the tse-tse fly, which is the bearer of the germ of sleeping-sickness, is found distributed throughout wide areas in tropical Africa, the disease in an endemic form has for centuries been familiarly known to the natives of Ashanti and many other parts of the West Coast, where it annually claims a few, but only a very few, victims. Of recent years, however, the opening up of trans-continental communication between the seaboard of the Atlantic and the Indian Ocean, which has been effected by Europeans, has caused sleeping-sickness germs to be imported into localities where the tse-tse fly abounds, but has hitherto been innocuous. In these places the native populations had had no opportunity of acquiring an hereditary immunity, such as is enjoyed by the natives of, say, parts of Ashanti, and in consequence the people of Uganda, to cite a single instance, have died of the disease in very large numbers.

The position then is that West Africa, while enjoying what *for the tropics* is quite a good climate, has the misfortune to be the chosen home of a variety of dangerous living organisms, which are peculiarly deadly to Europeans, and are much less easy to cope with than man-eating tigers or other more demonstrative beasts of prey. The recognition of this fact was and is the first step toward

effecting an improvement. The destruction of the breeding-places of mosquitoes ; the segregation of Europeans at night, with the object of minimising the chance of attack upon them by *infected* mosquitoes ; the avoidance of exposure to mosquito-bites by the use of nets and other artificial contrivances ; the judicious use of quinine when such exposure is inevitable ; the provision, where possible, of pipe-borne water supplies, and the boiling and filtration of all drinking-water—these are to-day precautions which are regarded as a mere matter of common sense, which no one of any intelligence would willingly neglect while living in West Africa. Little more than a score of years has elapsed, however, since the necessity for many of these things first dawned upon Europeans in the tropics, but the result is already to be seen in the enormous improvement in the death and invaliding-rates. An immense deal, of course, still remains to be done ; for one cannot deal with a country of the size and population of the Gold Coast and its Dependencies as the Americans have dealt with the narrow strip of territory through which the Panama Canal has been delved. The complete extirpation of disease-carrying insects, which has there, to all intents and purposes, been effected, is something altogether removed from the regions of practical things where vast areas are in question ; but it is not a task beyond the ability of the sanitary expert notably to reduce the chances of infection, and to work a material improvement in the health-conditions of particular localities. Every year this is being progressively effected in the Gold Coast, and it is time, I suggest, that the old and crusted superstition anent “ the climate ” should be discarded once and for all. It is all very well to give a dog a bad name, and hang him ; but it is hardly fair to go on hanging him after it has been conclusively proved that it was the cat that robbed the larder.

For the rest, I have none but the warmest admiration to express for Dr. Claridge's handling of his subject, for the long and patient labour which he has devoted to it, and for the success which that labour has achieved. The

people of the Gold Coast and Ashanti have reason to be grateful to him, for he has recounted the history of their country and their forebears in a manner which should cause it to be widely read throughout the English-speaking world; and if a knowledge and understanding of a country's past is, as I believe it to be, essential to those who serve it in the present, and have to some extent a hand in the moulding of its future, then the toil and study which have gone to the making of this book will bear fruit in West Africa, not only for men of the present generation, but for those of generations yet unborn.

HUGH CLIFFORD.

LLANDOGO, MONMOUTHSHIRE,
August 17th, 1915.

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PART I

ANCIENT HISTORY AND TRADITION

A HISTORY OF THE GOLD COAST AND ASHANTI

CHAPTER I

THE ORIGIN OF THE GOLD COAST TRIBES

THE country now known as the Gold Coast includes, not only the Colony proper, but also Ashanti and a small portion of the Southern Soudan known as the Northern Territories. Its coast-line extends from Newtown on the west to Aflao on the east, and, in addition to the Gold Coast as geographically defined, includes a part of the Slave Coast to the east of the River Volta. It is only within comparatively recent times that the greater part of this area has been included within the sphere of influence or been visited and explored by Europeans, who, for many centuries, never penetrated more than a few miles into the interior. CHAP. I

The history of the country lying along the coast-line is fairly well known ; for one European nation or another has held trading settlements there for over five hundred years, and the works of several writers remain, giving a more or less complete account of different periods. Such discrepancies as occur between them are mainly attributable to international jealousies ; for they were written at a time when several nations were on the coast together, contending the one against the other for the trade and regarding each other as interlopers. In these circumstances, it is not altogether unnatural that each writer should incline towards that version of any particular occurrence which redounds most to the credit of his own race.* Apart from

CHAP. I these works there are no written records. The local history, however, has always been handed down verbally from one generation to another through the Linguists, and such are their powers of memory that these accounts have been found remarkably accurate in those cases in which they could be checked by the written records. They are always entitled to consideration, and may usually be accepted as reliable so far as the incidence and sequence of events are concerned, and there is seldom any difficulty in fixing the approximate dates by other contemporary occurrences.

The records left by Europeans do not commence till the latter part of the fourteenth century, and none of them have left any account of any statements that may then have been made to them by the people as to their past history. Very little is known, therefore, about the origin of these tribes, and such accounts as have been handed down and are current among them at the present time are purely traditionary. The Gold Coast African, however, seldom emigrates. He will make long journeys for purposes of trade and may stay away for years, but he always tends to return to his original home. The Linguists and better-class people, from whom these traditionary accounts of past events are obtained, belong to families which have had their home in one and the same place from time immemorial. Among such a people, tradition has a far greater value than among less settled races, for places and natural objects connected with their past history are constantly before their eyes, and assist in preserving the story from generation to generation.

The general sum of these traditions is that the Fantis, Ashantis, Wassaws, and in fact all the Twi-speaking or Akan peoples, were originally one tribe. They were a pastoral race and inhabited the open country beyond the forest belt and farther north than Salaga. A northern and lighter-skinned people, which is commonly supposed to have been the Fulanis, commenced to encroach on their territory, and being stronger than they, seized their cattle and young women and made many of the others slaves.

After a time, the Akans began to migrate in small parties into the forest, where they built little villages and lived in hiding. As time went on, the number of these forest-dwelling fugitives increased, until, in the course of many years, their numbers became very considerable. Their oppressors then heard of them and made several attempts to conquer and enslave them, but were unable to fight in the dense forest, and, tiring of their want of success, eventually left them unmolested. Living in peace, the people continued to increase, and gradually extended farther south until they had populated the forest belt and eventually reached the coast.

The subdivision of the united Akan race into its main branches, the Fantis and Ashantis, is variously accounted for. The split, however, seems to have occurred long before the coast-line was reached and while the principal settlements were in the country north of the River Pra, the present Adansi, and around Tekiman. One story very plausibly explains that the constant raids of their northern enemy, who burned all the farms, reduced the Akans to great straits for food. Some of them subsisted on a wild plant named "fan," and others on a plant named "shan," and thus gained the names "Fan-dti" and "Shan-dti" (dti—to eat). The former subsequently migrated farther south, and the latter remained in the more northerly districts of the forest. But though this story accounts for the names Fanti and Ashanti—and it is worthy of note that the initial "A" of the latter is not pronounced by the people—it fails to explain why they separated. Another account says that a section of the people disliked the King and conspired to poison him. The names of the two tribes are derived from the names of the foods they offered to him. The Fantis are said to have gathered "fan" and the Ashantis a poisonous herb called "asun" or "asuan," which, with the verb "tsiw" (to gather), give the derivation of these names. The King, discovering what the Ashantis had done, naturally favoured the Fantis; but they were not strong enough to withstand the jealousy and oppression of the former, who ultimately drove them

CHAP. I from the country. Yet another version of this story says that a quarrel arose among the people, who divided into two factions, one of which migrated farther south. They became known as the "Fa-tsiw-fu," meaning a portion of the people who had cut themselves off from the main body, and the others were called "Asua-tsiw-fu," meaning the people who did not hearken, because they refused to listen to the advice of the King when he wanted to restore peace and prevent the Ashantis from driving the Fantis away.

The Fantis say that they found the forest uninhabited, and some of them settled there, founding the village of Kwaman; but the majority pushed on till they reached the coast. They are said to have been led by three chiefs—Osun, Oburnuma Kuma and Odapagan. They found the sea-board inhabited by two tribes, the Asibus and Etsiis, who united to oppose the new-comers. Kormantin is said to have been the principal town of the Asibus, and their Chief, Amanfi, who is said to have been a giant, led them against the Fantis, defeated them and compelled them to pay him tribute. Later, however, they organized a rebellion and drove the Asibus into the bush, but Amanfi, who was suffering from guinea-worm in his legs and could not escape, was found in his house and put to death. The Elminas are said to have come to the coast at a later date, and to be an off-shoot of the Ashantis, which would account for the fact that while the latter have always been the foes of the Fantis, their relations with the Elminas have been uniformly friendly.

How much truth there may be in these accounts, it is impossible to say; but vague and uncertain though they may be, they are, nevertheless, not unreasonable, and are probably very fairly correct. The Fulanis are known to have been migrating in a southerly direction for centuries, and the Arabs had, even prior to the eleventh century, founded states in the interior of Africa, one of the chief of which was Ghana, which is believed to have been near the present site of Sokoto. The country of Wangara belonged to this state, and, though this name is now confined to a country quite distinct from Ashanti, the Ma-

homedans in Kumasi in 1821 told Mr. Dupuis, the British Consul, that Ashanti was a part of Wangara. According to the Arab historians, the country to the south of Wangara was called Lam-lam, and was inhabited by a race of savages, whom the people living round the Niger used to hunt and sell into slavery. It is, moreover, well known that the Mahomedans have only been able to conquer in countries where they could use cavalry, which would have been quite impossible in the dense forest of Ashanti, and might easily account for their lack of success against the Akans who fled thither.

In Winneba and some other places on the coast, a language is still spoken which is quite distinct from Twi. This language is gradually dying out, but it may well owe its origin to that of the tribes who were living on the coast-line at the time of the Fanti immigration. Assuming the traditional account of their conquest to be substantially correct, it by no means follows that they were exterminated. It is far more probable that they would have been required to pay tribute to the Fantis, and, if this was so, the natural conservatism of the African would be quite sufficient to account for their language and perhaps some of their customs having lingered in those parts of the coast where they settled. The different languages of the Accras and Apollonians, on the other hand, are to be accounted for by the fact that they are believed to be immigrants from the Slave and Ivory Coasts rather than true natives of the Gold Coast. The Accras at least have never succeeded in establishing themselves in the true forest districts; and the fact that the country now occupied by the Fantis was at one time inhabited by a very primitive race is proved by the discovery of a number of stone weapons and implements.

The only argument that could be adduced to refute the general truth of these traditions is the fact that the Portuguese, when they first settled on the Gold Coast in 1482, found the people already grouped into separate petty kingdoms and tribes; and the question has been raised whether four and a half centuries would afford suffi-

CHAP. I cient time for the migration through the forest and the formation of these tribal distinctions. Each of these little states, however, most probably arose from the settlement of one of the more powerful families of the immigrants with their dependents; for the family or patriarchal system is the fundamental principle of the Akan constitution.

Another point in favour of a belief in the common origin of the Fantis and Ashantis is the existence among them of a number of definite families. At the present time it is impossible to say what their original number may have been. It is certain, however, that some of them are of very much greater antiquity than others, which are believed to be off-shoots from the parent stock due to quarrels or some other cause. The principal families are the Twidan (Leopard), Nsonna (Bush-cat), Kwonna (Buffalo), Intwa (Dog), Anonno (Parrot), Abradzi (Plantain), Abrutu (Corn-stalk), Appiadi (Servant) and Yoko (Red earth). There are several others, but these are generally acknowledged to be the oldest. The animals and other objects from which they derive their names are commonly held sacred by their members. The name was probably given as a descriptive title to the original head of the family—a common practice among most primitive peoples—but in course of time the fact that it was merely the name of an individual has been lost sight of, and later generations have come to regard these animals as their actual ancestors, or as the tutelary deities or the homes of the tutelary deities of their families.

Members of these families are found among Fantis and Ashantis alike, and it would be difficult to find any explanation of this fact unless it is admitted that these tribes were at one time living together as one united people. Many of these names, too, seem to belong to an older dialect, for they are not those in common use among the Fantis at the present day. Moreover, though the members of these clans are now so widely scattered, a certain brotherhood still exists among them, and the customary laws in use among all the Akan peoples, though varying slightly

in different districts just as the dialect they speak does, CHAP. I
are, nevertheless, identical in principle and clearly point to
a common origin. The same may be said of their religion,
customs and municipal regulations.

Meredith, writing in 1811, while bearing out what has
already been said about the origin of the Fantis, also
records a tradition of their early government on the coast.
He says :—" The Fantis were originally an inland people,
and governed by the kings of Ashantee : but when they
formed a separate state, we have no satisfactory accounts
to determine. They, however, rebelled against the Ashantee
government, and fled towards the sea ; where, it appears,
they remained unmolested until very lately. When they
considered themselves out of the Ashantee dominions, and
in tolerable security, they appointed a person to govern
them : but as they dreaded the vengeance of their old
masters, and were fearful that on the promise of favour
or reward this person would betray them, they had re-
course to a singular expedient to prove his fidelity. They
told him, that he must consent to lose his left hand as the
only token they considered sufficient to prove his attach-
ment to them. The man hesitated at this extraordinary
method of putting his fidelity to the test ; when a general
murmur arose against him. Whereupon his cane-bearer
stepped forward and exclaimed, that if his master were
unwilling to lose a hand for the good of the people, he
was not ; and laying his left arm upon the block, it
was taken off. He was then constituted their Braffoe ;
which term signifies captain, or leader ; and the person
so appointed was endued with many privileges :
his family were to be provided for, and considered
as a kind of nobility ; and his power was almost
absolute." ¹

According to Bosman, however, the power of the Brafo
was at first controlled by a Council of Elders " not unlike
some European Parliament, acting perfectly according to
their Inclinations, without consulting the Braffo," ² and
it was not until later that the Brafos usurped greater powers,

¹ Meredith, p. 116.

² Bosman, p. 57.

CHAP. I and their rule became so tyrannical and obnoxious to the people that their authority was expressly limited.

In addition to the Akans, there are a number of other tribes, more especially in the Northern Territories, about whose origin little or nothing is known ; and there are also many colonies of Hausas and Fulanis scattered about the country ; but, though something more is known of their early history, they are only aliens in the land and cannot legitimately be included among the tribes of the Gold Coast.

CHAPTER II

THE GOLD COAST AND THE ANCIENTS

WHETHER the Gold Coast was known to the Ancients or not, is a question to which it is impossible, at this day, to give a decided answer ; but there is a certain amount of evidence which tends to justify the belief that it was. CHAP. II

The greatest navigators of early times were the Phœnicians, but, as none of their writings have been preserved, the exact extent of their voyages and discoveries is doubtful, and there is very little mention of them in the writings of other nations. This fact is easily accounted for by the jealousy of the Phœnicians, who carefully guarded all information connected with their navigation and trade as State secrets. Consequently, when Tyre was conquered by Alexander and Carthage by Rome, these records were lost for ever. We know, however, that they made frequent voyages in the Mediterranean, which were often extended along the Atlantic coast of Africa or to the British Isles, and that they founded colonies on the African coast, beyond the Straits of Gibraltar, as early as 1,200 to 800 B.C. But it is quite certain that they would never have attempted such colonization of new countries until they had, by frequent voyages, become fairly well acquainted with their seas and coasts.

Knowing therefore that these ancient Phœnicians were in the habit of sailing down the western coast of Africa, the only question to be settled is how far these voyages extended. There are two passages in Herodotus which point to the possibility of their having reached the Gold Coast or its neighbourhood. He states that the Carthaginians say there is a region of Libya (Africa)

CHAP. II beyond the Pillars of Hercules (Jebu Zatout and Gibraltar) which is inhabited ; and that when they go there to trade, they land, and having deposited their goods on the beach, return on board their ships and make a great smoke in order to attract the attention of the natives. The latter then come down to the shore and place the gold they are willing to give in exchange opposite the heaps of merchandize and go away. The traders then land again ; and if they are satisfied with the amount offered, take the gold and leave the goods and then sail away ; but if they think the price too small, they go on board again and wait for it to be increased.

Now a similar method of trade is mentioned by two other writers. Aluise de Cada Mosto, a Venetian, was sailing from Venice to Flanders in 1455, when he heard of the great profits made by the Portuguese in the African trade under Prince Henry the Navigator. These were stated to be sometimes 700 or even as much as 1,000 per cent. He therefore determined to make a voyage down the west coast, and arranged to give the Prince a fourth of the profits on his return. Having arrived at a place somewhere in the neighbourhood of Cape Blanco, which he calls Hoden, he heard of a town or district named Tregazza (meaning a chest, bag or sack of gold) which lay some six days' journey by land from Hoden. From this Tregazza a salt trade was regularly carried on by means of caravans to Tombuto (Timbuktu) and thence to Melli. Whatever salt was not disposed of in Melli was taken by carriers through a country where there were no camels or other beasts of burden to a river (? the Niger ¹). There, he says ;—" having reached the shore, or bank of The Water, the salt is placed in heaps, each merchant's property by itself. They who belong to it then retire to the distance of half a day's journey ; when other negroes, who avoid being spoken to, or seen, and who it is conjectured come in boats from some adjacent Islands, approach the heaps of salt ; and having examined its quality, place a certain portion of gold on each, and withdraw.

¹ Or possibly the Volta.

The original traders then return : if the Deposit satisfies their expectation, they take it, and leave the salt ; if not, they again retire, without removing the gold. The former Negroes upon this, either add more gold, or only take the salt on which their deposit was approved. This mode of trading is very ancient among them : the truth of it has been attested by many of the Arab and Azanaghi merchants, and by other persons whose information deserves credit.”¹

The next mention of this silent trade is made by Captain Richard Jobson, who, in 1620–21, made a voyage to the River Gambia for the express purpose of discovering the gold trade mentioned by Cada Mosto. He published an account of his voyage in 1623 ; but though he makes mention of this trade, he does not seem to have been writing from personal experience of it, but rather to have been repeating what he had read in “ certain authors, but whose names he could not recollect.”² Claude Jannequin, Sieur de Rochfort, who made a West African voyage in 1637, also mentions the existence of this silent trade in the neighbourhood of Cape Blanco. The account given by Herodotus of this trade as carried on by the Phœnicians is therefore confirmed ; and the fact that payment was habitually made in gold is additional proof of its truth. It does not follow, however, that they sailed as far as the Gold Coast, though it is a fact that a form of this silent trade is not uncommon both there and much farther down the coast, even to the present day.

The second passage from Herodotus is of much greater importance in this connection. About 600 B.C. Pharaoh Necho,³ then King of Egypt, attempted to cut a canal from the Nile to the Red Sea ; but such enormous numbers of his labourers died at this work that he was forced to abandon it and seek some other means of establishing communication between that sea and the Mediterranean. He therefore provided some Phœnicians with ships in the Red Sea and ordered them to enter the Mediterranean by the Straits of Gibraltar and so return to Egypt. They

¹ Clarke, p. 245.

² Astley, vol. ii, p. 182.

³ The same who slew the Jewish King Josiah.

CHAP. II accordingly sailed south, and, on the approach of autumn, landed and made a farm, where they sowed corn and waited to gather in the harvest. This, Herodotus explains, was the usual practice with sailors on an African voyage. "Having thus consumed two years, they in the third doubled the columns of Hercules, and returned to Egypt. Their relation may obtain attention from others, but to me it seems incredible, for they affirmed, that having sailed round Africa, they had the sun on their right hand."¹

It appears that though Herodotus believed that Africa was everywhere surrounded by the sea except at Suez, he thought this statement that the sailors had had the sun on their right, that is to the north, was a mere travellers' tale. As a conscientious historian, however, he inserted it for what it was worth, and it is very fortunate that he did so; for it undoubtedly affords the very strongest evidence that the circumnavigation of Africa was actually accomplished. Either this must have been done, or the whole story was a pure invention of the Phœnicians, who tried to cover their failure by describing something marvellous. But, as against this latter hypothesis, it must be remembered that such an idea was so entirely opposed to the knowledge of those days that, had they wished to invent anything, it is one of the very last things they would have been likely to think of; and, since the holders of such unorthodox views were more often than not punished by death, it is even less likely that they would have ventured to repeat it unless they had really seen what they described and were convinced of its truth. This statement alone, therefore, goes far to prove the truth of their story and to justify the belief that they really had rounded the Cape of Good Hope and were describing in perfect good faith a phenomenon which they had actually observed, but which they were unable to explain. Nor are any of the other details given inconsistent with this belief. The time the voyage is said to have occupied is not unreasonable, and the winds and currents are more favourable for the passage from east to

¹ Melpomene, 42; Clarke, p. lxxxvii.

west than in the opposite direction. The only real difficulty is the doubt whether the ships of those days could have successfully encountered the enormous seas which are so frequently met with off the Cape of Good Hope. It is usual to avoid these by standing out to the south, but this was a course which the Phœnicians, coasting along in strange seas, would not have been able to adopt. But though this objection exists, it is not sufficient to invalidate the story ; for, starting with a number of ships, it would be quite reasonable to expect a proportion of them to get through, and it is known that they constantly sailed to and maintained a regular trade with the British Islands, which involved the successful navigation of the Bay of Biscay.

