

What may be called for sake of a short descriptive term a "regimental system" is the one best adapted to the circumstances of the Auxiliary Forces, at least the "regimental medical unit" or staff should form the basis of any more elaborate medical organisation all branches of these forces may possess. The medical unit the Auxiliary Forces most urgently require is one akin to that called a Sanitation Unit, described by Captain Harvey in the March number of the JOURNAL OF THE ROYAL ARMY MEDICAL CORPS; a medical unit of that nature would provide regimental units of the Auxiliary Forces with a trained staff for adequately dealing with those sanitary and medical questions which constantly and immediately affect them. A period of training in camp is ordained for all branches of the Auxiliary Forces, so there occurs annually a necessity for the practical application at home of methods essential to the well-being of a force in the field. During the inter-camp periods the regimental medical staff would discharge those routine duties towards their units, which, in the Regular Army, are ordinarily undertaken by a detachment of the Royal Army Medical Corps. The auxiliary medical corps, owing to their present distribution, are little fitted to provide regimental units with the requisite medical *personnel*, particularly during the inter-camp periods, and probably the most they can do for the Auxiliary Forces is to provide them with such form of field medical unit as meets their needs when large training camps are formed. But possibly the members of the regimental medical units could be affiliated to the medical corps, though whatever their connection with the corps may be there is no question where their permanent place is, and to secure it it is expedient to adopt the practice which renders their position least equivocal.



## Travel, &c.

### SIERRA LEONE.

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THE steady rise in importance which has taken place in recent years of the whole of Africa, is to be observed on its West Coast nearly as much as in most other parts of the Dark Continent. With the increase of our knowledge of Africa has come an improvement in the conditions of life and living, not only of the peoples whose native country it is, but also of those Europeans who, year by year, in increasing numbers, visit its shores either on pleasure or business bent.

Sierra Leone, the subject of this article, is a part most of us have heard of, in common with the rest of the West Coast of Africa, as one of the most pestilential quarters of the globe. Formerly it was known as the "White Man's Grave," and rightly so, as few who braved its depressing and malarious climate for any length of time returned to tell their experiences; and even if they did so, they were probably too weakened in constitution and broken in health to be able to get much enjoyment out of life for many years to come. These conditions have now, thanks to the progress of science, the great discoveries of recent years in medicine, and the improvements in sanitation, undergone a material change for the better. Europeans can now go there with a reasonable hope that they will return to their native country again, and also that they will not be entirely shattered in health when they do so. But for all that, it is not a part of the globe to be visited carelessly at all times of the year.

January and February (the dry season) are the months of the year when it can be most enjoyed. On some days during these months the Harmattan wind blows from the Sahara Desert. It is dry and refreshing, in spite of its colour. When it is blowing, the whole atmosphere is loaded with a fine dust which causes a red mist and haze throughout these regions. So much so, that on arrival at Freetown one day towards the end of February, we were scarcely able to discern the houses on some of the neighbouring hills within half a mile of where the ship anchored.

We landed, and on the quay found hammocks and their native bearers (fig. 1)—which a kind friend had provided—waiting for us. In we got with some difficulty—it is not an easy matter to do so at first, without going out the other side—and were carried stretched at full length by four sturdy natives, who poise their burden on their heads and carry one smoothly and safely once they have started. It is wonderful how these native "boys" carry one for long distances up hill and down dale, over rough and smooth ground, without ever making a false step. A really good lot of "boys" take a pride in carrying one well and quickly, and most cheerful and willing they are when treated properly. The hammock is practically the only means of conveyance on this part of the coast, as horses do not thrive well, and motors and bicycles have not yet been introduced in great numbers. The first motor car ever seen in Sierra Leone arrived about the middle of 1904, and was a great source of amusement and interest to the natives. The country round Freetown is too hilly and the roads too bad



finish about them that one finds in similar work from the East Indies and some other native countries. To an amateur it seems that much might be done to develop this industry or, at any rate, that of cotton growing: at present there is little or no systematic work carried out in this line of business. In some parts of the Protectorate there is much rubber to be obtained in the forests, and this is collected by the natives, who are now beginning to realise its value as an article of trade. The method of collecting is by cutting niches in the stem of the rubber vine, and allowing the raw rubber to flow out, and subsequently forming it into large masses for export. Another important article of trade, and one much valued by the natives, is the kola nut. It is something like a chestnut in shape, slightly bitter but not disagreeable to the taste. If one of those nuts is presented to a traveller on arrival at a town or village, it denotes friendship. When chewed slowly, they allay thirst and ward off fatigue, and enable the eater to travel long distances without food. These nuts are exported great distances, in some cases, it is said, even across the continent to the Soudan and Arabia. Other products of Sierra Leone are rice, coffee, cassada, ground nuts, mangoes, bananas, and various other fruits. In some parts of the Protectorate there is much big game; it is, however, hard to find at some periods of the year, owing to the densely-wooded nature of the country, but when towards the end of the dry season the undergrowth is thinned, and the grass burnt by the natives for cultivation of the land, herds of antelope and buffalo (bush cow) are to be seen. Elephants are also numerous in some districts, but their tusks are said not to grow to so great a size as those of elephants on the East Coast, though the animals themselves are quite as big. The natives, however, procure a certain amount of ivory and export it. Many of the rivers abound with hippopotami, and nearly all with crocodiles, which latter may often be surprised, lying asleep in the sun on the river bank or on the branch of a large tree overhanging the water. Leopards are plentiful in some places, and much dreaded by the natives. Sometimes one is able to obtain their cubs, and very nice and interesting pets they make, too, when young, being perfectly tame and amiable with those they know, and who feed and are kind to them. Guinea fowl, pigeons, francolin (bush fowl) and duck are also found in considerable numbers in some districts, and afford some excellent sport.

