

GOLD COAST (ASSINÉE). J. F. Farley.
C

RETURN to an Address of the Honourable The House of Commons,
dated 3 August 1874;—for,

COPY

OF

CORRESPONDENCE

RESPECTING THE

BRITISH SETTLEMENTS ON THE GOLD COAST,

AND

OCCUPATION OF ASSINÉE BY THE FRENCH IN 1843.

Colonial Office, }
4 August 1874. }

J. LOWTHER.



(*Sir Patrick O'Brien.*)

Ordered, by The House of Commons, to be Printed,
7 August 1874.

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CORRESPONDENCE

RESPECTING THE

BRITISH SETTLEMENTS ON THE GOLD COAST,

AND

OCCUPATION OF ASSINEE BY THE FRENCH IN 1843.

No. 1.

Dr. *Sweeny* to Major *Rowan*.

Sir,

Cape Coast Castle, 20 September 1826.

IN reply to your inquiry of the 13th instant, with reference to the insalubrious climate of the Settlements on the Gold Coast, I have the honour to inform you that the character of the endemic fever to which Europeans are liable is remittent, and the subsequent attacks are generally intermittent, accompanied with dysentery.

The local causes that probably excite remittent fever in persons lately arrived are noxious emanations from a very ill-regulated town, from an uncultivated country that is covered with bush or jungle abounding with insects, and in many parts impenetrable to man, from an extent of wood impeding thorough ventilation, and a miasmata arising from the combination of earth and moisture with putrescent animal and vegetable matter acting on a constitution predisposed, and the atmospherical vicissitudes give a check to the capillary circulation on the external surface of the body, and cause a determination to the internal organs, the liver becomes deranged and its functions are nearly suspended, and its torpid circulation retards the flow of blood into the right auricle, and the heart being supplied with a diminished quantum, the pulse becomes agitated, fluttering, and easily compressible. On the first day of attack, when reaction, the pulse becomes quick and bounding, conveying a peculiar vibrating and irregular impulse to the finger, as if a slow diastole and convulsive systole of the heart existed accompanied with languor, lassitude, loss of appetite, general uneasiness, pain of the back, headache, countenance and eyes suffused, great heat of skin, immoderate thirst, loaded tongue, severe gastric derangement often accompanied with delirium, which symptoms appear to be influenced by a principle of periodic movement, and they are generally aggravated in the evening, and the patient obtains generally relief soon after daylight. Nervous irritability is early developed in formidable accessions, and the patient is carried off in despite of all medical tact. In cases less severe this disease lapses into intermittent fever, and a tendency is induced to relapse from the application of slight causes, so long as the individual remains on this station, and these frequent attacks induce chronic obstructions of the liver and spleen, and dysentery and dropsy result as a consequence; the malignity on this coast is increased by the detention of persons so afflicted, and from the desponding influence it causes in the minds of the European soldiers. They abandon themselves to intemperance, impressed with the melancholy reflection that they are to remain here for life, and the sooner their miseries are put an end to the better; if a limited period could be fixed on for their relief or removal to a healthy station, I am of opinion many lives would be saved. Twelve months is the time required in the commissariat department as a tour of duty on this station, and a diminution in deaths in that department is the result. I beg leave to recommend as modes of prevention the culture and draining of the neighbouring country, which would perhaps improve the seasons of the year, and alter the peculiar states of the weather that influence the characteristic malignity of the remittent fever of Western Africa, and perhaps render the European constitution less susceptible of it, and to have the mud huts removed from the immediate vicinage of Castle, and to cause the natives to change the inclosed labyrinths they

now inhabit into better ventilated abodes, and to enforce the removal of the accumulated filth from about them, being one of the sources that emit morbid exhalations in a more concentrated form in the rainy season, owing to the putrescent matter being acted on by the solar heat, a certain degree of moisture being necessary to generate it, and so long as the continuance of sources so amply abundant, and so favourable to the existence of this pestiferous miasmata, the fever will rage both here and at Sierra Leone, unless steps are taken to render the miasma innocuous. The European soldiers ought to be supplied with fresh meat and vegetables in lieu of the salt meat and rum at present issued to them, and if a breakfast of coffee or any other substitute could be allowed. Daily ablution and less exposure to the sun's influence should be enforced. A clothing more adapted to this climate ought to be in use, and an ample supply of pure water. The site of some of the tanks here is very objectionable: several graves are close to them. The treatment from which I have experienced most benefit in the remittent fever of this coast has been, if of a plethoric or sanguine habit, I used the lancet; but great caution in blood-letting is necessary. I freely administer purgatives in the commencement; cold affusion often repeated during the accession or ablution has accelerated remission. Warm bath has been found beneficial in some constitutions and pediluvia and sponging. Cold applications to the forehead and hands served to relieve the urgent headache. Local determinations are best relieved by cupping, blisters, and other counter-irritating applications. Tartrate of antimony with potass combined with mercurial ointment I find an excellent remedy when rubbed on the hypochondriacal regions until pustules are excited, and if I am so fortunate as to establish a good remission I administer the bark with no sparing hand, and in such cases success is generally the result. Sulphate of quinine is an excellent medicine in this as in intermittent fever; the controlling power it has over the latter disease far surpasses any medicine in any complaint that I have ever witnessed. I have abandoned the pernicious practice of giving opium and calomel until the system became under its influence. The irritation and determination to the head that it caused aggravated the paroxysm, and I fear but too often induced effusion within the brain. Although remittent fever under ordinary circumstances is not contagious, it is my opinion it may become so by a crowded state or want of proper accommodation, and that the febrile miasm will propagate itself. A detachment, consisting of six officers and 50 men, left Sierra Leone on the 22nd of June last, in the "Louisa" transport, and landed at Cape Coast Castle on the 8th of July. Four men died on the passage, 16 entered hospital, two died soon after, and two of the officers died within one week after landing; three of the deaths on board were men that had been engaged on the Sherbro' expedition. This disease appeared to propagate itself, and was more malignant than the fever that exists here at present. In intermittent fever I have witnessed much benefit from the exhibition of Peruvian bark, sulphate of quinine, arsenic, and alum. Dysentery in this climate will not often bear venesection. Generally the mode of treatment adopted is simple, and has been found successful. Calomel and opium in small doses, a solution of tartrate of antimony with potass and sulphate of magnesia largely diluted, given in small doses and often repeated. It relieves the constant inclination to stool and the febrile excitement. James' powder is sometimes combined with the calomel and opium; and small doses of the compound powder of ipecacuanha often repeated is frequently of benefit. A counter-irritating application of tartrate of antimony, with potass mixed with any of the simple ointments, and rubbed over the arch of the colon, particularly the descending portion. Internal and external fomentations afford great relief; warm baths and blisters; and in this climate the hepatic functions should be closely watched in patients labouring under this disease. When convalescent, they should have flannel covering next the skin and continue the use of vegetable bitters; and they ought to be removed to an extra-tropical climate, as very few are ever fit for military duty of those that have had a severe attack; and it is truly painful to witness their frequent return to the hospital, which is in a measure caused here by the issue of salt meat and the use of impure water.