Believing therefore that this voyage was indeed made 600 years B.C., it is quite possible that the Gold Coast may even then have been visited. The ships of those days were small and the seas unknown, and it is safe to assume that this voyage was a coasting one, and that the ships never lost sight of land for more than a few days at a time, and then only if blown out to sea by storms. The Phœnicians would, moreover, have been compelled to land and obtain fresh water and provisions at fairly frequent intervals, and it is quite possible that one or more calls may have been made on the Gold Coast for this purpose : for though it is true that the landing there is for the most part very dangerous, there are several places where it is nearly always easy and safe, and they would doubtless have been put on shore and taken off again by the natives, who would have come out to the ships in their canoes, and are well able to manage them in almost any surf. They might even have made their farm there, though this is very improbable owing to the amount of clearing that would have been necessary. If they did in fact visit the Gold Coast, it is possible that it was then that they discovered that gold was obtainable there, and founded that more or less regular trade which there is some reason to suppose at one time existed. For similar reasons we must admit the possibility, at any rate, that

CHAP. II the Gold Coast may have been visited by others of the Phœnician explorers who sailed along the West African coast, but of whose exploits no record has been preserved.

There seems to be no doubt that, at this time, the belief that Africa was a peninsula had gained general acceptance, and that the theory of Hipparchus, which confined each sea in its separate basin, was only formulated after all recollection of these earlier discoveries had died out. It was then that such fragmentary accounts of the Phœnician voyages as survived came to be discredited. In the reign of Xerxes, Sataspes, a Persian nobleman and a nephew of Darius, was condemned to death for some crime ; but his mother prevailed upon Xerxes to commute his sentence on condition that he should sail round Africa until he reached Arabia. Sataspes accordingly set out, and passing the Pillars of Hercules and Solois, turned towards the south. According to Herodotus,¹ after " continuing his Voyage for several months, in which he passed over an immense tract of sea, he saw no probable termination of his labours, and therefore sailed back to Egypt." ² On his return to the Court of Xerxes with his task uncompleted, he gave as his reason for turning back that it was impossible to make the circuit of Africa, as his vessel was totally unable to proceed. Xerxes, however, was not the man to be put off with excuses of this kind, and the original sentence was at once carried out and the unfortunate Sataspes crucified. Antonio Galvano, writing in the sixteenth century, gives the date of this voyage as 485 B.C., and says that Sataspes reached the Cape of Good Hope, though it is not very clear on what grounds he bases this assertion. It is true, however, that " several months " might have enabled him to get there, and the mountainous seas and strong currents around the Cape might well account for his statement that his vessel was totally unable to proceed.

By far the most important of these ancient voyages of which we now have any record, however, is that of the Carthaginian Hanno. This was undertaken when Carthage

¹ Melpomene, 43.

² Clarke, p. cii.

was at the height of its prosperity—"Carthaginis potentia florente"—and consequently before the battle of Himera in 480 B.C.; its exact date, however, is not known, and some place it as early as 1,000 B.C. or even earlier. The account we have of it certainly gives more details than those of the other ancient voyages, but leaves room for endless speculation as to its actual extent. The original account was, of course, written in Punic, and the one we now have is a translation of this made by a Greek at a much later date, and is apparently little more than an abstract, in which many important details of time and distance have been either omitted or distorted. CHAP. II

The dual object of this voyage was the foundation of colonies on the West African coast and the discovery of another route to India. Hanno's fleet consisted of sixty quinqueremes, large galleys with two masts and five banks of oars: one tier of these was amidships between the masts, two more, one above the other, before the foremast, and the other two were similarly arranged abaft the main-mast. The colonists, amongst whom were many women, numbered 30,000, and they also had on board large quantities of provisions and other stores.

The first colony was founded two days' sail beyond the Pillars of Hercules. This was named Thymaterium, and has been identified with Azamor on the banks of the River Marmora. Sailing on, Hanno next came to a promontory which he calls Soloeis. This is believed to be Cape Cantin. Here he built a temple to Neptune, and, sailing another one and a half days beyond the cape, founded five other cities along the coast, which he named Coriconticos, Gytte, Acra, Melitta and Arambys. He next came to a river which he calls the Lixus, where he describes the natives as a race of herdsmen, and says he remained there so long that they became quite friendly. The time taken in reaching this river is not given, but it is generally believed to have been either the Ouro or the St. Cyprian. When he left this river, Hanno took some of these friendly Lixitæ with him as interpreters, and then sailed two days south and one day east. He then dis-

CHAP. II covered an island in a deep bay, which he colonized and named Cerne. He adds that the distances from the Pillars of Hercules to Carthage and to this island seemed to him to be about equal. He seems, therefore, to have doubled Cape Blanco and to have reached the island now known as Arguin ; a surmise that is further borne out by the discovery in Arguin of the remains of the old tanks or cisterns constructed by these Phœnician colonists. Proceeding farther south, Hanno came to another river, the Chretes. This he entered, and found that it opened into a large lake containing several islands. One day's sail beyond the mouth of this river were some mountains, and still farther south another large river, in which were large numbers of crocodiles and hippopotami. This description can fairly be applied to the Rivers Senegal and Gambia, the first of which has a large lagoon, in which there are several islands, while the latter was noted for the number of crocodiles and hippopotami it contained within quite recent times. The mountains he mentions as being one day's sail beyond the Chretes would then be the hills around Cape Verde, which, though of no great height, are specially noticeable on a coast that is almost uniformly flat. Hanno, having apparently reached the mouth of the Gambia, then returned to Cerne for a time before again proceeding south, and it is during this second part of the voyage that the principal difficulties arise in identifying localities, and that there is most reason to suspect errors or omissions of time on the part of the Greek translator.

The Periplus gives the following account of this second portion of the voyage. "Sailing then twelve daies Southerly, not going farre from the Coast, which was peopled with Negroes, who upon sight of us fled away, and spake so, as the Lixitæ that were with us understood them not ; the last day we arrived at a Mountaine full of great trees, the wood whereof was odoriferous, and of various colours. Having now coasted two daies by this mountaine, wee found a deepe and troublesome race of Sea ; on the side whereof towards the land was a plaine,

where by night we saw fires kindled on every side, distant one from the other some more some lesse. Having watered here, we sailed by the land five daies, so that we arrived in a great Bay, which our interpreters said was called Hesperus his horne (the western horn). In this there was a great Island, and in the Island a lake, which seemed a sea, and in this there was another Island ; where having landed, by day wee saw nothing but woods, but in the night many fires were kindled, and we heard Phifes and the noise and sound of cimbals and drummes, and besides infinite shouts ; so that wee were exceedingly afraid, and our diviners commanded us to abandon the island : then swiftly sailing from thence, we passed by a countrie smelling of spices ; from which some fierie rivers fall into the sea, and the land is so hot that men are not able to goe in it ; therefore being somewhat affrighted, we suddenly hoised out our sailes, and running along in the maine the space of four daies, we saw by night the countrie full of flames, and in the midst an exceeding high fire, greater than all the rest, which seemed to reach unto the Starres : but wee saw this after in the day time, which was a very loftie mountaine, called the Chariot of the Gods. But having sailed three daies by fierie rivers, we arrived in a gulfe called Notuceras, that is, the South Horne : in the inner part thereof there was a little island like unto the first, which had a lake in it, and in that there was another Island full of savage men, but the women were more ; they had their bodies all over hairie, and of our interpreters they were called Gorgones (Gorillæ) : we pursued the Men but could take none, for they fled into precipices and defended themselves with stones ; but we tooke three of the Women, which did nothing but bite and scratch those that led them, and would not follow them. Therefore they killed them and flead them, and brought their skins to Carthage : and because Victuals failed us we sailed no further.”¹

This portion of the voyage is less easy to limit than the earlier part, and various estimates of its extent and

¹ Clarke, p. clxx.

CHAP. II the positions of the Western and Southern Horns have been given by different commentators. D'Anville says the Western Horn is Cape Roxo and the Southern one Cape St. Anne or the point of Sherbro Sound. M. de Bougainville, on the other hand, fixes Cape Palmas as the Western and Cape Three Points as the Southern Horn, while Major Rennel thinks Sherbro Island was the island of the Gorillæ, and practically limits the extent of the voyage to Sierra Leone. But though there are mountains here, some indeed reaching a height of about 2,600 ft., they have been pronounced non-volcanic. Others again believe that Hanno reached the Gaboon and Congo; while some geographers have argued that he never got beyond the Moroccan coast, and others even say he reached the Cape of Good Hope. Several of these writers had no personal acquaintance with the West African coast; but those who know it best incline to the belief that Hanno reached the Cameroons, even if he got no farther.

Apart from the question of time, there are other difficulties; the chief of which seems to be to decide what Hanno himself really means by the different things he says. In the first place, there is some doubt about the meaning implied by the term "horn." Much confusion seems to have arisen through some commentators having confined this term to promontories, whereas the word "keras" was usually applied by the Greeks to arms of the sea. A passage in Hampton's translation of Polybius shows the sense in which it was then used. In describing the current in the Bosphorus, he says:—"It is once more hurried back to Asia to the place called Bos; and lastly falling back again from Bos it directs its course towards Byzantium, and there, breaking into eddies, a small part of it winds itself into a pool which is called the horn." The islands mentioned in the great bay at the Western Horn were probably low-lying alluvial tracts, whose conformation would, in the course of centuries, be liable to very great alterations. They might even become joined to the mainland and cease to exist. The island of the gorillæ, however, seems to have been of a much more permanent

character, for precipices are mentioned in it which certainly do not occur on the alluvial islands found in lagoons and river deltas.

Then there is the question whether the Gorgones mentioned in the *Periplus* were identical with the species now known as gorillæ, or were in reality baboons, chimpanzees or some other large species of ape. When the modern gorilla was discovered in 1846 it was so named because it was believed that it was the species that had been described by Hanno. The way in which the males are said to have fled up the mountains and thrown stones is very suggestive of baboons, the females of which would equally have fulfilled the conditions of biting and scratching their captors, and would, moreover, have been far more readily taken than genuine gorillæ. In fact the capture of three living and possibly full-grown specimens of the true gorilla would be an undertaking of considerable magnitude and danger even at the present day. Even assuming that these animals really were gorillæ, it is quite unnecessary to conclude that the species was then confined within the same geographical limits as now. We know that many African animals were common, even within the last few centuries, in places where they would certainly never be found at the present time. Bosman, writing about 1700, describes how the tracks of thousands of antelope, elephants and other animals were to be seen in the neighbourhood of Takoradi and Sekondi; while around Axim and the River Ankobra several elephants were killed daily. One indeed was killed close to the fort at Accra and at least three at Elmina, one of them in the town itself. Elephants could not now be found within many days' march of these places; and if this change has occurred within the comparatively short space of a couple of centuries, how much more may the distribution of the gorilla have been altered during a period of between two and three thousand years. The probability is, however, that these Gorgones were merely baboons or chimpanzees.

Then there is the distance travelled by the ships of those times in a day's sail to be considered. Rennel has

CHAP. II collected several examples in his *Geography of Herodotus* giving the rate of sailing of the best constructed ships of the Phœnicians, Greeks and Egyptians. He gives eight examples, and, taking the mean of these, a day's sail works out at thirty-seven miles. A great deal, however, must depend upon winds and currents, and Hanno would naturally have had to regulate the speed of his whole fleet by that of his slowest vessel, so that it is impossible to draw any accurate conclusions from times alone. Moreover, great uncertainty exists whether the times given in the Periplus are either complete or correct. Obviously, then, it would be very unwise to place too much reliance on them as a means of fixing localities, though, when times are given, they cannot of course be entirely disregarded.

Consequently, with so extensive a field for conjecture opened up by this question of time, the possible uncertainty about the exact meaning of the term "horn" and the doubtful identification of the Gorgones, we are compelled to rely rather on the more definite physical features mentioned, and notably on the mountain of fire, the island with precipitous hills which was inhabited by some species of ape, and either promontories or gulfs, but preferably the latter, that will answer the descriptions given of the Western and Southern Horns.

Now to consider the second portion of the voyage in greater detail. Taking Cerne as having been satisfactorily identified with Arguin, about which there can be little room for doubt, and the Carthaginians having already explored the coast as far as the Gambia, we find they set out again from Cerne and sail south past a country inhabited by Negroes whose language the interpreters taken from the Lixitæ were unable to understand. This again clearly shows that they had already passed south of the River Senegal, which forms the northern limit of distribution of the true Negroes, whose language would of course be strange to the Lixitæ. Next they reach some mountains covered with trees. This is probably another reference to Cape Verde, for there are no other mountains except Dubrika until Sierra Leone is reached, and this cape is so

conspicuous a point and landmark on a West African voyage that it would not be unnatural to mention it again. The tree-covered hills of this cape, from which it derives its name, are cited as a landmark by all the early voyagers. Villault, in 1666, says "Cape Verde is one of the most agreeable places in the world for its verdure, the north part is mountainous and always covered with green trees."¹ Golberry, who wrote an account of his travels in West Africa during 1785-87, says of this spot "the baobabs, which are the most monstrous of all vegetables, grow here in great abundance. I counted near sixty of them towards the point of Cape Verd, among which there were many of a prodigious size; their branches laden with foliage, give the Cape a very verdant aspect, and it is from these trees alone that it derives its name."² It is also given as a landmark in the *Merchants' and Mariners' African Guide* (1819), which says of the hills at Cape Verde that "the easternmost is thickly studded with trees."³ Having already mentioned the River Gambia, Hanno probably would not refer to it again, and the "troublesome race of the sea" may be the mouth of the Rio Grande, which he could hardly fail to notice.

After this they come to the great bay called the Western Horn, where they land on an island, but are alarmed at night by the sounds of drumming and shouting and by fires. This Horn at any rate is distinctly stated to have been a bay, and can hardly have been anything but the harbour of Sierra Leone, which is the finest on the whole coast. It also contains several low-lying alluvial islands beyond Tagreen Point. The fires and sounds which so alarmed the Carthaginians are capable of a very simple explanation. It has been the custom of the natives along the whole of this coast, from time immemorial, to clear land for their farms by setting fire to the low bush and grass at the end of the dry season, and it was probably these fires that Hanno saw "distant one from the other some more some less," or they may have been fires lit by the people to illuminate

¹ Astley, vol. ii, p. 376.

² Golberry, vol. ii, p. 37.

³ *Merchants' and Mariners' African Guide*, p. 14.

CHAP. II their dances in the evening. The drumming and shouting may be heard in any African village on a moonlight night.

After this they passed by the land "from which some fierie rivers fall into the sea, and the land is so hot that men are not able to goe in it." This so alarmed them that they went on for four days until they sighted the mountain of fire. These fiery rivers admit of two explanations. It was commonly believed by the earliest voyagers that the heat in the tropics was so great that no man could live there, and that the heavy surf they saw was due to actual boiling of the waves on coming in contact with the heated sands. For many years this surf was always referred to as "burnings," and Bosman, in his description of the mouth of the River Volta, mentions the "very high Burning of extraordinary violence, as well as lofty Agitations of the Waves,"¹ and the same author, when writing of the bad surf on the Slave Coast, says: "This Port (Fida) is so incomodious and dangerous; by reason of the horrible Burnings in the Sea, that we cannot land here without running a great Risque; but in April, May, June and July the Sea burns so violently, that according to the Proverb, he ought to have two lives who ventures . . . for the Sea-Burning is so violent and rolls so that a Canoa full of People is over-turned and the Canoa shattered into Splinters in a minute."² These statements about fiery rivers, therefore, may merely mean that the rivers they passed had bad bars, and have been inserted to explain why it was that they did not enter and explore them. It may be, however, that the passage was intended to be taken literally; for when the grass is fired at the end of the dry season the vegetation along the banks of the rivers and streams is usually too damp to burn and remains until later, when, if the stream has dried up and the grass is again fired, the rest of the land being already clear, the appearance of a veritable river of fire is produced. The four days mentioned probably refers to the time taken after leaving this land and not to that occupied in passing it also, which has been omitted; and if this is so, they might

¹ Bosman, p. 328.

² *Ibid.*, p. 337.

well have reached the neighbourhood of Benin. If this is really what they did, they would have had many opportunities of seeing fiery rivers of either kind, until they arrived off the dense mangrove swamps of the Bight of Biafra.

The Carthaginians now came to the great fire reaching to the stars, which they discovered in the morning was a "very loftie mountaine called the Chariot of the Gods." There is no mountain along the whole West African coast to which this description so aptly applies as to the Cameroons Peak, a volcano which is not even yet extinct ; and if Hanno really sighted it during an eruption by night he may well have felt alarmed. If the name " Chariot of the Gods," was not given to this mountain by the Carthaginians themselves, they must have obtained it from their interpreters. But the interpreters themselves would not have been able to understand the language of the natives, and would have been forced to carry on any conversation they held with them chiefly by means of signs. Hanno, too, must, as a rule, have communicated with his interpreters in the same way, for any knowledge of their language that he had acquired must have been very limited. In this way errors may very easily arise, and the one thing that is quite certain is that no West African used the word " chariot," for they have no knowledge of such things, and even to this day do not know what wheels are except in the coast towns or artillery stations. Even there, a Kru-boy or other African will almost invariably call a wheel the " cart's foot." Now the name borne by the Cameroons Peak at the present day is Mungo ma Lobeh, which can be interpreted as the Place or Throne of Thunder or the Place or Throne of the Gods.¹ This mountain, therefore, coincides both in description and in name with that which Hanno passed before reaching the Southern Horn.

The Southern Horn is plainly described as a gulf containing the island of the Gorgones. This island was evidently no mere sandbank such as might disappear in the

¹ Kingsley, *West African Studies*, p. 236 (1st edition).

CHAP. II course of a few centuries. Now the number of really permanent islands in this part of the world is very limited, and the choice on this particular part of the coast is reduced to two, Fernando Po and Corisco. The former lies too far out to sea to have been described by Hanno as being in a gulf, but Corisco, standing in the entrance to Corisco Bay, is a rocky, wooded island with some small precipitous cliffs along its shore and with mountains, lakes and miniature rivers inland. In fact it answers the description admirably.

Now there is nothing in all this voyage to show that Hanno ever landed on the Gold Coast; in fact, if its extent has been correctly estimated, he seems to have been too alarmed by the surf or bush fires that he saw even to have touched there to water his ships. The account, however, is of very great importance, because it is the only one that has been handed down to us, and because, whatever its actual extent, it shows the enterprising character of the Phœnicians, and proves that they had seriously turned their attention to West Africa. Their explorations were made primarily for the purpose of extending their trade, and it is quite certain that, after achieving so much as, at the very lowest estimate, was done by Hanno, they would have followed up this first success by further voyages, and have endeavoured to open up communication and trade with the natives. They would then have received gold and ivory in exchange for their merchandize, and, once they learned that these were obtainable on the coast and in very considerable quantities, nothing would have been left undone to foster and extend so profitable a trade. A very few voyages would have sufficed to show them that gold was most abundant on the Gold Coast, and the bulk of their trade would then have gone there. Therefore, though no accounts of any further voyages are now extant, it is not at all unreasonable to believe that they were made.

There is, however, other evidence on the Gold Coast itself which supports this belief in an ancient trade with a maritime people. There are on the Gold Coast certain peculiar beads, locally called Aggri beads, though the

natives can give no meaning to the word. These beads are highly prized and commonly valued at their weight in gold. The natives assert that they find them in the ground, and it is noteworthy that they have only been found in the western part of the Colony, where the best-known gold-producing districts have always been ; nor have they been found at any great distance inland. Their manufacture is a lost art. Many attempts have been made to counterfeit them on account of the high value set upon them by the natives, but easily detected imitations have been the only result. They are of different colours, either plain or variegated, and some have small flowers or other patterns worked on them or an appearance of mosaic. Similar beads have been discovered in some parts of North Africa, in tombs in Thebes, and in places in India to which the Phœnicians are known to have traded. It is also known that the Phœnician city Sidon was celebrated for manufactures of this kind. They cannot have been introduced by caravans across the Sahara, or specimens would surely have been discovered farther inland, and they must therefore have been brought by maritime traders, and none more likely than the Phœnicians, who made them. The remains of bronze lamps of antique design and arranged to burn a wick floating in oil have also been found in some old disused gold workings.

