

**ANCIENT FORTS**

**AND**

**CASTLES**

**OF THE**

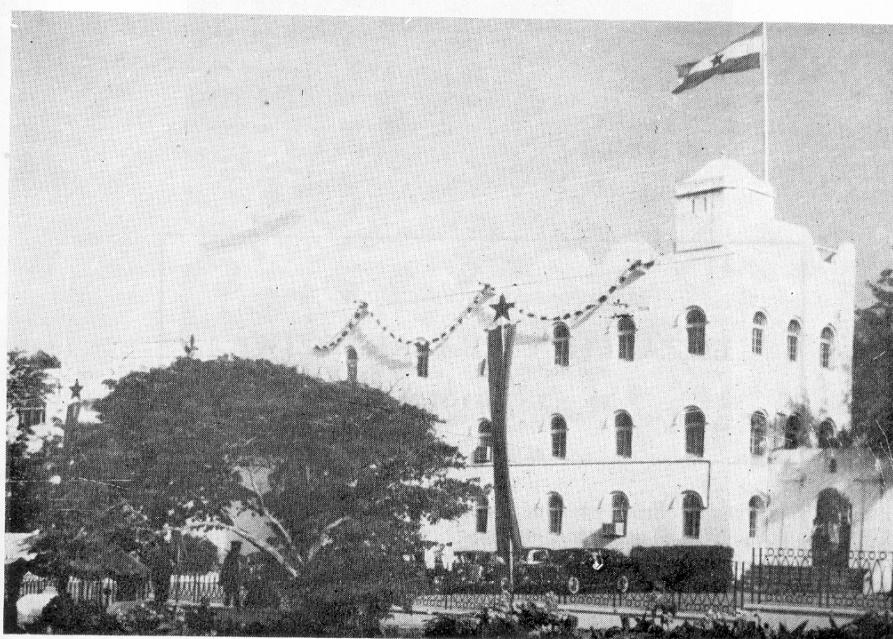
**GOLD COAST  
(GHANA)**

**by**

**DR. ISAAC S. EPHSON**



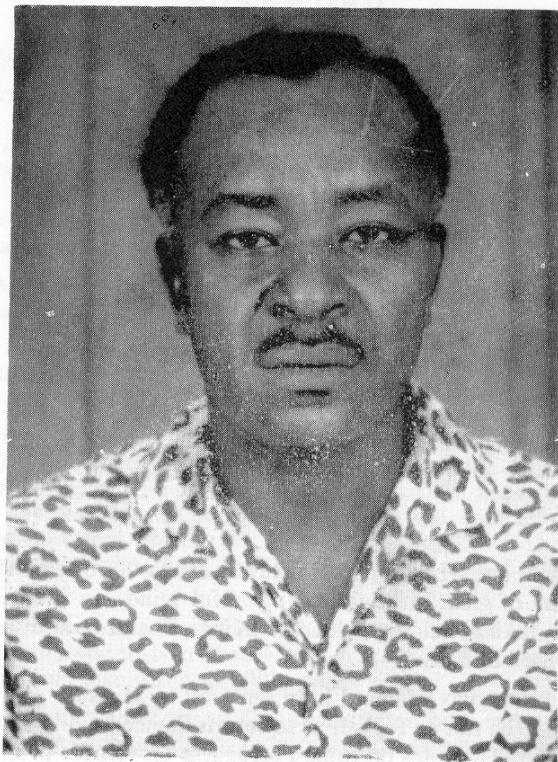
**ANCIENT FORTS AND CASTLES**  
**of the**  
**GOLD COAST**  
**(GHANA)**



*The Christiansborg Castle — once the seat of the Governments of Portugal, Sweden, Denmark and Britain respectively, in West Africa and now the seat of an All-African Government of Ghana.*

*It was built by Portugal in 1662.*





Dr. ISAAC S. EPHSON

Economist, anthropologist, political theorist, novelist and a lawyer, Dr Isaac S. Ephson (47), hails from Cape Coast, Ghana. He was educated in the Universities of Dublin, London and Geneva, and in the Honourable Society of Lincoln's Inn (London), where he was called to the bar.

An author on political and historical subjects, and a novelist of topics with legal bias, Dr Ephson has gained a high reputation with the publication of remarkably few books—**Reflections and Refractions on the Ghana Draft Constitution, Gallery of Gold Coast Celebrities (1632-1958), The Murder of the rich miser and The Kidnapping of the millionaire's daughter.** (The last two books are not yet out).

Dr Ephson has travelled extensively throughout Western Europe and several parts of Western and Northern Africa in the course of his academic researches.

His hobbies include hiking, travelling, reading and writing.

He is married to Nora (nee Heather), and they have two children, Leslie (16) and Elizabeth (14).

(by Rita J. Williams, London, N.W. 2.)



In 1501, King John III, King of Portugal, sent out to Elmina as governor one Lopo Soares, "a man of great learning and powerful mind, an intimate and a favourite of the King." On taking his leave of the King, Soares kissed the King's hand, and finally the King advised him thus:

"Lopo Soares, I have sent you to Mina;  
be not so foolish as to return thence a poor man."

(Furley J. T.: Notes on some Portuguese Governors p. 194)



## FOREWORD

by

Albert Hammond, B.A. (Hons) London, Dip Ed. (Lond.)  
Formerly Executive Secretary, Ghana Institute Of Art and Culture

IN the pageant of our history, the Castles and Forts of Ghana retain even today associations which reverbrate all over the world—associations of power struggles between the warring European nations, of the shameless exploiters of resistance to foreign traders, memories of buccaneers and slavers who linked Africa to the New World by a despicable human bondage and greed.

They remain as visible warnings and challenges to free, unbound Africa, memorials of the history of our land for over 300 years.

Together they constitute important records, as much by their unique architectural history and value as by the light they cast on the background of the history of Ghana and of Africa.

Until the establishment of the Monuments and Relics Commission, under the Chairmanship of Sir Leslie Mac Carthy in 1945 which merged with the Ghana Museum Board to form the Ghana Museum and Monuments Board in 1957, many of the 37 castles and forts were left in a hopeless state of neglect, resulting in the complete decay of eight of which there are now no traces whatsoever; Fort Duma, Fort Elise Carthago, Fort Sophie Louise, Fort Witsen, John Kabe's Fort, Fort Fredericksburg alias, Fort Royal, and the Fort at Winneba.

It is thanks to the salutary services of the Ghana Museum and Monuments Board that today many of the castles and forts are being kept in good condition and the ruins of those that are beyond repair are also being carefully preserved.

The story of the castles and forts of Ghana has often been recounted by many a historian. There is yet every likelihood that, today's world has inherited only a small fraction of the information that could be made available on so vast a theme.

In his present book *Ancient Forts and Castles of the Gold Coast (Ghana)*, Dr Isaac S. Ephson has, by patient and careful research, collected the stories from diverse sources and presented them in a single, concise and readable volume. To his self-appointed task, Dr Ephson brings qualities of a lucid style, a masterly grasp of the history of this country and a close personal knowledge of the castles and forts. The account that he gives in this new book will be acknowledged as an essential reading for all men and women who realize the importance of being well-informed on the many factors that have contributed to the birth of our present dynamic society of Ghana.

For, indeed, the story of the birth of our new, free and independent nation is the story of a slow and long evolutionary process which was complicated by the arrival of European powers.

I sincerely hope that this book will be read both in Ghana and abroad. I hope especially that it will be read by the younger generation who will learn from it the birth pangs that Africa has had to suffer in order to deliver the inspired nation, that is Ghana, and her sister states of Africa.

ALBERT HAMMOND

GHANA INSTITUTE OF ART AND CULTURE,  
ACCRA, GHANA.



## PREFACE

THE forts and castles of the Gold Coast (Ghana) are undoubtedly the most visible relics of the Triangular Trade of the past few centuries. They relate the history of the once flourishing trade that intimately bound the commercial regions of Europe, Africa and America together. They are also the remaining links, albeit dormant, of the Castle Trade—the systematic and regular trade that once flourished in West Africa between accredited European trading companies and the indigenous African people, as opposed to the “unauthorised” and unlicensed trade between European interlopers and the local people.

The former concerned the prosperous trade wherein the notorious Slave Trade featured a great deal, leading to the founding of the American state (a supreme World Power of our own day) and the latter concerned the fierce antagonism among various warring parties, to wit, European Powers, European nations and Africans, and thirdly, the African peoples themselves.

Even though each of these two features of commercial activities by itself contains a wealth of details to fill millions of pages of history books, they are but a minute part of the history of the ancient forts and castles of Ghana. From whatever angle, the reader looks at, these forts and castles can be written on without end, so to speak.

Indeed, there was generally no human pursuit in West Africa, legitimate or illegitimate, that ever escaped the attention of those who once owned or occupied these forts and castles. The history of government administration, education, religion, architecture, health, communication, transport, agriculture, commerce, the judiciary, or whatever else the reader can think of affecting the Gold Coast (Ghana) has its roots at these ancient forts and castles.

Consequently, what is of paramount importance to us today is the contribution to this country's growth, development and progress by the builders of these fortresses. These nations were respectively Portugal, the Netherlands, England, France, Sweden, Denmark and Brandenburg (the Prussian portion of Germany). There is no doubt also that our contact with these nations created a number of problems of far reaching consequences, which problems further raise the wider question as to “whether the African would have progressed faster in the absence of and without the co-operation and assistance of the white-settlers—the Castle-dwellers.” This is a matter on which opinions differ much, but the reader can make up his own mind after reading the text that follows.

Furthermore, it is worthy of note that of all the African countries it is only the Gold Coast (now Ghana), wherein at least fifty forts and castles were built. In fact, except the Gambia, Sierra Leone, and Whydah (Dahomey) that had one fort or so each, no other West African country had so many forts and castles as this country possessed. *A priori*, the Gold Coast was for the four centuries past the live-wire of the West African trade of the various European nations. Thus, Ghana's contact with Europe goes a good many centuries back—longer than most African countries'. Also, whether that accounts for the more rapid progress here, and consequently its gaining independence earlier than the other African countries is another matter. Here again, an answer can be found after reading the text that follows.

But the subject of the ancient forts and castles of the Gold Coast itself is one that has received the effective attention of hundreds of authors—both ancient and modern. It is a subject that was earliest dealt with even before the first castle was built in 1482. So also were the numerous and thrilling tales narrated to us orally about them by our great grand-mothers, grand-mothers and mothers. There are, therefore, tons of literature on them



written already in the finest details—in some cases, they are of interest to archeologists only, in others to architects, poets or to specialised history or divinity students.

Regretably, many of these books run into hundreds of pages and are in small prints, which hardly attract the interest of the ordinary reader. In other cases, they are written in foreign languages, that is, languages other than English. In the event, the average Ghanaian not to mention the serious-minded educated one, hardly shows interest in reading any of them. The result then is that all this important subject which relates to his progress has no appeal to anybody—a situation more woeful than words really can describe. Therefore, there is a gap that needs to be filled—a defect that can and should be healed in view of the re-awakening of interest in our past. Thus, we shall be able at least to trace what once linked us to important parts of the world as mentioned before and how that has affected our national growth and development today. We shall then be able to effectively build on a known and solid foundation. It is for this reason principally that I choose to write on this subject—and by an entirely different approach, to obviate the difficulties facing us and to meet the circumstances of the time.

Conscious, therefore, of all the handicaps and needs afore-mentioned, I have written this book in such a way as to offset and counteract any disinterestedness that may upset the average reader. The procedure I adopt is a natural one—as if answering certain specific questions—a method which would assist the reader however indifferent he is to make him think at the same time as he reads the text:

- CHAPTER 1. Why were the forts and castles built ?
2. Whence came those who built them ?
  3. Where were these forts and castles built ?
  4. When and how many of them were built ?
  5. Who at all lived in them ?
  6. What happened therein ?
  7. Did any events of importance and significance take place therein ?
  8. What problems faced the owners or occupants thereof ?
  9. Why is it that more of them were not built all over the country ?
  10. Whom did they avail ?
  11. Which of them are still surviving ?
  12. Is there any justification for building them at all ?

By this plan, I should think that the reader would be able to learn more and more by the time he completes reading the twelve chapters of the book. The reader can however obtain further and more detailed information from some of the specialised books listed under A SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY. The works of the various authors in this list are very important, as each one of them has special peculiarities of its own. I am grateful to them all for providing me with very valuable sources of reference, without which my task would have been much more Herculean.

In the course of my researches, I travelled a great deal—from library to library, from museum to museum, from archive to archive, from castle to castle, from fort to fort, from university to university, and from personality to personality—in different countries and in different parts of the world, principally in Ghana, Sierra Leone, Senegal, Gambia, Morocco, Great Britain, Portugal, Spain, the Netherlands, France, Sweden, Denmark and Germany for a period exceeding six years.

It is my pleasure indeed to express my gratitude to each and everyone of the several officers of those institutions which I visited, and whose kind assistance contributed greatly to my task. In as much as I would have liked to record my formal appreciation to them for their benefaction, I regret that in view of their numerical strength, I am unable to mention their names, even though most of them definitely insisted that they would like to remain anonymous.

In conclusion, I would very much like to express my sincere thanks to my former secretary, Miss Oriel Dowuona (now Mrs Heward-Mills) who helped me a great deal in typing my field-notes in the compilation of a manuscript for this book in the early stages; and to Mr Albert Hammond of the Ministry of Education, Ghana, a renowned Ghanaian historian, who was kind enough to write the foreword to this book.

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*Fort San Jorge d'Elmina built on 19th January, 1482, by the Portuguese — the first European building in this country.*



## CHAPTER 1

## RAISON D'ETRE

THE forts and castles of the Gold Coast, all of which are invariably situated on the coast, are easily the oldest buildings in this country. Most of them were built during the hey-days of the slave-trade—at a time when human beings were sold just as commonly as many commercial products of our own day

The sale of hundreds of slaves after cessation of tribal wars, their storage in the forts and castles, their transportation through the tunnels underneath the forts and castles, etc. to America and the West Indies would easily arouse the suspicion of a visitor to these fortresses that they were built solely for slave-trading purposes.

But that was really not the case; for these signs alone are not enough to provide even the barest minimum evidence that the forts and castles were originally built purposely for storing commercial slaves. *Alas*, the slave-raiding Moslems of North Africa and the Sahara never stored their victims in forts and castles, nor in any fortified thick-set edifices of like description, yet they traded in slaves on a very wide scale. Nor were the slaves of ancient Judea, Greece, Rome, Phoenicia or Babylon accommodated in any such peculiar edifices.

It is necessary then to find out the primary reason for building the forts and castles, if they were not built for slave-trading purposes.

The answer is provided by a single word—defence: to protect their trade monopoly to the fullest length.

As will be shown in greater detail, the first European nation credited with erecting the first castle on the Western Coast of Africa was Portugal. Their coming to this part of Africa was not by mere accident, but it followed a systematic plan to explore a sea-route to India and the Far East, as the overland route through the Mediterranean lands were inhabited by Islamic Moslems who were continually at war with Christian Europe.

Oriental products (e.g. ivory, silk, spices and sugar) had for centuries fetched very high prices in European markets, and it was mainly the well-to-do who could afford to buy them. Moreover, these oriental products which sold in European markets were paid for in gold, a precious metal which about this time was scarce in all Europe after the Wars of Roses. But it was not easy either to have access to the source of these supplies, more so as Islamic Moslem countries, via the Eastern Mediterranean between Europe and the East, were a formidable barrier. Thus, an outlet via the western Mediterranean, that is, the Atlantic Ocean, was the only alternative route open to explorers of Christian Europe.

The opportunity to utilise the Atlantic route offered itself most favourable at this time. Prince Henry the Navigator had learnt with great interest and astonishment from some Moorish prisoners "that beyond the Sahara, to the south—beyond that supposed torrid zone or fiery belt, which offered an insurmountable barrier to communication between the peoples of the northern and southern hemispheres—there was a country rich in gold and ivory, fertile and populous. It was called by the Moors, who seemed to have made special mention of the Djollofs of Senegambia, the "Land of the Blacks", and could be approached either by sea or land". \*

It was his sole ambition to reach this country of riches, and therefore he gathered around him the most advanced men of his nation and set about to work on projects of discovering the rich lands. From Morocco, he retired to Sagres, near Cape Vincent. It was from here that he initiated his scheme.

\* Ellis. p. 14

In 1418, the rocky island of Porto Santo was discovered, followed by the discovery of Cape Bojador in 1433, and that of the island of Arguin in 1444.

Four years later in 1448, Portugal established a fort on the island of Arguin, as that area proved to be a favourable base for her fishing fleets and general trading purposes on the West Coast. Besides, it was hoped that it would provide an inland route to the rich stores of gold in the Wangara kingdom, south of the Sahara.

After the erection of this fort, Portugal continued with further voyages to the West African Coast, and made more discoveries. Foremost of these discoveries on the West Coast was the abundance of gold in this country, for so aptly does Dr. Fage put it.

