

Marx Hardy Machiavelli Joyce Austen
Defoe Abbot Melville Montaigne Cooper Emerson Hugo
Stoker Wilde Christie Maupassant Haggard Chesterton Molière Eliot Grimm
Garnett Engels Schiller Byron Maupassant Schiller
Goethe Hawthorne Smith Kafka
Cotton Dostoyevsky Kipling Doyle
Baum Henry Flaubert Nietzsche Willis
Leslie Dumas Stockton Vatsyayana Crane
Burroughs Verne
Curtis Tocqueville Gogol Busch
Homer Tolstoy Whitman Twain
Darwin Zola Lawrence Dickens Plato
Potter Freud Jowett Stevenson Andersen Harte
Kant London Descartes Cervantes Burton Hesse
Poe Aristotle Wells Voltaire Cooke
Hale James Hastings Shakespeare Irving
Bunner Richter Chekhov da Shakespeare Irving
Doré Dante Shaw Wodehouse
Swift Pushkin Alcott
Newton



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**To The Gold Coast for Gold, Vol.
II A Personal Narrative**

Richard Francis, Sir Burton

Imprint

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TO THE GOLD COAST FOR GOLD

A Personal Narrative

BY Richard F. Burton AND Verney Lovett Cameron

In Two Volumes – Vol. II.

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TO THE GOLD COAST FOR GOLD.

CHAPTER XII.

THE SÁ LEONITE AT HOME AND ABROAD.

In treating this part of the subject I shall do my best to avoid bitterness and harsh judging as far as the duty of a traveller—that of telling the whole truth—permits me. It is better for both writer and reader to praise than to dispraise. Most Englishmen know negroes of pure blood as well as 'coloured persons' who, at Oxford and elsewhere, have shown themselves fully equal in intellect and capacity to the white races of Europe and America. These men afford incontestable proofs that the negro can be civilised, and a high responsibility rests upon them as the representatives of possible progress. But hitherto the African, as will presently appear, has not had fair play. The petting and pampering process, the spirit of mawkish reparation, and the coddling and high-strung sentimentality so deleterious to the tone of the colony, were errors of English judgment pure and simple. We can easily explain them.

The sad grey life of England, the reflection of her climate, has ever welcomed a novelty, a fresh excitement. Society has in turn lionised the *marmiton*, or assistant-cook, self-styled an 'Emir of the Lebanon;' the Indian 'rajah,' at home a *munshi*, or language-master; and the 'African princess,' a slave-girl picked up in the bush. It is the same hunger for sensation which makes the mob stare at the Giant and the Savage, the Fat Lady, the Living Skeleton, and the Spotted Boy.

Before entering into details it will be necessary to notice the history of the colony—an oft-told tale; yet nevertheless some parts will bear repetition.

[Footnote: The following is its popular chronology:—

1787. First settlers (numbering 460) sailed.

1789. Town burnt by natives (1790?).

1791. St. George's Bay Company founded.

1792. Colonists (1,831) from Nova Scotia.

1794. Colony plundered by the French.
1800. Maroons (560) from Jamaica added.
1808. Sá Leone ceded to the Crown; 'Cruits' introduced.
1827. Direct government by the Crown.]

According to Père Labat, the French founded in 1365 Petit Paris at 'Serrelionne,' a town defended by the fort of the Dieppe and Rouen merchants. The official date of the discovery is 1480, when Pedro de Cintra, one of the gentlemen of Prince Henry 'the Navigator,' visited the place, after his employer's death A.D. 1463. In 1607 William Finch, merchant, found the names of divers Englishmen inscribed on the rocks, especially Thos. Candish, or Cavendish, Captain Lister, and Sir Francis Drake. In 1666 the Sieur Villault de Bellefonds tells us that the river from Cabo Ledo, or Cape Sierra Leone, had several bays, of which the fourth, now St. George's, was called *Baie de France*. This seems to confirm Père Labat. I have noticed the Tasso fort, built by the English in 1695. The next account is by Mr. Surveyor Smith, [Footnote: He is mentioned in the last chapter.] who says 'it is not certain when the English became masters of Sierra Leone, which they possessed unmolested until Roberts the pirate took it in 1720.' Between 1785 and 1787 Lieutenant John Matthews, R.N., resided here, and left full particulars concerning the export slave-trade, apparently the only business carried on by the British.