As before mentioned, Freetown and the surrounding parts are inhabited by numerous descendants of freed slaves, as well as some Arabs, Syrians, and other African tribes. Up country from

the coast each tribe is more distinct, and has its own territory in the Protectorate under its own particular paramount Chief (fig. 2), or "King" as he is generally called. Among the most important tribes of the Protectorate are the Mendis, Timminis, Korankos and Limbas. The Timminis on the whole are the most civilised, and are to a great extent under Mohammedan influence, and therefore more educated and intelligent. They are also the most warlike of these tribes, though the Mendis are not far behind them in this respect, and are their natural enemies. The Mendis are practically



FIG. 2.—"King" Bayanki of Mayanki, Head of the Lokkoh Tribe.

pagans, and have as yet been little affected by Mohammedan influence, which has gradually spread across the Dark Continent from the East. Until recently they indulged in cannibalism. Their chief is a fine old man and most friendly to the British, as are most of the other chiefs, though some of their powerful satellites are not so. There are other less important tribes than those mentioned, such as the Lokkohs, the Connahs, and the Susus; these latter are a fine race, but the tribe is divided, part being in French territory and part in British. Along the

Eastern frontier is a warlike tribe, the Kissis, against whom a small and successful expedition was recently sent to stop their raids across the frontier into the Protectorate. Close to this frontier the little native village of Waima is situated, where in 1893 French and British forces were accidentally engaged in attacking each other in mistake for a common enemy. The small cemetery with the graves of those who were killed is cared for by the Government, an old native, who lives in a hut close by, getting a retaining fee to keep the rough wooden fence and graves in order.

The dwellings of all the tribes are made of the stems of trees let into the ground, with branches interwoven transversely through them. Over this kind of trellis work mud is plastered to a thickness of some 6 to 12 inches. The whole is covered in by a roof of coarse grass thatch, thus forming a structure most readily destructible by fire. Great care has consequently to be taken by the inhabitants to prevent sparks being blown about in dry weather, as their whole town may be destroyed in a very short time should a single hut accidentally catch fire.

Some of the native customs are peculiar, and among them one of the most striking is the funeral ceremony of the Lokkoh tribe. After the body has been brought out of the house, the bearers turn round and endeavour to re-enter the house with the corpse, but are stopped and pushed back by the deceased's friends or other occupants of the house. This is repeated three times by a species of more or less vigorous rushes towards the door. Other houses of the deceased's relatives are attacked in the same manner, but if entrance is not gained the corpse is carried outside the village, and laid beside a rough grave about two feet deep. One by one, the near relatives come close to the corpse, bend over it, and call the deceased by name to come back or answer, and last of all the nearest relation, who, on receiving no reply, says "He"—or "She," as the case may be—"is not here." The body is then placed in the grave and the loose earth thrown over it as quickly as possible. No one except the bearers, who are always of the same sex as the deceased, actually touch the body during the ceremony. Sometimes, if there happens to be a native in possession of a gun in the village, a final salute will be fired over the grave. Before leaving, the relatives place food and water near, to speed the spirit of the departed on its long journey, and those who have witnessed the ceremony take up a handful of dust from the grave, throwing it over their shoulder behind them as they leave the spot, this last

act being to prevent the ghost of the departed following or molesting them afterwards.

Though Sierra Leone can hardly be called a health resort, there is much to interest one in its peoples, with their quaint customs, curious ideas of civilisation and religion, and their modes of life, &c. There is also the country itself, many parts of which are practically unknown, and yet full of Nature's curios for those who care to look for them.

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### SANITATION IN JAPAN.

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THE customs and domestic economy of the Japanese are so different to any other nation, civilised or uncivilised, that a study of their methods of personal hygiene and disease prevention well repays one's curiosity.

Those with æsthetic natures may scorn the sanitarian who, in the land of flowers and scenery, can waste a glance on such material objects as drains and water supplies. But during two tours of leave spent in various parts of Japan, I may as well confess that my enthusiasm in temples, curios, and iris fields began to wane, and my interest in the manners and customs of the people to increase.

The "back to the land" theory is seen here in its ideal sense—no nitrogen is wasted; the sewage of the villages being conveyed along open drains in front of the houses to a cess-pool just outside the town, to be later deposited on the rice-fields and vegetable gardens. This is a frequent cause of enteric amongst visitors to the country, who do not follow the native custom of eschewing raw vegetables in any form, and boiling even radishes. These open drains make themselves very evident in the hot weather, and though I will not vouch for the truth of the statement that in Nagasaki one is directed to one's destination by the second or third smell to the right, they are certainly one of the characteristics of the country.

All the large cities are provided with a water-supply, and modern sand filter-beds. In the Tokyo Exhibition the public are educated to the use of these beds by large glass models of plate cultures of *Bacillus prodigiosus* before and after the water has