“Although gold could be obtained at many points of the West African coast, it was only on the Gold Coast that the supplies were large and regular. The other gold-producing areas were too far in the interior for more than a trickle of gold to escape to the coast away from the established trans-Sahara trade.”\*\*

In 1481, John II ascended the Portuguese throne, and gave additional and active impetus to the exploration of the West Coast. “His revenues,” states Ellis, “were largely derived from the importation of gold from Elmina and its vicinity, and one of his first cares was to improve and extend the Guinea trade.” \*\*\*

In the circumstances, he took positive and strong measures to keep away other European nations, even friendly ones, from encroaching upon his new preserves. He adopted six firm methods for that purpose, which are mentioned hereunder:-

1. Reprisals—the first method was to cruelly torture any European from another nation who was found on the West Coast; his goods were confiscated or burnt, and his ships destroyed or burnt. The Portuguese authorities even went to the extent of cutting off the heads of such interlopers and affixing them on the walls of the Governor’s residence in Elmina as a warning to others who might chance to follow their example.
2. Propaganda—the Portuguese spread false rumours all over Europe that the land of the Africans which they had reached were inhabited by cannibals and dangerous animals who on the least opportunity would pounce on a European to devour him. . . that to reach such a land was an impossibility; for it required, they alleged, the use of special boats which the Portuguese alone could manufacture. . . that as sailors reached the tropics the seas were so hot that when the waves fell on any crew it meant instant death. Thus, it was not worthwhile to travel thousands of miles to experience all that fatal unpleasantness.
3. Papal Bulls—Prince Henry obtained from the Papal authorities special protection to secure quiet and undisturbed possession of his African discoveries. The first of these was granted in 1443 when Pope Eugene IV granted to Portugal “all lands or islands which had been or might be discovered between Cape Bojador and the East Indies, with plenary indulgence to all who might lose their lives in prosecuting the discoveries.”\*

Pope Sixtus IV subsequently confirmed this monopoly, and in addition strictly prohibited all Christian powers from intruding within the limits which he had bestowed upon the Crown of Portugal. The Papal prohibition was very much scrupulously observed.

\*\*Fage. J. D. p. 49  
\*\*\*Ellis. p. 15  
\* Ibid. p. 25

4. **Formal Protests**—It was unthinkable that any Christian Power would defy the Papal Bulls or attempt to risk the lives and properties of their subjects by trifling with Portugal's determination to maintain to the inch her rich possessions in Africa. However, some European nations even at this early stage ignored the Papal bulls. Examples were two English merchant adventurers, John Tintam and William Fabian, who in 1481 at the instigation of the Duke of Medina Sidonia, when preparing to make a voyage to Guinea, King John II sent Ruy de Soussa as an ambassador to Edward IV "to explain the Papal Bulls, and to call upon him to restrain his subjects from trading to the Portuguese possessions in Africa."
5. **Police Patrolling**—The Portuguese were in the habit of employing a number of their ships to patrol the length and breadth of the West African Coast, and woe unto any non-Portuguese ship they came across. It is recorded that "their favourite method of attack was in galleys, in which they could sweep up under a ship's stern as she lay becalmed and helpless and they 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 misfortune to fall into the hands of the Portuguese, and now had to spend the remainder of their short lives sitting in the boiling 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 harquebusers and crossbow men."\*\*\*
6. **Building of Fortresses**—forts and castles—the sixth measure to make, assurance doubly sure, or in this case, to effectively sextuply their determination, was to erect forts and castles—to protect their rich trade monopoly from being invaded by unauthorised non-Portuguese. It is for that reason that Portugal built the first few forts and castles. The reader will hereafter get to know about why forts and castles were built in subsequent years in other places on the coast.

King John now instructed that a permanent foothold be established on the Gold Coast, (the reservoir of all gold in West Africa), hence the building of the first castle in 1482, the details of which are given later.

Having now erected a permanent base on the Gold Coast which was identified with vast quantities of gold, Portugal was able to overcome her previous obstacles, namely, evade the antagonism and competition of the Islamic Moslems of North Africa and appropriate to herself alone the rich Oriental trade; and also to extend the christian religion to this hitherto unknown part of the world.

Meanwhile events in other European countries encouraged her nationals not to leave Portugal's new find alone. For reasons of profit-making, piety and religion, protestant Netherlands and England came out openly to challenge Portugal in her new hold in West Africa. The struggle became fiercer even when the two countries of Portugal and Spain were subsequently united in 1580.

\* Claridge. pp. 73-7



To check any competition or interference whatsoever, Portugal persuaded the Pope to grant further Papal Bulls in her favour. Thus Portugal considered the West African coast as exclusive to herself and looked on other European countries as interlopers whether supported by their national governments or they came out as individual traders. In spite of three Bulls, these interlopers trickled in between times to participate in the West African trade to the annoyance of the Portuguese.

The situation was worsened by pirates and bucaners who also entered the scene, and often robbed a whole fleet of Portuguese ships laden with gold or other products.

Portugal, therefore, became much worried about the position, and attempted to keep out even a friendly country like Castile: Thus in 1493, by a Papal Bull, and the Treaty of Tordesillas of the following year, the unknown world was divided into two: monopoly of the Western half (west of a line across the Azores) was granted to Portugal, and that included West Africa; and the eastern half (east of the same line across the Azores) was granted to Castile, and it included the New World.

Lulled in false sense of security as to the power, authority and importance of the Bulls and Treaties, Portugal dictated her own terms to the detriment and disadvantage of the African natives with whom her nationals traded.

Apart from parting with inexpensive and relatively useless articles to the Africans with whom they bartered, the Portuguese savagely punished any African whom they caught trading with a non-Portuguese. They summarily put to death any such African whom they caught that way, or burnt a whole village whose people permitted trade with a non-Portuguese.

For fear of these reprisals, the African natives often braved the situation by secretly meeting non-Portuguese traders at high seas and exchanging their wares for theirs. Still Portuguese traders put out a whole galley to chase out these intruders and interlopers, and punished them severely when caught.

This extreme form of barbarism proved offensive to all non-Portuguese, both Europeans and Africans. Henceforth, the intruders and interlopers reached certain hide-outs in the mainland where there were prospects of obtaining gold and other valuable products. The French and the English were the first among these European nations to take that risk, but they dared not come out openly, e.g. to establish a permanent base as the Portuguese had done. Towards the end of the 16th century, the Dutch also openly defied Portuguese authority and succeeded in erecting a small lodge at Moree, some ten miles east of Elmina.

As more gold was discovered on the Gold Coast, Portuguese interest increased, and they doubled their efforts to preserve all the trade on the Gold Coast for their own country. They built more forts: in Axim, Shama, and on the Anko bra basin on the West, and another one in Accra on the east.

By this means they extended their influence all along the Gold Coast, and instigated the native Africans to betray non-Portuguese Europeans who ventured to come to the Coast for trade. Thus between 1592 and 1642 many European traders of non-Portuguese origin were treacherously killed. Dr Walter Claridge mentions many of these cases: at Cape Coast a Dutch Captain Simon de Taye and his men were inveigled to the shore with a boat under pretence that the local chief would like to visit their ship, but as soon as they were ashore, they were savagely attacked and were all murdered, with the exception of two or three who succeeded in swimming back to the ship.

A similar brutal treatment was given to the Dutch by the Portuguese when the latter seized the former's ship off Cape Coast in 1596, and killed most of her crew and sent the others as galley-slaves to Elmina.

In 1598, the Portuguese employed an African by name Voetian purposely to betray Dutch ships into their hands. By this means, the Portuguese endeavoured to keep out non-Portuguese traders away from the West Coast trade.

The Portuguese ill-treated their captives. Once, they wounded all their Dutch captives "... brought them ashore, ... cut off their heads and presented them to the Governor. These and their broken limbs were set up on the castle walls as warning to their countrymen, and their skulls were afterwards made into drinking cups by the natives. ..."

But the so-called monopoly of the Portuguese lasted for about one and a half centuries—until in 1642 when the Dutch were able to expel them altogether from the Gold Coast, seized the coveted Portuguese Castle at Elmina, and built more forts for themselves.

The scramble for this rich trade in West Africa was contemporaneously joined in by England and France, and later by lesser European nations. Although the Dutch insisted on going the Portuguese way at first, that is, to declare a monopoly for themselves and to hold on to their newly acquired gains by methods harsher than their predecessors, they did not succeed in doing so.

They succeeded however in building forts and castles just as their Portuguese predecessors had done. Other European nations that followed also built forts and castles here and there, for similar reasons—for purposes of protecting and defending their rich preserves.

After the discovery of America and the West Indies, there was an increase in the demand for negro slaves. This factor gave a further impetus to more voyages to the West Coast by other European nations—despite whatever risks and dangers.

It has been explained that before the expulsion of Portugal from the Gold Coast, other European nations had at various times challenged their so-called monopoly. In many cases these intruders succeeded in trading with the local Africans for the West Coast was very wide and the hide-outs were so many that the Portuguese could not possibly exert control in all nooks and corners of the whole territory they claimed for themselves exclusively. Besides, about this time, slave-trading was becoming a lucrative business, so much a profitable trade that gold which was the original, bait of the West Coast trade had now receded to the background, on the export list.

Non-Portuguese Europeans flocked in here and there and set up lodges or factories unofficially—and at great risk to their lives and properties, especially after the Dutch had driven the Portuguese away.

The Dutch put up additional fortifications to make easy attack difficult or impossible. They also proceeded to consolidate their position by erecting forts and improving upon what had previously been mere lodges and redoubts. By this means they hoped to check intruders much better.

But they were unable to go the same inhuman and brutal way by which the Portuguese had treated non-Portuguese as interlopers and criminals. Thus the Dutch were compelled rather reluctantly to recognise the impossibility of keeping out non-Dutch traders from the Gold Coast trade.

Meanwhile, the prospects in the supply of slaves to America and the West Indies were very bright. Reprisals of the Portuguese type were a thing of the past—there in America

millions of dollars were awaiting any European nation that could supply its quota of slaves, and stop splitting hairs on West Coast monopolies. Tobacco and sugar from America could also be obtained. Thus after the Portuguese came the Dutch, and shortly afterwards the English, French, Swedish, Danish and the Brandenburgers—each to stay, unmolested as before by another European nation. Contemporaneously, these various European nations each built forts and castles—this time also for different reasons:—

“The forts, as has been seen, were held primarily for the purpose of carrying on the Slave Trade, and a ground-net secured by monthly pay-notes was paid to the Chiefs.”\*

Now that a substitute was found in another commodity, namely, slaves, the various European nations could have afforded to leave the Gold Coast alone and concentrate on other lands where they could similarly build more forts and castles to trade in slaves. This procedure was however not taken. Gold Coast was still the centre of gravity of the West African trade.

Was it then that the Gold Coast excelled other African territories in slaves just as it did in gold? That should not be the case, for the various regions of West Africa were specifically designated according to their trade specialities—Grain Coast (Liberia), Ivory coast (the same), Gold Coast (Ghana), Slave Coast (Dahomey), Oil River (the Niger Delta), and the Banana Coast (St. Thome and Fernando Po). Furthermore, it would interest the reader to learn that it was on the Gold Coast where Europeans bartered slaves for gold, that is, received gold from the Gold Coast Africans in exchange for slaves they had brought from other African territories.

“Thus it came about that the first traffic in human bodies between Europeans and Africans on the Gold Coast was the sale of African slaves by Europeans to Africans on the Gold Coast who wanted porters. The earliest recorded instance of such a sale appears to have been in 1480, when Castilians sold slaves at Mina, although on that occasion they are not specified as porters. In later accounts slaves regularly appear among the goods exchanged for gold along with clothing, armlets, shaving bowls, pots, iron kettles, blankets and shells.”\*\*

Thus, the Gold Coast appeared to all the European powers as the most favourite territory from which they could administer their trade more profitably than they could do in other West African territories. But to do so required forts and castles which had several advantages.

For defence purposes, to start with, a fort or a castle has a lot of advantages over an ordinary house. The latter can easily be besieged and bombarded by a garrison of soldiers, whereas the former cannot be raided so easily or readily. It is apt at this juncture to mention the difficulties which the Dutch, for example, encountered in capturing the formidable castle at Elmina from the Portuguese.

After several attempts to capture the Elmina Castle had failed, the Dutch besieged the Portuguese garrison on the top of a hill over-looking the castle. Fierce fighting took place on that hill between the Portuguese and the Dutch until the latter eventually moved nearer to the castle. The Dutch forces led by Colonel Coine “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 capitula-

\* Claridge. W.W.: Vol. 1 p. 95

\* O'Neill. p.



tion".\* This incident took a number of days, and the reader can appreciate that had the fortress been an ordinary house it would have capitulated in a matter of minutes.

But defence was also needed against the African natives, for there were constant and continuous conflicts between them and the European settlers.

Thus in 1679, the Winnebas attacked the English factory there and helped themselves to whatever they could lay hands on.

In the same year, at the instigation of one Peter Bolt, a Greek officer in the Danish service, the natives of Osu raided the Christiansborg Castle and succeeded in seizing the castle for the Portuguese. For example, there was mutual distrust between the Portuguese and the natives. Later on, whilst the Portuguese were unwilling to employ the Africans to work in the castle the Africans resented even their presence.

Claridge also records the unsuccessful combined attack of the Elminas and the Komendas to besiege the Elmina Castle to drive away the Dutch: for not less than ten months the combined forces kept the garrison at the Castle as well as that of Fort Conraadsburg "closely confined and made two separate attempts to take the Castle by assault" Neither of these was successful however, for the Castle is indeed impregnable so far as African warfare is concerned and could only be reduced by bombardment".\*\*

There was also an attempt by the people of Cape Coast who in 1681 having refused to surrender eighteen slaves who had escaped from the Castle and found refuge in the town, resisted the English masters (of the slaves) and raided the castle in defiance.

About the same period the Aowins also attacked the Dutch, north of Axim, and prevented their advance into the up-country.

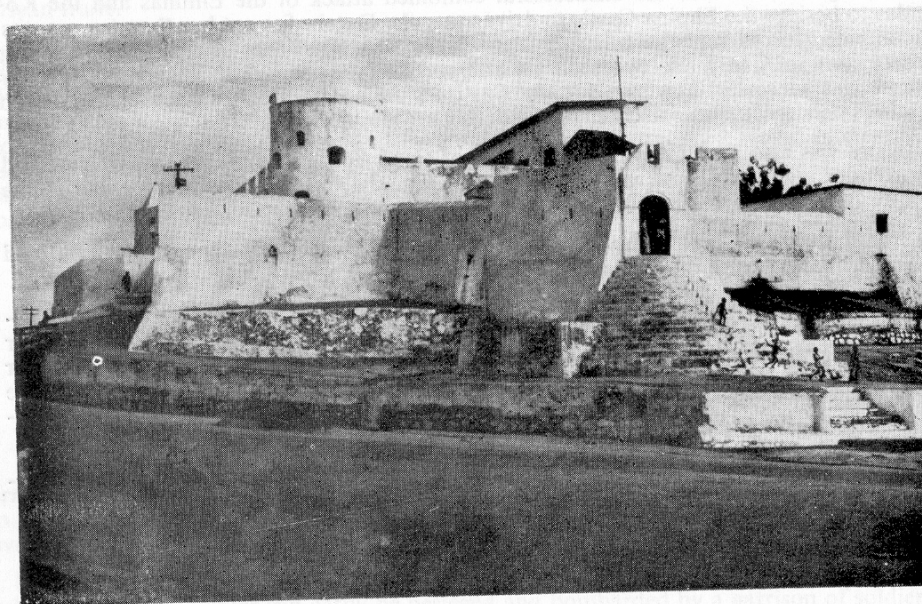
Examples of such invasions by the Africans can be cited without number. Thus experience showed that to protect themselves against any hostile invaders, Europeans or Africans, and appropriate to themselves all the wealth that could be obtained from their West African trade, it was essential to have a well fortified building in the form of a castle or a fort, and invariably it was essential that it was built along the coast to secure an additional advantage—shipping facilities. So well is it put by Prof. Lawrence:

"In all three continents forts had been built only on the coast or besides navigable rivers."\*\*\*

\* Claridge. p. 229

\*\* Ibid. p. 122

\*\*\* Lawrence. A. W.: Trade Castles and Forts of West Africa. p. 26



*Fort San Sebastian, Shama, originally built in 1526 by the Portuguese.*

## CHAPTER 2

## THE ORIGINS

THE most ancient of the forts and castles in this country is Elmina Castle. It was built by the Portuguese in 1482. They named it **Fort Sao Jorge D'Elmina** on account of the rich gold deposits they discovered in that area. However, some French authors such as Villaut and Robbe claim that the French were the first to build a fort in Elmina—in 1383.

These authors asserted that certain merchants from Dieppe, accustomed to making long voyages (a circumstance which is attributed to their Norman descent) visited the West Coast of Africa, and established settlements here and there. Among these, they claimed, was a bay they named "Bay of France". It is further recorded that these Dieppe merchants took with them enormous quantities of ivory, which soon encouraged the manufacture of the comb—an industry for which Dieppe became famous about that time. These authors date the prior claim of France as 1383, and hold further that they held on to the fort until 1404 when owing to the French Civil War (1380-1461) trade became disrupted, and made them abandon the fort and the trade in this country altogether.

Robbe and Ogilby support Villaut's view, and state further that the frequency of voyages by these Dieppe merchants together with those of Rouen to the Guinea Coast in 1382 took them to Komenda as well. It was in Elmina, they relate, that the French in the following year built a fort, deposited a dozen Frenchmen there to garrison it, and later abandoned it. They recorded further that in Elmina itself the French also built a Chapel in 1397.

Although there is a scintilla of evidence in the Castle at the present day to lend some colour to this view, (e.g. the battery towards the sea in the Castle known as the **Bastion de France** with inscription **Anno MCCC**), most authors of West African history do not take this prior claim seriously.\*\*

An Agent-General of the French Africa Company of M. Barbot, (in Vol. V of Churchill's "Collection of voyages", p. 10) stoutly denies this prior claim in favour of France, and states that "if this account be true, it is strange that no mention is made of it by other European historians, several of whom I have examined, and particularly de Serres and Mezeray. Such considerable undertakings, and so rich a trade, seemed to deserve a place in history".