Modern Sá Leone is the direct outcome of Lord Chief Justice Mansfield's memorable decision delivered in the case of *Jas. Somerset v. Mr. James G. Stewart*, his master. 'The claim of slavery never can be supported; the power claimed never was in use here or acknowledged by law.' This took place on June 21, 1772; yet in 1882 the Gold Coast is not wholly free. [Footnote: Slavery was abolished on the Gold Coast by royal command on December 7, 1874; yet the *Gold Coast Times* declares that domestic slavery is an institution recognised by the law-courts of the Protectorate.]

Many 'poor blacks,' thrust out of doors by their quondam owners, flocked to the 'African's friend,' Granville Sharp, and company. Presently a charitable society, with a large command of funds and Jonas Hanway for chairman, was formed in London; and our people, sorely sorrowing for their newly-found sin, proposed a colony

founded on philanthropy and free labour in Africa. Sá Leone was chosen, by the advice of Mr. Smeathman, an old resident. In 1787 Captain Thompson, agent of the St. George's Bay Company, paid 30_1_ to the Timni chief, Naimbana, *alias* King Tom, for the rocky peninsula, extending twenty square miles from the Rokel to the Ketu River. In the same year he took out the first batch of emigrants, 460 black freed-men and about 60 whites, in the ship *Nautilus*, whose history so far resembled that of the *Mayflower*. Eighty-four perished on the journey, and not a few fell victims to the African climate and its intemperance; but some 400 survived and built for themselves Granville Town. These settlers formed the first colony.

In 1790 the place was attacked by the Timni tribe, to avenge the insult offered to their 'King Jimmy' by the crew of an English vessel, who burnt his town. The people dispersed, and were collected from the bush with some difficulty by Mr. Falconbridge. This official was sent out from England early in 1791, and his wife wrote the book. In the same year (1791) St. George's Bay Company was incorporated under Act 31 Geo. III. c. 55 as the 'Sierra Leone Company.' Amongst the body of ninety-nine proprietors the foremost names are Granville Sharp, William Wilberforce, William Ludlam, and Sir Richard Carr Glynn. They spent 111,500_1_ in establishing and developing the settlement during the first ten and a half years of its existence; and the directors organised a system of government, closely resembling the British constitution, under Lieutenant Clarkson, R.N.

Next year the second batch of colonists came upon the stage. The negroes who had remained loyal to England, and had been settled by the Government in Nova Scotia, found the bleak land utterly unsuitable, and sent home a delegate to pray that they might be restored to Africa. The directors obtained free passage in sixteen ships for 100 white men and 1,831 negroes. Led by Lieutenant Clarkson, they landed upon the Lioness range in March (1792), after losing sixty of their number.

Bred upon maize and rice, bread and milk, the new comers sickened on cassava and ground-nuts. They had no frame-houses, and the rains set in early, about mid-May, before they had found shelter. The whites were attacked with climate-fever, which did not respect even the doctors. Quarrels and insubordination resulted, and 800 of

the little band were soon carried to the grave. Then a famine broke out. A ship from England, freighted with stores, provisions, and frame-houses, was driven back by a storm. Forty-five acres had been promised to each settler-family; it was found necessary to diminish the number to four, and the denseness of the bush rendered even those four unmanageable. Disgusted with Granville Town, the new comers transferred themselves to the present site of Freetown, the northern *Libreville*.

The Company offered annual premiums to encourage the building of farm-houses, stock-rearing, and growing provisions and exportable produce. Under Dr. Afzelius, afterwards Professor at Upsal, who first studied the natural history of the peninsula, they established an experimental garden and model farm. An English gardener was also employed to naturalise the large collection of valuable plants from the East and West Indies and the South Sea Islands supplied by Kew. The Nova Scotians, however, like true slaves, considered agriculture servile and degrading work—a prejudice which, as will be seen, prevails to this day not only in the colony, but throughout the length and breadth of the Dark Continent.

Meanwhile war had broken out between England and France, causing the frequent detention of vessels; and a store-ship in the harbour caught fire, the precursor of a worse misfortune. On a Sunday morning, 1794, as the unfortunates were looking out for the Company's craft (the *Harpy*), a French man-of-war sailed into the roadstead, pillaged the 'church and the apothecary's shop,' and burnt boats as well as town. The assailant then wasted Granville, sailed up to Bance Island, and finally captured two vessels, besides the long-expected *Harpy*. Having thus left his mark, he disappeared, after granting, at the Governor's urgent request, two or three weeks' provision for the whites. Famine followed, with sickness in its train, and the neighbouring slave-dealers added all they could to the sufferings of the settlement.

