

LIFE ON THE GOLD COAST.

Some time back Sir William MacGregor, the Governor of the Gold Coast Colony, of Lagos, made application to Queensland for surveyors for that territory. Several gentlemen accepted appointments, and amongst these was Mr. Stiles, a Queensland surveyor, who, with his wife, left Brisbane in August, last year, for Adelaide, whence they proceeded to England by the Oroya, and three days after landing in England they sailed for the Gold Coast, arriving there on 18th October.

A private letter received from Mrs. Stiles by friends in Brisbane gives the following first impressions of life on the Gold Coast: —Cape Coast Castle, 3rd November, 1902.—I am afraid it will be some time before this reaches you, as everything has to go to England first of all. On Saturday, 18th October, we landed at Sekondl, quite a new town. It was simply awful landing in a surf boat. I was slung over the side of the ship in a chair; it was a horrible feeling, swinging in the air. There were about twelve natives in the surf boat, and one caught me by the foot, and steadied me down. We had about a mile and a-half of surf to go through to the shore. It is really wonderful to see how they manage the boat. They use short little three-pronged paddles, five on each side, and one at the stern for steering. One native stands up and watches the rollers. They generally let two pass, and then paddle furiously, and get on the crest of the third (which is generally the highest). I had on a waterproof, so did not get wet, but all the others were soaked. Major Watherston met us on landing. He is the head of the Gold Coast survey; a very nice man. They worked all Sunday and Monday fixing things up, and left on Tuesday morning early for Tarkiva, the headquarters of the Royal Engineers. I was left till Thursday at the hotel in Sekondi.

There was one man in bed with fever, and the manager (a German); all the rest are native men. They never allow the women to go into a house. I got on all right. The only other white woman in Sekondl came to see me. She is a nurse in the hospital.

On Thursday I went up to Tarkiva, through the thickest Jungle I have ever seen. It is so dense and airless that there are no birds even living in it. Tarkiva is not bad, but it poured with rain the whole time. Everything got mildewed. If you take off your boots, they are green with mould in a couple of hours. Altogether it is not a country that any one would choose to live in; the worst parts of Queensland are a paradise in comparison. The natives carry you in hammocks, four to each. I soon had to get out of mine, as I got quite seasick. I walked: but John liked it and went to sleep. We reached Arama, and slept there that night. On Wednesday we got to Kamenda. and on Thursday to Elmina. It is a wonderful castle, built in 1655 by the Portuguese. There are 500 rooms in it, and it is simply beyond description. We had a suite of rooms that used to be occupied by the first British Governor. Of course, they were dusty and unused, but enormous, and beautifully furnished. We were taken by the British soldiers, who have charge of the place, to see the prisoners in the dungeons, right under ground. It was awful to see them behind the bars. They had been there ever since the siege of Coomassie, and they had only seen Lady Hodgson before seeing me. She was with her husband all through the siege. King Prempeh (who was taken prisoner with these chiefs that I saw) was sent to Seychelles. You could easily get the book. "The Siege of Kumassi." by Lady Hodgson, in your School of Arts, and it is worth reading. From Elmina we came to Cape Coast Castle. It used to be the capital of the Gold Coast Colony, but owing to its unhealthy position it has been almost deserted by Europeans, and the capital is now Acra. On Friday we

not here (Cape Coast Castle) and here we have been ever since. . . . We have very nice quarters in what was once the hospital. To-night I am alone, as John and his two assistants (Messrs. Boyd and Townsend) have gone out to the camp, about three miles from here. I have a negro man servant, who is very proud of working for a white "mammie." There is another white woman here, but she is married to a nigger.

The camp is a very large one—fifty carriers, thirty-three hammock men (fifteen for Messrs. Boyd and Towns and, and eighteen for John and self), and three men who are sort of head men and interpreters for the others. It seems funny to be in a country where there are no horses or cattle. The only way I can tell the difference between the sheep and the goat is that the sheep have their tails turned down, and the goats' tails are turned up ; both have long hair, and are exactly the same size. The mutton is fairly good, but we have to pay 1s. per lb. for it. We get any quantity of bananas, oranges, paw-paws, yams, &c. but they are all a fair price, so I am afraid we won't be able to save much money. There is a steamer in from England to-day, but the surf was so high that no one could land. The Post Office boat tried to get out for the mails, but was upset. We are both very well, and don't feel the heat at all. The English people growl a lot, but it is not really hot. People here are quite interested to meet Australians, and while in London we got extra attention because we were Australians.

A writer in the " Outlook " gives an old Boer's simple but telling account of how the British infantry stormed the Boer position. " Ah ! they were brave," he says. " those stupid khakis, as no other men were brave in this war for if the soldier fell on either side, the other would not look to the right or to the left, but come on slowly, slowly, but always on. I have been through the war from Talana Hill to the peace; and, believe me, your Infantry have won the Transvaal and Free State for England." A curious comment this on the celebrated message "unmounted men preferred."



QUEENSLANDERS BOUND FOR THE GOLD COAST.

Recently several surveyors have left Queensland for the West Coast of South Africa to fill appointments under Sir William MacGregor, Governor of Lagos. Among them was Mr. Stiles, who was accompanied by his wife, who relates some of their experiences in a letter published in this issue. This group, taken on board the Oroya at Marseilles en route to Lagos, includes Mr. and Mrs. Stiles and two other Queensland surveyors.

William Crompton may be the gentleman second from the left in the front row.

The photograph below comes from Website and appears to have been taken at the same time –