Whatever be the truth or otherwise in the French prior claim to the discovery of Elmina or of the Castle there, it is on authentic record that before the Portuguese reached Arguin, West Coast of Africa, in 1443, some European and North African explorers had been there earlier and had penetrated southwards into the interior—to as far as a district as the Cameroons.

Herodotus, a Greek chronicler and Father of History, mentions a series of these voyages. Among them were Phenocian voyages made under the direction of Pharoah Necho II in about 600 B.C.; and another Pheonician voyage was made in 485 B.C. during the reign of Xerxes, King of Persia, under Sataspes. There were also the voyages of a Persian nobleman and his nephew Darius, who had been condemned to death by Xerxes; the Carthaginian voyages under admiral Hanno in about 520 B.C. and the Greek voyages undertaken by Euthynius, who visited the Guinea Coast between 400 B.C. renaming the Senegal river "Chremetes".

\* San Jorge (St George) is the patron saint of Portugal.

\*\* Nevertheless, Labat, in his *Nouvelle de l'Afrique Occidentale* (Paris 1928) supports the prior claim Theory in favour of France.



Further voyages were made in subsequent years, e.g. those of Polybius, an explorer and historian in 330 B.C. and Exodus of Cyrcus in 117 B.C. Both explorers were Greeks.

But none of these ancient voyagers erected any fort or Castle in West Africa. Any fort or castle that was built here was said to have been erected in the fifteenth century or later than that.

As far as the forts and castles in this country are concerned it is the common belief that Portugal who was the first European country to discover Elmina, built the first Castle there, besides giving the name "Elmina" to that town, and the name "Gold Coast" to this country.

Although they were slow at first in their voyages down to West Africa, the early Portuguese made rapid strides in their discoveries in course of time: Cape Bojador was founded in 1434, Cape Blanco in 1441, and the Senegal in 1446. In 1470, the two Portuguese, Jeao de Santarem and Pedro Escobar, went as far south as the island of St Thomas. It was on their return voyage that they touched a town in the Gold Coast, "where they obtained such a quantity of gold that they named it La Mina (Elmina). Gold was also found at Shamah; and Fernand Gomez opened a gold mine at Abrobi, near little Commende called by the Portuguese, "Aldea des Terres".\*

This discovery further revealed that the area between the rivers Ankobra and Pra was teeming with gold, and led them to honourably nickname this country the Gold Coast in contradistinction to other Coasts of West Africa which were contemporaneously discovered: Grain Coast (Liberia), Ivory Coast (the same Ivory Coast) and the Slave Coast (Dahomey).

This happened in about 1471, and a further evidence from Ward confirms this view:

"The whole region between Cape Three Points and Cape Coast was so rich in Gold that the coast received the name of the Gold Coast, and such a busy trade in gold dust sprang up that Gomez soon made his fortune."\*\*

The importance of this discovery cannot be gainsaid, for having fulfilled one of her greatest ambitions, Portugal used the Gold Coast as her base for making further discoveries: the Portuguese discovered the Congo in 1483 and the Cape of Good Hope in 1488. It was through their knowledge and experience in these West African voyages that led Christopher Columbus, a Genoese mariner who accidentally served on the Portuguese expedition that built Elmina Castle in 1482, to set sail in 1492 and after a voyage of 33 days discovered "the Islands which he supposed to be the easternmost islands of Asia"—America.

The discovery of the "Mine" on the "Gold Coast" rekindled the interest of the Portuguese Government in this part of the West Coast. Thus in 1482, they built the Elmina Castle, and took very serious measures (e.g. signing the Treaty of Tordesillas with Castile in 1495) to monopolise for Portugal the lucrative trade in gold, slaves, ivory, pepper, gum and mahogany, all in which the West Coast was prolific, so as to keep out other European nations from the African trade. Henceforth, despite all these attempts to hold on to this self-acquired monopoly, other European nations entered the scene as already mentioned. There were six more other European nations who subsequently entered the scene, namely, the Dutch (1595), the English (1631), the French (about the same time), the Swedes (1652), the Danes (1657), and Brandenburg (1682).

Thus the various European nations above-mentioned built a number of forts and castles soon after their arrivals—some built a few, others several of them. But building was not the only method of acquiring a fort or castle. Subsequent chapters throw more light on other methods of acquisition.

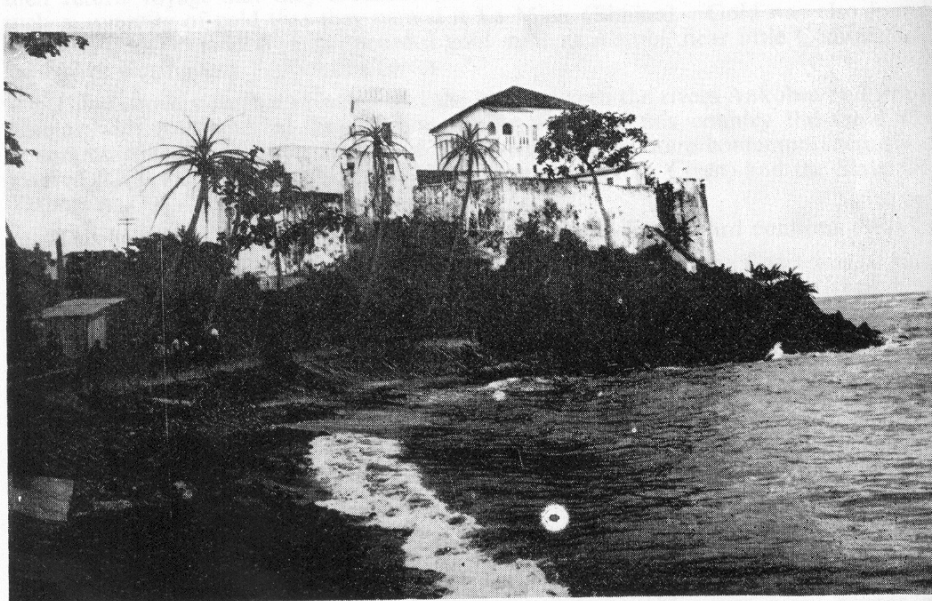
\* Ellis. p. 17  
\*\* Ward. p. 60

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*Fort San Antonio, Axim, built in 1515 by the Portuguese.*

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## CHAPTER 3

## LOCATION OF THE FORTS AND CASTLES

THE forts and castles on the Gold Coast, except in one or two cases only, were all built in the coastal towns—in different districts under the domination of independent local authorities.

The site chosen for the building of the first fort—that at Elmina, was very near to the sea—and just nearby, there were rocks and, therefore, facilities for the Portuguese builders to quarry. Sand, water and labour were there for the searching.

But a most important consideration for choosing that particular site was that in the neighbourhood the Portuguese had discovered large quantities of gold deposits. It was for similar reasons that the Portuguese built their next three forts—at Axim, Shama and near the mouth of the Ankobra river (Fort Duma); for gold at this time was the principal object of their visit. Slaves, as a significant commodity, were for the future when labour was required for the sugarcane and tobacco plantations in America and the West Indies.

But why did they not subsequently build the forts in an inland town far away from the sea, within the neighbourhood of the gold deposits; for in course of time the prolific gold deposits in Wassa and Ashanti became well-known to European geologists. In nearly all cases, whether gold abounded in the area or not it will be noticed that the forts and castles were built very much near to the sea\*—on some rock, top of a hill,\*\* or within the reach of another fort or castle.

Gold, the principal attraction that lured the Portuguese to establish a permanent trading base in this country, was more easily obtained in our rivers and streams along the coast, at the time than it is today. It was often washed down by the river and the African people collected several pieces of them in big lumps and exchanged them for European merchandise. It was no wonder then that the districts prolific in gold were selected for the building of the first three forts.

Inland in the Ashanti kingdom and the country of Wangara there were vast quantities of gold as well, and similarly forts and castles could have been built there. We shall soon notice why that was not done; why they did not build even a small and inexpensive lodge in Ashanti or Kwahu, for example, as was the case in several coastal towns, e.g. in Butri by the Dutch in 1598, at Anashan by the English in 1663, and in Takoradi by the Brandenburgians in 1685.

There must be some special attraction then about the coast to induce the builders to erect all the forts and castles along it. Surely, for many reasons the early Europeans found the coastal areas a much healthier and safer place to live in than the interior. For the most part they were completely ignorant of the inland districts of the country. In fact, it was not until about 1700 that the European traders on the coast began to hear of some of the inland states for the first time.\*

The early European settlers on the coast had very grim and horrible views of what obtained in the inland parts of the country: as a place infested with wild and dangerous animals; as a place whose peoples were continually at war with one another; and as a place where the European trader might be easily shot and his goods seized from him by brigands and robbers.

\* The English fort at Discove lay on the shore of a little bay where the landing was safe. Claridge. p. 163.

\*\* At Takoradi the ruins of Fort Witsen could still be seen on a hill near the village. Ibid.

\* Claridge. Vol. 1. p. 156



On the other hand, since they knew the coast much better than the inland parts of the country, and were satisfied that none of these dangers obtained in the former place they were content to dwell on the coast and carry on their business there. In addition to these so-called advantages that the coast could afford the coastal areas offered the builders of the forts and castles a much greater advantage to erect their fortifications. They had much better transport facilities for importing and exporting their goods; they could more easily communicate with their governments or principals in Europe or America; they could get relief more readily from passing vessels; and above all, they could watch the activities and movements of any trade rivals around and bring them to books. There were additional facilities, such as quarrying for stones, for carting sand, sea-water, pebbles and other materials for building purposes. If the builders were short of building materials or implements it was easier to place an order from the coastal towns than from the interior; if a whole consignment of goods or building materials from Europe were to be unloaded, as was the case in the building of **Fort San Jorge D'Elmina**, **Fort Groot Fredericksburg** at Princes Town and several others, the materials and equipments needed for the building were to be unloaded at the beach with a minimum of delay—near the site on which the fort was to be built. If they were to be built inland an unnecessary burden would then be added to their problems.

Besides, the coast offered very healthy surroundings;\* for fresh air from the sea was abundant, and there was also the opportunity for sea-bath which they were used to. Even the sight of a ship that passed by, the smoke from it, or the siren that it blew assured the European settlers a large measure of safety and mental comfort.

Although gold could well be the main object of their visit, it must be remembered that it was the desire to exclude other European nations from participating in this rich trade that provided the primary motive for building these forts and castles. Therefore, certain sites of strategic importance were uppermost in the minds of the builders in erecting other forts and castles. Thus Conraasburg, Elmina, was built on the Jago Hill to protect the Elmina Castle:

"The Dutch greatly improved the 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 improved 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 Fort Conraasburg and garrisoned by an ensign's guard of twenty-five men, who were relieved every twenty-four hours."\*\*

Similarly, since the building of **Fort Fredericksburg** by the Danes at Amanful, Cape Coast, in 1658, the English did not feel happy about the security and safety of **Cape Coast Castle**, their most precious settlement on the West Coast. Consequently, the English were too happy to purchase that Danish fort in 1685, renaming it **Fort Royal**. They rebuilt it in fourteen years' time and even abandoned it, but still kept an eye on it.

It was for the purpose of protecting the **Cape Coast Castle** also that the English thought fit to make use of all available hills in Cape Coast for the building of extra forts. Thus after purchasing **Fort Fredericksburg** from the Dutch and rebuilding it, the English built

\* Butri was considered one of the healthiest stations on the Gold Coast. Claridge. p. 163  
Ibid, p. 123.

The eagerness or unwillingness of African kings and their people accepting the European traders' offers to build forts and castles on the formers' lands depended ultimately on the bargaining power of either party. This might be due to the quantity of presents the Europeans could offer, their physical strength to bully the African chiefs, their sense of diplomacy, or how urgently they needed foreign protection against external aggression and internal dispute.

Thus during the time of the Portuguese, that is, prior to 1642, the Accras were strongly opposed to the erection of any forts and castles on their soil, but after this date, the Danish and Dutch merchants were able to get round the chiefs of Accra, offered them large quantities of presents, and thus obtained the necessary permission to build store houses, "undertaking to pay seven marks of gold (£224) annually for the concession."

After thus securing a footing, "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 consented to, and in 1652 they enlarged their lodge, (which they had built in 1642) fortified it and named it **Fort Creve Couer**.\*\*

In 1673, the English were given a similar privilege to build a fort in Accra, which they named **James Fort** in honour of the Duke of York.

In about 1682, the king of Eguafu (near Elmina) sent his second son called Kukumi as ambassador to France to discuss with the French Government about the formation of a French Settlement in his kingdom. This proposal was seriously taken up by the French Government. Ampeni was chosen as the most suitable site for the purpose of erecting a fort, and in 1688 M. du Casse was sent out with four French men-of-war from Rochfort and established a fort at Komenda. But after a few years, the project fell through.

But it was not always the case that the African chiefs and their people readily consented to the Europeans' demand to be permitted to build a fort or castle on the formers' land. In 1697, it is recorded, that the Dutch began to build a small fort at Apam, but such was the opposition of the African people there that it was not until 1702 that it was completed. "The Dutch", says Claridge, "then commemorated the perseverance they had shown by naming the fort **Fort Leydsaanheid**", meaning Patience.\*\*\*

Between 1683 and 1690, the English and the Brandenburgers continually disputed about the ground for building a fort at Dixcove, but in 1691 the English succeeded by getting round the chief by means of presents—against the will of the people. However, in 1697 the fort was finished and named **Fort Metal Cross**. In the same year, the people laid siege to it and very nearly succeeded in capturing it. To save the situation, the English factor in charge, however, agreed to submit to their terms, "by which he acknowledged that he had no power or authority over them and agreed to join them in cheating all ships that called there by passing imitation gold on them."\*\*\*\*

Sometimes, it happened that the European traders forced their way against the will of the African kings and owners of the land, and erected a fort. For example, in 1688, Mr N. Sweert, a Dutch Governor visited Komenda, and despite opposition from the Komendas he built **Fort Vredenburg**. He had only thus accomplished his object by force of arms, offering as a pretext the re-opening of the gold mine at Abrobi which the Dutch had

\* Claridge. p. 106

\*\* Truly war broke out between the Accras and the Akwamus and it was not until 1680 that it ended. During this time a vast extent of country had been laid waste, many towns had been burned and all the plantations destroyed. The Accras were completely crushed, and their country was reduced to the position of a tributary province of Akwamu.

Claridge. p. 121

\*\*\* Ibid. p. 151

\*\*\*\* Ibid p. 151





## CHAPTER 4

## NUMBER OF FORTS AND CASTLES

FOR nearly four centuries, 1482-1850, when the Castle Trade on the Gold Coast was active, as many as six castles, thirty forts and about twenty-four lodges, trading posts and redoubts were built by various European Governments and trading companies. But the numbers of these buildings in the hands of their owners or occupants, as has been explained in the last chapter, fluctuated as the vicissitudes of wars, invasions and other calamities (e.g. earthquakes, lightnings and erosions) dictated.

It would at this stage amply reward the reader's labour to find out how many of them were actually built by them and which of them passed through whose hands in the course of history.

	<i>Built Before 1750</i>	<i>Existing in 1950</i>
1. Castles ... ..	6	6
2. Forts ... ..	34	16
3. Lodges, redoubts, etc. ... ..	24	—
	<hr/> 64	<hr/> 22

The six castles in order of antiquity are as follows:-

1. **Elmina Castle or Fort San Jorge D'Elmina** built in 1482
2. **The Christiansborg Castle (Osu)**; built in about 1637
3. **Fort Crevecouer (or Ussher Fort), Accra**; built in about 1652.
4. **The Cape Coast Castle (Cape Coast)**; built in 1662.
5. **James Fort (Accra)**; built in 1673.
6. **Fort Groot Fredericksburg, Princes Town**; built in 1683.

The last of the forts and lodges which were built by the various European trading companies are as follows:—

## WESTERN PART:

1. **Fort San Antonio, Axim**; built in 1515
2. **Fort San Sebastian, Shama**: built in about 1535.
3. **Lodge-Btri**: built in 1598.
4. **Fort Duma; Egwira**: 1623
5. **Fort Orange, Sekondi**: built in 1640.
6. **English, Sekondi-Fort**: built in 1654
7. **Fort Witsen** built in 1664
8. **Takrama-Fort** built in 1684.
9. **Fort Dorothea, Akwida**: built in 1690.
10. **Fort Ruyghaver**, 1694.
11. **Fort Elise Carthago** built in 1695.
12. **Fort Metal Cross built in Dixcove in 1697.**

**CENTRAL PART:**

1. **Fort Conraasburg (or Fort St. Iago):** built in 1556
2. **Mori-Fort (Fort Nassau):** built in 1598.
3. **Kormantine-Lodge** built in 1631.
4. **Cape Coast Castle:** built in about 1662.
5. **Fort Fredericksburg, Amanful, Cape Coast:** built in 1658.
6. **Winneba-Fort,** built in 1662-1663.
7. **An English Lodge** built in **Komenda** in 1663.
8. **Egya-Lodge:** built in 1663.
9. **Fort Anashan—A Lodge:** built in 1663.
10. **Fort Goede Hope, Senya Beraku:** built in 1667-1704.
11. **Fort Anomaboe, Anomabo:** built in 1673-1674
12. **Queen Anne's Point-Lodge:** built in 1682
13. **Fort Vredenburg, Komenda:** built in 1688-89
14. **Fort Leydsameid, Apam:** built in 1700.
15. **Queen Anne's Point:** built in 1720.
16. **Tantumkwerri-Fort:** built in 1726.
17. **Elmina:** 5 Redoubts built, viz.  
**Fort de Veer 1810-11**
18. **Fort William, Cape Coast:** built in 1820.
19. **Fort Victoria, Cape Coast:** built in 1821.