In the same year Zachary Macaulay, father of Lord Macaulay, became Governor for the first time. The Company also made its earliest effort to open up trade with the interior by a mission, and two of their servants penetrated 300 miles inland to Timbo, capital of that part of Pulo-land. A deputation of chiefs presently visited the set-

tlement to propose terms; but the futility of the negro settler was a complete obstacle to the development of the internal commerce, the main object for which the Company was formed. Yet the colony prospered; in 1798 Freetown numbered, besides public buildings, about 300 houses.

In 1800 the Sierra Leone Company obtained a Charter of Justice from the Crown, authorising the directors to appoint a Governor and Council, and to make laws not repugnant to those of England. During the same year the settlers, roused to wrath by a small ground-rent imposed upon their farms, rose in rebellion. This movement was put down by introducing a third element of 530 Maroons, who arrived in October. They were untamable Coromanti (Gold Coast) negroes who boasted that among blacks they were what the English are among whites, able to fight and thrash all other tribes. They had escaped from their Spanish masters when the British conquered Jamaica in 1655; they took to the mountains, and, joined by desperadoes, they built sundry scattered settlements. [Footnote: In 1738, after regular military operations, the Maroons of Jamaica agreed to act as police and to deliver up runaways. In 1795 the Trelawny men rebelled, and, having inflicted a severe loss upon the troops, were deported to Nova Scotia and Sá Leone.] Introducing these men fostered the ill-feeling which, in the earlier part of the present century, prevented the rival sections from intermarrying. Many of the disaffected Sá Leonites left the colony; some fled to the wilds and the wild ones of the interior, and a few remained loyal.

Rumours of native invasions began to prevail. The Governor was loth to believe that King Tom would thus injure his own interests, until one morning, when forty war-canoes, carrying armed Timnis, were descried paddling round the eastern point. Londoners and Nova Scotians fled to the fort, and next day the Timni drum sounded the attack. The Governor, who attempted to parley, was wounded; but the colonists, seeing that life was at stake, armed themselves and beat off the assailants, when the Maroons of Granville Town completed the rout. After this warning a wall with strong watch-towers was built round Freetown.

Notwithstanding all precautions, another 'Timni rising' took place in 1803. The assailants paddled down in larger numbers from Porto

Loko, landed at Kissy, and assaulted Freetown, headed by a jumping and drumming 'witch-woman.' Divided into three storming parties, they bravely attacked the gates, but they were beaten back without having killed a man. The dead savages lay so thick that the Governor, fearing pestilence, ordered the corpses to be cast into the sea.

The first law formally abolishing slavery was passed, after a twenty years' campaign, by the energy of Messieurs Clarkson, Stephen, Wilberforce, and others, on May 23, 1806. In 1807 the importation of fresh negroes into the colonies became illegal. On March 16, 1808, Sá Leone received a constitution, and was made a depôt for released captives. This gave rise to the preventive squadron, and in due time to a large importation of the slaves it liberated. Locally called 'Cruits,' many of these savages were war-captives; others were criminals condemned to death, whom the wise chief preferred to sell than to slay. With a marvellous obtuseness and want of common sense our Government made Englishmen by wholesale of these wretches, with eligibility to sit on juries, to hold office, and to exercise all the precious rights of Englishmen. Instead of being apprenticed or bound to labour for some seven years under superintendence, and being taught to clear the soil, plant and build, as in similar cases a white man assuredly would have been, they were allowed to loaf, lie, and cheat through a life equally harmful to themselves and others. 'Laws of labour,' says an African writer, [Footnote: *Sierra Leone Weekly Times*, July 30, 1862.] 'may be out of place (date?) in England, but in Sierra Leone they would have saved an entire population from trusting to the allurements of a petty, demoralising trade; they would have saved us the sight of decayed villages and a people becoming daily less capable of bearing the laborious toil of agricultural industry. To handle the hoe has now become a disgrace, and men have lost their manhood by becoming gentlemen.' I shall presently return to this subject.

Thus the four colonies which successively peopled Sá Leone were composed of destitute paupers from England, of fugitive Nova Scotian serviles, of outlawed Jamaican negroes, and of slave-prisoners or criminals from every region of Western and inner Africa.