About the year 117 B.C. a Greek named Eudoxus, a native of Cyzicus, sailed from Egypt to India ; and on his return voyage, meeting with bad weather, was blown out of his course and driven on to the East African coast. Here, among other things, he found the wreckage of a ship with the figure of a horse carved upon the prow. Regarding this as something of a curiosity, he carried it away with him, and subsequently exhibited it in the marketplace at Alexandria. Some pilots who saw it there identified it as the prow of one of the ships of the fishing fleet of Cadiz, which were all marked in this way and used to fish along the West African coast as far as the River Lixius.

Having found the wreckage of a ship peculiar to western

CHAP. II waters on the east coast of Africa, Eudoxus concluded that it must be possible to sail round that continent, and determined to make the attempt. Accordingly he went to Cadiz and fitted out one large and two small ships, in which he sailed down the west coast for some distance, but was then compelled to beach his vessels, because the crews, when they found themselves entering unknown seas, refused to go any farther. He persuaded them, however, to make another start, but then found he could not refloat his largest ship. At length he contrived to build another small one of her materials and saved all her cargo. Continuing the voyage, he reached a country inhabited by Negroes, which was probably Senegambia, and then a fresh mutiny broke out and he was forced to return. This failure, however, was not sufficient to extinguish his ambition. Fitting out two more small vessels, he again sailed south, but unfortunately never returned.

The wreck Eudoxus found on the east coast can hardly have been carried there by wind and tide after having been lost on its usual fishing grounds, though the possibility of this must be admitted. Nor is it known exactly how far Eudoxus went on his first voyage: some indeed believe that he sailed much farther than Senegambia, for he reported on his return that the natives spoke the same language as those on the east coast, and that before he turned back he was unable to obtain provisions. The language common to the east and west coasts at the present day is Bantu, which would not now be met with north of the Cameroons, nor is there any reason to suppose that it ever extended any higher. It is quite possible, however, that in those days, before the Arab invasion of North Africa, the Berber language may have extended right across this part of the continent. The accounts of the old Arab historians show that the Moroccan coasts were much more fertile in those days than now, and a determined man like Eudoxus should have had no difficulty in obtaining provisions until he got down among the mangrove swamps of the Niger Delta, or, if he really went

south of the Cameroons, until he had passed the Congo and reached the Kalahari Desert. CHAP. II

Though, therefore, there is no definite proof of trade or communication with the Gold Coast by the Phœnicians or any other ancient race; there are, nevertheless, a number of facts which together furnish a considerable amount of evidence in favour of such a belief.

PART II

*THE PERIOD OF EUROPEAN DISCOVERY AND
SETTLEMENT*

1364 TO 1699

CHAPTER III

THE DISCOVERY OF THE GOLD COAST BY EUROPEANS

1364 TO 1482

THE earliest European discoveries on the Gold Coast **1364-1482**
of which there are now any complete records are those **CHAP. III**
made by the Portuguese. They first reached this coast
in 1471, and in 1482 began to form Settlements, in which
they remained for a period of one hundred and sixty years.
It is by no means certain, however, that they were actually
the first European nation on the scene. The French
claim to have discovered the Gold Coast in 1346, over a
century before the arrival of the Portuguese, and to have
established and maintained a regular trade for many years.
This claim of the French is most indignantly denied by
the Portuguese and as stoutly supported by themselves.
It is true that there is a certain amount of evidence in
their favour, but it is of rather doubtful value. Con-
sequently, the truth of this French claim has not been
generally admitted. The Portuguese discoveries, on the
other hand, are thoroughly substantiated, and there is no
doubt that, whether preceded by the French or not, they
were made independently. It is to them, therefore, that
the credit of having been the European pioneers of the
Gold Coast is usually given, and their discoveries will
be dealt with first and the claims of the French considered
later.

The progress of Portuguese discovery along the western
coast of Africa was gradual and stimulated from time to
time by various successes. Many years elapsed before
the Gold Coast itself was reached, and its discovery was,
in reality, only an incident in a long sequence of events.

1364-1482 These will, therefore, be outlined in order to show what
CHAP. III were the objects for which these explorations were undertaken, and how it was that the Portuguese were encouraged to persevere for so long.

The discoveries of the Portuguese were primarily due to the enterprise and ambition of Prince Henry the Navigator. He was the fifth child and fourth son of John I of Portugal and Philippa daughter of John of Gaunt. On his mother's side, therefore, he was English and a nephew of Henry IV and great-grandson of Edward III. Until the year 1412 the Portuguese had never passed beyond Cape Non ; but in this year Prince Henry sent a small ship to explore the coast, and another was despatched a little later. Cape Non was then passed and the coast explored as far as Cape Bojador ; but when they reached this point, the Portuguese were so alarmed by the strong currents and tremendous surf they found there, that they were afraid to venture beyond it, and maintained that they had now reached the limit of practicable navigation.

In 1415 Prince Henry accompanied his father to Ceuta, in the conquest of which he greatly distinguished himself, and was created Duke of Viseo. Remaining some time in Africa, he collected all the information he could from the Moors, and it was then that he learned for the first time of the existence beyond the Sahara Desert of a rich and fertile inhabited land where both gold and ivory were obtainable. This he was told could be approached either by land or by sea. The Mahomedans at this time had several States on the Niger, and were well acquainted with the Jallof country and Timbuktu. It was the account of their trade with these regions, the very existence of which had hitherto been unsuspected, that fired the Prince with the strongest desire to reach them. But this was not the only object of the explorations to which he devoted the remainder of his life. He was anxious to discover, if possible, a southern route to India in order to obtain for Portugal a portion of the valuable trade carried on by the Arabs and their Venetian agents, which had first been

founded by Alexander and Nearchus. Prince Henry was, **1364-1482** moreover, a very pious man and Grand Master of the Order of Christ. He believed in the now abandoned dogma that no heathen could be saved, and the propagation of the Christian Faith and the discovery of the kingdom of Prester John also formed part of his schemes. This rather mysterious person was said to rule over a Christian people. He had been sought in vain in Asia, and it was now believed that his kingdom must be somewhere in Africa. At the present time this kingdom of Prester John is identified with Abyssinia, whose Kings trace their descent from the son of the Queen of Sheba by Solomon. **CHAP. III**

Prince Henry, though only twenty-one, now retired from the Court and went to live on Cape St. Vincent, where the town of Sagres was built. It was a bleak and desolate spot, where a few junipers were the only plants that could survive the continual drenchings of spray from the waves that dashed against the foot of the cliff. The view of the wide expanse of ocean constantly inspired his thoughts and encouraged him to persevere. Here he established his dockyards and collected the most skilful navigators, the best shipwrights, and the most learned scientific men of his day ; and from here he watched his vessels sail from the neighbouring port of Lagos with the cross of his Order painted on their sails, and patiently waited to catch the first glimpse of them as they returned from the unknown seas they had been sent to explore.

In 1418 Prince Henry sent two naval officers of his household, Joao Gonsalvez Zarco and Tristam vaz Teixeyra, in a small ship to try to pass Cape Bojador. Before they reached the cape a heavy gale sprang up and blew their ship out to sea. In this helpless condition, having lost sight of their familiar landmarks, they had given themselves up for lost when they suddenly saw an island ahead, under the lee of which they cast anchor. This was one of the Madeira group, which they named Porto Santo. Hitherto the Portuguese had never done more than coast along within sight of land ; but this accident had demonstrated the possibility of navigating the open sea, and when they

1364-1482 returned and reported their discovery they were sent back
CHAP. III in the same year with one Bartholomew Perestrello to
colonize the island.

Prince Henry now met with great opposition from many sections of his own countrymen, who, for reasons of their own, were averse to the further extension of these discoveries. The nobility were afraid the wealth obtained by others from these new lands might weaken their own power and dignity, and the learned men dreaded having their long-cherished theories upset by newly discovered facts. The clergy seem to have thought the expenditure of a part of the funds of the Order of Christ on the problematical conversion of heathens who had yet to be discovered was hardly justifiable, and the jealousy of the military was aroused by the sight of honours being won by a profession they had always been accustomed to look down upon. There were many ignorant and superstitious persons, too, who loudly proclaimed that it was vain presumption to attempt to discover a passage round the southern extremity of Africa, which the best and wisest of the older geographers had always taught was impossible. They declared that any Portuguese who were rash enough to pass Cape Bojador would be turned into Blacks and bear this lasting brand of their folly. These absurd predictions had such an effect on public opinion that Prince Henry found it impossible to obtain crews to man his ships; but he was not a man to be easily turned from his purpose, and the success he had already achieved in the discovery of Porto Santo made him determined to persevere. About 1430, therefore, he sent Ferdinand Lopez d'Azevedo to Pope Martin V to point out the advantages that might accrue to the Church if his discoveries were extended. He succeeded so well in this mission that the Pope granted a Bull confirming the Portuguese in the possession, not only of the islands that they had already discovered, but of any lands that might be acquired by future expeditions also. He then silenced the objectors by blessing the naval profession and granting plenary indulgence to all those who might lose their lives in these attempts. These concessions

were subsequently confirmed and extended by Popes Eugene IV, Nicholas V, and Sextus IV. **1364-1482**

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In 1433 Gilianez succeeded in doubling Cape Bojador and then returned and reported that, contrary to the general opinion, there was nothing to prevent the seas beyond that point being navigated. Accordingly, in the following year, he was sent out to continue his discoveries ; and with him, in a larger ship, went Alphonso Gonzales Baldaya, the Prince's cup-bearer. They reached a point ninety miles beyond Cape Bojador, where, on landing, they found the trail of a caravan and then returned. They gave the name Angra dos Ruyvos or Bay of Gurnets to the bay in which they had anchored, on account of the number of those fish that the seamen had caught. The next year, 1435, these same two men were sent out again and ordered to prolong their voyage until they met with some of the inhabitants of these new countries. They sailed another forty miles beyond the Angra dos Ruyvos, but saw no signs of any people. They therefore landed two of their number, Hector Homen and Diego Lopez d'Almada, with horses. Neither of these youths was yet sixteen, but they rode boldly inland to explore : each was provided with a spear and sword, but they were not allowed armour lest they should be tempted to engage the natives if they met any. It was not until late in the day, after they had ridden many miles, that they espied nineteen natives all armed with spears, who, on their approach, fled and hid themselves in a cave, from which they found it impossible to dislodge them. The two adventurers, therefore, returned to their ship for assistance, and a party was quickly organized, which set out for the cave ; but when they reached it they found that the people had already fled. In commemoration of this excursion the bay in which they had landed was named Angra dos Cavallos or the Bay of Horses. Later, they reached Punto da Gale, where they found a fishing-net, but could see no other sign of any inhabitants, and then returned to Portugal.

During this voyage Gilianez had obtained some seal

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skins, and in 1441 Antonio Gonzales was sent out to continue the exploration of the coast and get a further supply of these skins. Having shipped his cargo, this enterprising man took nine of his crew and marched inland by night. After they had gone about ten miles, they saw a man armed with two spears following a camel and easily secured him, for he was too astonished by this sudden apparition of white men to attempt to escape. On their way back to the ship with their captive, they fell in with a party of forty men and a woman, and, having separated the latter from her companions, secured her also. The next day, while they were getting ready to leave, Nuno Tristan arrived in another ship, and a second excursion was at once planned for the following night. They had not gone far when they again fell in with the natives, and after a struggle in the darkness, in which three of the Africans were killed, succeeded in taking ten more prisoners. They were taken on board, where it was found that an Arab who formed one of the crew was able to understand their language. He was accordingly put on shore with the woman to arrange for the redemption of the others. The Africans were naturally enraged by these captures and the loss of the men who had been killed in the affray over-night; and though they came down to the beach in great numbers and beckoned to the Portuguese to come on shore and treat with them, the Arab called out, warning them that if they landed they would certainly be attacked. They therefore lay off in their boats, and the people, after throwing volleys of stones at them, went away. Gonzales then returned to Portugal with his prisoners, and Nuno Tristan, having first careened his ship, continued his voyage down the coast and succeeded in reaching Cape Blanco about three hundred and sixty miles beyond Cape Bojador. But though he again found fishing-nets on the beach, he could see nothing of any inhabitants.

The prisoners taken on this expedition were well treated; and when it was found that three of them were men of some importance in their own country and willing to pay liberally for their release, it was decided to send them

back ; for the Prince believed that the accounts they would give of the good treatment they had received at the hands of the Portuguese would do much to remove the ill-feeling of the people towards his sailors and materially simplify their future labours. In 1442, therefore, Gonzales returned with the three principal Moors, and, on reaching the coast, landed the chief one. He, however, no sooner found himself free again than he forgot all his promises and disappeared as quickly as he could without paying the ransom, for which he certainly cannot be blamed. But he seems to have reported the arrival of the others ; for nine days later about a hundred of their people came to redeem them. They were given up in exchange for ten Negroes¹ from different countries, some gold dust, a few ostrich eggs and a buckskin shield. This gold dust was the first that had been seen, and the estuary in which it was obtained was named the Rio del Oro or River of Gold. It is difficult to over-estimate the effect it had in inflaming the zeal of the Portuguese for further discoveries and silencing their detractors ; for the sight of it opened up such vast possibilities of an extensive and highly profitable trade that there was no longer any fear that these explorations would be abandoned. Had Prince Henry died before this gold was obtained to prove the truth of his theories, it is doubtful if any further voyages would have been made ; for he was still generally regarded as a visionary, and it was due to his personal influence and determination alone that they had not been given up long before. In 1443 Nuno Tristan doubled Cape Blanco and reached the Island of Arguin, where he captured fourteen more natives.

These seizures of natives by Gonzales and Nuno Tristan constituted the foundation of the African Slave Trade ; for from that time forward it became customary for the captain of every vessel that passed down the West Coast to carry off a few of the people in this way.² Though it was not until the commencement of the sixteenth century

¹ They were presented by Prince Henry to Pope Martin V.

² In 1444 200 slaves were brought to Portugal, and the annual average importation soon rose to 700 or 800.

1364-1482 that this trade began to take definite shape, it was then
CHAP. III very quickly established, and eventually assumed such proportions that it over-shadowed everything else, and for many years afterwards maintained its position as one of the greatest curses ever introduced into Africa. It was a custom, however, which was not peculiar to the Portuguese ; nor did they originate it. Slavery, in one form or another, had existed from the remotest times, not only in Africa, but also among the Jews, Greeks, Phœnicians, and in fact every ancient race. During the Roman occupation of Britain, great numbers of the people were carried away into slavery to add lustre to the triumphal processions of their generals or to be done to death at their festival games.

About this time some merchants of Lagos, now fully alive to the importance of the Prince's schemes and the value of the trade that might be expected to result from his discoveries, projected a Chartered Company. The Prince granted their request, and the first East India Company was formed by Lançarot, Juan Diaz Gilianez, Estevan Alphonso and Rodriga Alvarez. In 1444 this Company, with the sanction of the Prince, sent out a fleet of six caravels under Lançarot, who reached the Island of Nar near Arguin. There he assaulted a village and captured not fewer than one hundred and fifty-five natives, afterwards taking forty more from some other islands near by. It is said that the object of the Portuguese in taking these prisoners was to obtain reliable information about their countries, but that the Prince had ordered all his captains to treat the people at all times with kindness and humanity and not to take more men than were necessary for this purpose. It is evident, however, that these moderate instructions were grossly exceeded by his officers, who had only themselves to thank for the unfortunate events that occurred a little later.

It is but natural that such high-handed proceedings should have been resented by the natives and have incensed them against the Portuguese, and, in the following year, Gonzales da Cintra was betrayed by an Arab interpreter at Arguin, and he and seven of his men murdered, while five

others only saved their lives by swimming off to the ship. 1364-1482
Prince Henry, therefore, sent three ships in 1446 under CHAP. III
Antonio Gonzales, Diego Alphonso and Gomez Perez with strict orders to use every possible means to cultivate the friendship of the people and remove their suspicions and ill-will. In this they met with little or no success ; but on their return Juan Fernandez was left behind at his own request. By living among the people for a time he hoped to gain much information about the country and to win their confidence. This intrepid man, after suffering the severest hardships and living with the people as a slave, at length gained the friendship of an aged Moor, named " Huade Meimon," who treated him with some consideration. He was rescued about eight months later by Antonio Gonzales, and several of the prisoners previously taken by the Portuguese were ransomed at the same time. This voyage was very successful, and Gonzales returned with a considerable quantity of gold dust, besides ninety Negroes obtained from various places.

In 1446 Denis Fernandez sailed past the mouth of the Senegal River, near which he captured four natives in a canoe, and reached and named Cape Verde before turning back. Many minor voyages were made during this period, and in 1447 Nuno Tristan, sailing past Cape Verde, reached the Rio Grande, which he entered and began to explore in one of his ship's boats. He took twenty-two of his crew with him ; but after they had gone some distance up the river, they were suddenly attacked by eighty natives in canoes. They had doubtless heard of the kidnapping propensities of the white men, and at once poured in a flight of poisoned arrows, killing or wounding every man. Tristan himself and two or three others were the only occupants of the boat who were still alive when she drifted down to the ship, and they too died soon after being taken on board. Only four men out of the whole ship's crew were now left to sail her home, but after experiencing the greatest difficulties they eventually succeeded in reaching Portugal.

In this same year, 1446, Alvaro Fernandez sailed forty

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CHAP. III leagues beyond the Rio Grande, when he too was wounded by the poisoned arrows of the natives, but, "being possessed of an antidote," recovered and returned in safety to Portugal, where he received one hundred gold ducats each from the Regent Dom Pedro and Prince Henry as a special mark of their gratitude. After many other voyages of no special importance, and the first two voyages of the celebrated Genoese Aloisio da Cada Mosto in 1455 and 1456, Pedro da Cintra sailed with two armed ships in 1462 and discovered and named Sierra Leone, after which he sailed on and explored the coast as far as Cape Mensurado.

Before Da Cintra's return, Prince Henry had died in 1463 in his sixty-seventh year. The death of this illustrious Prince, the founder and moving spirit of European discovery in West Africa, put a stop for a time to further explorations of an organized character. His had been undertaken as a national work, but the only voyages that were made during the next few years were those of private traders and adventurers.

Though the records of his discoveries only extend them to the neighbourhood of Sierra Leone, there is some reason to believe that some of the expeditions he sent out went much farther and even penetrated south of the Line ; but whether the absence of records is due to loss or to the fact that the explorers were wrecked and could not return to report the extent of their travels, is doubtful. The latter, however, seems to be the most probable explanation. In 1525 Garcia de Loaysa, Knight of Malta, visited the Island of San Thomé with a Spanish fleet. He found it uninhabited, but saw distinct traces of its former occupation by the Portuguese. Besides many fruits and tame cattle, he discovered an inscription carved on a tree, as was the Portuguese custom, setting forth that they had been there eighty-seven years earlier—that is, in the year 1438, twenty-five years before the death of Prince Henry, whose motto "Talent de Bien Faire" was also carved upon the tree.

In 1469 King Alphonso V farmed out the Guinea Trade to Fernando Gomez for an annual rent of five hundred

ducats (equivalent to about £138) and an undertaking that he would extend the discovery of the coast five hundred leagues farther south. Few details remain of the voyages made during this period ; but in 1471 Juan de Santerem and Pedro d'Escobar discovered the trade of Oro de la Mina, or the Gold of the Mine, somewhere in the neighbourhood of Elmina or Shama.¹ This is the first authentic record of Portuguese discovery on the Gold Coast. Fernando Gomez also opened a gold mine at Abrobi, near Komenda.² There was now a regularly established gold trade, and large quantities were imported annually from Elmina and Shama, a treaty of commerce having been concluded with the Chief of the former place. When his contract expired in 1474, Fernando Gomez was given the surname Mina by the King and granted a coat of arms argent, three Negroes' heads collared or and with rings in their noses and ears, in recognition of his discoveries.

In 1481 John II ascended the throne of Portugal, and being thoroughly conversant with the Guinea Trade and appreciating to the full the great importance of the work done and progress made by Fernando Gomez, decided not to rely on the Papal Bull alone, but to build a fort on the Gold Coast to protect the trade from the avarice of other nations and safeguard the interests of Portugal. Accordingly, a fleet of ten caravels and two transports was made ready and loaded with all the materials necessary for the erection of a fortress and church, which were to be built at the place found most convenient for protecting the gold trade. The equipment was remarkably complete. Everything was provided from the ready-dressed stones for the foundation to the tiles for the roof and provisions for six hundred men. The command of this fleet was given to Don Diego d'Azambuja, under whom were the following officers commanding caravels : Gonzales da Fonseca, Ruy d'Oliveira, Juan Rodrigues Gante, Juan Alphonso, Diego Rodrigues Inglez, Bartholomew Diaz, Pedro d'Evora and Gomez Aires. Of these, the last was an attendant on Pedro King of Arragon, but all the others were officers

¹ Marmol.

² Ellis.

1364-1482 of the King's household. The two transports were commanded by Pedro da Cintra and Fernan d'Alphonso, and a smaller vessel went with them as despatch-boat to the squadron. They had 500 officers and soldiers and a 100 masons and other workmen on board.