Fort Nagtglas	{	1828	}	<b>Elmina.</b>
Fort Java				
Fort Scomarus				
Fort Batenstein				

20. **Fort M'Carthy:** built in 1822
21. **Connors' Hill—Cape Coast:** Redoubt built in 1863.

**EASTERN PART:**

1. **Fort Freidensburg, Ningbo:** built in 1734.
2. **Fort Vernon, Prampra n:** built in 1780.
3. **Fort Prinzentein, Keta:** built in 1780.
4. **Fort Konigstein, Ada:** built in 1784.
5. **Fort Augustaborg: Teshie:** built in 1787.

The following table shows the number of forts and castles in the Gold Coast and their distribution as owned by the various European Powers between 1550 and 1950:-

	By	1550	1650	1750	1850	1950
Portugal ...	...	6	—	—	—	—
Netherlands ...	...	—	7	12	15	—
England ...	...	—	3	8	12	24
Sweden ...	...	—	—	—	—	—
Denmark ...	...	—	—	6	6	—
France ...	...	—	—	1	—	—
Brandenburg*	...	—	—	3**	—	—
Total ...	...	6	10	30	33	24

An account of how the very many castles, forts, and lodges were built by the various European trading companies and how they changed hands from time to time will now be given.

On his accession to the throne of Portugal in 1481, King John II decided to build a fort on the Gold Coast "to protect the trade from the avarice of other nations and safeguard the interest of Portugal". A complete preparation was made with equipments for the erection of a castle, and on the 11th of December, 1481 the fleet with provisions for six hundred men under the command of Don Diego d'Azambuja set out from Portugal and reached Elmina on 19th January, 1482. Through the intermediary of a Juan Bernardo, a Portuguese trader who had earlier come to the coast for gold, a meeting was arranged with the local chief, King Kwamena Ansa, and after some formalities a piece of ground was granted to the Portuguese new-comers. Within twenty-one days from January 21st, 1482 they completed building the castle. This castle was named San Jao de E'lmina.

The fleet returned home to Portugal with a large quantity of gold immediately after that, but left d'Azambuja with a garrison of sixty men under his command. He was the first resident Governor of the castle, and he filled this position with credit for two years and seven months.

The Portuguese subsequently built more forts and lodges: in 1502, they built a fort in Axim, but it was destroyed by the townspeople in 1515. The Portuguese, however, put up the present one soon afterwards, and named it **Fort San Antonio**. In about 1556, they also built a redoubt on St. Iago Hill, Elmina. Next in 1565, they built two forts in Accra and Shama (the latter of which they named **San Sebastian** (it was in 1600 abandoned by them and the Dutch quickly occupied it).

About the same time they built a lodge at Cape Coast and afterwards abandoned it; in about 1640, they also built a lodge and named it **Ursu Lodge**, Accra; but it was captured by the Dutch in 1645. Then in 1623, they also built a fort up the Ankobra River, and named it **Fort Duma**, which was shattered by earthquake in 1636.

Reports of the Portuguese profits soon reached all Europe at this time, and despite Portuguese propaganda to keep out other European nations and to hold on to this self-acquired monopoly other European nations participated in the Guinea Coast trade.

\* The Swedes occupied the Portuguese lodge at Cape Coast between 1630 and 1657: they captured the Portuguese Ursu Lodge (near Accra) between 1645 and 1657; and during the same period built and occupied a lodge at Takoradi. In 1657, all these lodges were captured by the Danes under Sir Henry Carlöf.

\*\* The Brandenburgers settled in the Gold Coast from 1662 to 1708, after which period they left unceremoniously — without disposing their 3 forts and castles to any European power or African authority. See pp 40 — 41.



Thus the Dutch West India Company established in 1629, and the English company, namely, the Company of London Trading into Africa, formed in 1631 put in their maximum effort in participating in the Trans-Atlantic Trade. In the same year the English built a fort at Kormantine, about six miles from the Dutch headquarters at Moree.

Realising that they already had vast markets in Brazil, and that if they could gain a monopoly of the Gold Coast trade as the Portuguese had earlier attempted, the Dutch strove hard to drive away the Portuguese and succeeded in doing so in 1637.

After some correspondence between Nicholas Van Ypren, Dutch Governor of Moree at this time, and Count Maurice of Nassau, a near relation of the Prince of Orange and Governor of the West India Company's possessions in South America, a fleet was arranged which soon arrived at Moree. The initial attempt to capture the Portuguese lodge at Iago Hill (built in about 1556) overlooking the Elmina Castle failed, but having made a successful attempt later, the Dutch troops were able to bombard the Castle, and the Portuguese garrison capitulated. The Elmina Castle, therefore, fell into Dutch hands on Saturday the 29th of August, 1637.

In 1638, the Dutch built a fort on the Iago Hill, and named it Fort Conraadsburg.

Later on in 1642, the Dutch captured the Portuguese fort at Axim and by the treaty of peace concluded subsequently, the Portuguese formally ceded all their Gold Coast Possessions to the Dutch West India Company "in return from Holland's renunciation of her claims to sovereignty in Brazil."

Earlier in 1600, the Dutch had occupied the Portuguese lodge, San Sebastian, in Shama.

During subsequent Dutch occupation they built the following forts:-

In about 1630, they built a lodge at Cape Coast and afterwards abandoned it; but was subsequently (before 1657 occupied) by the Danes.

In the year 1640, the Dutch built a lodge at Anomabo, and a fort at Sekondi.

In the case of the lodge at Cape Coast, the Swedes captured it in 1656, and in the following year the Danes also took it from them. Between 1660 and 1665 this lodge went forwards and backwards between the Dutch and the English—in 1660 it was recaptured by the Dutch; in 1664 it was retaken by the English under Holmes; and in 1665 it capitulated to the Dutch under Ruyter. In the case of the fort at Sekondi, they named it **Fort Orange**. It was plundered by the Ahantas in September, 1694. In 1840 they abandoned it, but re-occupied it later. On 6th April, 1872, they sold it to England together with other Dutch possessions.

About the same year, 1640, when the Dutch built a lodge at Anomabo and a fort at Cape Coast, they also improved the lodge at Kormantine (built by the English in 1631) and named it **Fort Amsterdam**.

Between 1681 and 1682 the Dutch enlarged and greatly improved it. In 1782, it was captured by the English under Captain Shirley, but restored it to the Dutch in 1785. In 1806, it was surrendered to and occupied by the Ashantis, but was immediately afterwards abandoned. The Dutch retook possession of it, but abandoned it ten years later.

In 1658, they built a fort at Amanful, Cape Coast, and named it **Fort Fredericksburg**. This fort was purchased by the English and renamed **Fort Royal**. In 1699, the English rebuilt it, but subsequently abandoned it.

Between 1667 and 1704, the Dutch built a fort at Senya-Beraku, which was captured by the English under Captain Shirley in 1782. In 1785, it was restored to the Dutch, but they abandoned it in 1816.

Prior to 1682, the Dutch built a lodge at Queen Anne's Point, Cape Coast, but soon abandoned it.

Between 1688 and 1689, the Dutch built a fort in Komenda, and named it **Fort Vredenburg**. This fort was attacked by the Komendas in 1695. In 1782, under Governor Mills, the English captured it, but was soon restored to the Dutch who occupied it until they sold it to the Dutch on 6th April, 1872.

The Dutch began building a fort at Apam in 1697, which they completed in 1700, naming it **Fort Leydsameid**. They occupied it until 1782 when the English under Captain Shirley captured it. After three years of English occupation, they restored it to the Dutch, but it was abandoned later.

In later years, 1810-1811, the Dutch built much smaller forts in Elmina, principally for the protection of the town and the Castle, namely, **Fort de Veer** (West of the Castle), **Fort Nagtglas** (on the Elmina-Cape Coast road), **Fort Java** (on the Java Hill), and a few others, namely, **Fort Scomarum** and **Fort Batenstein**, both at the back of the Elmina town.

There were three principal English trading companies that traded on the Gold Coast, namely, The Company of Royal Adventurers of England Trading into Africa, The Royal Africa Company, and the African Company of Merchants.

Prior to the formation of the Royal Adventurers in 1662, a twenty-year charter that had been granted by Charles I was renewed and confirmed to Rowland Wilson "and some other merchants by the English Commonwealth." But competition from the Dutch, Danes and Swedes was too fierce and strong for the English, and as a result, war actually ensued between the Dutch and the English in 1600. Further hostilities occurred, e.g. the capture of the English ship, the *Merchant's Delight* in 1661 by the Dutch, who took the crew on board to Elmina where they were imprisoned in the Castle by Governor Jasper Van Housen; other hostilities against the English by the Dutch at Komenda and Cape Coast, neither of which place "according to the English statements, had they any factory at that time."

In spite of incessant Dutch animosities and determination to keep out any trade rivals and to make themselves supreme in the Gold Coast trade, the English realised that unless they put their trading activities on a proper footing by the formation of a regular trading company with a permanent fort or castle on the Gold Coast they would not succeed, hence the formation of the Company of Royal Adventurers.

This Company was formed in January, 1662 under Royal charter granted by Charles II, and their charter gave them "the sole trading rights from the straits of Gibraltar to the Cape of Good Hope." Among persons of influence who subscribed to the new Company's share capital was the King's brother James, Duke of York (afterwards King James II).

It undertook "to supply 3,000 slaves yearly to the West Indies, and was to maintain posts at Cape Coast, Anashan, Komenda, Egysa and Accra, besides a factory at Winneba and their fort at Kormantine. The headquarters, too, were to be removed from Kormantine to Cape Coast, where the Chief Agent was to be assisted by two other merchants, a ware house-keeper, a gold taker, two accountants and three assistant factors". \*

Other important rights and privileges it enjoyed were:—

\* Claridge. p. 84

- (a) Import of ivory, redwood (mahogany) pepper and certain other West African products into England was allowed to members of this company only.
- (b) The Company had the monopoly of the gold trade from Guinea; and the Crown two-thirds of the profits, and
- (c) The Company was permitted to issue its own gold coins.

Thus on receiving royal patronage and the formal sanction of the government to trade in slaves as well as other products, it embarked on building at least five forts in 1662-1663 alone—

In Winneba, the Company built a factory at this time, which remained in active use until it was captured by the Dutch under De Ruyter in 1665, and restored to the English later in 1667 by the Treaty of Breda. In 1697, it was plundered by the Agonas.

In 1663, the English built a lodge at Anashan, and two years later it was captured by the Dutch De Ruyter. It was restored to them in 1666, but was soon abandoned.

In 1663, the English built a lodge at Egya, and in the middle of the same year the Dutch captured it from them. In 1664, the English under Holmes recaptured it, but was during the following year blown up by the English themselves in an attempt to prevent it fall into Dutch hands again.

The English built a lodge in Komenda in 1663, but two years later it was captured by the Dutch under De Ruyter. In 1667, it was restored to the English under the Treaty of Breda.

The Royal Africa Company built (or rebuilt and enlarged) the Cape Coast Castle in 1662, and in June, 1663, it was captured by the Dutch. It was recaptured by the English in 1664, improved and enlarged in 1673. It was attacked by the townspeople in 1681, and twice bombarded by French fleet in 1703 and 1757 respectively.

It is obvious from the foregoing account that Anglo-Dutch hostilities must have disturbed trading activities on the Gold Coast a great deal, particularly the security of the forts and castles. Under the Treaty of Breda, 1667, which marked the peace agreement “the English obtained the return of all the forts they had held before the war, with the exception of Kormantine. They were then in a position to take steps to re-establish their trade.”

Following the remarkable losses sustained during the war, the Company of Royal Adventurers surrendered their charter in 1667. A new company was now formed in 1672, namely, the Royal Africa Company. This Company took over the rights and privileges of the previous company, and was given “permission to rule the forts, factories and plantations on the Gold Coast, and to declare peace or war with native tribes.”

A most important record of the new company was the impetus it gave to its trading activities in all the three parts of the world (Britain, the Gold Coast and America), particularly trade in slaves wherein it made very huge profits.

During their tenure of trade (1667-1750), the company built at least seven forts in addition to what they took over from the Royal Adventurers. These are as follows:-

In 1673, the company built a fort in Accra, and named it **James Fort**.

Between 1673 and 1674, they built **Fort Komenda** which they abandoned in 1684, and re-occupied it a decade or so later. In January, 1868 it was transferred to the Dutch by exchange and in a month's time it was bombarded by the Dutch Warship *Metalen Kruis*.

On 6th April, 1872, the English purchased it together with three other Dutch possessions east of the Sweet River (near Elmina).

The present fort at Anomabo, was built by the English between 1673 and 1674. On 4th September, 1794 it was bombarded by a French fleet; and 1806 it was captured by the Ashantis; and on 4th September, 1701, it was attacked by the Anomabos themselves.

In 1694, the English built **Winneba Fort**. It was blown up in July, 1812 and the town was also destroyed by Commodore Irby "to avenge the cruel murder of the English resident Commandant, Mr Henry Meredith, by the townspeople." A few years later it was rebuilt and re-occupied for most part of the last century.

In about 1691, the English commenced building a fort at Dixcove which they completed in 1697, and named it **Fort Metal Cross**. It was besieged by the Ahantas. It was one of the four English forts east of the Sweet River which was transferred to the Dutch by exchange in 1868. On 6th April, 1872, it was purchased by the English with the other Dutch possessions.

In 1699, the English rebuilt the Dutch Fort **Fredericksburg**, (Amanful, Cape Coast), which they had bought in 1685, but subsequently abandoned it.

Prior to 1726, the English built a fort at Tantumkwerri, but abandoned it sometime after January, 1820.

In about 1750, the English built a fort at Benyin, which they named **Fort Appollonia**, but abandoned it in 1833. In 1835, it was temporarily occupied by Governor Maclean's expeditionary force which besieged King Kwaku Arkai of Nzima. Fort Appollonia was one of the four English forts transferred to the Dutch in 1868, and was later in 1872 purchased back by the English.

Notwithstanding the enormous profits that characterised their activities, the Royal Africa Company began to meet difficult times just before the middle of the eighteenth century. Among these troubles were the attacks on the company's ships by pirates, the burden and cost of maintaining the Company's forts and castles, and the frequency of wars, both European wars and inter-tribal wars which disturbed trade considerably.

In 1730, the Company successfully petitioned to British parliament, which gave them £10,000 per annum allowance, and thus enabled the Company to continue to exist.

Four resolutions were passed by the English Parliament on that occasion, namely,

1. That the trade to Africa should be free.
2. That the company should be charged no duties for the upkeep of the Company's forts.
3. That it was necessary the forts should be maintained, and
4. That parliament should grant an allowance for this purpose. This was the £10,000 just referred to.

More troubles continued for the Royal Africa Company, and as a result the Company kept on until 1750. An Act was then passed authorising the payments of the Company's debts and the government taking over of its rights and properties. This change of management brought the British Government into direct contact with the people of the Gold Coast who had formerly only sought the protection of the English Company.



From now on—after the second half of the 18th century and after the termination of the powers of the Royal Africa Company, more serious troubles occurred which made the next English company unable to survive for long. These troubles included wars in Europe and America, and inter-tribal wars in the Gold Coast itself, and the worsening condition of the forts and castles.

Many of these forts were badly affected, namely, the forts in Benyin, Dixcove, Sekondi, Komenda, Anomabo, Tantumkwerri, Winneba and (James Fort) Accra. Cape Coast Castle, it was said, was the only settlement in good condition, and even here further extensions and strengthening of the buildings were necessary.

The new company that succeeded the Royal Africa Company was the African Company of Merchants. This new Company held on from 1750 till 1821 when it ceased to exist. This was a most difficult era for the Company, due to the frequency of wars and the Abolition of the Slave Trade. As stated by Cave, "In one day nine-tenths of the trade on the coast became illegal. There existed on the Coast a vast organisation of wholesale dealers, brokers and depots for the collection of slaves. The purchasing power of the Gold Coast people depended on the trade, and now they had nothing to exchange for the European goods they wished to bring. The years following 1807 were very difficult ones for Europeans and African traders alike, and the whole character of trade and English interest on the coast had to change completely." \*

During the period in which the Africa Company of Merchants traded on the Gold Coast, no significant additions were made to English settlements, except that many of the forts were rebuilt just as several others were neglected and abandoned to fall into ruins.

Similar observations can be made in respect of the Committee of Merchants whom the British Government entrusted with the administration of the Gold Coast under the Dependency of Sierra Leone at this time. The African Company of Merchants was abolished in 1821 when the settlements of the Gold Coast were placed under the British Crown. Sir Charles Macarthy was the first Governor. He arrived at Dixcove on 27th March, 1822 and proclaimed the Colony.

It has been stated already that after the expulsion of the Portuguese by the Dutch in 1642, the latter adopted harsher and more barbaric methods than the former had done to keep out trade rivals and to reserve the so-called monopoly rights which they had unilaterally appropriated to themselves. In spite of this Dutch opposition, European traders of the Big Powers as well as the Small Powers incessantly participated in the Gold Coast trade.

Among the Big Powers were France and England, the former could not withstand the strain of Dutch antagonism on the Gold Coast, and therefore after a brief and uneventful stay here, they pulled out for the Ivory Coast. The latter, however, successfully competed against the Dutch for over two and a half centuries.

We now turn to the traders from the Small Powers—Sweden, Denmark and Brandenburg.

The Swedish contact with the Gold Coast was shortlived. They arrived here in 1652, and within a few years established trade settlements in three places—Takoradi, Cape Coast and Accra. They built their first fort at Takoradi in 1652, and named it **Fort Witsen**. This was soon afterwards followed by a lodge they built at Cape Coast, and at third one at **Ursu** (Osu Accra). In 1657, King Frederick III of Denmark sent an expedition to the Gold Coast under Sir Henry Carlot—to drive them out of the place.