The first society of philanthropists, the 'Sierra Leone Company,' failed, but not without dignity. It had organised a regular government, and even coined its own money. In the British Museum a silver piece like a florin bears on the obverse 'Sierra Leone Company, Africa,' surrounding a lion guardant standing on a mountain; the reverse shows between the two numbers 50 and 50 two joined hands, representing the union of England and Africa, and the rim bears 'half-dollar piece, 1791,' the year of the creation of the colony. The Company's intentions were pure; its hopes and expectations were lofty, and the enthusiasts flattered themselves that they had proved the practicability of civilising Africa. But debt and native wars ended their career, and transferred, on January 1, 1808, their rights to the Crown. The members, however, did not lose courage, but at once formed the African Institution, the parent of the Royal Geographical Society.

The government of the Crown colony has undergone some slight modifications. In 1866 it was made, with very little forethought, a kind of government-general, the centre of rule for all the West African settlements. The unwisdom of this step was presently recognised, and Sá Leone is now under a charter dated December 17, 1874, the governor-in-chief having command over the administration of Bathurst, Gambia. Similarly farther south, Lagos, now the Liverpool of West Africa, has been bracketed, foolishly enough, with the Gold Coast.

The liberated, called by the people 'Cruits,' and officially 'recaptives,' soon became an important factor. In 1811 they numbered 2,500 out of 4,500; and between June 1819 and January 1833 they totalled 27,167 hands. They are now represented by about seventeen chief, and two hundred minor, tribes. A hundred languages, according to Mr. Koelle, increased to a hundred and fifty by Bishop Vidal, and reduced to sixty by Mr. Griffith, are spoken in the streets of Freetown, a 'city' which in 1860 numbered 17,000 and now 22,000 souls. The inextricably mixed descendants of the liberated may be a total of 35,430, more than half the sum of the original settlement, 53,862. Being mostly criminals, and *ergo* more energetic spirits, they have been the most petted and patronised by colonial rule. There were governors who attempted to enforce our wise old regulations touching apprenticeship, still so much wanted in the merchant na-

vy; but disgust, recall, or death always shortened their term of office. Naturally enough, the 'Cruits' were fiercely hated by Colonists, Settlers, and Maroons. Mrs. Melville reports an elderly woman exclaiming, 'Well, 'tis only my wonder that we (settlers) do not rise up in one body and *kill and slay, kill and slay!* Dem Spanish and Portuguese sailors were quite right in making slaves. I would do de same myself, suppose I were in dere place.' 'He is only a liberated!' is a favourite sneer at the new arrivals; so in the West Indies, by a curious irony of fate, 'Willyfoss nigger' is a term of abuse addressed to a Congo or Guinea 'recaptive.' But here all the tribes are bitterly hostile to one another, and all combine against the white man. After the fashion of the Gold Coast they have formed themselves into independent caucuses called 'companies,' who set aside funds for their own advancement and for the ruin of their rivals.

The most powerful and influential races are two—the Aku and the Ibo. The Akus [Footnote: This is a nickname from the national salutation, 'Aku, ku, ku?' ('How d'ye do?')] or Egbas of Yoruba, the region behind Lagos, the Eyeos of the old writers, so called from their chief town, 'Oyo,' are known by their long necklaces of tattoo. They are termed the Jews of Western Africa; they are perfect in their combination, and they poison with a remarkable readiness. The system of Egba 'clanship' is a favourite, sometimes an engrossing, topic for invective with the local press, who characterise this worst species of 'trades-union,' founded upon intimidation and something worse, as the 'Aku tyranny' and the 'Aku Inquisition.' The national proverb speaks the national sentiment clearly enough: '*Okân kau lè ase ibi, ikoko li asi ìmolle bi atojù ìmolle taù, ke atojù ibi pella, bi aba kù ara enni ni isni 'ni*' ('A man must openly practise the duties of kinship, even though he may privately belong to a (secret) club; when he has attended the club he must also attend to the duties of kinship, because when he dies his kith and kin are those who bury him').