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This fleet sailed on the 11th of December 1481, and anchored off Elmina on the 19th of January 1482. There they found a Portuguese trader named Juan Bernardo, who had come to the coast for gold and had some knowledge of the people and their language. He was therefore taken as interpreter and sent to notify the Chief of the arrival of the expedition. He was told to arrange a meeting as early as possible, and particularly to impress upon the Chief the high rank and importance of his visitors.

Early the next morning, January 20, the party landed, carrying their arms concealed under their coats, and walked towards the spot they had chosen as most suitable for the erection of the fortress. There they hoisted the Royal Standard of Portugal on a high tree, beneath which they built an altar. Mass was then said and prayers were offered for the success of their plans, the conversion of the Africans, and the endurance of the church they were about to found. Everyone was splendidly dressed in order to make the greatest possible impression; d'Azambuja wore a gold brocaded waistcoat and a richly ornamented gold collar set with jewels, and all his companions were clothed in silks.

The Chief was now expected, so d'Azambuja seated himself on a raised chair and disposed his followers in two lines before him so that they formed an avenue up which the Elminas would have to pass. The Chief, whose name is given as Caramança—probably a corruption of Kwamin Ansa—now approached with his retinue. They wore monkey-skins or palm leaves hanging from the waist, but were otherwise naked. Their arms consisted of spears, shields, and bows and arrows, and on their heads were helmets made of skins and thickly studded with sharks' teeth. The Chief, who was preceded by his horn-blowers and drummers, wore plates and other ornaments of gold on

his arms and legs and a heavy gold chain around his neck, while his hair and beard, as well as those of his subordinate Chiefs, were ornamented with small golden bells and other trinkets. The lesser Chiefs also wore gold chains about their necks, and each one was accompanied by two attendants, one of whom carried his stool and the other his shield.

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After an interchange of salutations and compliments, d'Azambuja, through his interpreter, explained the object of his visit. He used every specious argument he could think of to convince the Chief of the advantages he and his people would derive from the friendship and local protection of so powerful a monarch as the King of Portugal ; and, while carefully concealing all anxiety and covetousness on his own side, laid special stress on the fact that the King's chief wish was to instruct the people in the Christian religion. Finally he asked Ansa's permission to establish themselves in his town and build a house, saying that though Baya the Chief of Shama and several others would think it an honour to have such a house built on their lands, yet the King had selected Elmina because he had been moved by Ansa's previous kindnesses to his people and wished to honour him alone.

This speech was listened to with great attention by the Elminas, and, when it was finished, Ansa sat silent for some minutes considering the whole subject and weighing the arguments that had been advanced by d'Azambuja in support of his request. He raised no objection to anything but the suggested formation of a Settlement, a project which he evidently viewed with suspicion and distrust. His guarded reply plainly shows that even in those early days the African Chief was as skilled a diplomatist as those of more recent times have so often proved themselves.

"I am not insensible," said he, "to the high honour which your great master the Chief of Portugal has this day conferred upon me. His friendship I have always endeavoured to merit by the strictness of my dealing with the Portuguese, and by my constant exertions to procure an immediate lading for their Vessels. But never until this

1364-1482 day did I observe such a difference in the appearance of
 CHAP. III his subjects : they have hitherto been only meanly attired,
 were easily contented with the commodities they received ;
 and so far from wishing to continue in this Country, were
 never happy until they could complete their lading, and
 return. Now I remark a strange difference. A great
 number richly dressed are anxious to be allowed to build
 houses, and to continue among us. Men of such eminence,
 conducted by a commander who from his own account
 seems to have descended from the God who made day, and
 night, can never bring themselves to endure the hardships
 of this climate ; nor would they here be able to procure
 any of the luxuries that abound in their own country.
 The passions that are common to us all will therefore
 inevitably bring on disputes ; and it is far preferable
 that both our nations should continue on the same footing
 they have hitherto done, allowing your ships to come and
 go as usual ; the desire of seeing each other occasionally
 will preserve peace between us. The Sea and Land being
 always neighbours are continually at variance, and con-
 tending who shall give way ; the Sea with great violence
 attempting to subdue the Land, and the Land with equal
 obstinacy resolving to oppose the Sea.”¹

This skilful evasion of the principal, if not the sole
 object of their mission, considerably disconcerted the
 Portuguese, and it required all the address of d’Azambuja,
 backed by presents and promises and veiled threats that if
 permission were withheld it might possibly be dispensed
 with, to induce the Chief to give a reluctant consent. His
 unwillingness was probably due in part to previous mis-
 understandings and quarrels with some of the Portuguese
 sailors, and to a belief commonly held by the Africans
 that Europeans were a people who had no land of their
 own, but were compelled to wander about the seas in ships
 until some fortunate chance enabled them to settle them-
 selves in the country of some other people. Whatever his
 real reasons may have been, there can be no doubt that
 Ansa looked forward to the continual presence of the

¹ De Barros and Faria. *Vide* Clarke, p. 324.

Portuguese with anything but enthusiasm, and had a pretty clear perception of his own interests. However, his consent once given, d'Azambuja lost no time in commencing operations, and Ansa as soon saw his misgivings justified.

The very next morning (January 21) the workmen were landed and preparations at once made for laying the foundations of the fortress. Seeing a large rock close at hand and convenient for their purpose, the Portuguese were beginning to quarry it, when they were suddenly attacked by the Elminas, who believed it to be the residence of the god of the River Benya. D'Azambuja ran towards them and managed to pacify them with presents and apologies, but not before many of his men had been wounded. This misfortune, however, was not allowed to delay the building of the fort, and the work was pushed on to such good purpose that in twenty days' time the tower had been raised to the first storey and the whole building was already sufficiently advanced to be capable of easy defence. This rapid progress had been made possible by the prepared materials that had been brought out for the tower, which only required fitting together. This is the tower which stands just beyond the draw-bridge at the main entrance to the Castle at the present time.

As soon as the building was finished, d'Azambuja sent back the fleet with a large quantity of gold, while he himself remained at Elmina with a garrison of sixty men as its first Governor, a position which he filled with credit for two years and seven months. The fort was named the Castle of San Jorge,¹ and in 1486 King John conferred upon it all the rights and privileges of a city, and an annual solemn mass was ordered to be said in its church for the repose of the soul of Prince Henry, to whose efforts the Portuguese owed their Possessions in West Africa. At the same time, the King added to his other titles that of "Lord of Guinea."

The site of the Castle was well chosen. It stands upon a rock forming the point of a peninsula, and is surrounded

¹ Saint George.

1364-1482 on two sides by the sea and on the third by a lagoon known
CHAP. III as the River Benya, which runs inland for some distance almost parallel to the sea. The Castle, therefore, can only be approached by land on its western side.

Such is the account given by the Portuguese historians of the formation of the first settlement at Elmina ; but although this is the one that is most generally accepted, it is not, as has been mentioned already, the only one, and the claim to priority of discovery which has been advanced by the French must now be considered. That the French traded to the Gold Coast shortly after the Portuguese settled at Elmina there is abundant evidence to prove, and the Portuguese themselves admit it ; but the question now at issue is whether or not they were there in the fourteenth century, long before the date of the Portuguese discoveries and even before the time of Prince Henry himself.

This claim has been advanced by Villault, Sieur de Bellefond, who made a voyage to the Gold Coast in 1666 and 1667, and by the geographer Robbe, whom Ogilby and others have copied. Their several accounts are in general agreement. Villault says that in the year 1346 certain adventurers of Dieppe, who were accustomed to make long voyages—a circumstance which he attributes to their Norman descent—sailed down the West Coast of Africa and established Settlements at various places, especially in the neighbourhood of Cape Verde, where they named a bay the Bay of France, giving the names Petit Dieppe and Cestro Paris to Rio Corso and Grand Cess respectively. He says they brought large quantities of ivory back with them, and that it was at this time that the ivory-turning and comb-making industry for which Dieppe afterwards became famous was first established. He goes on to say that the Castle of Mina (Elmina) was founded by the French in 1383 and that they held it until 1484 ; but that during the time of the Civil Wars in France, from 1380 to 1461, this trade became so disorganized that the Settlements were first neglected and ultimately abandoned.

Robbe's account is that in 1364 the merchants of Dieppe made several voyages to Cape Verde and Cestro Paris, and in 1382 combined with the merchants of Rouen to send three ships on a voyage of discovery beyond these places. One of these, *La Vierge*, arrived at Komenda on the Gold Coast, and afterwards sailed on to Elmina. He agrees with Villault that it was in the following year, 1383, that a fort or factory was built at this place and garrisoned by ten or twelve men. The trade prospered, and in 1387 a chapel was also built. This trade was carried on until 1413, when it was finally abandoned owing to the Civil Wars in France.

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Such are the statements of these two authors, who unfortunately give very little information as to the grounds upon which they base their assertions. They say, however, that there still existed in Elmina Castle a battery—the principal battery towards the sea—known as the Bastion de France, and that a stone in it bore an inscription, of which all that was legible was “Anno 13—.”¹ This they allege referred to the date 1383 when the place was built by the French. As further evidence in support of their claim, they mention the existence of places with French names and some knowledge of the language by the natives, who they say used a few words derived from it. The French are further said to have had Settlements at Axim, Cape Coast, Kormantin, Komenda, Accra and Takoradi.

Barbot, who was Agent-General of the French African Company in 1682, in discussing this question, decides against the French claim on the following grounds. “If this account be true, it is strange that no mention is made of it by other French historians, several of whom I have examin'd, and particularly de Serres and Mezeray. Such considerable undertakings, and so rich a trade, seemed to deserve a place in history. . . . The silence of the French historians in [*sic*] this point, gives us just cause to suspect the validity of this author's assertions; nor do I find in the history of Portugal, which is so full of the Portuguese

¹ Or MCCC—.

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discoveries of Nigritia and Guinea, the least mention of their having heard of any Frenchmen that had founded the Castle of Mina, in 1383 ; or that Azembuja when he came to Mina in 1484 [*sic*], and begun there his first entrenchment, ever saw or heard of any such castle built by the French an hundred years before.”¹

These reasons seem singularly insufficient for thus summarily dismissing all claims of the French ; for according to the accounts of Villault and Robbe, those voyages and settlements were made by private merchants, and not, as in the case of the Portuguese, as a national work. It seems most unreasonable to suppose that these independent traders, having at great trouble and danger to themselves discovered and founded a rich and profitable trade in a hitherto unknown country, would have been anxious, or even likely, to have advertised many particulars ; but far more probable that they would have been content with congratulating themselves on their good fortune and have endeavoured by every means in their power to keep it to themselves. A manufacturer at the present day who discovers a new and lucrative process does not immediately make a present of it to all his rivals, but, on the contrary, takes every precaution to keep it secret. There are comparatively simple means of effecting this now, but in former times silence was the only safeguard, even as it is still the best. The absence of any mention of this trade by the French historians is not, therefore, very remarkable.

The fact that no French fort is mentioned by any Portuguese historian is equally inconclusive. These writers were dependent for their information on those who went to the Coast with Diego d'Azambuja's expedition ; and if they, going out to found a Settlement, suddenly discovered the existence of a fort built by another European nation long before the date of those discoveries of their own race in which they took such pride, it would be only in accordance with human nature, perhaps, if they decided to say nothing about it, but to keep all the credit

¹ Barbot, p. 10.

for themselves, rather than nullify the glory of all those expeditions that had cost them so much.

As against this possibility, it may be argued that the Portuguese would never have permitted a name or inscription pointing to such a previous occupation to have remained in existence during all the time they were in undisputed possession. But though this seems to be a sound argument, it is nevertheless a well-known fact that such careless mistakes are very frequently made, and the name Bastion de France might have been perpetuated by the Elminas themselves and not by the Portuguese at all. The inscription also amounted to so little, that it might easily have been overlooked or its defacement deferred until in the end it was forgotten; or, again, it may actually have been defaced but the work badly done.

The existence on the coast of places bearing French names at the time of Villault's voyage is, however, of very little importance. Such names were probably given by the Rouen Company, which had Settlements on the Grain Coast in 1616, only fifty years before he wrote, but were afterwards abandoned. On the other hand, in favour of this claim, Villault distinctly states that he himself saw the ruins of the French fort at Takoradi,¹ upon which the Swedes had subsequently erected a fort which, in turn, was then in ruins; and saw at Elmina "a fair Church still in Being, adorned with the Monuments and Arms"² of France. He was also shown at Komenda the remains of the old French factory at the northern end of the town, and received a message from the Chief informing him that he had refused a flag that had been sent him by the Dutch General Willemburg at Elmina, on the ground that his country had always belonged to the French and that no other nation would be welcomed in it. The Portuguese and Dutch writers also complain of the damage done by

¹ These may, of course, have been the ruins of Fort Witsen, which was blown up by De Ruyter in 1665, but it is none the less a fact that the Chief and people of Takoradi still point to a hill at some distance from that on which are the remains of Fort Witsen as the site of a French fort that stood there many years ago.

² Astley, vol. ii, p. 375.

1364-1482 the French to their trade, and the preference the people showed for them.

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The chief interest in this dispute, however, centres around the inscription in the Bastion de France. As has already been remarked, and as might reasonably be expected, the French make mention of these things, while the Portuguese, on the other hand, are silent on the subject. They were both interested parties ; and Villault, as has been stated, did not write until 1666 and does not quote any authorities for his assertions. It is interesting, therefore, to note what a third party, writing at a not much later date, has to say on the subject. Dapper, a Dutchman, published a description of this Coast in 1686, less than fifty years after the expulsion of the Portuguese from Elmina, of which he gives one of the best accounts. He says : " Some years ago the Dutch restored a battery which is called the French Battery, because, according to the general opinion of the natives of the place, the French were masters of it before the Portuguese. There is engraved on a stone the first two figures of the number 1300, but it is impossible to decipher the two others. It had another inscription also carved on a stone between two pillars in a small room inside the fort, but it was all obliterated." ¹ He goes on to say that there was yet another inscription over the door of the warehouse in the Castle, setting forth that it was built in 1484 under John II of Portugal, and that the figures of this date were so little worn that " they might only have been carved nine or ten years," and consequently the others must be assumed to be of great age. Farther on he describes how, after the expulsion of the Portuguese, the Dutch restored " the ruined battery which held the outworks of the Castle, and is said to defend the shore battery and river," ² and that as the soldiers in this battery could not pass into the Castle, except by " two flights of close on forty steps, the soldiers' lodgings were lowered by about 5 ft. and a long gallery constructed all round from the sea to the new bastion." ³

¹ Dapper, p. 280.

² *Ibid.*, p. 281.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 283.

Now if the figures in an inscription over the door of a warehouse, where they would be exposed to the inclemency of the weather, only appeared to be about ten years old after the lapse of a couple of centuries, it is absolutely inconceivable, even after allowing for possible differences in the quality of the stone, that another inscription in a sheltered position in a room inside the fort should have been so defaced by time alone as to have become quite illegible after a period of only one hundred years longer. Consequently, great support is lent by this statement to the theory that there really was a French fort in existence at Elmina when the Portuguese arrived there under d'Azambuja, and that, in order to conceal this evidence of priority, they defaced the inscriptions, but did not perform this act of vandalism and deceit sufficiently thoroughly to prevent a part of the date of one of them being still decipherable ; and further, that the ruins of this old building were subsequently restored and incorporated with the Castle by the Dutch.

Labat, writing in 1728, alleges that there existed among the archives of Dieppe, a Deed of Association between the merchants of Dieppe and those of Rouen to carry on the trade to West Africa. This deed was dated 1365, but was destroyed in the fire which consumed the Town Hall in 1694, and consequently could not be produced in evidence.

Such is the evidence now available on this disputed point, which it must be admitted is somewhat inconclusive and meagre. But though it may be impossible at this date to decide with certainty whether the French had established themselves in Elmina before the arrival of the Portuguese or not, it is equally out of the question altogether to ignore the claims of the former nation. The account of the formation of the Portuguese Settlement has therefore been given first, merely because there is no doubt that it occurred and because it is the one of which we now possess the fullest particulars, and not because the French account is considered apocryphal or in any way deserving of ready dismissal.

CHAPTER IV

EARLY ENGLISH VOYAGES TO THE GOLD COAST

1482 TO 1592

1482-1592 CHAP. IV SOON after the Portuguese had formed their Settlement at Elmina, the King sent to Pope Sextus IV and obtained a confirmation of the Bulls that had been granted to Prince Henry. This Pope added an injunction strictly forbidding any Christian nation to disturb the Portuguese in the possession of the territory that he had bestowed upon them, and even decreed that if they should discover any fresh countries within the limits he had assigned to the Portuguese, these too should belong to them. At this time the Pope's right to dispose of kingdoms was universally acknowledged, and his mandates were considered binding upon all European nations ; nevertheless, it appears that their violation was, on at least one occasion, seriously contemplated. In 1481 John II sent Ruy de Sousa as his ambassador to the English Court. He was accompanied by his surgeon and secretary, Joan d'Eluas and Fernam de Pina, and had orders to " confirm the ancient leagues with England " and to inform Edward IV of the King of Portugal's title to Guinea. He was to ask him to cause this to be published throughout his kingdom, so that none of his subjects might go there, and more particularly to request him to prohibit the sailing of two Englishmen named John Tintam and William Fabian, who were even then fitting out a fleet under the instructions of the Spanish Duke of Medina Sidonia. With all these requests Edward complied.

John, however, was not entirely satisfied with these

safeguards, and feared that if the great riches of the country became known, the greed of gain might be more than sufficient to counteract fear of the Pope's commands. He therefore spared no pains to keep the full extent of the Portuguese discoveries secret. He spread reports of the great difficulties to be encountered in making a voyage to Guinea, and alleged that each quarter of the moon produced a terrible storm, that the people were cannibals, that the shores were hedged around with dangerous rocks, and that such a voyage was, in fact, only possible at all in a ship of special construction which had been invented by the Portuguese.

Hence it is that very little is known of the history of the Gold Coast during the earlier years of the Portuguese occupation, and such knowledge as we have of the latter part of this period is mainly derived from the accounts of different voyagers who sailed there after the Pope's Bull had come to be disregarded. It is known, however, that about the year 1500 John II formed a Guinea Company, granting it a monopoly of the trade to the Coast for an annual payment of a "hundred pieces of gold," and making it a capital offence for any of his subjects to trade there without its licence. This Company for a time made very great profits and set up new stations at Axim, Accra and Shama, and a little later at Christiansborg and probably at Cape Coast also. According to all accounts, the Portuguese treated the people very badly, though it would be unjust to place implicit trust in everything that is said of them by other nations, who were doing their utmost to deprive them of their trade and oust them from their Possessions. It is certain, however, that they had frequent trouble with the people of different places, and had very little power outside the range of the guns of their forts, and that they often treated not only the natives, but also any Europeans who fell into their hands, with the utmost barbarity.

The Gold Coast at this time was held to extend from the Rio de Sweiro da Costa (River Tano) on the west, to Ningo on the east. It was split up into a number of

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petty kingdoms and commonwealths lying along the sea-board, none of which extended any great distance inland. Commencing on the west, the country between the Rivers Tano and Manco was known as Adouir and the kingdom of Ankober lay between this and the Rio Cobre (River Ankobra). Next came Atsyn (or Axim), which was bounded on the east at Akoda (Akwida) by the western frontier of Ante.¹ Ante extended from this point to about a mile and a half east of Zakonde (Sekondi). Between this place and the Rio San Juan (River Pra) were two more kingdoms, Adom or Little Inkassan and Jabi; but on crossing the river the kingdom of Commani, Commendo or Guaffo was entered. This stretched as far as the River Benya or Salt River at Elmina. The present coast town Komenda was called Little Commany or "Ekki-Tokki," and it and the headland near it were known to the Portuguese as Aldea de Terres. It is still called Ekiteki by the natives. The capital Eguafo, which was then a large town said to have contained about four hundred houses, was distinguished as Commany Grande or Great Commendo. Fetu lay between the Benya and Queen Anne's Point, and Saboe between there and the Iron Hills. These last three seem to have been subdivisions of an earlier larger state; for Barbot says the kingdoms of Commendo, Fetu and Saboe formerly constituted one kingdom called "Adossensys."² It is possible that the split may have occurred during the early years of the Portuguese occupation. Fantyn (Fanti) lay between the Iron Hills and somewhere near where Saltpond now stands. From here to the Monte de Diable (Devil's Mount at Winneba³) was Akron and from there to Beraku, Aguna. The country lying between this and Ningo constituted the kingdom of Accra. In the majority of these little States the towns on the sea-board were mere villages, the inhabitants of which were employed in fishing and making salt to supply the larger inland towns. The capitals of their Kings lay at some distance from the coast.

¹ Ahanta.² Barbot, p. 154.³ So called because it was believed to be the residence of the god Bobowisi.