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\* Cave, p. 41

From 1658 onwards, therefore, the Danes began to build forts and lodges as the Big Powers had done before them: in 1658, they built a fort on a hill (Danish Mount) at Amanful, Cape Coast, about three-quarters of a mile east of Cape Coast, which they named **Fredericksburg**; in 1659, they enlarged the Swedish lodge at Osu and renamed it **Christiansborg**. A few more forts were built, all on the eastern part of the country: **Fort Friedensborg** at Ningo in 1734; **Fort Konigstein** at Ada in 1784; **Fort Prinzestein** at Keta in 1784, and **Fort Augustaborg** at Teshie in 1787. About this time (1787) the Danes destroyed the English fort (**Fort Vernon**) at Prampram which had been built in 1780.

The Danes were until 1850 one of the three principal European Powers with trade interest in this country. Their forts were all situated east of Accra, and they had their headquarters at Christiansborg. Earlier in 1685 the Royal Africa Company had bought from them their fort situated on the Danish mount at Cape Coast and renamed it **Fort Royal**.

Dutch occupation of Christiansborg Castle saw a stormy history: it saw murders of governors, mutinies of soldiers, ravages of earthquakes, invasions by African traders, and other havocs. All that is described in another part of this book.\*

During their occupation of this part of the Gold Coast Denmark of all the European nations had the unique distinction of developing agriculture. "There plantations were started by them in Akwapim, but were destroyed by tribal wars. Coffee was their most successful crop."\*\*

Before dismissing the fact that the French did not stand competition against other European nations on the Gold Coast, we must explain that they made a number of attempts to establish settlements at different parts of the coastal towns but none proved successful. Komenda, Cape Coast, and Amoku were some of the towns in which they attempted to build factories and forts.

In 1688, they established a factory at Komenda, but in the following year the Komendas drove them away, as the Dutch also pillaged and destroyed their factory. Early in 1700 they unsuccessfully attempted to capture the Cape Coast Castle from the English. Subsequently, in 1703 and 1757 French fleets bombarded the Castle heavily. The third town they chose to establish a fort at was Amoku, near Anomabo. This was in 1794, and they hoped to capture the latter town then an English settlement in case they gained a footing in the former town. Having failed to establish in any of these towns, they left for the Ivory Coast, Guinea, and Senegal where they enjoyed a virtual monopoly of trade—without any serious European rival as was the case on the Gold Coast.

The last among the European nations to share in the West African trade during this period was Brandenburg (Prussian portion of Germany). Under the Captainships of Mathieu de Vos and Philip Pieter Bloncq, the Elector of Brandenburg despatched two frigates to the West Coast with orders to form a Settlement. They reached Cape Three Points in May, 1662, and landed their men at Princes Town, where they set up the Brandenburg flag. Captain Bloncq, who had performed several voyages to the coast previously, did not have much difficulty in getting round the local chief to arrange for a piece of land for the erection of a fort. Montfort Hill was chosen in Princes Town and work on building a temporary lodge was started. He took some of the chiefs back with him to Hamburg and then to Berlin where they were happily entertained, and returned home with them the following year.

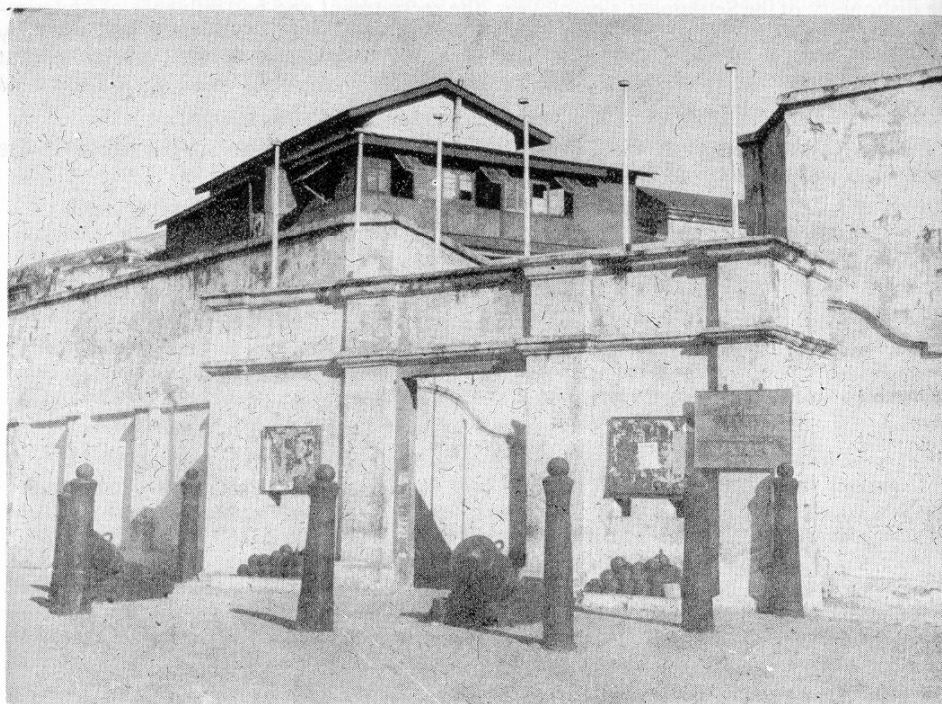
On his return with the chiefs, he built a proper fort, which he named **Groot Fredericksburg** "in honour of his sovereign". This fort was completed in May, 1682.

\* Chapter 6  
\*\* Cave p. 24

Subsequently, a lodge and a fort were built at Akwida and Takrama respectively. In 1683 the Brandenburgs built the lodge at Akwida, and was captured by the Dutch in 1690. The Dutch enlarged it and named it **Fort Dorothea**; but in 1698 the Dutch West India Company ordered them to restore it to the Prussians. In 1684, the Brandenburgs also built a small fort at Takrama "to guard the adjacent watering-place, where they levied a total of £10 per every foreign ship that put in for wood and water."

The Brandenburg stay on the Gold Coast was relatively short; for early the next century business mishaps and other troubles demanded winding up their affairs. These included the dishonesty of the Settlement's employees, the recruitment and bad influence of undesirables, malcontents and deserters from other European settlements, and trade losses. They endeavoured however to sell the Settlement at Princes Town to the Portuguese, but without success. In the end they left the Settlement completely in 1708, and the local chief John Conny claimed possession.

Five years subsequently the Dutch outwitted John Conny who sought refuge in the bush—and was heard of no more.



*The Cape Coast Castle—the seat of English authority in this country for upwards of two centuries—1662-1876*



## CHAPTER 5

## THE TENANTS

THE occupants of the forts and castles were many, and of various categories—from time to time, and from fort to fort, and castle to castle. The pattern remained similar, however. In view of their larger size, castles often took more occupants than forts. A castle, therefore, took as many as four hundred occupants, and a fort about one hundred at most, and a lodge or redoubt about ten.

There was also a variation in the policies of the various European trading companies, the enormity of their trade determining the strength of the staff needed in a particular locality, depending also on the nearness or remoteness of a fort to a castle (invariably the headquarters of the trading company). For example, by 1640 whilst the Dutch occupied the Elmina Castle, they also possessed forts at Moree and Butri. Similarly, by 1700 the English had the Cape Coast Castle not far away from their forts in Komenda, Kormantine, Egysa and Anomabo. In either case, it took no longer than half a day to travel by canoe from the headquarters (the Cape Coast Castle) to any of the forts in any of the four towns aforementioned. This means that only a skeleton staff was needed in a fort very much near to the headquarters.

Against this background, an attempt can now be made to find out the actual position: the occupants of the castle, the sort of occupation they pursued, how much they were paid, and the sort of life they led.

There was no uniform pattern of the sort of occupants in any particular fort or castle. In any case under every European trading company, there was a Governor or commandant in charge of both the senior and the junior staff.

In mentioning the financial burden that faced the trading company with a fort or castle to maintain, Bossman gives the following list as typical of the list of the staff in a particular castle:—

- The Director-General (or Commander or Governor)
- The Chaplain (or preacher, next to the Director)
- The Treasurer
- Medical Officer
- Extra-chief factors (2 or 3 of them)
- Other factors (7 or 8 of them)
- Sub-factors (9 or 10 of them)
- Assistants
- A ware-house keeper
- Accountant
- Book-keeper (General)
- Book-keeper (to Garrison)
- Clerk of the Church
- Auditor or Informer
- Regular Soldiers (50 or 60)
- Ad hoc* recruits (about 100)

Added to this number were about 180 slaves at a particular time in the castle, or at a favourable peak or season. For example, on the cessation of hostilities, there might

be as many as 500 slaves ready to be sold to a trading company which then housed them in the forts and castles for shipment overseas. Of course, not all slaves in the castles were intended to be transported to be sold abroad. There were domestic slaves as well as prisoners of war intended to be paid for to go abroad as soldiers. e.g. to the East Indies.

The Portuguese administration of the forts and castles was run on feudal lines: the Elmina Castle was under the absolute command of the Governor, who was styled the Captain-General, and directly represented the King of Portugal. He had jurisdiction in both civil and criminal matters over all the inhabitants in the castle in which he himself resided as well as those in other Portuguese settlements on the Coast.

The occupants were generally clerical and mercantile staff, and workmen skilled in essential handicrafts.

A. W. Lawrence gives a list of posts as established in 1529 at the Elmina Castle:—

The Governor (or Captain-General) earned a basic salary of 800 *real* in addition to a wide range of emoluments.

"The Governor's own salary, without his pre-requisites virtually equalled half of the total emoluments received by the fifty-five officers and lesser civilians subject to him at Elmina" he states.

Doctor-Surgeon next highly paid (70 *real*) Chief trader . . . with workmen under him (50† *real*) Thirteen Officers—for military and general duties (40—30 *real*) The King's Chaplain—who daily said Mass for the soul of Prince Henry the Navigator the protagonist of the African voyages. (40 *real*)

The priest-in-charge (50 *real*) with two other Chaplains (30 *real*) each to teach the mulatto children.

"but their chief occupation was proselytising the Africans, under the patronage of St. Francis of Assisi (because the face of an image of that saint turned black on reaching West Africa, as it might well do in the moist atmosphere if it had been painted with white lead." Ibid, p.39 Works Superintendent (40 *real*)

The rest of artisans—an apothecary, a barber, supervisor of the infirmary, overseer of the oven, blacksmith, cooper.

2 Carpers

2 Masons

a tailor

2 bombardiers or armourers

4 women, paid two *real* each, kneaded dough and served in the infirmary.

The pattern of the staff in occupation in other European forts and castles was less elaborate than the foregoing. Professor Lawrence similarly gives a list of the Dutch staff as follows:—(83 in all)

Governor (300 florins as well as other emoluments)

Treasurer (72 florins)

Chief Merchant (90 florins)

Commandore-in-Charge of Dockyard (80 florins)

Military officer (39 florins)

One Lay-preacher (36 florins)

Two Assistant merchants (26 and 24 florins)

Cadet (14 florins)

Eight European artisans of whom an armourer took precedence although he earned 20 florins, as a smith earned 28 florins.

Non-commissioned officers ... (11 — 8 florins)

Soldier ... (14 — 11 florins)

Drummers ... (2 — florins) flat.

There were as many as 184 slaves who spent their whole time working for the company.

In the case of the fort at Moree, he gives the list as follows:—

( Commandant (60 florins)

Senior ( 3 junior trading officers)

Officers ( Garrison (28 florins) with sergeant

( Lay-preacher (30 florins)

( Surgeon (25 florins)

junior ( Carpenter (24 florins)

Officers ( Copermulth (14 florins)

( 2 lands (6—4 florins)

156 slaves

He states further that in 1645, there were 223 servants in the company's service and 409 slaves. The slaves were made up of 170 men, 114 women and 125 children. Where a fort became congested with many slaves a redistribution was made to other forts.

There are a few other points that would interest the reader. Apart from the Portuguese and the Dutch who invariably had recruits and officers of their own respective nationalities in their services to occupy their settlements, other European companies recruited servants of other European nationalities.

The Brandenburgers usually appointed Dutchmen as Governors, although military matters were always put in the charge of Germans.

The designations of the various officers afore-mentioned give a clear picture as to who lived in these castles, but it should be added that the various European occupants were hardly accompanied by their wives. The generality of the European traders, soldiers, artisans, etc., came out without their wives. The dangerous tropical disease, the strain of the tropical weather, and the risks and fatigue of life on the West Coast, etc., made them give little or no attention to taking their wives out here with them.

Thus one would expect to find several mulatto children in the neighbourhood of the trading settlements. Except the Portuguese and the Dutch who strictly forbade their officials taking African girl-friends into the forts and castles to stay overnight, the English and other Europeans did not object to that practice. In any event, the results were nearly always the same for the Portuguese and those of other nations.

In all these forts and castles there were two types of slaves, namely, those intended to be retained in the castle as domestic servants, and then those intended as commercial products to be sold to overseas slave-dealers. On the whole, the former were relatively happy, and except in a few cases, there were rarely cases of desertion among them.

With the latter group, the general rule was that the commercial slaves endeavoured to resist their transportation. The procedure through which they passed from the interior to the coast, chained hand and foot, from the dungeons through the Middle Passage etc., to be worked literary to death on a plantation in America or the West Indies was horrible.

The pattern of occupants, therefore, would give the reader an answer to what took place in the forts and castles. In the first place, it has been established that the settlements were primarily for defence purposes—to protect themselves from European interlopers and unlicensed traders, from attacks against rival European traders, from hostile African peoples and even from possible internal rebellions. Therefore, most of the personnel resident in the forts and castles were soldiers, trained to attack and defend themselves against any of the potential hostile groups mentioned above.

The Director-General or Governor was generally a distinguished soldier of a very high rank, and commanded respect both at home and abroad. Among the Portuguese, he was invariably somebody who had lost an arm in war or was otherwise disabled. He represented the King of Portugal, and it was to him alone that he was responsible. With other European Powers, their Governors represented their respective trading Companies in which members of the royal family might have shares. But since they depended on the governments of their respective countries for parliamentary funds they tended to carry out policies not opposed to those of their respective governments. The governors tried cases, and therefore sat as judges sometimes and settled disputes between the occupants of the castle, or between them and the townsmen. He might require the assistance of assessors in the latter case.

The Chaplains, priests and pastors were there to see to the spiritual oversight of the settlements; they conducted services regularly in the forts and castles; and they taught catechism to the slaves who were about to be transported overseas in order to render them docile and less aggressive. In the case of the Portuguese, the priests-in-charge said regular prayers for Prince Henry the Navigator (1413—1480), the prime-mover of the West African voyages for the repose of his soul. The priests ranked very high in the hierarchy of the occupants of the Castle; for he often ranked next to the Governor.

There were then the treasurer and the medical officer, who ensured the purity of their accounts and of their health respectively. As the principal business of the occupants was trading, it was always necessary to engage a competent accountant and auditor to assist the Treasurer, who was not necessarily a qualified accountant. The Treasurer must be a trustworthy person, and one who could keep a list of items of goods that sold at a good profit. He was always well-paid, and in many cases was forbidden to engage in private trade.

There were then the factors and assistant factors, who kept a large department assisted by accountants, book-keepers and clerks. It was necessary for each of them to know the habits of the people with whom they traded, for very often there was dishonesty on either side. For example, Dixcove, where the English possessed FORT METAL CROSS became notorious for its indulgence in exchanging base metals for precious goods.

In each fort there were regular numbers of soldiers to stand by in case the forts were attacked and plundered. There could be as many as fifty or more soldiers depending upon the size of the fort or the magnitude of its trade. In the absence of any troubles, the soldiers were put on a useful assignment, such as repairing the fort, constructing a road, or making farms and catching fish.

As the Slave Trade became a profitable trade, the forts and castles were often infested with hundreds of slaves, whom it has been mentioned, fell into two categories, commercial and domestic slaves. The former did not do any manner of hard work once they were dumped into the castle. On the contrary, they were well fed and well-looked after—to fetch good prices overseas. The latter were not intended for sale, but had to perform manual services in the forts, e.g. washing, baking, general cleaning.

Alongside this general pattern of activity, there were other incidental matters, e.g. the training of the children of the officers, and the meeting of important officials from other



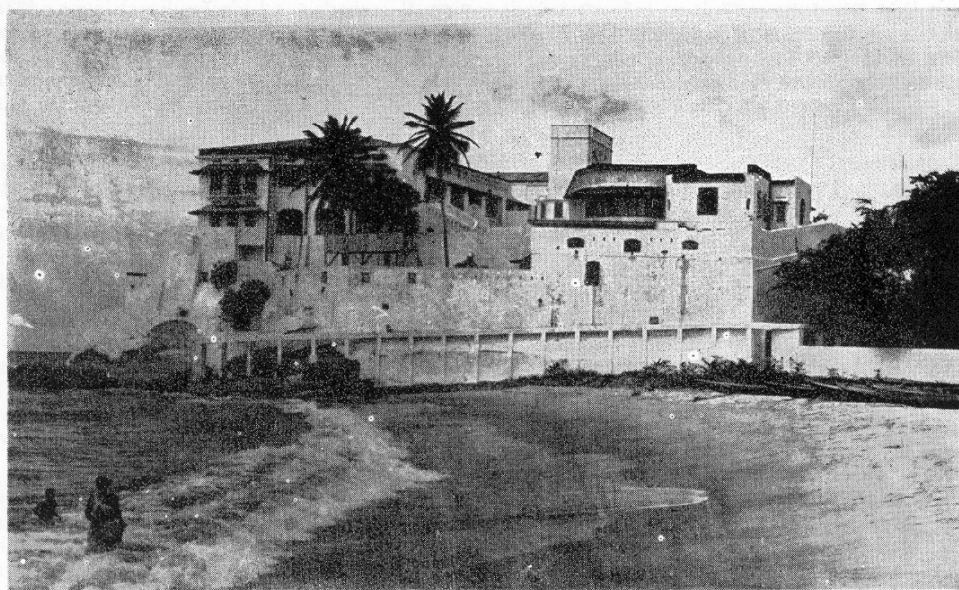
forts and castles, the meeting of African kings, Chiefs and other dignatories. These matters would, therefore, necessitate the running of a private school in the forts and castles, the calling of durbars, etc. Thus Rev. Christian Jacob Protten (1714—1769) served both as pastor and a school-master in the Danish fort at Osu; Rev. J. E. J. Capitein (1717—1747) served as pastor and school-master in the Dutch fort in Elmina; and Rev. Dr. Philip Quae-coo (1741—1816) rendered similar services in the English Castle at Cape Coast. The political and judicial works of Governor Maclean,\* who was Governor under the Committee of Merchants from August, 1838 to 1844, and was later appointed President and Judicial Adviser of the English Settlements in the Gold Coast are already well-known.