The Ibos, or 'Eboes' of American tales, are even more divided; still they feel and act upon the principle 'Union is strength.' This large and savage tribe, whose headquarters are at Abo, about the head of the Nigerian delta, musters strong at Sá Leone; here they are the Swiss of the community; the Kruboyes, and further south the Kabenda-men being the 'Paddies.' It is popularly said that while the Aku will do anything for money, the Ibo will do anything for re-

venge. Both races are astute in the extreme and intelligent enough to work harm. Unhappily, their talents rarely take the other direction. In former days they had faction-fights: the second eastern district witnessed the last serious disturbance in 1834. Now they do battle under the shadow of the law. 'Aku constables will not, unless in extreme cases, take up their delinquent countrymen, nor will an Ebo constable apprehend an Ebo thief; and so on through all the different tribes,' says the lady 'Resident of Sierra Leone.' If the majority of the jury be Akus, they will unhesitatingly find the worst of Aku criminals innocent, and the most innocent of whites, Ibos, or Timnis guilty. The Government has done its best to weld all those races into one, and has failed. Many, however, are becoming Moslems, as at Lagos, and this change may have a happier effect by introducing the civilisation of El-Islam.

Trial by jury has proved the reverse of a blessing to most non-English lands; in Africa it is simply a curse. The model institution becomes here, as in the United States, a better machine for tyranny than any tyrant, except a free people, ever invented. The British Constitution determines that a man shall be tried by his peers. Half a dozen of his peers at Sá Leone may be full-blooded blacks, liberated slaves, half-reformed fetish-worshippers, sometimes with a sneaking fondness for Shángo, the Egba god of fire; and, if not criminals and convicts in their own country, at best paupers clad in dishclouts and palm-oil. The excuse is that a white jury cannot be collected among the forty or fifty eligibles in Freetown. It is vain to 'challenge,' for other negroes will surely take the place of those objected to. No one raises the constitutional question, 'Are these half-reclaimed savages my peers?' And if he did, Justice would sternly reply, 'Yes.' The witnesses will forswear themselves, not, like our 'posters,' for half a crown, but gratis, because the plaintiff or defendant is a fellow-tribesman. The judge may be 'touched with a tar-brush;' but, be he white as milk, he must pass judgment according to verdict. This state of things recalls to mind the Ireland of the early nineteenth century, when the judges were prefects armed with a penal code, and the jurymen vulgar, capricious, and factious partisans.

Surely such a caricature of justice, such an outrage upon reason, was never contemplated by British law or lawgiver. Our forefathers

never dreamt that the free institutions for which they fought and bled during long centuries would thus be prostituted, would be lavished upon every black 'recaptive,' be he thief, wizard, or assassin, after living some fourteen days in a black corner of the British empire. Even the Irishman and the German must pass some five years preparing themselves in the United States before they become citizens. Sensible Africans themselves own that 'the negro race is not fitted, without a guiding hand, to exercise the privileges of English citizenship.' A writer of the last century justly says, 'Ideas of perfect liberty have too soon been given to this people, considering their utter ignorance. If one of them were asked why he does not repair his house, clear his farm, mend his fence, or put on better clothes, he replies that "King no give him work dis time," and that he can do no more than "burn bush and plant little cassader for yam."'

But a kind of *hysterica passio* seems to have mastered the cool common sense of the nation—a fury of repentance for the war about the Asiento contract, for building Bristol and Liverpool with the flesh and blood of the slave, and for the 2,130,000 negroes supplied to Jamaica between 1680 and 1786. Like a veteran devotee Great Britain began atoning for the coquetries of her hot youth. While Spain and Portugal have passed sensible laws for gradual emancipation, England, with a sublime folly, set free by a stroke of the pen, at the expense of twenty millions sterling the born and bred slaves of Jamaica. The result was an orgy for a week, a systematic refusal to work, and for many years the ruin of the glorious island.

If the reader believes I have exaggerated the state of things long prevalent at Sá Leone, he is mistaken. And he will presently see a confirmation of these statements in the bad name which the Sá Leonite bears upon the whole of the western coast. Yet, I repeat, the colony is changed for the better, physically by a supply of pure water, morally by the courage which curbed the black abuse. Twenty years ago to call a negro 'nigger' was actionable; many a 5_l. has been paid for the indulgence of *lèse-majesté* against the 'man and brother;' and not a few 50_l. when the case was brought into the civil courts. After a rough word the Sá Leonite would shake his fist at you and trot off exclaiming, 'Lawyer Rainy (or Montague) lib for town!' A case of mild assault, which in England would be settled by a police-magistrate and a fine of five shillings, became at Freetown a