When the Portuguese first settled in Elmina, the town was divided into two parts under separate kingdoms, one owing allegiance to the King of Eguafu and the other to that of Fetu.¹ The Portuguese, however, encouraged them to assert their independence, and, now that they had the Castle to protect them, they established themselves as a separate republic. There were three Town Companies in Elmina at this time, and their Chiefs ruled the town under the direction of the Portuguese Governor. They had to submit their decisions and resolutions for his sanction, and his right to approve or reject them was jealously guarded and went far to maintain the local authority of the Portuguese. The people were also assisted when necessary to avenge any wrongs inflicted on them by the neighbouring tribes, and were thus kept trained to war and made formidable to their enemies. But though the Portuguese found it to their advantage to encourage and humour the Elminas, they treated the people elsewhere with very scant consideration.

When the Guinea Company was first formed, the King caused the Castle to be further fortified and well provisioned, and reserved to himself the right of appointing the Governor and other principal officers. These appointments were made every three years, and were usually given to officers who had lost a limb or in some other way become unfitted for further active service while fighting in the King's wars against the Moors of Fez. The chief officials besides the Governor, were the Padre or Chaplain, the Viedor or Chief Factor, the King's Procurador or Judge and the Officer Commanding the Garrison. These and the Company's chief clerk had quarters in the Castle, but the soldiers, barber-surgeon and others lived in the town beneath its walls and only went there each day to do their work. The garrison was composed of criminals who had been banished there for life, and with such a rabble it is not surprising that discipline is said to have been very poorly maintained. Only the most negligent guard was kept, except when there were ships in the roads, when the

¹ Efutu.

1482-1592 sentries in helm and breastplate and armed with heavy
CHAP. IV halberds might have been seen pacing up and down the
ramparts. Two fleets of four or five ships each used to
arrive at Elmina in April and September every year,
bringing merchandize and supplies for the garrison from
Portugal. Elmina Castle, on account both of its position
and design, was a fortress of no mean importance. The
Portuguese had built two batteries on the side towards the
sea and mounted them with six guns each. On the land
side there was another six-gun battery, but towards the
north-east, facing the River Benya and a hill beyond it,
it was only defended by two small pieces of ordnance.
Towards the sea it was strengthened by the lower bastion
known as the Bastion de France, so the walls on this side
were of no great height ; but those to landward were very
lofty. The Castle was surrounded by a deep ditch ; but it
was only on the side towards the sea that it contained any
water. Here, however, it was deep enough to admit small
boats. There were two gates, one on the east and the
other on the west. The latter, which was the main
entrance, was furnished with a draw-bridge, and over it,
in d'Azambuja's original stone tower, were the Governor's
quarters. The other and lesser gate was next the Custom
House, and was only used for passing goods in and out
of the Castle. Some time before 1555 the Portuguese
built a little chapel on the hill over-looking the Castle from
the other side of the River Benya and dedicated it to St.
Jago. The hill itself still bears the name. A little later,
between 1555 and 1588, a small watch-tower was also
erected there, and a stone wall with a gate in it and de-
fended by a deep ditch and several guns was built across
the neck of the peninsula on which the Castle stands,
extending from the sea to the River Benya.

The first fort erected by the Portuguese at Axim¹
was built on a little point on the shore, but they were so
continually harassed by the natives that they were com-
pelled to abandon it. In 1515, however, they built a
second but far stronger fort on a small but high rock in

¹ Called " Achombene " in some of the older books.

the sea, which formed the rounded head of a peninsula and was only open to attack on the land side, where it could easily be defended. This side was strengthened with breastworks, a ditch 8 ft. deep and a draw-bridge, the approach to which was covered by several guns. There was also a spur capable of containing twenty men, with steps cut in the rock to connect it with the main building. This fort was named San Antonio. Though small and triangular in shape on account of the limited space afforded by the rock upon which it was built, it was, nevertheless, very strong, and had two good batteries towards the sea in addition to the land defences already described. It mounted several large guns besides smaller pieces.

The post at Shama was only built to supply the Castle at Elmina with provisions and firewood. Little if any trade was carried on there, and the place was afterwards neglected and fell into decay. In 1554 the Portuguese had a dispute with the Shamas over a man they had stolen, and drove them out of the town, fully half of which they demolished with their guns.

The fort at Accra was built much against the wish of the people, who dreaded the tyranny of the Portuguese and were anxious to keep them out of their country. They therefore took steps to remove them at the first opportunity. In 1578, some traders having arrived from the interior, a number of the Accras went to the fort, and having gained admission under a pretence of coming to trade, fell upon and murdered the garrison and razed the building to the ground. They subsequently invited the French to settle there, which they did, but were soon afterwards forced to abandon the place owing to the persistent hostility of the Portuguese.

Until the time of the Reformation, the Papal Bull had insured a monopoly of the Guinea Trade to the Portuguese ; but the change in religion had no sooner invalidated the Pope's authority in the eyes of other nations, than they began to compete with them. According to the accounts that are still in existence, the English were the first to undertake trading voyages to Guinea ; they were quickly

1482-1592 followed by the French however, and very soon afterwards
CHAP. IV by the Dutch also. These intrusions naturally aroused the bitterest enmity of the Portuguese, who left no stone unturned to drive the new-comers off the Coast. It is from the accounts left of these early voyages, and principally from those of Towrson, that most of our knowledge of what happened on the Gold Coast at this period is derived. They were semi-piratical adventures in which ships were sent out by small syndicates of merchants; and the captains divided their time between a legitimate barter of goods for gold and ivory or slaves and attacks upon one another.

The first of these English voyages was made by Captain Thomas Windham and Antonio Anes Pinteado, who sailed in two ships, the *Primrose* and *Lyon*, and a pinnace, the *Moon*, with total crews of 140 men. This Pinteado was a Portuguese, a native of the Port of Portugal (Oporto), who, on account of his skill in navigation, had formerly been a gentleman in the King's household and very popular, but afterwards fell out of favour and came to England, resolved to bring the English on the scene to avenge his wrongs. He is described as having been a very able and prudent navigator and an expert pilot, and it is on record that he had previously been entrusted by the King of Portugal with the "care of the Coasts of Brazil and Guinea against the insults of the French." From this it appears that, though there are no accounts of such voyages now extant, the French had made attempts to trade on the Coast prior to this voyage; and if it is true that they had a prior claim to it, it may very well be that they did make efforts to re-establish themselves there after the Civil Wars, to which their former retirement is attributed. Windham, on the other hand, seems to have been a very ill-natured, quarrelsome and obstinate man, and to have taken great offence at the appointment of this Portuguese captain as his colleague.

They sailed from Portsmouth on the 12th of August 1553, Windham having first given a sample of his disposition by turning a relative of one of the principal merchants

out of his ship. On reaching the Gold Coast they carefully avoided Elmina, but traded along the shore both to east and west of it and succeeded in obtaining 150 pounds weight of gold. There was no lack of gold here, and they might easily have bartered the whole of their cargo for it, a course which Pinteado advised. Windham, however, who had commenced to quarrel openly with Pinteado soon after leaving Madeira, insisted upon going on to Benin for Guinea-pepper,¹ and, when his fellow captain ventured to doubt the wisdom of this course owing to the lateness of the season, openly reviled and cursed him before the crew, saying, "This whore son Jew hath promised to bring us to such Places as are not to be found, or he cannot bring us to; But if he do not, I will cut off his Ears and nail them to the Mast."² They sailed on, therefore, to the Benin River. Pinteado and some of the crew then ascended it for some distance in the pinnace and saw the King, who treated them very well and sent out ordering his people to bring in large quantities of pepper. Windham, in the meantime, was becoming alarmed at the high rate of mortality among his crews and sent for them to return, to which they replied that they now had large quantities of pepper and daily expected more. They therefore begged him to wait a little longer. This so enraged Windham that he seems to have lost all control over himself. He broke up Pinteado's cabin, destroying his chests, instruments and other possessions, and then sent him word that if he and his party failed to come back at once he would sail without them. Pinteado then hurried down and tried to make him listen to reason; but Windham himself now died, and several of the officers and crew after cursing Pinteado for having brought them to so deadly a place and even threatening his life, insisted on leaving the Coast at once. It was in vain that Pinteado begged them to wait for those who were still up the river or to leave him one of the ships' boats and a sail to bring them home: nothing would content them but that they must start at once and he with them. He therefore wrote

¹ Aframomum; much valued as a spice at this time.

² Astley, vol. i, p. 142.

1482-1592 to the men he had left, promising to come back later and
CHAP. IV fetch them, and was then forced on board and grossly ill-
treated, being put with the cabin-boys and half starved.
He died broken-hearted a few days later. The crews were
now so reduced that they had to sink one of their ships
for want of hands to sail her, and on their arrival in Eng-
land there were only forty men left alive of the 140 who
had set out. Nevertheless, the great quantity of gold
they had got in exchange for only a part of their cargo
soon encouraged others to try their fortunes on a Guinea
voyage.

One of the first of these was Captain John Lok, who
sailed from the Thames on the 11th of October 1554 with
three ships, the *John Evangelist* and *Trinity* of 140 tons
each and the *Bartholomew* of 90 tons. He also took two
pinnaces, but lost one of them in a gale before he had
cleared the Channel. Passing Fort St. Anthony at Axim
(which Lok calls Arra Castle), he reached Shama on the
12th of January 1555. Here he says the natives fired on
them with their ordnance, "whereof they have only two or
three pieces." This was a year after the Portuguese had
had their dispute with the Shamas and destroyed most
of the town, so that they may have already abandoned
their lodge, as these smaller fortified houses at out-stations
were called. In this case the Shamas may have been
making use of the guns they had left there, but it is far
more likely that it was the Portuguese themselves who
were firing. Sailing on, they reached Cape Korea (called
Cabo Corso by the Portuguese and now anglicized to Cape
Coast). The Chief of this place was called Don John by
the Portuguese; hence these early writers often refer to it
as Don John's Town. The people here were very friendly,
and the English found a ready market for nearly all their
cloth. In the meantime, the *Trinity* had been trading
along the coast farther east, but the other ships now joined
her and they then traded in company as far as Beraku.
While the *Trinity* was at Kormantin, the Chief had come
on board and invited the English to build a fort there,
promising to give them land if they would do so. On the

13th of February they turned homewards, and two or three days before reaching Cabo de Tres Puntas (Cape Three Points) sent the pinnace to trade along the shore. This time they seem to have obtained a quantity of gold at Shama, where they had been fired on on the outward voyage, so that if the Portuguese were there then they must have left it now. Possibly, as no trade was done there, no permanent garrison was maintained, but the place was only visited from time to time. The return voyage to England occupied not less than twenty weeks. They lost twenty-four men in all, most of whom died after they reached the colder latitudes and especially after passing the Azores ; but they brought back over 400 pounds weight of gold, 36 butts of Guinea-grains and about 250 elephants' tusks, some of which measured as much as nine spans along the curve, were as thick as a man's thigh and weighed 90 pounds apiece. The elephant seems to have caused them the greatest astonishment, and they brought back a skull as a curiosity.

The natives of the Gold Coast at this time are described by Lok as follows : " Their Princes and Noblemen pounce and raise their Skins in divers Figures, like flowered Damask. And although they go in a Manner all naked, yet many of them, especially their Women, are, as it were, laden with Collars, Bracelets, Hoops and Chains, either of Gold, Copper or Ivory. . . . Some wear one on each Arm and Leg, wherewith they are often so gauled, as to become in a Manner lame ; yet they will by no Means leave them off. Some wear also on their Legs, great Shackles of bright Copper ; which they think to be no less comely. They likewise make use of Collars, Bracelets, Garlands and Girdles of certain blue Stones like Beads.¹ Some of their Women wear on their bare Arms, certain Fore-sleeves, made of Plates of beaten Gold ; and on their Fingers, Rings of Gold Wire, with a Knot or Wreath, like that which Children make in Rush Rings. Among other Things of Gold, which the English had in Exchange, were certain Chains and Collars and Chains for Dogs. They

¹ Evidently " agгри " beads.

1482-1592 are very wary in bargaining, and will not lose the least Spark of Gold. They have Weights and Measures, and are very circumspect in them. Whoever would deal with them must behave civilly, for they will not traffick if they be ill used."¹

CHAP. IV

In 1555 Captain William Towrson made the first of his three voyages to the Gold Coast. This, as in the case of the preceding ones, was a trading venture; and two vessels, the *Hart*, John Ralph master, and the *Hind*, William Carter master, were engaged in it. Their cargo consisted principally of linen cloth and small basins. They left Newport in the Isle of Wight on the 30th of September 1555, and after trading for pepper and ivory higher up the Coast, eventually reached Cape Three Points on the 3rd of January 1556, having passed Fort St. Anthony during the night. They found some difficulty at first in getting the people to trade with them, for they were all afraid of being punished by the Portuguese, who, now that they found their trade declining, dealt severely with all those whom they caught buying from other nations, confiscating the goods and fining or enslaving the purchasers. At length, however, they anchored off a town which Towrson calls St. John's Town. This, from the description he gives of it, must have been Shama, the name being given it because it stood at the mouth of the Rio San Juan, as the Portuguese called the Pra. Here they traded very profitably. The people gave the Portuguese a bad name. They said they used to catch the natives whenever they could and keep them in irons as slaves in the Castle at Elmina, and would certainly hang any English or French whom they caught trading on the Coast. Towrson was also told that, instead of the four or five ships every six months that formerly brought supplies to Elmina, only one ship and a small caravel now came once a year. This in itself is sufficient evidence of the disastrous effect that competition and the counter-attraction of their newly acquired commerce with the East Indies had had on the Portuguese trade.

¹ Astley, vol. i, p. 148.

These people wore cloth manufactured from the bark of trees, probably palms, and used cords and fishing-lines of the same material. Some wore caps of this cloth, and others helmets made of skins, either basket-shaped or like a wide purse. They understood the working of iron, and made spears, fish-hooks, two-edged daggers and other articles of it. Some of these latter weapons were very sharp and curved like a scimitar. Their other arms consisted of spears and bows and arrows, and they carried shields made of bark.

Having been told at Shama that Don John the Chief of Cape Coast was then at war with the Portuguese, they sailed down and anchored off his town. Cape Coast at this time consisted of only some twenty houses, which were enclosed by a rush fence about 5 ft. high. The Fantis call this place Gwa or Ogwa, and a local tradition says that it was founded by an Efutu hunter of that name, who came down to the coast and first saw the sea from the hill on which the Wesleyan Chapel now stands. No boats coming off to them, they landed and were told that Don John had gone to the bush, but was expected back that night. Landing again the next day, they found he had not yet returned, but was expected hourly. Some men, however, had arrived in the meantime from Deviso, the town on Akwon Point, so called from its Chief having been named John de Viso by the Portuguese. They had brought some gold to show Towrson, and asked him to come down there and trade. He therefore went down in the *Hind*, and spent the next two days trading with them. This trade was carried on from the ship's boats, which lay off the shore, the people coming out through the surf in their canoes; but, finding the natives kept pressing them to land, they suspected treachery and went back to the ship, whence they discovered thirty men on the hill with a flag, whom they took to be Portuguese. Towrson, therefore, went down in his boat to join the *Hart* off Cape Coast; but before he could reach her she was seen to fire two guns and her boats came hurrying off from the shore. Hastening on board, he learned that some of his

1482-1592 men had been on shore negotiating with Don John and his
CHAP. IV sons to open trade, when a party of Portuguese suddenly
came down from the hill and fired on them as they were
making off in their boats. The people had tried to warn
them of their danger, but they had not understood what
they said and were taken completely by surprise.

Guns were at once put into the boats, which were
well manned and pulled towards the shore. The surf
was too bad for them to land ; so they lay off the beach
and opened fire on the Portuguese, who had now taken up
a position on the rocks. The fire was returned, but no
one seems to have been hurt ; and, as the Portuguese were
seen to be still in the town next morning, they went down
to rejoin the *Hind* off Deviso. Here they found the
Portuguese had punished the people for trading with them
by burning their town, and only six houses were left stand-
ing. They therefore went farther along the coast until
they came to a place which, from the description given of
it, must have been Kormantin.

The people here seemed afraid to trade ; but in the
evening the Chief came down to the beach and Towrson
sent him a present. Early the next morning they landed
and rigged up a tent with their oars and sail while waiting
for the people to come down. After a time the Chief
arrived ; but though he appeared friendly enough, he was
in reality betraying them into the hands of the Portuguese
and trying to distract their attention from a crowd of his
people who were standing in the opening of a narrow path
and acting as a screen for the enemy while they got their
gun into position. With this they suddenly opened fire ;
and before Towrson and his men could get the oars and
sail into their boat and launch her, they had reloaded and
fired a second shot. Fortunately, however, neither of
them did any harm, and having now got their boat into
the water, the English sprang into her and pulled off to
their ship as fast as they could, while the Portuguese fired
two more shots at them and the Kormantins also ran out
along the rocks and poured in a volley or two.

The cause of this treacherous attack by the Korman-

tins was that the year before, when Lok was on the Coast, Robert Gainsh, the master of the *John Evangelist*, had basely seized the Chief's son and three other men who had come on board his ship to trade, stealing the gold they had brought with them and carrying them off to England. This disgraceful act had had the natural effect of turning the Kormantins against the English and making them friendly with the Portuguese, whom they had formerly hated. It was probably the cause of the unwillingness to trade that was shown by the people of more than one place during this voyage; for the fact that these men had been kidnapped seems to have been well-known all along the Coast, and a man had asked Towrson, when he was at Shama, what had become of them, and had been told that they were safe and well in England and would return as soon as they had learned enough of the language to be of use to the English in their trade. Had Gainsh himself suffered for his treachery, he would have had only himself to thank for it; but, as it was, the vengeance of the people fell on Towrson, who seems to have been a most honourable man in his dealings with the natives, who afterwards became very fond of him, so that his bad fortune was quite unmerited. Nor were these his only troubles; for a Portuguese brigantine followed him wherever he went to warn the people against trading with him, but was herself too weak to risk an attack on his ships. In spite of all these difficulties, however, he managed to get a great quantity of gold before returning to England.

A year later, in 1556, Towrson set out on his second voyage with three ships—the *Tyger* of 120 tons, the *Hart* of 60 and a 16-ton pinnace, commanded by himself, John Skire and John Davis. His experiences during his last voyage, however, had convinced him that he would have very little need to fear the Portuguese if he could but secure the good-will of the natives. Before leaving Plymouth, therefore, he arranged to take back the men whom Gainsh had kidnapped in 1554. They sailed on the 15th of November and had got as far as the Cess River

1482-1592 when they sighted three other ships. Thinking they might be Portuguese, they at once cleared for action; but on coming up with them, they found that the strangers were Frenchmen. On learning each other's nationality, the Frenchmen enquired what Portuguese the English had seen and were told none but fishermen: the French, however, reported that several Portuguese ships had recently been sent out to Elmina to protect the trade and that they themselves had taken and burned another of 200 tons only a short time ago, saving only her captain, one or two Negroes and a few of the crew; but they had all been so severely burned that they had put them ashore at the Cess River.

The French officers came on board Towrson's ship and proposed that the two fleets should continue their voyage in company. Towrson and his officers carefully weighed the advantages and disadvantages of this arrangement, and, next day, dined on board the French flag-ship and agreed that "to whatever Place they came, they should be of one Mind, and not hurt each other's Market. To which End some of their Boats should settle the Price for all, and then one Boat make Sale for each Ship."¹

Having doubled Cape Three Points, they arrived on the 15th of January 1557 at a town standing on the shore of a bay. This, which they call Bulle, was probably Butri or perhaps Dixcove. The inhabitants were very pleased to see the Kormantins they had now brought back with them, and told them that there had been more than one fight recently between the Portuguese guard-ships and some other French vessels that were down the coast. From here they went to Hanta, which, from the sailing distances given, may have been Sekondi or Takoradi, where they heard that there were five ships and a pinnace then at Elmina. The Kormantins they had brought back with them were well known here, and they were consequently very well received. On the 17th they anchored off Shama, and, putting guns in their boats, landed with drums beating and trumpets sounding, fully

¹ Astley, vol. i, p. 163.

expecting to encounter some of the Portuguese. In this, however, they were agreeably disappointed and were able to do a good trade in peace. They promised the Chief protection from the Portuguese, and fired their guns and shot with their long-bows in order to give him some idea of their power, which greatly astonished and impressed him. All this time they had been keeping a sharp look out for the Portuguese and always went ashore prepared for battle and expecting to be attacked ; but though they heard some shots in the forest near by, which must have been fired by the Portuguese to frighten the Shamas and deter them from trading, they were evidently not strong enough to risk an engagement, and never showed themselves. Towrson, therefore, lay at anchor here for some time, sending his boats every day to trade at the different villages along the beach.