Finally, it must be mentioned that the inmates of the forts and castles were mostly Europeans, hardly accompanied by their wives. Barbot mentions that the Danish women could not live there long, and his own brother James, who sailed along the coast in 1699 says that Mr Johane Trawne, the Governor of Christiansborg, had his lady with him.\*\* On the whole, the Europeans out here came as single men, and most of them did not remain long in their company's service—they returned to their home countries, saw service in another country or died out here.

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\* George Maclean was responsible for the signing of the Bond of 1844, which treaty partly provided the basis for negotiating for our independence from the British crown. He was easily the most remarkable English Governor of the 19th century in the Gold Coast. It was mainly through his efforts that human sacrifices, panyarring and other inhuman customs were abolished in the Gold Coast. It was partly through his efforts that the Wesleyan Missionary Church was established in the Gold Coast. He died at Cape Coast on 13th December, 1847 and was buried in the Castle there.

\*\* Barbot. p. 173



*The Christiansborg Castle—the seat of Danish authority in this country for about two centuries—1650-1850, and now the seat of the Ghana Government and of the Head of State (President).*

## CHAPTER 6

## UNHAPPY INCIDENTS

THERE was hardly any fort or castle in Ghana which did not witness an incident of triumph or sorrow, of happiness or misery, and of peace or war. The extreme forms of barbarism by King Kwaku Arkai of Benyin, who had to be summoned many a time to **Fort Appollonia** by Governor Maclean to explain his savage and inhuman conduct, and the brave and heroic deed of John Swazy, an English merchant resident at the **James Fort, Accra**, in defiance of the cowardly surrender of an Ashanti political refugee by Governor George Torraine to the Asantehene in 1805 were just one of out of a million and one incidents that took place in the European settlements of the era in the Gold Coast.

We may read with grief a series of atrocities that took place in the forts and castles during this era, as if the pattern of life was such as one would expect in infernal hell.

It was the turn of the nineteenth century—the period of Ashanti invasion on the coast and the exploits of one Ashanti commander by name Atta. With another Ashanti army commander, Opoku by name, he occupied and pillaged Ada, but made no attempt to molest the Danes at **Fort Koningsstein**. Opoku nevertheless looted the bell in **Fort Koningsstein** “as a trophy and pursued the enemy into the mountains.”

But there were worse things to come in the other parts of the country at this time—at Senya Beraku, **Elmina Castle** (Elmina), **James Fort** (Accra), **Fort Leydsameid** (Apam), **Winneba Fort** (Winneba), **Fort Vredenburg** (Komenda), **Fort Metal Cross** (Dixcove), and other Forts and Castles in the country.

In March, 1808, and again in July, Atta demanded the English commandant at Winneba in the strongest possible terms to be supplied with powder and lead, but his request was turned down. Later on, Atta made a similar demand on a mulatto commandant-in-charge of the Dutch fort at Beraku named Vanderpuye, threatening to blow the whole garrison up if he did not comply with his request. The English Commandant, Mr Meredith, obliged Mr Vanderpuye, with some powder and lead for the extortioner's pacification before he could be appeased.

But there were worse crimes—crimes of a very deep dye in the forts and castles—stealing, extortion, kidnapping, robbery and even murder. The Elminas murdered the Dutch Governor Mr Hogenboom sometime in August, 1808 as he was on his way (in the middle of the town, near the River Benya) to the Castle at mid-night. He had paid a visit to the house of one of the Dutch traders in the town to play a game of billards, and as he walked home the townsmen suddenly attacked and assassinated him.

Sometime in April, 1811, a similar atrocity occurred in Accra—at James Fort. An English trader in Cape Coast visited Accra by canoe paddled by some Fanti canoemen. Fearing an untoward event from the Accras who were about this time at war with the Fantis,\* this English trader purposely left the canoemen in the boat and came ashore alone. But some Accras on the beach sensed what was afoot, and so they gathered a large mob who seized this Englishman and refused to release him until some officers from **James Fort** paid them £42.

Some months afterwards, the Accras at **Fort Crevecouer** perpetrated a greater outrage against a Dutch commandant also. He was Mr Vanderpuye, the mulatto commandant

\* The Fantis declared war on the Accras for the latter's neutrality during the Fanti-Ashanti war of 1806-1807. Similarly the Fantis attacked the Elminas for the same reason. They however applauded and commended the Akyims for siding with them against the Ashantis, even though the Akyims shared no boundary with them.

resident at Beraku. He had visited Accra on business, accompanied by a number of Fantis. The Fantis got hold of an Accra fetish priest who went to fish in the River Sekum, carried him to Beraku, and there severed his head from off his body. In revenge, the Accras raided **Fort Crevecouer** where they got hold of Mr Vanderpuye and six Berakus (Fantis) who were with him and murdered the whole lot of them.

A more ghastly act was the murder of Mr Meredith, the English Commandant at Winneba. It was in 1811, when the Winnebas were about to join the Fantis as allies in an invasion against the Ashantis.

A volunteer of the Winneba forces by name Assibata entrusted a locked chest (containing as much as £4,000) to one sergeant Weuves in the **Winneba Fort** for safe-keeping. After the cessation of hostilities, Sergeant Weuves accounted for this amount to the successors of Assibata, who had meanwhile died in the war. But these successors erroneously thought that the amount was more than £4,000, and therefore demanded more than he should account for. Despite repeated protests and remonstrances that he had not taken a penny more than what Assibata had left him, Sergeant Weuves was forced and maliciously threatened to give false evidence against Mr Meredith that he (Mr Meredith) had also helped himself out of the contents of the locked chest of the deceased.

The bogus oracle at Mankessim which was believed to be infallible made matters worse. It gave details of how the alleged theft was committed (e.g. that Sergeant Weuves stole the money at 7.00 o'clock one morning). Still he denied his guilt as well as that of Mr Meredith in the matter. But these denials rather aggravated the people's wrath and as a result Mr Meredith was forcibly removed from the **Winneba Fort** and marched barefooted on burning grasses for over a mile under a scorching sun without any cover whatsoever on his head until he became completely exhausted and weak. Mr Meredith soon died from this brutal and savage torture.

But his successor in office, Mr James, got in touch with Commodore the Honourable F. P. Irby of H.M.S. *Amelia*, about this tragedy. The Commodore lost no time, and a few months later he docked at Winneba and even though the townsmen on the approach of the man-of-war had deserted the town for the bush, bombarded and destroyed the town, and blew up the fort,\* "while for several years afterwards it was the practice of all ships passing the place to pour in a broadside as an intimation of the relentless vengeance that would always be exacted for the murder of a European."\*\*

In the following pages of this chapter, the reader is taken on a mental trip to a number of forts and castles to see what once happened there—we start from **Elmina Castle**, then to **Fort Nassau** (Moree), **Fort Duma**, **Fort Ruyghaver**, **Fort Elise Carthago**, the **Cape Coast Castle**, **Christiansborg Castle**, English Fort in Sekondi, **Fort William** (Anomabo), **Fort Metal Cross** (Dixcove), and back to Elmina—to **Fort Conraadsburg**.\*\*\*

The Portuguese were in the habit of instigating Africans to coax and lure other Europeans traders into their towns and villages on the pretext of trading with them and by that means the Portuguese suddenly rushed on them, and savagely murdered them. Thereafter,

\* Although the demolition of the forts showed the utmost concern the English took about this savage act of the Winneba people the African Committee of Merchants in London (the owners of the fort) were ironically not in favour of that form of retaliation and ordered the fort to be rebuilt. The Winnebas themselves regretted for the unfortunate incident and contributed financially and supplied labour for it to be rebuilt.

\*\* See next page.

\* The Winnebas treated Mr Meredith with the utmost brutality: for they not only made him walk in the sun without his hat but even set fire to the grass, and taking off his boots, compelled him to walk barefooted through the flames. On reaching their destination in the bush, they tied his outstretched arms as tightly as possible to a heavy piece of wood, which passed and pressed upon his throat, and would have put him in irons also had he not avoided this by promising to pay them two ankars of rum, thirty-two heads of cowries and a hundred hands of tobacco, for which he gave them an order on the fort". Claridge. p. 269.

\*\*\* It would have normally been easier to travel crow-wise, but this is a mental exercise, and above all, the narrative goes strictly in a chronological order.



the Portuguese hanged the skulls of their victims on the walls of the castles and forts as a warning to others of their countrymen. One of such Dutch victims was Captain Simon de Taye, who with his men were sent ashore in a canoe by some Africans under pretence that their chief wished to come on board his ship to trade. As soon as they reached the shore, the Africans, who had been bribed for this foul deed, furiously attacked them with cudgels and knives and brutally murdered them. Only two or three of them succeeded in swimming back to their boat. The murdered Dutchmen were taken to Elmina Castle, and their severed bodies were hanged on the walls of Elmina Castle.

A similar incident occurred in 1598, when an African trader, Voetian by name, betrayed the crew of a Dutch boat. He and his men succeeded in coaxing a number of Dutchmen to join them on land for hunting, and it was in the course of this exercise that the Dutchmen were seized upon and taken to the Governor at Elmina as slaves.

In 1599, the Portuguese Governor in Elmina Castle showed similar acts of barbarism to some five Dutchmen. As a Dutch boat passed by Elmina on its way to Mori, the Governor sent some Elminas to escort the boat towards the Castle—to which place the crew were readily summoned. All the five Dutchmen were savagely attacked in the boat and were severely wounded; their heads were cut off; and then presented to the Governor.

No sooner had the Dutch expelled the Portuguese from the Gold Coast than they followed the latter's barbaric methods of murdering intruders and interlopers of other European countries. They were in the habit of instigating one African tribe to go to war with another tribe, and thereby increased their sources of slave supply. Thus it happened that sometime in 1674 they instigated the Ahantas to drive away the warring Aowins, and by that means succeeded in building two forts along the basin of the Ankobra River—**Fort Duma and Fort Ruyghaver**, so as to enable them to open a market for the slave trade. Furthermore, the Dutch laid siege to that river basin. The Aowin chief, however, informed the Dutch that he was willing to trade with them and suspecting no foul deed, the Dutch went along, but the chief arranged with his slave to hide behind a counter and put a match to a quantity of powder on hearing him stamp his foot. By this means, the chief blew up the whole place and everyone who was in it.

In 1681, a great riot took place in Cape Coast. Eighteen slaves escaped from the Castle and sought refuge in the town. Despite persuasions and threats by the English Governor resident at Cape Coast the townsmen refused to surrender them. Eventually, he got the soldiers in the Castle to fire several shots on their houses with a view to frightening them to surrender the fugitives, but in vain. As the persistent refusal of the townsmen continued the Governor became more and more furious and trailed on the town more guns. Some 700 men then turned out and attacked the Castle, and fighting broke out between the residents of the Castle and the Cape Coast people in which about a hundred men on either side were lost. The King of Cape Coast, then resident at Fetu, not far distant from the town itself, accompanied by a dozen of his attendants, called on the government to sue for peace. He remained for eight days beneath a fetish tree which stood near the Castle, and it was principally due to his mediation and persistent reasoning with the people that the dispute was finally settled and the *status quo ante* restored.

In about 1693, a *coup d'etat* took place at the Christiansborg Castle—the seat of the Danish government in this country. One Assameni, an Akwamu trader, accompanied by about eighty of his townsmen, visited the Osu Castle on the pretence of buying bullets. As the Danish residents suspected no foul deed, they admitted them into the Castle, and the factor began to sell them guns and powder. Unknown to the factor, they had secretly brought in some slugs which they now slipped into their guns, thus fully loading them. By

\* Claridge. pp. 122-123

this means, they stabbed the factor, and made the rest prisoners. On hearing noise downstairs, the Governor who was then upstairs came to the scene at once, but he was helpless and had to swim to the Dutch fort some two miles westward to save his own dear life. Thus, Assameni was installed as Governor of Christiansborg Castle, and flew a white flag emblazoned with a device of an African brandishing a sword. He was always neatly dressed in the fashion of a Danish Governor, and "caused himself to be treated in every way as Governor".\* On the 13th of May, 1694, the Danish government paid him some £1,600 for the return of the Castle.

Sometime in 1693, a pathetic incident took place at the English fort in Sekondi, where a Mr Johnson (an English factor) with his assistant, "a mere lad who had but recently left the Bluecoat Hospital" was in charge. Johnson was found in bed greatly distressed.

The cause of this unhappy state of affairs was attributed to his disappointment in a young African girl. He had a broken heart after being jilted by this young mulatto-girl under very treacherous circumstances. The girl was the daughter of an earlier European trader on the coast by an African lady in Cape Coast by name Taguba. Johnson showed keen interest in the girl, and asked her hand in marriage from Madam Taguba even when the girl was as young as twelve years of age. The mother agreed all right, and put her daughter to Johnson's care even at that age. He brought her up nicely until she came of age to be married. All this while, she put up with him at Sekondi. One day, the Dutch Factor of the Elmina Castle happened to hear of this pretty girl, and having made fantastic promises to the mother, assured her of better prospects under his own roof. Accordingly, the mother set out for Sekondi on the pretext of visiting the daughter and son-in-law. At Sekondi Johnson treated the mother-in-law nicely, and she stayed with them for a few days. In the course of her stay, she pretended to take the daughter out for a walk, but as soon as they were near an appointed place, the Waterman took the daughter by force into a waiting canoe, as her mother followed, and they were both carried away to Mr Van Hukeline, "who soon cracked the nut Johnson had been so long cooking to his own tooth."\*\* Thus came about Johnson's tragedy.

A Captain Thomas Phillips \*once made a voyage to Elmina and had dinner with the Dutch General at the Elmina Castle, where the young girl came in to dance before them, "very fine, bearing the Title of Madame Van Hukeline".\*\*

On Sunday, 4th September, 1701, war broke out between the Anomabos and the English. The English had a fort at Anomabo about this time, and everything had been going on well. But the allegation was that instigated by the Dutch, the Anomabos rebelled against their masters, the English, for no just cause. They raided the English fort, and succeeded in breaking open the outer spur-gate, and set fire to the outbuildings and corn room. But the English residents in the Castle fired on them several shots until at last they retreated. In the dead of the night, the English retaliated by setting the town on fire, and as a result the town was nearly destroyed. This war which took twenty-two days hampered trade a great deal. The English resident factor and some of his men were so roughly handled by the townsmen that they fled to Cape Coast in nothing but shirts.

The King of Asebu used his good offices to bring about peace, and things thus returned to normal soon afterwards. Shortly afterwards "the Anomaboes began to be as troublesome and turbulent as ever, being encouraged in their outbreaks by the captains of some of the ten per cent ships."\*\*\*

\*\* Asiley. Vol. 11. p. 399

\* Captain Phillips also visited Governor Assameni at the Osu Castle and dined with him during his visit to the West Coast. Also present at this dinner were Nicholas Buckeridge and John Bloom, the English Commandants of Winneba and James Fort respectively. Claridge. p. 129

\*\*\* Boesman. p. 319

Just about this time, 1701, the English completed building their fort at Dixcove—**Fort Metal Cross**. In the same year, the townsmen laid siege to it and almost succeeded in capturing it. But the factor in charge of this fort bravely resisted the attack, and came to terms with them: that the English would have no power or authority over them, and that furthermore he would collude with them to cheat all passing ships that called on them to exchange their merchandise for gold. This bargain was very well-kept; and the townsmen continually cheated European merchants who called on them for the purpose. As a result, Dixcove earned a rather unevitable name—**False of Mint of Guinea**.

The story was current at the time that in 1701 two small ships that carried valuable consignments of goods stopped by Fort Metal Cross, where one of them which carried a cargo of at least £1,700, was exchanged for a trifle sum of gold that was worth practically nothing.

Our next visit is to Elmina—to Fort St. Jago, at the precincts of which a terrible incident occurred at this time. An elephant of a prodigious size suddenly made its appearance into the town about six o'clock one morning, and paced along the foot of St. Jago Hill. This unusual incident attracted large numbers of people from all directions of the town who came unarmed. The animal cared less for the huge crowd, and wandered about unconcerned. Suddenly, a Dutch officer came from **Fort Conraadsburg** and shot at it, wounding it just above the eye. This attack did not deter it, nor did subsequent volley of shots fired at it.

It paced along quietly, crossed the river Benya (in the middle of the town) until it reached the Government Garden in the Castle, where it furiously pulled down a number of coconut trees.