(signed) *M. Sweeny*, M.D.,

Major James Rowan,
Commissioner of West African Inquiry. Surgeon to the Forces.

No. 2.

Mr. Hay to Mr. Lack.

Sir,

Downing-street, 27 June 1827.

HAVING laid before Viscount Goderich the Memorial enclosed in your note of 21st instant, from sundry manufacturers of the town of Birmingham, setting forth the great losses which will be sustained by them if the British Settlements on the Gold Coast should be abandoned by his Majesty's Government, I have received his Lordship's directions to return to you the said Memorial, and to acquaint you, for the information of the Lords of the Committee of Privy Council for Trade and Plantations, that his Majesty's Government have been mainly induced to come to the determination of withdrawing the garrisons and public establishments from the forts on the Gold Coast, in consideration of the constant drain upon the troops and civil servants employed there, arising from the destructive unhealthiness of the climate and other local inconveniences, as well as of the great expense which, upon inquiry, was ascertained to be necessary in order to repair the forts and place them in a proper state of defence.

Keeping in view, however, the interests of the merchants who reside there, the Governor of Sierra Leone has been directed not to abandon the forts without placing those merchants in possession of them, should they think it advantageous for themselves to remain on the coast, for which purpose it is proposed to grant them assistance in a moderate degree.

No accounts have as yet been received of the arrangements which the Governor may have made with the merchants, in conformity with the views of his Majesty's Government, but Lord Goderich desires me to observe that the memorialists may rest satisfied that these views have not been adopted without the fullest examination of the subject in all its bearings, and that all those considerations which ought justly to influence his Majesty's Government in their deliberations on a question of so much importance were maturely weighed at the time.

As far as relates to the value of the trade between this country and the Gold Coast, and of which the memorialists are now apprehensive of being deprived, it would appear that the total amount of consignments to Cape Coast Castle, Accra, Annamaboe, and Dixcove, have not, from the month of April 1822 to 30th of June 1826, exceeded the sum of 133,154 *l.* 2 *s.* 6 $\frac{1}{4}$ *d.*, of which 108,560 *l.* 7 *s.* 10 *d.* was for the value of British manufactures, and 24,593 *l.* 14 *s.* 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ *d.* for foreign manufactures. But whether this trade be so valuable as it is represented to be or not (and if it is of that importance which the memorialists assign to it, Lord Goderich has no reason to apprehend that the experience of the resident merchants will not enable them to maintain themselves on the coast), his Lordship is of opinion that his Majesty's Government would not be justified in purchasing such trade at a large sacrifice of human life and expense to the country.

Thomas Lack, Esq.,
&c. &c. &c.

I am, &c.
(signed) R. M. Hay.



No. 3.

Mr. Stephen to Viscount Canning.

My Lord,

Downing-street, 11 October 1843.

I AM directed by Lord Stanley to transmit to your Lordship the copy of a letter addressed to this department by Captain Maclean, President Administering the Government of the Forts on the Gold Coast, reporting the arrival of a French squadron off Assinee, for the purpose of establishing a settlement at that place.

Viscount Canning,
&c. &c. &c.

I am, &c.
(signed) Jas. Stephen.

Enclosure in No. 3.

President *Maclean* to Lord *Stanley*.

My Lord,

Capo Coast Castle, 8 July 1843.

I HAVE the honour to acquaint your Lordship that on the 3rd instant a French squadron, consisting of a barque sloop, a gun brig, a cutter and two transports, with troops, &c., arrived off Assinee for the purpose of establishing their projected settlement at that place. If I am correctly informed, however, they do not intend to occupy the spot where a French factory formerly stood, near the mouth of the Assinee River; but have hoisted the French flag about 10 miles to the eastward of that place on the Appollonia coast, which has always been looked upon as British territory. I shall make further inquiries on the subject as early as possible.

I have been informed that Lieutenant Governor Hill was at Sierra Leone three weeks ago, and I am consequently in daily expectation of his arrival here.

The Right Hon. Lord Stanley, M.P.
&c. &c. &c.

I have, &c.
(signed) *George Maclean*,
President of the Council
of Government.

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Under 1 oz.