About a week had been spent in this way when, on the 23rd, the Shamas warned them that the Portuguese ships had left Elmina and were coming down to attack them. The English and French thereupon fired their guns and sounded their trumpets, while the Shamas implored them to show the Portuguese no mercy. Two days later, five Portuguese ships were sighted coming towards them, and the boats were at once recalled, but when night closed in the enemy were still a long way off, and in the morning they were seen at anchor. White scarves were then served out to all the English crews so that the French might distinguish them in case of boarding, and that night they anchored just out of range of the enemy. Next morning both fleets weighed anchor at about seven o'clock and the fight commenced. The Portuguese seem to have out-manœuvred the ships of the Anglo-French fleet, besides having the faster vessels and the better ordnance. They sailed past in succession and riddled the French flag-ship with their broadsides and carried away her main-mast, "neither was the *Tyger*" able to make a good shot at any of them, because "she was so weak in the Side that she lay all her Guns under Water."¹ The *Tyger* and the

¹ Astley, vol. i, p. 165.

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Frenchman tried to run alongside and board some of the enemy's ships, but they were too fast for them and sailed too close to the wind, so that they fell away to leeward and were left behind. The other French ships would not close, and the *Hart* lay far astern. The *Tyger*, therefore, seeing the French flag-ship was disabled, crowded on all her canvas and gave chase. Having followed the enemy out to sea for two hours, they suddenly put about and fired on her as they passed. All the other French and English ships had now sailed away to sea, but Towrson still held bravely on in pursuit of the Portuguese, in order to prevent them from boarding and capturing the disabled Frenchman. As they passed the latter, they each poured in a broadside, but, the *Tyger* being still close astern, they dared not stop to board her and seemed afraid to separate. After they had passed the Frenchman, she too lay as close as she could to the wind and followed the rest of the allied fleet out to sea. The *Tyger* was thus left in the lurch, but Towrson handled her so well that though the Portuguese tacked over and over again, he always contrived to keep to weather of them, so that it was useless for them to fire on her. These tactics were maintained until it was so dark that in the end she lost them.

Next day Towrson came up with the other English and French ships, except the French vice-admiral's ship *Leuriere*, which had fled clear away, and upbraided them with having deserted him. Most of them, however, were in a sorry plight, having lost many of their men and sustained other serious damage. The pinnace indeed had been so badly knocked about that they had to take off her crew and set her on fire. Ten days later, when they had resumed their trade, one of the Kormantins whom they had brought out with them came in a canoe, having followed them for thirty leagues, and told them that after the battle, which he had watched from the shore, the Portuguese had put into the Pra, but the Chief of Shama had refused to allow them to harbour there. Two men had been killed on one of their ships by a shot from one of the *Tyger's* guns.

They now seem to have returned to the Ivory Coast, where they found trade very bad for a time, the people at some places wanting too much for their gold, while at others difficulties arose out of their preference for the French cloth, which was a little wider and of slightly better quality than that which Towrson had brought out with him. The French and English ships, therefore, separated; the French remaining where they then were and the English going farther east to the Gold Coast again. But a few days later one of the French ships rejoined them and complained that they could do no good where they had been left, but Towrson fired on her and drove her off. He now obtained plenty of gold for a time, and, among other places, seems to have put in at Komenda and sent some of his men to visit the King at Eguafo. Later, they arrived at Mowre (Mori), but found the place deserted, and heard soon afterwards that the people had removed to Lagoua (Lagu), probably to be farther from the Portuguese. On their way back to Shama they saw the five Portuguese ships with which they had fought lying at anchor off Elmina, and before returning to England were chased by another Portuguese fleet of two ships of 200 and 500 tons and a pinnace which had just arrived on the Coast. Five days after passing Cape Verde on the homeward voyage they were again attacked by a French ship, but gave her such a warm reception that she soon drew off, badly damaged and having lost a number of her men. A French trumpeter on board the *Tyger*, though lying ill in bed, "yet on this Occasion took his Trumpet, and sounded until he could sound no more, and so died."¹

The men who went to Eguafo, or whatever place this inland town was, brought back a wonderful tale of what they had seen, part of which at any rate was an obvious invention or exaggeration; for they said it appeared to them to be as large as London, which, though a comparatively small place in 1556, certainly contained more than four hundred houses, which was all there were in Eguafo. They said they saw about a thousand ricks of corn and

¹ Astley, vol. i, p. 168.

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millet, and that the people " keep strict Watch there every Night, and have Cords, with Bells at them, stretched a-cross the Ways which lead into Town ; so that if any one touch the Cords, the Bells ring, and then the Watchmen run to see who they are : If they be Enemies, and pass the Cords, they take them by letting fall Nets, hung for that Purpose, over the Roads, which they are obliged to pass ; for there is no getting otherwise to the Town, by reason of the Thickets and Bushes which are about it. It is also walled round with long Cords, bound together with Sedge and Bark of Trees." ¹

Towrson's third and last voyage was made in 1558 ² in the *Minion*, *Christopher* and *Tyger* and a pinnace named the *Unicorn*. They had no sooner arrived on the Coast and begun to trade at Hanta, than they were attacked the very next day by five Portuguese ships. A running fight ensued, but no great damage was done on either side. At Lagu they heard that there were four French ships farther down the coast, one at Perrinen (?), another at Weamba (Winneba), a third at Perikow (Beraku) and the fourth at Egrand (Accra) ; and, England being then at war with France, they decided to go down and attack them. They soon sighted one of the Frenchmen coming out of Winneba and gave chase, and the next day found three of the enemy together at anchor, one of which, the *Mulet*, they boarded and took. She had fifty pounds five ounces of gold on board, and when they had removed this and all her cargo they tried to sell her back to the French ; but they would not pay anything for her, because she was leaky, so they sunk her off Accra. The ships now cruised singly along the coast, but met with very small success, and at Mori and Cape Coast the people refused to trade with them at all. At Cape Coast the inhabitants fled into the bush and the English took several of their goats and fowls ; but when they landed at Mori they were stoned, and on returning the next day to get ballast,

¹ Astley, vol. i, p. 167.

² The date is given in *Astley's Voyages* as 1557, but this is an obvious error.

numbers of people attacked them and tried to drive them on board again. Several of the natives were killed in this affray, and their town was then burned. The ships were now running short of provisions, so they returned to Shama and Hanta ; but the Chief of Shama had now come to terms with the Portuguese, and refused to supply them with anything, and they in revenge burnt his town also. They did very little better at Hanta, for the people here would not trade with them either ; so they concluded they were not likely to gain anything by remaining any longer on the Coast and returned to England.

When Towrson was at Komenda, the King of Eguafó had asked him to send men and materials to build a fort in his country, and in 1561 a syndicate calling themselves the Company of Merchant Adventurers for Guinea, and consisting of Sir William Gerard, William Winter, Benjamin Gonson, Antony Hickman and Edward Castelin, decided to send John Lok out in the *Minion* to choose a site near the sea and report on the possibility of accepting this invitation. The *Minion*, however, was an old ship, and had been badly strained in a gale on her last voyage home, and Lok told the Company that even though she had been repaired, he did not consider her sea-worthy, nor did he believe that any amount of patching would ever make her so. He therefore refused to sail in her, and the project fell through.

A year later, however, in 1562, the *Minion* and *Primrose* were sent out by this syndicate, but their misfortunes fully justified the predictions of Lok. They were unable to trade anywhere on the Gold Coast, for the Portuguese ships followed them to Cape Coast, Mori, Kormantin and wherever else they went, and continually harassed them.

The favourite method of attack with the Portuguese was in galleys, in which they could creep up under a ship's stern as she lay becalmed and helpless and take her at a disadvantage. These galleys carried a gun in the bow and had eighteen oars on either side, to each of which three slaves were chained. Many of these wretched galley slaves were English or Frenchmen who had had the mis-

1482-1592
CHAP. IV fortune to fall into the hands of the Portuguese, and now had to spend the remainder of their short lives sitting in the broiling sun and tugging at the oars, with nothing to keep up their strength but a minimum quantity of the coarsest food and little or no hope of rescue or escape. Two men used to run up and down between the rows of slaves carrying whips, with which to lash them to greater exertions, and in the stern were a number of harquebusiers and cross-men.

During the action off Kormantin, the *Minion* was attacked by two such galleys, which crept up under her stern, where they were safe from her guns while every shot from their own bow gun told. At last, by dint of great exertions, the *Minion's* crew managed to get a demiculverin into position on the stern, and during the next hour did great damage to the Portuguese. Many of them and the slaves were either killed or wounded and a cross-bar shot broke nearly every oar on one side of one of the galleys, so that though the *Minion* had lost several men, she was fully holding her own, when a barrel of powder suddenly exploded in the steward's room, injuring not only him but the chief gunner and nearly all his men as well. On this the Portuguese raised a shout of triumph, for the English were now dependent on their small-arms only, not having enough gunners left to work the gun. Soon after this, a lucky shot from one of the galleys carried away the foremast, and the Portuguese gave another great shout, thinking that now they must surely take the ship. Indeed the crew of the *Minion* had almost given themselves up for lost, when one of the white galley-slaves called out to them in English "not to give up, as it was better to die like men than lead a dog's life as a slave." Thereupon one of the Portuguese ran up to him and lashed him with his whip until the blood streamed down his shoulders and back, which so enraged the English that they swore they would never surrender, and poured in a close shower of arrows which killed both the wretched slave and his brutal assailant. Determined though they were however, they could not have held out much longer, for the

ship's stern was riddled with shot and fully half her crew were either killed or disabled ; but one of the Portuguese ships, for some unknown reason, now sent a boat to recall the galleys, and they, with half their oars broken and the thwarts encumbered with dead and dying slaves, pulled slowly away. With the help of the *Primrose's* crew, a jury-mast was rigged, and the ships, finding it impossible to trade on the Gold Coast, sailed away. The *Primrose* soon afterwards lost five men through the capsizing of her pinnace, and by the time they reached England they had lost twenty-one men dead and so many others had been disabled that there were only twenty left to work the ships, while even they were so ill and weak that they could scarcely drag themselves about.

In the November of the following year, 1563, several merchants fitted out two ships, the *John Baptist*, Laurence Rondel master, and the *Merlin*, Robert Revel master, and sent them down the West Coast to trade. They had not gone far when they fell in with two French ships, one of which they boarded and captured, selling her cargo at Groine in Spain. Having arrived on the Coast, Robert Baker, the factor of the *John Baptist*, and eight men went to trade along the shore in their boat, intending to return before night ; but a tornado unexpectedly coming up, the ships dragged their anchors and were blown out to sea and the boat's crew were forced to seek safety along the shore. The next day the ships returned to pick up their boat ; but, partly on account of the haze and partly because they had mistaken each other's direction, they missed her altogether, and after cruising up and down for three days, concluded that she must have been swamped and returned to England.

Thus stranded, Baker and his companions, having been without food for three days, landed and bought some yams and other provisions with some of their goods, and then continued their search for the ships. In this way they spent twelve days, living on yams, coco-nuts, palm wine, fish, and honeycomb, which they occasionally got from canoes that came off to them ; but, failing to see any

1482-1592 sign of their ships, they concluded that it would be useless
CHAP. IV to spend any more time in looking for them, and began to
consider what they had best do.

They saw at once that it would be hopeless to attempt to sail their boat home to England without provisions, and realized that it would be equally out of the question for them to remain in her much longer. Exposed as they were to all weathers by day and by night, they could not last long ; indeed, they were already so cramped that they could scarcely stand and were beginning to be afraid that they would lose the use of their limbs. Scurvy had also broken out amongst them. Baker, who had been factor of the *Minion* when she was attacked off Kormantin, and consequently knew what to expect, now suggested three possible courses. First, they might go to Elmina and surrender to the Portuguese, when the worst that could happen to them would be to be hanged and so have an end put to their misery, or, if they were made galley-slaves for life, which was the most they could hope for, they would at any rate be supplied with food and drink. Another possible course was to throw themselves on the mercy of the natives ; but they knew very little about them and were afraid they might be cannibals who would kill and eat them forthwith, while, even if they escaped this fate, they thought it very doubtful if they would be able to exist on their diet and endure the hardships they must suffer from want of clothing and other inconveniences to which they had never been accustomed. Their only other course would be to stay in the boat, which they had already decided was impossible. Baker, therefore, recommended that they should go to the Portuguese, from whom, as white men and fellow Christians, they might reasonably hope for better treatment than they could expect from the pagan Africans.

Everyone having agreed to this proposal, they started to row to Elmina ; but, seeing a light ashore during the night and thinking there must be a trading town there, they anchored until daybreak and then pulled in towards the beach. There they saw a watch-house, with a large black

wooden cross in front of it standing on a rock, and beyond this a castle. This proved to be the Portuguese Fort San Antonio at Axim, of the existence of which they seem to have been ignorant. Some Portuguese now came out of the fort, and one of them, carrying a white flag, beckoned to them to come on shore. But though they had been bold enough at a distance, the sight of the Portuguese, now that they had reached them, caused the boat's crew to regret their decision to surrender, and they tried to make off. The Portuguese however, seeing their intention, fired one of their guns, the shot from which fell within a yard of the boat, and they, having no means of resistance, then pulled towards the beach as fast as they could. The nearer they drew to the shore however, the more furiously did the Portuguese fire on them, until they got under the castle wall, where they were out of reach of the guns. They were about to land, when they were greeted with a shower of stones from the walls of the fort and saw the natives coming down with their bows and arrows. Several of them had been wounded by the stones hurled down at them by the Portuguese, so they turned round again in sheer desperation and once more tried to escape out to sea. Four men rowed, while the others snatched up their bows and fire-arms and turned them against the enemy. Having dropped several of the Axims, they next began to shoot at the Portuguese whom they saw standing on the walls of the fort "in long white Shirts (or Gowns), many of which were soon dyed red by means of the English Arrows."¹ They were still near enough to the fort to be safe from its guns, and had already discovered that there were no galleys in the place that might be sent out to take them; they could therefore afford to laugh at the threats of the Portuguese and held their ground until they thought they had sufficiently punished them for their want of hospitality. They then rowed off, and, although they were greeted with another storm of shot as soon as they entered the fire zone of the fort, got clear out to sea without receiving any damage.

¹ Astley, vol. i, p. 183.

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They had now had more than enough of Portuguese charity, and decided to sample that of the natives. Having sailed about thirty leagues from Axim, they anchored off a town somewhere in the neighbourhood of Grand Bassam, where some of the people came off to them in canoes. Baker gave them each a present, and the Chief's son then came out to them, to whom they explained by signs that they had lost their ship and were starving. They were then invited to land, but in doing so their boat capsized in the surf; the people, however, swam out and not only rescued them, but brought the boat and oars and all their goods safely to shore also. They were then kindly received and food was brought to them. For a time they were liberally supplied with everything, and Baker seems to have expected the people to feed and wait upon them for an indefinite period and complains because they did not do so. An European built boat, with her sail and oars and the goods that had been in her, must have represented an almost fabulous sum to these people and should have amply repaid them for anything they did; but when they found the time slipping by and no ships came, as they had expected, they gradually reduced the supplies and forced the castaways to shift for themselves. The latter then suffered great hardships, but do not seem to have been very resourceful, for they made no attempt to build themselves a hut or make a farm, but slept around a fire on the bare ground and subsisted on any roots or berries that they could find growing wild. This kind of life soon told on them, and six of the nine died one after the other; but Baker, George Gage, and one other survivor were ultimately rescued by a French ship, and, as England and France were still at war, were carried back to France and imprisoned.

The Portuguese were now thoroughly exasperated by the damage that was done to their trade by the continual presence of English and French ships on the Coast and took the severest measures to discourage them. In 1564, when the *Minion* was sent out again, they took her commander Captain Carlet, and a merchant and twelve seamen prisoners, and drove the ship off the Coast; and in 1582

their guard-ships sunk a Dieppe ship, *La Esperance*, 1482-1592 killing most of her crew and making the rest prisoners. They also offered a reward of one hundred crowns for every English or Frenchman's head that was brought to Elmina, which led the natives to kill a great many, whose heads were then stuck on spikes on the Castle walls. All prisoners taken were either hanged or kept in chains to work as galley-slaves for life ; but this last was their usual fate, for the Portuguese had no authority to execute without a special warrant from the King of Portugal, though it is probable that they did not hesitate to exceed their powers when it suited them to do so. The only exception to this rule was in the case of slaves who were caught attempting to escape, and a Frenchman who was thus taken was blown from one of the guns. CHAP. IV

The Portuguese on the Gold Coast itself were still far too weak to be able to effect much unaided, but they now had an extensive trade with the East Indies and the passing fleets used to help the local Authorities. In 1588 too, Queen Elizabeth granted a Charter to the merchants of Exeter to trade in Senegal and Gambia, and in 1592 another concession was given for the trade between Cape Nunez and Sierra Leone. These Charters, by providing fresh and less dangerous fields for their enterprise, combined with the barbarous treatment meted out to them by the Portuguese, quickly reduced the number of Englishmen who would venture to the Gold Coast, until in the end these voyages ceased altogether.

The Portuguese would never open their warehouses until forty or fifty marks of gold had been brought, and if any of it was found to be mixed with base metal, the offender was immediately put to death or enslaved. Besides punishing any of the people whom they caught trading with the English or French, they often seized quite innocent persons, and either compelled them to work for them or sold them as slaves. The Slave Trade, in fact, made the early history of the Gold Coast ; and though the English were at one time as actively engaged in this traffic as any other nation, they were the last to embark in it,

1482-1592 and, in the end, not only abandoned it themselves, but
 CHAP. IV made great efforts to abolish it altogether. Slaves had
 been taken from West Africa to Portugal as early as 1434 ;
 but it was not until the Spaniards in 1470 began to import
 slaves into Spain, the Canary Islands, and later into the
 West Indies also, that this trade began to assume large
 proportions.¹ There was some opposition in 1503 to the
 importation of slaves into the West Indies on account of
 the great number of them who escaped into the woods
 and formed themselves into dangerous predatory bands ;
 but the rapid decrease in the number of Indians, who died
 in enormous numbers under the cruel treatment of the
 Spaniards, and indeed seemed likely to become extinct,
 rendered the importation of Africans to replace them
 absolutely necessary. In 1517 this traffic in human
 beings received the formal sanction of the Pope, which at
 once established it on a firm basis, so that by 1539 the
 annual sales had risen to over 10,000.

The Papal Bull, by which the Spaniards were excluded
 from Africa, did much to bring other nations into the
 Slave Trade ; for as the demand increased and the profits
 became proportionately greater, so the international com-
 petition for the Spanish contract became more and more
 keen. The slaves were employed in the mines and on the
 sugar plantations and also as divers in the pearl fisheries.
 These unfortunate people, as well as the Indians them-
 selves, were often treated with the utmost cruelty ; and Las
 Casas, the Bishop of Chiapa, who was styled the Protector
 of the Indians and had himself advocated the establish-
 ment of a regular system of importing slaves in order to
 save the remaining Indians,² mentions an instance of the
 inhuman treatment meted out to them. He says : " I

¹ The Portuguese commenced this " carrying trade " to supply other
 nations in 1497.

² Permission was refused by Cardinal Ximenes (Regent during the
 minority of Charles V), but, after his death, Charles granted it, and by
 1539 from 10,000 to 12,000 slaves were being sold annually in the Slave
 Market established in Lisbon under Papal sanction. Charles after-
 wards regretted what he had done and forbade the traffic ; but, on his
 retirement to a monastery, it was revived.

once beheld four or five principal Indians roasted at a slow fire ; and as the victims poured forth screams which disturbed the commanding officer in his slumbers, he sent word they should be strangled. But the officer on guard (I know his name, and I know his relations in Seville) would not suffer it ; but, causing their mouths to be gagged, that their cries might not be heard, he stirred up the fire with his own hand, and roasted them till they all expired ; I saw it myself."

The English took no part in this trade until 1562, when Captain (afterwards Sir John) Hawkins engaged in it on his own account, fitting out three ships and obtaining three hundred slaves in Guinea which he sold in the West Indies ; and although Queen Elizabeth expressed her disapproval on his return, saying " If any Africans should be carried away without their free consent, it would be detestable, and call down the vengeance of Heaven on the undertaking,"¹ the prohibition, whether sincere or not at the time, was soon afterwards withdrawn, for the Queen lent Hawkins one of her own ships, the *Jesus*, for a slaving voyage in 1564, and granted him a coat of arms in which a Negro loaded with chains appeared.² In 1562 or 1563 an Act was passed legalizing the purchase of Africans, though few Englishmen, if any, seem to have availed themselves of the permission. Their efforts to establish Colonies in North America had not yet met with sufficient success to create a demand for slaves, and it was not until some years later, after 1660, that the English Slave Trade seriously began.