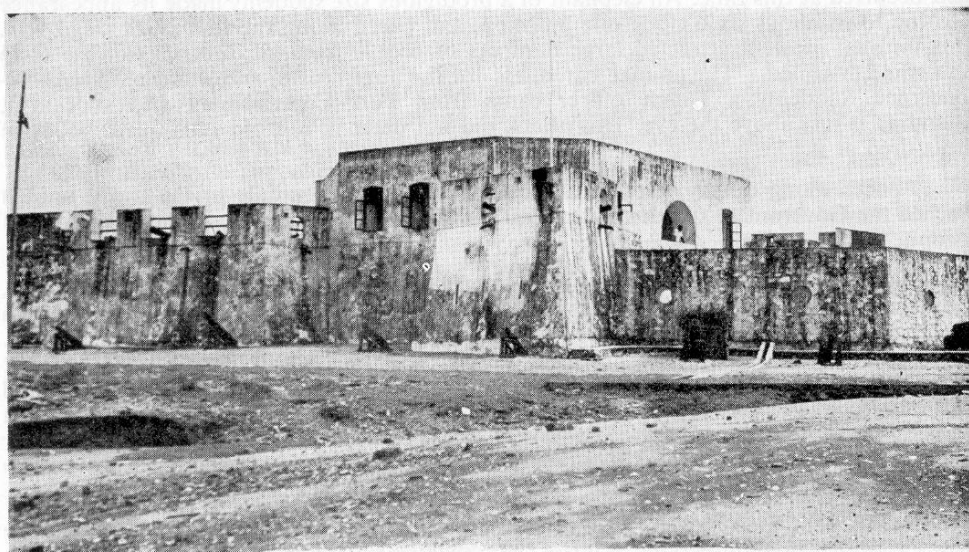
The Governor was at this time busily entertaining a number of high ranking officials, and their busy session was interrupted all of a sudden. He came forward himself, and with a gun loaded with bullets to the full, fired at the animal at a very close range, still to no purpose. The animal began to bleed but not so profusely. A daring youth came forward, caught the animal's tail, and attempted to cut off a piece of it. But this interference irritated the animal all the more, and it trod upon the youth so mercilessly and tore his body with its tusk that he died on the spot immediately. The animal itself remained motionless, and it steadfastly gazed at the dead body, "whilst two negroes fetched away the dead body, not offering to meddle with them in the least,"\*

The elephant then moved away towards the direction of the River Benya, as the crowd scattered in all directions, a lot of them seeking refuge under the slopes of St. Jago Hill. It caused more damage as it went along, breaking water barrels and canoes that were lying about. Finally, it stopped in the middle of the river to wash its wounds and treat them. As it was thus engaged, the townsmen renewed the onslaught. They severed its snout and soon afterwards it died.

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But all was not well after the event—at least, not in England. Captain Langhorne was brought to England to stand trial at the Old Bailey before Sir John Mordaunt on 10th December 1704. His plea was one of self-defence, but he was found guilty. The jury, however, recommended that he be executed. This was not done, and he was released. He was noted for the great gallantry that he had shown in Guinea.

\* Claridge. p. 220



*Fort Appollonia, built in 1750 by the English*



## CHAPTER 7

## GALLANT GOVERNORS

ALTHOUGH the forts and castles witnessed a multiplicity of dread and aversion, of scandal and infamy, and of savagery and inhumanity they did have their myrth, gaiety and glory—under the governorships of men of sterling quality. Indeed, many governors who once occupied most of these forts and castles showed remarkable examples of courage, honesty, integrity and loyalty.

After the expulsion of the Portuguese from the OSU CASTLE in 1642 by the Dutch they made desperate attempts to come back, but each time they were unsuccessful. They were so much hated by the Africans on account of the brutal treatment they gave to Africans and to non-Portuguese Europeans that their presence along the West Coast was hated by the Africans. It was, therefore, difficult to arrange to capture the Osu Castle from the Danes at this time with the connivance of any Africans. It was only in 1679 when a fresh attempt was made, not by the Portuguese themselves directly but by a certain ill-natured Greek called Peter Bolt. This crook conspired with a number of villanous Africans in the town to murder John Olricks of Gluckstad, then the Danish Governor at Osu. But Governor Olricks' African servants refused to join the conspirators, and infact, they betrayed the secret to their good-natured master. However, it was too late for him to save himself.

On the 24th of July, 1782 there occurred a most odious tragedy at the fort in Moree. The English were then in possession of the Dutch fort—FORT NASSAU. In the service of the English was a notorious English ex-convict—a very deplorable and despicable character, Kenneth Murray Mackenzie by name. He was the nephew of Captain Kenneth Mackenzie, then an officer commanding an Independent Company in the service of the African Company of Merchants. Captain Mackenzie himself was a man of great courage and determination “who was destined to suffer for the recklessness and evils of his kith and kin in a strange country—hundreds of miles away from his nativeland”.

The ex-convict Mackenzie had had a very bad past: he had at least on three occasions been sentenced to death for robbery but had been reprieved each time; and he had been indicted for several other heinous offences, but had each time been discharged on technical grounds—non-appearance of prosecution witnesses. Eventually, he was transported to Africa in the service of the African Company of Merchants. Since his arrival on the Coast he grew worse than before. Just about this time, 20th of July, 1782, he deserted, the army by trick, a deed which caused the sentry, Brooks, 1,5000 lashes and an exposure to the sun for some hours.!

After a desperate search Mackenzie was at last traced in the town of Moree, where the towns-people had meanwhile suffered incessant volleys of gun-shots from the English fort and had consequently fled to the bush for safety. In any event, after his arrest, he was not properly tried, but formally executed: “he was seated in one of the embrasures in front of a loaded gun, and his hands and legs were then made fast to it above and below.” Mackenzie thus came to his end instantly, and was buried in Moree.\*

But all was not well after this event—at least, not in England. Captain Mackenzie was brought to England to stand trial at the Old Bailey before Mr Justice Wiles on 10th December, 1784. His plea was one of self-defence, but he was found guilty. The jury, however, recommended that he be reprieved. This was granted; for Captain Mackenzie had a unique record in the army, and was noted for the great gallantry that he had shown in Guernsey

*Ibid.* pp. 230-231

during the French invasion of the Channel Islands in 1778; and had also on the West Coast led the English contingent to attack FORT CONRAADSBURG, Elmina, in 1781. Also public sympathy was very much in his favour.

After a few years' incarceration in Newgate Prison, he was granted King's pardon, but he did not receive the amount of £11,000 worth of gold-dust which they found on him. It was confiscated by the Government. But he was happy to come off a free man—still courageous and brave.

Shortly after this tragedy in Moree, an incident of spectacular interest occurred in Osu, Accra. It was in the year 1792. The Danish Governor of Christiansburg at the time was Andreas Biorn, who found himself in difficulties with the Popos—east of Togo. As a solution, thereto, the Governor made overtures to the then Asantehene, King Osei Kwamena, to provide him with a strong army to come to his aid, if necessary. It was the first time that the fame of Ashanti as a nation of warriors had been heard in this part of the country. Appropriate sums were paid by the Governor to King Osei Kwamena, and the bargain was duly concluded.

But Governor Biorn left on 25th January, 1793 and was succeeded by Andreas Hammer, who by nature was pacific and did not want to get himself involved in any such alliance that would have brought disaster to innocent people. He paid off the Ashantis 250 ounces of gold, and thus caused their army which was then making preparations towards advancing to the coast to return.

The position of a Governor in charge of a Settlement and those (Europeans and Africans) who owed allegiance to him was a difficult one. Discipline was often loose, and a whole mob could easily attack a castle or a fort for the least trifle incident, for example, for inflicting a fine of an ounce of gold, or lashing an African for some dishonest conduct at the expense and detriment of a European.

In about 1802, the relationship between the Europeans residents in Cape Coast and the townspeople got out of hand. "So outrageous," says Claridge, "did the conduct of the people of Cape Coast eventually become that they not only insulted but actually assaulted in the streets officers of ships, merchants, and even officers of the Company."\* The Captain of an English ship who happened to visit Cape Coast and came ashore was so roughly handled that he died on the spot soon afterwards. This conduct of the Cape Coast people put the Governor firmly on his guard to enforce discipline among the townspeople to the very letter of the law, and accordingly an agreement was reached between him and the Chiefs and Headmen of the town.

In the following year, Mr John Swanzy, an English trader resident in Cape Coast, was cheated by one of his employees who converted a quantity of his takings for the day and replaced them with base metals—false gold. This employee was one of his gold-takers who was to accept gold, measure and weigh it. It was his duty to do that in the presence of another African employee. But in the absence of the latter when someone else came to buy gold, the former trifled with the quantity of gold which was available and gave it to another African who easily slipped off to the town. Subsequently, this dishonesty was discovered, and Mr Swanzy demanded that the man who had slipped off be brought or the gold which he had taken be returned. He succeeded in getting hold of the man, whom he took to the Governor in the Castle to be detained. But Mr Swanzy could not be understood, and this little misunderstanding had such adverse effects in Cape Coast town that the Governor himself, Mr Jacob Mould, had to intervene. A large mob raided Mr Mould's residence (opposite to the Castle) shouting and pulling out furniture, as the garrison in the Castle fired several volleys of gun-shots on the townspeople and their houses.

\* Ibid. p. 220

As the rowdiness was coming to a head, and there was a reasonable fear that that might result in war, Governor Mould released the prisoner—to the satisfaction of the townspeople. But this one-sided solution to the problem greatly aggravated the anger of the European residents, who frowning upon the Governor's cowardly action, drew up and delivered to him a strongly worded protest. This had the desired effect.

The Governor ordered a bombardment of part of the town for the unreasonable conduct of the people, and imposed considerable fines on those responsible for this breach of the peace. But neither side would yield, and fighting continued until the Chiefs persuaded their people, and *H. M. S. Romney* arrived at Cape Coast to calm down the situation.

But trifling dissensions of this nature were enough to send a whole nation to war in those days, as happened in the case of the first Fante-Ashanti War of 1807.

In that year, an Assin Chief, Amu by name, lost one of his wing chiefs, with whose body a quantity of gold and other valuables were buried, as the custom of the time was. Now this Amu was the chief of the Eastern half of Assin, whilst Chibu and Kwaku Aputai were the chiefs of the western half. One of Aputai's relations who happened to be present at the burial and was aware of the contents of the grave of the deceased lately buried, returned soon afterwards and rifled with the grave. It was due to this small trifling delinquency on the part of a most insignificant person in a petty village that subsequently brought the Fantis and the English on the one side, and the Ashantis on the other side into a serious clash—such involvement that was to have serious adverse repercussions which later led to a series of wars.

Eventually, the matter was reported to the Ashanti king, Tutu Kwamena, who after several unsuccessful negotiations to have the gold returned to him, detained Aputai in Kumasi. It must be mentioned at this stage, incidentally, that Assin was at the time subservient to Ashanti, and therefore by custom King Tutu Kwamena acted with perfect propriety in that matter.

In the beginning, war broke out between Aputai and Amu (the latter supporting the Asantehene), i.e. king of Ashanti, but although either side suffered terribly Aputai was defeated and the culprit whose conduct had led to all this ordeal and woes was killed during the fight. In the long run Aputai and Chibu managed to escape to the Coast—first to Esikuma, then to Abura. The Asantehene, with the utmost respect and honour for the Fanti Chiefs and people implored for the surrender of the Ashanti fugitives (Chibu and Aputai), and sent presents and several slaves as a matter of custom as an inducement for that purpose. But all that proved futile. On the contrary, the Fantis molested some of the Asantehene's messengers and this naturally incensed the wrath of King Tutu Kwamena, who after consulting his Council of State, led the Ashanti army against the Fantis.

This war took a few months, and ignorant of the strength of the Ashantis, both the Fantis and the English made light of their advance until the position began to deteriorate fast. The Ashantis were still calm—even to the extent that they respected the ancient groves at Mankesim (Fanteland), and refrained from touching them when they were furiously destroying Mankesim town.

At last, the Fantis in their thousands flocked into FORT WILLIAM, Anomabo. As some hid behind the fort, others swam and left the scene altogether. This matter was reported to Colonel George Torraine, Governor of the Cape Coast Castle, who had earlier assured the Fantis full protection against the Ashantis. As the Ashantis spilt more Fante blood, the position became unbearable, and the Governor went back on his word and timidly surrendered Chibu and the Fantis in the Anomabo Castle to the Ashanti army.

But this base and timid action on the part of the Governor annoyed at least one man—another Englishman. He was John Swanzy who was then Commandant of JAMES FORT,

Accra. He was seriously ill in bed at the time when news of what the Governor and the Council (and he himself was a senior member of the Council but was absent at the last meeting) had done. He got up from his sickbed, and came by canoe to Cape Coast (a distant of about 100 miles). "His threats," says Claridge, "to expose them so alarmed Torraine and the others that they guaranteed to undo what could still be undone."

Torraine died at Cape Coast on 8th February, 1807, and was succeeded by Edward William White on 4th December, 1807. He met more troubles on the Coast than his predecessor. One of these was the misconduct of the people of Legu (Dgho) near Saltpond, who had impudently seized a number of Cape Coast fishermen and were about to sell them. Governor White promptly demanded their release, and then inflicted a heavy fine against them.

About the same time, 1815, the Chief of Anomabo found himself in hot waters: he was alleged to have behaved improperly towards a trader in that town, and a fine of four ounces of gold was imposed on him by the Governor.

Similarly, the Governor banished from Cape Coast one African by name Brew who allegedly been intriguing with some Ashantis for the continuance of the Slave Trade, had despite the Government's efforts to put an end to it.

The Governor also came to the rescue of another African. This time it was one of the Headmen of Cape Coast, who had been accused of practising witchcraft. On the death of one of the Cape Coast Chiefs this Headman was sentenced to death and was about to die by torture. But for the timely intervention of Governor White, who rescued him and sent him for safety to Sierra Leone this Chief would almost certainly have been murdered.

Likewise, Governor White and other officers of the English Settlements did all their best to put an end to other inhuman practices. In 1816, on the death of Kodwo Tandoh, Chief of Dixcove, a young girl was ritually murdered. Her fate would have been shared by a certain man in the same town but Mr Hutchison, the Commandant of FORT METAL CROSS, Dixcove, promptly saved his life.

A similar incident happened in Komenda in 1817. Four persons were about to be ritually sacrificed at a funeral custom, but were timously rescued by the Acting Commandant, Mr Aitken, despite the violent resistance of the towns-men.

The trouble did not always come from Africans alone. Some of the Europeans resident in the Castle were very ill-behaved as we saw in the case of Mr Mackenzie who was executed by his own uncle, Captain Kenneth Mackenzie, in Moree.

Readers would recall that in the forts and castles were resident chaplains whose assignment included preaching the gospel to the residents and the townsmen. One of these chaplains about this time was Rev. Philip Quarcoo of Cape Coast (1741-1816). He was a resident chaplain in the English Castle at Cape Coast. He had a most difficult people, both within and outside the Castle, to preach to; for it is recorded that he had to face the "unholy and uncouth defiance of certain Europeans, such as a Mr Cohouac, who refused to obey the Governor's summons to be present at divine service at half-past eleven, stating that "he did not choose to attend to hear any blackman whatever."\*

Finally, a pathetic story to end this chapter. It is the history of the death of Mrs Letitia Elizabeth Maclean,\*\* wife of the President of the English Settlements on the Gold Coast, and its repercussions on Gold Coast politics.

\* Ephson. I. S. Gallery of Gold Coast Celebrities. p. 29

\*\* Mrs Maclean (nee Longdon) was a literary genius especially in the field of poetry. She had published a number of interesting poems and novels, including *The Improsatrice* (1824), *The Troubadour* (1825), *The Golden Violet* (1826), *The Venetian Bracelet* and the *Lost Fleid* (1829). Among her novels were *Romance and Reality* (1831), *Fidel Churchill*, *Francesca Caravere* and the *Fisher's Drawing Room Scrap Book*. She died probably through an overdose of prussic acid as a cure for her epilepsy.



This happened in 1839. President Maclean returned from leave in England with his newly wedded wife on 16th August, 1838. They put up together in the Cape Coast Castle where parties were occasionally held, the last one taking place on 15th October, 1838. At this dinner, Mr Brodie Cruickshank, Commandant of ANOMABO FORT, was also present. The Governor himself was in ill-health, but the wife in good spirits. Mr Cruickshank had left the party at 11 o'clock that night, and as it was late he put up in the town of Cape Coast. The next morning at 8 o'clock, he was summoned to the Castle by a servant who reported to him that "the Governor was dead." Although he was shocked he was not surprised as he knew of the poor state of health of the Governor the past few days. On his arrival at the Castle, he learned that it was Mrs Maclean and not her husband who was dead."\*

Public attention was naturally drawn to this sad event. She was buried in the evening of the same day—Monday, 15th October, 1838—within nine weeks of her arrival in the country. She was buried in the courtyard of the Cape Coast Castle, and an eloquent memorial in Latin was erected on a tablet in her honour as follows:—

Hic jacet sepultum  
Omne quod mortale fuit  
Laetitia Elizabethae Maclean  
Quam egregia ornatam indole  
Musis unice amatam  
In ipso aetatis flore  
Mors Octobris XV A.D. MDCCCXXXVIII  
Aetatis XXXVI  
Quod spectas, viator marmor  
Vanum, heu, doleris monumentum  
Conjux moerens erexit

Many incidents and events of historical importance occurred about this time—difficult situations which mainly as a result of the magnanimous spirit and determination of the Governors and other officials of the European settlements on the Gold Coast were regularised. These, to mention only a few of them, included securing a land at Jukwa near Cape Coast, for the settlement of the Denkyiras (1829); the return of the Gold Coast Settlement to a Committee of three London Merchants (Barne, Brown and Forster) responsible to the Colonial Office (1830); the rivalry between the English and the Danes in the eastern part of the country's coming to a head in 1831; Bodwich's Treaty by which the Ashantis renounced its claim to the overlordship of certain parts of the Coast (1831); crisis in the administration of the Merchant Government of the Gold Coast Settlement (1835); the founding of the Wesleyan Church in the Gold Coast the same year; and the Dutch war with Ahanta—punitive expedition against King Baidu Bonso II of Ahanta State by the Dutch Governor at Elmina, Governor H. J. Tonneboeyer (1837-38).