In 1580 Portugal had become a province of Spain under Philip II, and these African Possessions were much neglected for those in America. This still further damaged the Gold Coast trade, and, as the profits decreased, the King reduced the supplies sent to Elmina, so that in the course of a few years the garrison became very much weakened and poorly provisioned, thus paving the way for its fall soon afterwards.

¹ *Hill's Naval History*.

² Hawkins perished miserably, as his Sovereign had predicted, during a slaving voyage in 1588.

CHAPTER V

THE ARRIVAL OF THE DUTCH AND EXPULSION OF THE PORTUGUESE

1592 TO 1642

1592-1642 CHAP. V THE Portuguese had no sooner got rid of the English and French than yet a third rival appeared on the Gold Coast. In 1595 Bernard Ericks of Medenblick made the first Dutch voyage and succeeded in establishing very friendly relations with the people, who found his goods were both better and cheaper than those with which the Portuguese were in the habit of supplying them. This Ericks had once been taken prisoner by the Portuguese and carried to the Island of St. Thomas, where he learned for the first time of the rich trade they had on the Gold Coast. Some time afterwards he was set at liberty and returned to Holland, where he laid his information before some Dutch merchants, who accepted the offer of his services and fitted him out with a ship and cargo to make a voyage to the Coast. This first venture, having proved so successful, was quickly followed by others, until in the course of a few years the Dutch had established a regular trade with the Gold Coast.

This fresh competition immensely disgusted the Portuguese who, since they had had the Coast to themselves again, had not improved their manner of treating the people and were as much disliked by them as ever. In 1596 Elmina Castle itself was threatened by one Charles Hutsor, and they were compelled to demolish their original Chapel, which stood outside the walls, and build another inside the fortress. They did all they could, however, to

counteract the evil effect of the presence of the Dutch on the Coast, spreading reports among the people that they were mere slave raiders, setting a price upon their heads, and offering a reward for every one of their ships that should be betrayed into their hands.

In consequence of these offers, many Dutchmen were murdered from time to time, though it is not likely that the people paid much attention to the character given them as slave raiders, for they knew by experience that no one was more adept at this than the Portuguese themselves. Amongst others, several Dutchmen were treacherously killed at Cape Coast, where the natives persuaded Captain Simon de Taye to send some of his men ashore with a boat under pretence that their Chief wished to come on board his ship to trade. They had no sooner reached the shore, however, than they were furiously attacked and all murdered, with the exception of two or three who succeeded in swimming off to the ship. In 1596 again, the Portuguese seized a Dutch ship off Cape Coast, killing most of her crew and sending the others as galley-slaves to Elmina, where they soon succumbed to the harsh treatment they received. In 1598 they engaged a negro trader named Voetian to betray a Dutch barque into their hands. Some of his people went on board in an apparently friendly manner, and by tales of the abundance of game to be had on shore, succeeded in inducing three of the Dutchmen to land and join them in a hunting party. So soon as they set foot on shore, however, they were seized and taken to the Governor at Elmina as slaves. Meanwhile, others of Voetian's men had remained on board and became so friendly with the Dutch sailors that they, suspecting no treachery, put their gun-matches out. The people then fell on them, killing and wounding many and throwing others overboard; indeed, they would soon have made an end of them all, had not the ship's carpenter, who had been cutting wood ashore, returned on board and attacked them so fiercely with his axe that they were glad to save themselves by jumping into the water and swimming back to the beach. In 1599 again, five Dutchmen were be-

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calmed near Elmina as they were passing to Mori by canoe. They were seen by the Portuguese Governor, who sent some Elminas out to take them. Having wounded all the Dutchmen and brought them ashore, the Elminas then cut off their heads and presented them to the Governor. These and their broken limbs were set up on the Castle walls as a warning to their countrymen, and their skulls were afterwards made into drinking-cups by the natives. In 1600 again, the Portuguese, aided by the Elminas, surprised another Dutch barque, but met with such determined resistance that they were compelled to beat a retreat. In the same year, too, the crew of a barque from Oporto, which had been taken by pirates, put in at Elmina for fresh water and provisions ; but though they were Spaniards, the Governor refused to supply them and threatened them with slavery if they did not immediately leave the Coast.

In spite, however, of the continued hostility of the Portuguese, the Dutch succeeded in doing what neither the English nor French had ever attempted and founded Settlements of their own on the Gold Coast. In 1598 they formed an alliance with the King of Saboe and established a lodge at Mori.¹ The Portuguese in revenge came by night and burnt all the fishing canoes ; but the Dutch, having thus gained a definite footing in the country, rapidly extended their influence and built two more lodges, one at Kormantin and the other at Butri. The lodge at Kormantin, however, was abandoned very soon afterwards because of the quantity of base metal that was mixed with the gold brought by the people, who then had to come over to Mori when they wanted to trade. The Dutch also supplied the Komendas with arms and ammunition and incited them to attack the Portuguese to avenge the attack they had made on the canoe at Elmina. The Komendas were joined by the people of Fetu, and the war that ensued lasted several months and cost the Portuguese about three hundred men, who were presumably

¹ Afterwards called the Cemetery of the Dutch on account of the great number of that nation that died there.

nearly all Africans ; but though they eventually managed to come to terms with the Fetus, the Komendas refused to owe any further allegiance to them, and the Dutch then built another lodge in their town. These early Settlements of the Dutch were mere fortified houses, and even at their headquarters at Mori the defences consisted only of earthworks which were continually being damaged by the rains and needed constant repair.

An incident which occurred at Mori just before the Dutch settled there shows the favourable disposition of the people towards them. In April 1598 some Dutch sailors landed there for wood and began cutting down some fetish trees, paying no heed to the warnings and remonstrances of the people, which in all probability they did not understand. The Moris, therefore, attacked them, killing one of their number and cutting off his head. The next day they brought the murderer on board and asked the Dutch to put him to death in the same manner ; but they refused. They therefore took him ashore themselves and beheaded and quartered him, and when the Dutch landed again soon afterwards, they found that their countryman had been decently buried and the murderer's head set up on a spear over his grave.

The Dutch did all they could to cultivate the friendship of the people, forming alliances with the different Chiefs, encouraging them to defy the Portuguese, and assisting them in their wars. When the Moris were threatened by the Chief of Atti with a much stronger force, the Dutch lent them two cannon and sixty or seventy muskets, which materially contributed towards the complete victory that they gained soon afterwards. It is true that this policy of inciting the people to resist the Portuguese had been tried by the English and French and failed ; but the greater success of the Dutch was probably due to the fact that they had formed definite Settlements in the country, which gave the people some guarantee that they would not sail away and leave them to bear the brunt of Portuguese vengeance as their predecessors had done. During the next few years the consistent pursuit of this policy and their

1592-1642 fair and just dealings with the people steadily increased
CHAP. V the influence of the Dutch, and that of the Portuguese was proportionately diminished.

There are two Castles on the Gold Coast—Christiansborg and Cape Coast—whose early history is shrouded in mystery. They will be considered in greater detail a little later, but may be mentioned here because they are both said to have been founded originally by the Portuguese. The different accounts, however, vary so much that nothing definite can be said to be known about the earliest history of either.

In 1621 Philip IV came to the Spanish throne. The Portuguese trade on the Gold Coast, however, had by this time been utterly ruined by the Dutch, who were able to sell their goods more cheaply on the Coast than the Portuguese could buy them in Lisbon. The new King, moreover, was far more interested in the growing trade with the East Indies than in the trifling profits that could now be expected from his Possessions in West Africa. Their wealth had paled before the newly discovered riches of the East, and he therefore neglected them even more than his predecessors had done. The Portuguese thus became so weak that they could seldom or never attempt to do anything outside the walls of their forts, though at one time, while they were still strong enough, they had not only claimed, but actually exercised sovereign rights over a great part of the Coast.

One of their last sources of gain was lost to them at about this time. This was the gold mine at Abrobi which had been opened by Fernando Gomez before the Castle was built and had been worked with few intermissions ever since. But by 1622¹ the hill had been riddled in every direction with badly shored up tunnels, and suddenly fell in, burying a number of the workmen beneath it. Djesi, the Chief of Komenda, consulted the Fetish Priests, who

¹ This is the date given by Ellis, but, since the Dutch are said to have had a lodge at Komenda at this time, it is possible that this disaster may have happened a little earlier. Ellis, however, is so uniformly careful, that it is very unlikely that he would have given a date at all unless he had some good authority for it.

declared that the catastrophe was due to the action of a **1592-1642**
sasabonsum¹ who lived in the hill and resented being disturbed. After this announcement no African could have
been induced to reopen or enter the mine, and it had
to be abandoned. CHAP. V

Ever since they first came to the Coast, the Portuguese had been accustomed to obtain large quantities of gold from the Ankobra district, and their fort at Axim had, in fact, been built for this reason. Fear of the Awoins, who were the only tribe on the Coast who used poisoned arrows and who were opposed to any advance of the Portuguese into the interior, had hitherto prevented them from following up this river ; but now that their trade had been ruined by the competition of the English and Dutch and the Abrobi mine had had to be closed, they were forced to make an effort to open up some fresh gold-bearing district. To protect their prospectors from the attacks of the Awoins, an expedition was sent up the Ankobra in boats in 1623, and a small square fort, designed to hold a garrison of about twenty men, was built on the left bank of the river about fifteen miles from its mouth. It was called Fort Duma, after a stream of that name which joined the river there from the east. This was not accomplished without opposition from the Awoins ; but they were taken by surprise, and the Portuguese had laid their plans carefully and took with them in the boats a number of mantelets made of stout planks and about seven feet high. These were set up around the site chosen for the fort and effectively screened the workmen from the showers of arrows that were sent against them when the Awoins at last arrived on the scene. A desperate attempt was made to carry the position by storm, and was only repulsed by the fire of a gun mounted in the bow of one of the boats, which created such havoc in the densely crowded ranks of the enemy that they were compelled to fall back, leaving nearly

¹ Sasabonsum are a class of malignant and implacable gods, who inhabit silk-cotton trees or live underground where the earth is red. They are the gods who produce earthquakes or kill people with falling trees.

1592-1642 two hundred of their dead before the fort. Even the
 CHAP. V Portuguese, protected though they had been behind their
 screen of mantelets, did not escape unscathed. About
 half a dozen men were wounded by spears in the final rush,
 and two or three Ahanta labourers and a Portuguese
 received arrow wounds. The latter all ended fatally
 within a few days with symptoms of tetanus. After this
 peace was arranged. The Awoins recognized the right of
 the Portuguese to open mines in the neighbourhood of
 their fort, and the latter undertook not to interfere with
 any workings that were already in the possession of the
 people. A rich vein of gold-bearing quartz was soon
 afterwards discovered in a hill at Aboasi,¹ about five miles
 from Fort Duma. This hill, however, was believed to be
 the residence of a sasabonsum, and for some time no labour
 could be obtained; but in 1630 slaves were brought up
 from Elmina, and the Chiefs having been won over by
 presents and promises, work was commenced. During the
 next six years it is said that some 2,000 pounds weight of
 gold was sent to Lisbon from this mine; but this is prob-
 ably a gross exaggeration.

The weakness of the Portuguese gave the Dutch more
 leisure to improve their own position on the Coast. Their
 first act was to enlarge and improve their post at Mori,
 converting what had been a mere trading station and
 redoubt into a substantial stone fort, which, on its com-
 pletion in 1624, was named Fort Nassau in honour of the
 House of Orange. It was garrisoned by a strong force of
 Europeans and native levies and the command given to
 Adrian Jacobs. They also built a stone house or lodge on
 the hill at Queen Anne's Point; but no trade was done
 there, the flag only being displayed to prevent others
 from settling there and damaging the trade at Mori.

The great ambition of the Dutch, however, was to
 capture Elmina, and in December 1625 they made their
 first attempt on it. The Dutch force consisted of 1,200 of
 their own men, most of whom had been sent out for the
 purpose, and 150 Saboes. It was commanded by Rear-

¹ Meaning "Under the rock."

Admiral Jan Dirks Lamb. A landing was effected shortly before sunset at Terra Pequena (Ampeni), a village about six or eight miles to the west of Elmina ; but before the Dutch had time to form up they were furiously attacked by a large force of Elminas, who inflicted a crushing defeat, the battle being over before night. In this action the Dutch lost nearly all their officers, 373 soldiers, and 60 seamen, besides their native allies, who were slaughtered to a man. Admiral Lamb himself was among the wounded, and was only saved by the Komendas, who opportunely arrived on the scene. This decisive victory must always stand to the credit of the Elminas, who that evening gave such convincing proof of their courage and loyalty.

In March 1629 the Dutch States-General established a West India Company and handed over to it all their Settlements on the Gold Coast, together with any other lands that it might acquire in Africa between the Tropic of Cancer and the Cape of Good Hope. The English, too, encouraged by the great success of the Dutch, had begun to renew an intermittent trade. In 1618 James I had granted a Charter to Sir Robert Rich¹ and some merchants of the City of London for the formation of a Company to trade to Guinea. This Company was called the Company of Adventurers of London trading into Africa, and several voyages were made ; but the results not coming up to their expectations, the promoters withdrew from it and the Charter was allowed to expire. The next Company was formed in 1631 under a Charter granted by Charles I to Sir Richard Young, Sir Kenelm Digby, Nicholas Crisp, Humphrey Slaney and some others. This Charter gave the Company an exclusive right to the Coast trade from Cape Blanco to the Cape of Good Hope for a period of thirty-one years. The principal trade at this time was for slaves, the demand for which had been greatly increased by the colonization of the West Indies by the English and the introduction of slave labour into Manhattan by the Dutch. The English had hitherto been content to cruise along the Coast and get a cargo of slaves

¹ Afterwards Earl of Warwick.

1592-1642
CHAP. V

wherever they could ; but the growing importance of the trade now led this Company to establish posts on shore the better to supervise it. They selected Kormantin as their headquarters, and built a large stone fort with four bastions there, and afterwards erected lodges at several other places along the Coast. Nominally this Company held the sole English rights to trade on the Coast, but in reality the trade remained open and anyone who cared to do so went there. The Company tried to stop these private ventures whenever it came to their knowledge that such a voyage was being planned, and in 1637 the *Talbot* was so stopped ; but as a rule their efforts were of little avail, for the promoters of such undertakings nearly always kept their destination secret until they were clear of the last English port.

On the 18th of December 1636 the western districts of the Gold Coast were visited by an earthquake, which caused the tunnel and galleries of the Portuguese gold mine at Aboasi to fall in and bury all those who were working in it, with the exception of a single soldier, who was on guard near the southern entrance to prevent the escape of any of the slaves and ran out just in time. The sole survivors of the disaster were this man, Juan Rodrigues, Fernan Diaz, and Pedro Gomez the engineers, and three other soldiers. They had all been above ground when the accident happened. That night they camped around the ruins intending to leave at daybreak and report. The Awoin villages, however, had shared in the catastrophe, and the Fetish Priests of course attributed it to the vengeance of the sasabonsum of the hill and demanded sacrifices to appease his wrath. During the night, therefore, they led the villagers against the little camp and surprised it. Five of the Portuguese were at once secured, and one of the others was shot down as he tried to make off ; but the seventh, though wounded in the thigh by an arrow, managed to escape. The prisoners were taken into the still open southern end of the tunnel, and there bound hand and foot and left as a propitiatory offering to the outraged god, while the Awoins tore down the supports of

the tottering roof and rolled great boulders of rock over the entrance until it was completely closed up and unrecognizable. The wounded soldier who had escaped saw all this as he lay trembling in his hiding-place on the hill-side above, and next morning dragged himself painfully over the five miles to Fort Duma, where he died of tetanus from his wound. Here too everything was in ruins. The guard-room roof had fallen in, crushing three of the soldiers, and all that now remained of Fort Duma was a heap of crumbled masonry, in the midst of which stood a few pieces of rent and tottering wall. The surviving members of the garrison had been awaiting the return of the party from the mine, but when they heard the news of their fate they lost no more time in abandoning the place, and retired to Axim, where they found that Fort San Antonio itself had been much shaken and damaged and had its walls fissured in several places.

Their disastrous defeat at Ampeni had not made the Dutch any the less anxious to gain possession of Elmina ; if anything, the added desire to wipe out the disgrace of that first defeat had made them more determined than ever. Nicholas Van Ypren was now Governor of Mori, and had followed the policy of gradually weaning the people from their allegiance to the Portuguese to such good purpose that, with the aid of large presents and still larger promises, he had now succeeded in obtaining from nearly every Chief on the Coast a guarantee that he would join in another attack on Elmina so soon as a favourable opportunity should arise. It is said that he had even contrived to bring about a division among the garrison of the Castle.

Having thus paved the way for another attempt on the fortress, Van Ypren wrote to the Directors of the Dutch West India Company telling them what he had done and assuring them that, if they could now supply him with a sufficient force, he had every reason to hope that he would be able to capture the Castle. The chief reason for their anxiety to secure this place was that they already had Possessions in Brazil, and hoped that if they could establish themselves on both sides of the Atlantic, they would be

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able to control the trade to the East Indies to the exclusion of all other nations. Moreover, Holland was then at war with Spain, of which Portugal had been a province since 1580, and the Dutch being unable to effect very much against the Spanish troops on land, had to rely on harassing the enemy at sea, where they were uniformly successful.

When Van Ypren's letter was received, Count Maurice of Nassau, a near relative of the Prince of Orange and Governor of the West India Company's Possessions in South America, was in Brazil with a fleet of thirty-two ships, including twelve men-of-war, on board which he had 2,700 picked troops. The news from the Gold Coast was, therefore, forwarded to him, with a request that he would detach as many men and ships as he could spare from his squadron and send them to Van Ypren's assistance. Count Maurice was so impressed with the importance of this scheme, that he decided to go to the Gold Coast himself. He took nine men-of-war, well manned and provided with large reserves of ammunition, and gave the command of the troops to Colonel Hans Coine.

This fleet arrived off Cape Lahou on the Ivory Coast on the 25th of June 1637, and, as soon as the ships had dropped anchor, a letter was sent to Van Ypren at Mori, informing him of the arrival of the troops and asking him to choose a suitable spot for their disembarkation. He was warned to keep their arrival secret, especially from the English, lest they should suspect their object and do something to thwart them. The fleet then sailed down to Assini, where Count Maurice had arranged to await the Governor's reply. Here an unforeseen difficulty arose, for the people naturally concluded the ships had come to trade, and came off in eighteen canoes to barter their ivory. But the Dutch had no trade goods with them, and had to put them off from day to day, while they sent another urgent message to Van Ypren begging him to complete his preparations with the least possible delay; for they now lived in continual dread that the people would suspect and reveal their object and possibly ruin the expedition by giving the Portuguese time to prepare for their defence or

raising the opposition of the English. These fears, however, were groundless: the people believed they were putting them off in order to obtain better prices, and a few days later came out and said that their Fetish had revealed to them that there were seven other ships on their way to the Coast, which would soon arrive and ruin the trade of the Dutch.

Van Ypren's reply now arrived instructing Count Maurice to bring his fleet to Komenda, where he promised to join him. In the meantime, Van Ypren had secured the alliance of the Komendas by promising them large rewards if the Castle should be taken, and by the time the fleet arrived there they were ready to join it in 200 canoes. The combined fleets left Komenda on the 24th of August, and sailed down towards Cape Coast, where the troops were disembarked early on the morning of the 26th in a little creek about half a mile to westward of the Cape. This must have been the opening of the lagoon or salt pond at Free Town, which, though usually quite shut off from the sea, has been opened from time to time, and must have been permanently connected with the sea until the sand silted up and closed its mouth.

The Dutch force consisted of 800 soldiers and 500 seamen, besides the Komendas, who probably mustered between 1,000 and 1,400 men. Each man carried rations for three days. They advanced towards Elmina in three divisions: William Latan led the advance guard and John Godlaat the main body, while Colonel Coine himself commanded the rear guard. About mid-day they reached the Rio Dolce (Sweet River), where a halt was called to rest the men and give them an opportunity to have something to eat while the scouts were sent forward to find out the strength and disposition of the enemy.

It was absolutely essential for the Dutch to gain possession of the hill on which the Chapel of San Jago stood; for this overlooked the Castle on its weakest side, and was the only position from which it could be attacked with any reasonable hope of success. But when the scouts returned, they reported that the hill was being defended by a force

1592-1642 of about a thousand Elminas which had been posted at its
CHAP. V foot. Four companies of fusiliers were, therefore, sent to drive them back ; but they advanced too far, and were so vigorously attacked by the Elminas that they were repulsed with heavy loss. The Elminas then seem to have imagined that they had already won the day, and, cutting off the heads of the fallen Dutchmen, carried them in triumph through the town. So many went to celebrate their victory in this way, that very few men were left to hold the position, and Major Bongarzon, coming up with a reserve detachment, quickly put this small party to flight with a loss of only four of his own men and ten of the native allies. The Elminas then realized too late that the battle had only just begun, and, hurrying back from the town, twice attempted to retake the position ; but though they fought well and inflicted some further losses on the Dutch, including William Latan and several more men killed, they were eventually driven back into the valley between San Jago and the hills behind it. The few Portuguese who had been with them at once sought refuge in the Chapel of San Jago and their redoubt, where they were soon afterwards attacked and forced to surrender.

Meanwhile, Colonel Coine had been having two paths cut through the bush, one leading to the summit of the hill and the other to the Sweet River, so that he could obtain fresh water and ascend the hill without using the path made by the Portuguese to their redoubt ; for this led up immediately in front of the Castle and was covered by its guns. Two pieces of cannon and a mortar were then brought up and mounted on the hill, whence fire was opened on the Castle and ten or twelve grenades thrown against it ; but they did little or no damage, as the range was too great. The Dutch, however, were perfectly safe where they were, for the Castle's only means of defence on this side were two small cannon mounted over an old walled-up gate, which were quite useless against an enemy on the hill. In the meantime, while the attention of the Portuguese had been engaged by the bombardment of the

Castle, the Komendas had been sent across the River Benya to attack the town, which lay on the opposite bank under its walls, and, having advanced under cover of the banks of the river, now succeeded in driving off all the cattle and sheep. 1592-1642
CHAP. V

Coine, who was anxious to avoid risking his men unnecessarily, could not however afford to delay, owing to the limited supplies that his men had with them. At day-break the next morning, therefore, he sent a trumpeter to summon the Castle to surrender, threatening to put all the garrison to the sword if they did not yield quickly. The Portuguese Governor replied that the decision did not rest with him alone, but that he must first consult his officers and people; he therefore asked for a three days' armistice before giving his answer. Coine of course could not agree to this or his men would have been starving, and sent word that he would only give him one day. Next morning the trumpeter was again sent to the Castle to demand the Governor's answer, but the drawbridge was kept raised and the gates closed. Coine therefore brought up his whole force and, moving the guns nearer to the fortress, renewed the bombardment; whereupon the Portuguese sent out two heralds with full powers to arrange the terms of capitulation.

These, which were shameful enough to the Portuguese, were agreed upon as follows:

1. The Governor, officers, garrison, mulattos, etc., to march out with their wives and children, but without colours or arms, and taking nothing with them beyond one suit of clothes each.

2. The Dutch to have all the gold, merchandize, slaves and other property then in the Castle, with the exception of twelve slaves, which were to be allowed to the Portuguese as servants.

3. The Portuguese to be allowed to carry away all those ornaments of their church that were not made of gold or silver.

4. The Portuguese to be put on board the Dutch warships and provided with the necessaries of life until

1592-1642 they could be landed on the Island of San Thomé
CHAP. V (St. Thomas).¹

Thus the celebrated Castle of San Jorge del Mina fell into the hands of the Dutch on Saturday the 29th of August 1637. A Dutch inscription over the main gate still exists recording the event, and a white stone let into the pathway leading from the bridge over the River Benya to the Castle marks the spot where the Portuguese Governor handed over the keys of the fortress to Colonel Coine. The garrison had been so reduced by death and neglect that only about thirty men were left to march out of the Castle, and even they were nearly all sick. The Dutch found very little gold or merchandize in the place ; but they took 30 good brass cannon, 9,000 pounds of powder, 800 cannonballs and 10 casks of musket-balls, 300 packages of flints and 36 Spanish swords, besides a great number of axes, pikes and other weapons, most of which, however, had been much neglected and were very rusty. It was not want of ammunition, therefore, that had been the cause of the feeble defence made by the Portuguese.

Colonel Coine now left Captain Walraeven Van Malburg and 140 men to garrison the Castle while he went down to Mori to make arrangements for moving the Dutch headquarters to Elmina. At the same time, he sent a letter by canoe summoning the Portuguese Commandant at Axim to surrender. He hoped that the consternation following the fall of their principal stronghold would prove sufficient to ensure the submission of any other Portuguese on the Coast at his mere word ; but he soon found that this man was not such a poltroon as the Governor of Elmina, and the only answer he got was a defiant message challenging him to do his worst, the Commandant declaring that, as for himself, he would hold the fort for the King his master until his last breath. With this the Dutch had to be content for a time ; but in 1640 Portugal, taking advantage of the distracted condition of Spain, achieved her independence under the House of Braganza, and war

¹ There was also a provision that the life of a Dutch deserter named Herman should be spared.

immediately broke out between her and Holland on the question of the possession of Brazil. It was during these hostilities that the Dutch attacked and captured Fort San Antonio on the 9th of January 1642, and by the treaty of peace concluded soon afterwards the Portuguese formally ceded all their Possessions on the Gold Coast to the Dutch West India Company in return for Holland's renunciation of her claims to sovereignty in Brazil.

The Portuguese version of the fall of Elmina is entirely different to that of Barbot and Dapper which has been given above ; but there is no difficulty in deciding which is correct. They say that a Dutch ship anchored in Elmina roads, either to obtain provisions or out of curiosity to see the place, and that her Captain became very friendly with the Portuguese Governor. They exchanged presents and entertained each other, and the Governor also purchased a considerable quantity of the Dutchman's trade goods on his own account, paying for them in gold. Before the ship sailed, the Governor invited the Captain to return as soon as he could with a large cargo, guaranteeing him a successful voyage and promising to have plenty of gold and ivory ready for him on his arrival.

The Dutchman now schemed to take possession of the place, and on his return to Holland laid his plans before the States-General. Their approval having been obtained, special short light cannon were cast and packed in boxes to represent cases of merchandize, and quantities of small arms and ammunition were made up into bales to appear like ordinary trade goods. These were put on board a ship with a small supply of the usual articles for the Coast trade and presents for the Portuguese Governor ; but instead of the thirty or forty men which was the usual complement of a merchantman of forty guns, 300 picked men sailed in her. Six months later she anchored off Elmina. Presents were sent to the Governor, and her Captain reported that, owing to want of fresh provisions and other privations, sickness had broken out among his men, who were nearly all seriously ill. He therefore begged the Governor's permission to land them and treat them in a hospital camp on shore.

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Leave was granted and a site for the camp chosen on San Jago's Hill, where the sick men might reap the full benefit of the sea breeze. Tents were pitched, and the supposed invalids, and incidentally the cases containing the cannon, were carried up in hammocks. Engineer officers posing as surgeons accompanied them, and bales of arms and ammunition were landed as medical stores and other necessaries. As it was found that the "sick men" complained of the intense heat and want of proper ventilation in the tents, it was next decided to erect barracks, a work in which some of the Portuguese soldiers themselves were paid to assist. These were so arranged by the "surgeons" that they could easily be converted into batteries. The Governor and Portuguese officers suspected nothing, being too afraid of possible infection to approach the working parties. They were, moreover, well entertained by the Dutch Captain and his officers, who did all they could to distract their attention from the suspicious number of loads that was being taken up to the camp. In two days' time all the arms and ammunition had been disembarked, and the Dutch then began to raise earthworks under cover of the temporary walls of the huts.

Their preparations were soon completed, and the Dutch then invited some of the Portuguese to join them in a shooting party, and even borrowed guns from them, pretending that their own were still on board the ship. In the evening they entertained their guests to supper on the hill, and plied them so well with wine that they were unable to return to the Castle. During the night the temporary walls were taken down, thus uncovering the now finished batteries, and when the Portuguese awoke they were astonished to find themselves prisoners in a respectably fortified camp, with the "surgeons" commanding the plague-stricken crew, who now appeared as soldiers under arms and in the best of health. The Dutch Captain at once sent to summon the few Portuguese who remained in the Castle to surrender, threatening to butcher every one of them if they did not comply immediately. The ship at the same time stood in towards the shore and

prepared to bombard the fortress from that side, and the Governor, deprived of most of his officers as he was, had no alternative but to surrender. 1592-1642
CHAP. V

This ridiculous tale, invented by the Portuguese to cover the disgrace of their defeat, teems with so many palpable absurdities that it is utterly incredible. Their disposition towards all strangers who came to trade on the Coast, and the treatment they consistently meted out to them, are too well known to admit for one moment of the belief that they would ever have permitted any foreign ship to resort to Elmina and enjoy the privileges here described; and even assuming that the Governor himself had been bribed, it would still have been absolutely impossible for any of these preparations to have been carried out under the suspicious eyes of the other Portuguese officers. But in the case of the Dutch, the absurdity of the whole story is accentuated by the facts that they had a Settlement of their own at Mori, a few miles only from Elmina, to which they could have gone, and that they had already given unmistakable proof of their intentions by their attempt on Elmina only twelve years before this alleged deception. There can be no doubt, therefore, that the version previously given is the correct one. The only possible point that could be mentioned in support of the Portuguese story is the extraordinary similarity between the methods here attributed to the Dutch and those actually practised by some others of their nation in another part of Africa within recent times.

Though it is now over two and a half centuries since the Portuguese were finally driven from the Gold Coast, many traces of their 160 years' occupation are still to be found in words in common use and in geographical names. The Dutch and English, however, have left few such marks. This may be due to the fact that the Portuguese mixed more with the people than these other nations have ever done, but is more probably attributable to the perpetuation of the names originated by the Portuguese in a translated or slightly corrupted form. Examples of such words of Portuguese derivation are: palaver

1592-1642 (palabra), panyar (apanhar), fetish (feitiço), piccaninny (picania), caboceer (cabeceiro), and dash me¹ (das me).

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Many of the old Portuguese geographical names, too, still persist, as : Gold Coast (Costa del Oro), Cape Three Points (Cabo de Tres Puntas), Cape Coast (Cabo Corso),² Elmina (San Jorge del Mina), River Volta (Rio Volta), River Ankobra (Rio Cobre), and many others. Many of the names used by them, on the other hand, have quite disappeared ; Ampeni is no longer known as Terra Pequena nor the River Pra as the Rio San Juan. It was the Portuguese, too, who first introduced cattle into the country and the prickly pear with which to fence their enclosures. They are also said to have brought Indian corn and the sugar-cane from the Island of San Thomé and the banana and pineapple from the Congo. It is also asserted that some parts of the funeral customs and other ceremonies of the people, especially in the neighbourhood of Elmina, show some traces of the influence of Roman Catholic ritual ; and this may very possibly be the correct explanation of their origin, for the Portuguese, so long as they were on the Coast, adhered to this object of Prince Henry, and maintained missionary priests to instruct the people in their religion. Nor were these the only missionaries on the Coast, for Barbot records the fact that some French Capuchine priests were sent out to Assini in 1635 " and at first made some progress among the people ; who treated them very courteously, and seemed to have some relish of Christianity ; but soon after, they scoffed at them, and their doctrine." Three of these men died at Assini, and the other two then " withdrew to the Portuguese near Axim, being no longer able to bear with the insulting behaviour of the Blacks, and their deriding the Christian religion." ³

¹ Sarbah (Fanti National Constitution) thinks the derivation of "dash" is the Fanti "dasi" (thank you).

² A ridiculous corruption. The original name, meaning "cruising cape," was doubtless given to it from its use as a landmark by the Portuguese sailors.

³ Barbot, p. 305.

CHAPTER VI

THE FIRST ANGLO-DUTCH WAR

1642 TO 1672

THE Dutch greatly improved Elmina Castle. They restored the Bastion de France, connecting it with the main building by a long gallery, and generally extended and improved the fortifications, until, in the course of a few years, the whole building had been very considerably enlarged. Having proved its weakness on the north-east, where it faced St. Jago's Hill, they set about remedying this serious defect as soon as possible. To this end they built a strong fort on the summit of the hill in 1638, which was planned with four batteries and a tower, whence watch could be kept over a wide expanse of country and ships sighted thirty miles out at sea. It was named Fort Conraadsburg¹ and garrisoned by an ensign's guard of twenty-five men, who were relieved every twenty-four hours. The greatest care was always taken to prevent the defences of this fort being inspected, and no strangers were ever admitted to it under any pretence, for the Dutch rightly regarded it as the key to the Castle. They also built a stone bridge, with a wooden drawbridge in its centre, across the River Benya, and cut a wide road from it to the new fort. Another battery was then constructed on this side of the Castle and mounted with six guns, which covered the road to the fort and were capable of being turned on the latter in case of need, and a second smaller battery was raised on another hill² as an additional protection to it.

1642-1672

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¹ Now generally known as Fort St. Jago, after the hill on which it stands.

² Either Java Hill or St. Joseph's Hill.

1642-1672 Besides these material improvements in the defences,
CHAP. VI a great deal of other work was carried out from time to time in after years. Stone walls were built along the banks of the River Benya converting it into a harbour into which small vessels could enter and, after passing through the drawbridge, refit under the guns of the Castle. Many fine stone houses were also built and some good roads made in the town rather later. Nor were these improvements confined to Elmina; at Mori a half-moon was cut off Fort Nassau and the buildings further improved and strengthened, and in about 1640 or 1642 the old Portuguese lodge at Shama and their own at Butri were converted into small forts with four batteries each. The former had been called San Sebastian by the Portuguese, and this name was now retained by the Dutch, while the fort at Butri, which was built by one Carolus, was named Fort Batenstein. Other lodges were built at Anamabo, Kormantin, Accra and Corso (Cape Coast).

Very little is definitely known of the history of the Gold Coast during the first few years after the expulsion of the Portuguese, and a great deal has to be inferred from subsequent records in which mention is made of forts and Settlements then in existence at various places along the Coast and possessed by different European nations. At this time the enormous profits that were to be derived from the Slave Trade attracted others to the Coast, and the Danes and Swedes soon began to compete with the English and Dutch, so that in all probability many interesting but unfortunately unrecorded disputes and transactions took place. After the final conquest of the Portuguese by the Dutch, all their Settlements of course came into the possession of the latter nation; but though we find some of these places occupied by others very soon afterwards, it is impossible to decide whether these changes were brought about by the reoccupation of posts that had been abandoned by the Dutch or by their forcible ejection from them. Thus important forts or castles are suddenly mentioned as being in existence at Christiansborg and Cape Coast, but of their origin next to nothing is

known, and there were doubtless many other lodges built at this time. **1642-1672**

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Christiansborg is said to have been occupied first by the Portuguese, from whom the Swedes took it in 1645. At this time it seems to have been a fortified house rather than a fortress, and was known as Ursu Lodge. If it is true that the Portuguese were the first settlers there, this lodge was probably built after the demolition of their fort at Accra in 1578, and it is quite possible that they may have been here as late as 1645, for, though they had then lost both Elmina and Axim, the Dutch do not appear to have frequented the eastern districts of the Gold Coast until several years later.

Cape Coast Castle, obscure though its early history is, seems to have witnessed many changes. Reindorf, whose writings deal principally with the traditions of the Accra district, says: "Cape Coast Castle (the Castle at Cabo Corso) was built in the year 1652 by the Swedes. The foundation was laid by its commandant, Isaac Miville, a Swiss from Basel. The first name of the Castle was 'Carolus-burg' (Charles' fort). In 1658 it was taken by the enterprising Heinrich Karloff, a native of Sweden, then in the service of the Danish Company, and thus it fell into the hands of the Danes. . . . But unfortunately Immanuel Schmid, the successor of Karloff, surrendered the Castle . . . to the Dutch in 1659. After this the natives of Fetu (Efutu) besieged Cape Coast Castle and took it in 1660; but the Swedes retook it from their hands and kept it from that year to 1663, when the Fetu retook it from the Swedes by surprise and treachery. Now the English, Danes, and Dutch respectively endeavoured to get possession of it by negotiation, but all failed. On the second of May 1663, however, the Fetu voluntarily surrendered it to the Dutch. It had not been one year in their possession, when it was attacked by Admiral Sir Robert Holmes by land and by sea and captured on the third of May 1664."¹ Some of the latter part of this account is certainly incorrect, but this does not neces-

¹ Reindorf, p. 14.

1642-1672 sarily prove that there is no groundwork of truth in the
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Ellis sums up what is known of the early history of this building as follows : " The question as to when Cape Coast Castle was built is involved in great obscurity. Smith, Surveyor of the Royal African Company, who visited the Gold Coast in 1727, says the Portuguese founded it in 1610 ; while Barbot (1687) says it was built by the Dutch shortly after the capture of Elmina. Neither of these gives any authority for his statement, and Barbot contradicts himself in two other places, saying in one that the Dutch ' had a pretty good fort at Cape Coast, which they bought of the factor of one Caroloff, who had built it for the Danish Company,' and in the other that ' Cape Coast is famous for the castle the English built there.' In any case Smith is in error, for there is abundant evidence to show that the Portuguese had no fort at Cape Coast, and Barbot's statement that it was built by the Dutch is directly traversed by the complaint made by the African Company in November 1662, in which it is said the Dutch had no factory at Cape Coast. There seems, therefore, but little doubt that Cape Coast Castle was built by the English, but at what date is uncertain. The probability is that it was built shortly before the formation of the Company of 1662, perhaps in 1662, for there is no mention made of it before January 1663."¹

The Portuguese author Vasconcellos, however, in his *Life of King John*, writing of the time when the Portuguese were still in possession of Elmina, and therefore prior to 1637, says of the Dutch that " they held without any other right but force, the fort at Boutroe four leagues from that at Axim, also the settlements of Kora, Kormantin and Aldea deí Tuerto at Komendo." This Kora can have been no other place than Cape Korea, as Cape Coast was often called.

Meredith says the Danish force under Sir Henry Carlof (1657) " conquered the Swedish forts Carolusborg (now Cape Coast), Taccarary, Annamaboe, and Ursu Lodge

¹ Ellis, *History of the Gold Coast*, p. 53.

(now Christiansborg)."¹ In another place the same author says the Castle was originally built by the Portuguese and ceded to the Dutch with their other Possessions in 1642. Barbot again, when writing of a Danish fort near the Castle, which will be referred to later, says "the Danes being formerly expell'd from Corso by the Dutch, made choice of that mount, as a proper place to build a fort."²

The name Carolusborg suggests the possibility that this place may have been built or enlarged by the same Carolus who built Fort Batenstein for the Dutch in 1640; and though Ellis says there is abundant evidence to prove that the Portuguese had no fort at Cape Coast, yet he gives none, and the statement of Vasconcellos quoted above certainly seems to show that they had, and that the Dutch had ousted them from it. When Towrson was trading on the Coast between 1555 and 1558, he was attacked by the Portuguese at Cape Coast, and in 1663 the Dutch Governor of Elmina, Jean Valkenburg, complained that "in 1647, the English had encouraged the Dutch vassals at Cabo Corso to rebel."

But although these statements are so conflicting, there are several points on which they show a general agreement, and they are not really so irreconcilable as they appear to be. After the date of the voyages of Towrson, it is known that the Portuguese made very determined efforts to drive all strangers from the Coast, and, having already found the English trading at Cape Coast within eight miles of their headquarters, there is nothing more likely than that they would have established a small fortified post or lodge there to protect their interests. This may very possibly have been built in about 1610; but when a little later their trade declined and their garrisons were weakened, this would have been one of the first places that they would have abandoned. This would be quite sufficient to account for the absence of all opposition to the landing of the Dutch in 1637, which is presumably the evidence upon which Ellis was relying. The deserted lodge would then have come into the possession of the

¹ Meredith, p. 197.

² Barbot, p. 172.

1642-1672 Dutch, who apparently did not think it worth garrisoning, so that when in after years the Swedes resorted to the Coast, they were able to settle at this place without opposition. Their occupation of Cape Coast is said to date from 1652, and there is a general agreement that in 1657 or 1658 Karloff, or Carlof, dispossessed them and took the place for the Danish Company. What happened after this is very doubtful, and the place may have changed hands more than once, and even have been taken by the Fetus and passed from them back again to the Dutch, as is alleged, before it came into the possession of the English, as it undoubtedly had done by 1662 or 1663. Until then the fort was probably no more than a lodge, and it was at this time that the Castle itself seems to have been built, either as an addition to and improvement on the original lodge, or near it. It is most likely, however, that the latter course was adopted, and that the fortified house close to the Castle, and occupied by a native trading agent or middle-man, which will be referred to later, was the old lodge which had been left untouched and handed over to him.

The Accras were at first as strongly opposed to the erection of European forts in their country as they had been in the time of the Portuguese, and it was not until about 1642 that the Danes and Dutch, after giving considerable presents to the King, succeeded in obtaining his permission to build store houses, undertaking to pay seven marks of gold (£224) annually for the concession. Having once secured a footing in the place in this manner, they continually insinuated the necessity of converting these houses into proper forts in order to protect the Accras in time of need from the attacks of their inveterate foes the Akwamus. This was at last agreed to, and the Dutch then built a stone fort with a tiled roof, which they named Crève Cœur. It was completed in about the year 1650, but it was not until some years later, 1673 in fact, that the English were given a similar privilege. At this time the Swedes held Ursu Lodge, but in 1657 Frederick III of Denmark sent an expedition to the Gold Coast under Sir