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\* Mrs Maclean's death aroused a great deal of gossip on the Coast, and suspicion in England—even among members of respectable societies. An inquest was held and a Commission sat on it, but in the end the husband (Governor Maclean who had been suspected of foul play was vindicated and his good conduct, integrity and honesty upheld.



Fort Prinzenstein, Keta, built by the Danes 1782, and was purchased by the English on 12th March, 1850.

## CHAPTER 8

## PROBLEMS ABOUT THE FORTS AND CASTLES

THE forts and castles brought in their train several complex problems—problems which transcended the boundaries of the settlements themselves, the country at large, and affected people several hundreds of miles away in other countries and continents. These problems fall into two streams—internal and external.

The first problem that the forts and castles easily faced was the difficulty of maintaining them properly. Frequent alterations, pulling down of doors, gates, windows, cisterns and walls; or making extensions and enlarging apartments were found necessary at times. It was also found necessary at odd times to give a more strategic shape to the fortifications, make them square or oblong with normal bastions at the angles. Such work easily entailed thousands of pounds. Of course, it was true that a good many of the trading companies made handsome profits from time to time, but it was equally true that many more of them lost a great deal of money. It was indeed for the latter reason that most of them packed up, and closed down or abandoned their trade on the Gold Coast altogether.

Apart from simply maintaining the forts and castles, it was necessary to make adequate allowances for meeting the salaries and wages of the several officers and workers in the companies' employ. It was the normal practice of the trading companies, for example, to offer bribes to African kings and chiefs as protection money to ensure "local monopoly". Payments had to be made to other category of Africans as well—all in the normal course of running the affairs of the settlements. These included payments made to factors, African volunteer-forces and canoe-men. All such expenditure had to be met fully to keep the settlements going, whether the companies made profits or not, and certainly it made a heavy inroad into the financial resources of the company.

There were occasional earthquakes, bombardments, inclement weather, and other causes that affected the stability of these forts and castles.

e.g. In Accra, an earthquake which occurred on 10th July, 1862 greatly damaged the **Ussher Fort** and the **James Fort**. Similarly, in 1636, **Fort Duma**, a Portuguese fort built up the Ankobra River, was seriously shattered by earthquake. Bombardments of forts and castles were frequent occurrences, e.g. in 1703 and 1757 the **Cape Coast Castle** was bombarded by the French fleet, and on 31st January, 1868 the Dutch warship *Metalin Kruis* bombarded the English fort in Komenda.

In spite of this unpleasant situation, employees of the trading companies indulged in dishonest practices, such as stealing and defrauding their own companies. Sometimes they undercut the prices of goods and sold them at a loss for their own personal gains. This resulted in considerable loss to their companies.

Bossman, writing in about 1750, instances the case of certain Dutch traders who indulged in this form of dishonesty: "Yet its officers were not all drawn from the dregs of Europe. To enter the company service, they had to find sureties who would enter into bonds for their good behaviour. Junior factors needed security for £400, merchants for £800-£1,500, the Agent-General for £2,000. All sureties were scrutinized by the Court of Assistants, and bad risks rejected. Over the years the sums required were increased, but, significantly the company began to accept the officer's own bond. Few signs have been found of the company's recovering from these sureties any substantial part of the damages it claimed to have suffered at the hands of its employees, and it is probable that in later years the bonds became little more than an elaborate formality."\*

\* Bossman, p. 145

He explains that there were two principal reasons for this shortcoming, first the miserable and uncomfortable life they had to lead in Africa which was precarious and not conducive to hard work, so that they were easily prone to vicious excesses. There were also the lack of good supplies of fresh food and of relatively luxurious goods which some of the traders were used to, so that they were often tempted to make up that deficiency by pilfering, stealing, defrauding and robbing.

It was the practice of both the European and African traders to mix the gold they sold with base metals, thus rendering a hundred sterling worth of gold practically valueless and worthless. **Fort Metal Cross**, Dixcove\* was notorious for this sort of shady deal along the Gold Coast; for both the Europeans and the Africans, particularly the latter were guilty of such malpractices. After the building of this fort in 1702, the townsmen compelled the English factor to submit to their terms by which he acknowledged that he had no power or authority over them and agreed to join them in cheating all ships that called there by passing imitation gold to them. The compact was kept so well that the place soon became known as the "false mint of Guinea", and in 1701 two small ships, the cargo on one of which alone was valued at £1,700, sold their whole stock there and received nothing but this false gold in exchange."

Cape Coast was also notorious in that respect. This meant that without taking adequate precautions, a trading company stood to lose hundreds and thousands of pounds sterling if it fell into the guiles and tricks of such dishonest traders. Allusion has been already made to a case which took place in Cape Coast\* in 1803 when a Mr John Swanzy, an English trader living in the town, complained to the Governor that one of his African gold-takers had accepted false gold.

The absence of female companions caused serious problems. For health reasons, European ladies were not in the habit of accompanying their husbands to the West Coast; for the West Coast, albeit famous for its valuable mineral resources, had incurred a rather notorious appellation as the "Whiteman's grave"—the home of terrible and wild tropical diseases, the "black hole" of mosquitoes and other deadly insects.

The early Portuguese settlers and traders used to bring their wives out, but this was even rarely done, and did not continue for a long time.

The Dutch stoutly forbade concubinage with local women, and prohibited taking into the castle local girls of any description.

The other European national companies did not prohibit officers and others in their employ to go after local girls or to bring them to the settlements any time, once that did not interfere with their work.

All the same, mulatto children increased everywhere along the trading settlements, and some of these children grew up respectably and replaced the European staff where a vacancy was to be filled strictly by an expatriate staff.

Inadequate food supplies and malnutrition were a great menace to the peace and tranquility of the castle and fort dwellers. They had free supplies of food as an addition to their remuneration, but there was much discrimination in the distribution of food among the senior and junior officers, non-officers and the slaves. It could be imagined that the last three category of workers were inadequately fed, but occasionally as ships called from the home country some supplies of wheat, fresh and salted fish, butter, pork, beef,

\* Claridge. Vol. 1 p.151

\* Ibid. p. 231



and some beer, wine and brandy were obtained, which might not be enough for all the company's servants.

There were frequent deaths due to the inadequacy of decent food and to malnutrition. Food poison was a common cause of death.

Desertions and mutinies of soldiers were very common. Poor conditions of service led to dissatisfaction in the settlements, and that led to open defiance of subordinate officers who sometimes refused to take orders from their superior officers. The more vicious among them went to the extent of violently assaulting their superior officers or conspiring with others of their rank to rebel against those in authority.

In some cases, drunkenness, associations of female companions in town, or better conditions of service in another company led to desertions. The Brandenburg settlement at Princes Town was full of all nationalities, and the story was common that they were made up mostly of rebels and deserters from other settlements.

There were cases of strict discipline imposed in some of the forts, especially in those of the Dutch.

This tendency tended to drive away many of the inmates of the Dutch settlements to those of other European companies. Hereunder is an apt description of the picture in two typical forts, one belonging to the Dutch, the other the English.

"The Dutch favoured neat brandy or rum, the English mixed their brandy with lime juice, sugar and water; in general both drank to excess. The English Company allowed men to spend the night in the town and to bring women into the fort, but the Dutch inflicted heavy penalties for both practices, and allowed men outside the forts only in day-light, when they would almost continuously be on duty; drinking was their sole relaxation in the long evenings, and consequently, in the Dutch service, a large number of soldiers were put on charge for drunk and disorderly conduct."\*

Externally, the problems which the forts and castles as well as their occupants faced were many and more serious. They ranged from petty squabbles and misunderstandings in the towns and villages wherein the forts were situated to international wars in which World Powers were seriously involved. As instances of the former—the brawls between the European settlers of the forts and castles and the African inhabitants, the following instances can be cited:—the Portuguese clashed with the people of Axim in 1514, with the Accras over the Portuguese lodge in 1578, and with the Aowins in connection with Fort Ruyghaver in 1697; the Dutch in 1680-81 fought against the Elminas for ten months when the latter besieged both the Elmina Castle and Fort Conraadsburg; the English similarly fought the townsmen of Cape Coast in 1663, and of Anomabo in 1701, Dutch-Accra in 1782; and the Danes for similar reasons fought the townsmen of Keta—all in connection with the forts which the Europeans had built on their respective lands, apparently against their will.

Trade rivalry in West Africa among the various European nations inevitably led to war which entailed the seizure of this fort or that castle. The Anglo-Dutch wars were a case in point: "The Dutch having driven the Portuguese away from the Gold Coast by receiving a definite surrender, not unnaturally considered themselves entitled to undisputed possession of the lucrative trade in slaves, gold, etc. But other nations particularly the English, disputed this logic and proceeded to take part in the trade as already related. It was not long before trade rivalry led to war; indeed these happenings in West Africa precipitated the Anglo-Dutch war which broke out in 1664. In that year an English fleet under Captain Robert Holmes avenged the Dutch capture of Cape Coast Castle, which had preceded the opening of the official war, capturing nearly all the Dutch forts,

\* Ibid. pp. 50—51

including Fort Nassau (Mori), Fort St. Anthony (Axim). In the following year the Dutch retaliated in force sending Admiral De Ruyter with a large fleet, who succeeded in taking all the English forts except Cape Coast Castle. Their own forts were described in 1666 as being those at Elmina, Kormantine, Axim, Mori and Butri, the Danes having Fredericksburg and Christiansborg. This position between English and Dutch was confirmed by the Treaty of Breda in 1667, but the English company was ruined and surrendered its charter.”\*

There were many more external problems that faced the forts and castles, e.g. the grant of asylum to hundreds of Fanti refugees in June, 1806 in the **Anomabo Fort** when pursued by the Ashanti army, eventually flared into a full-scale war between the Ashantis and the Fantis (with the British as the allies of the latter); the exercise of jurisdiction over the inhabitants within the range of a canon-shot from the forts and castles which jurisdiction brought lots of clashes between the European local governments and the African kings and chiefs; the encouragement given by the European settlers to christian teachings and the religion which clashed with the African juju, fetish and superstitious practices and above all the introduction of the slave trade with all its grim and horrid experiences.

The agonies of the slaves were many, and ranged from the initial difficulties of torture at their place of captivity to the plights which they experienced at their destinations in America or the West Indies.

The following description gives a vivid picture of their initial experiences:—

“All slaves when they reached the coast were closely shaved and well anointed with palm oil to give their skins a smooth and glossy appearance, so that it was often no easy matter to tell an old man from a young one. They were then carefully examined by the surgeons, who looked at their teeth, made them jump and thoroughly over-hauled them from head to foot in order to exclude the aged and infirm or any who were diseased, who were invariably rejected, while those who were passed as fit were immediately handed on the right breast with the purchaser’s mark to prevent the risk of substitution. In the case of the Royal African Company the letter D.Y. (i.e. Duke of York) were used. This was done with a heated silver or iron brand after first anointing the skin with a little oil. When the slaves had all been marked, if no vessel was already waiting, they were confined in the slave rooms of the forts until an opportunity occurred to ship them to their final destination.”\*\*

The experience of a surgeon on board a slave-ship was described in these words:—

“Some wet and blowing weather having occasioned the potholes to be shut and the grating to be covered, fluxes and fevers among the Negroes resulted. While they were in this situation, my profession requiring it, I frequently went down among them, till at length their apartments became so extremely hot as to be only sufferable for a very short time. But the excessive heat was not the only thing that rendered their situation intolerable. The deck, that is the floor of their rooms, was so covered with the blood and mucus which had preceded from them in consequence of the flux, that it resembled a slaughter-house. It is not in the power of the human imagination to picture a situation more dreadful and disgusting. Numbers of the slaves had fainted, they were carried on deck, where several of them died, and the rest were with difficulty restored. It nearly proved fatal to me also.”\*\*\*

Rather than be slaves in a strange land or meet an unpredictable fate, some slaves during the Middle Passage, did whatever they could to free themselves or end their lives.

\* O’Neil’s Report, pp., 11-12

\*\* James, C. R. *Black Jacobins*

\*\*\* D’Auvergne, E. B. *Human Livestock*, pp. 68-9

Once a Dutch ship leaving for Surinam with a hundred slaves on board contained powerful hands of certain Gold Coast Kormantines, who lost no time in conspiring in the course of the Middle Passage to rebel against their masters. Whatever tool they laid hands on, they picked up and chased their masters. It is said that at one time five of the ship's crew were forcibly thrown into the sea, six severely wounded, and two others were killed.

Nor was this an isolated instance. Cases of rebellion were frequent: in three continuous years, one ship belonging to a Liverpool slave-trader made ten voyages to the West Coast each time carrying slaves on board to be sold. It happened that in seven out of those ten voyages, rebellions occurred which spelt serious disasters for the slave-dealers.

The danger of suicide was common and pathetic. Many of the slaves were taken against their will, and apart from the harsh treatment meted out to them in the dungeons and the cold weather at sea, they became mentally worried as to what was going to befall them. A slave ship bound for Jamaica in 1689 had 264 slaves on board, and sixteen of them committed suicide.

There were other means of ending once and for all this dreadful condition during their voyage to the plantations. Some of the slaves succeeded in unfasting their chains and did the same for friends. To avoid any punishment from the ship's captain for thus freeing their fellow slaves, they chose to throw themselves over-board and die. Once upon a time, it happened that before a slave ship, the *Dragon*, reached Virginia, after unfasting the chains that bound their wrists and ankles together, all the three hundred slaves on board threw themselves over-board, except some twenty-five women who resisted against the move, and begged to be left alone.

A slave ship which was carrying 425 men and 83 women to Virginia in April 1672 lost 215 men and 57 women through over-crowding and suffocation after twenty-one days' voyage at sea from the port of Anomabo.

On their death in this manner, the Captain on board threw the corpses into the sea without any ceremony.

Death often came about through causes other than over-crowding: outbreak of small-pox was very common. In January, 1714, a slave ship bound for the Dutch West Indies lost 400 of its 500 slaves on board. Before it reached its destination, 54 more died. The rest reached in very poor condition and did survive barely ten days after their arrival.

But the greatest danger mostly dreaded by the slave owners and the slaves alike was shortage of food. On their way to the West Indies, slave-ships called on a number of ports to obtain adequate supplies of food, but unable to get any hundreds of slaves on board had to share the few bags of grains intended for the whole lot.

At one time three ships bound for Caracao and St. Eustatius carried on the whole a thousand slaves and before they left Elmina the boats were said to have carried fifty bags of grains for the use of the slaves which were to last them for about two weeks. The voyage took seven weeks to complete, and by the end of the second week, the next supply received the following week after the start of their voyage was rotten, so that for three or four days after the first ration finished, most of the slaves had to starve. Such wanton causes of starvation intensified the anger of the slaves and made them to rebel against the crew, and openly made them fight their masters even when fettered in chains.

It often happened that the crew rebelled against the slave masters in protest against being served with the same kind of diet as that given to the slaves. At one time, it was reported, the slaves got hold of the stock of food intended for the European slave-masters and then threw the whole lot into the sea. There was shortage of food and the slave-masters, therefore, attacked the slaves for throwing their stock of food into the sea. They

chained them more strongly, and beat them up severely, leaving bruises and marks on their backs,

Apart from those calamities to which the slave dealers themselves were continuously exposed and which led to a considerable reduction of profits, the slave dealers stood against several other dangers. Fear of piracy was the greatest of them; for pirates meant no better for the slaves either and much less for the slave dealers. Three out of every twenty ships which plied the "Middle Passage" were attacked by pirate-ships, robbed of their slave-cargo, and the ships seized or burnt. In time of war, the dangers from pirates were much worse.

A slave-ship bound for Antigua in 1687, and which had some 220 slaves on board fell a prey to a pirate-ship which deprived the former ship of all its cargo and seized the ship as well. Similar incidents happened the same year to three ships leaving the Guinea Coast for Nevis, St. Christopher and Monserrat. In the last case, the Captain of the slave-ship, a strong fighter, stood firm and successfully defended his ship as well as the slaves from the pirates. The pirate-ship was burnt together with the crew.

The menace of piracy was even greater to the slavers during periods of war, as could be imagined from an incident which occurred during the war of 1683. Below is an extract in connection therewith.

"Finally, the war at sea led to a recrudescence of piracy. Pirates were not known in Africa before the war. In 1683, for example, they plundered the (Royal African) Company's ship, *Lisbon Merchant* of 150 marks of gold, and were reported to have a fleet of seven vessels. Further outbreaks occurred in 1685 and 1686 when the *James* was taken. The most serious menace to shipping, however, came in the later stages of the war of 1689-1697 and immediately afterwards, when the activities of Avery and others eventually induced the Admiralty to send a man-of-war to the African Coast."\*

In spite of all these dangers, the slavers carried on their work undaunted; for they took the consolation that the slaves stood risks as well. Among either group, the slave-dealers and the slaves, there were several of them who lacked courage. For example, many fainted and were conveyed from the canoes to the ships or when the ship was at high sea. Nine youths among fifteen others of their age-group in a slave-ship bound for Barbados in 1798 were so frightened that before they reached half the way, six fainted and the three others became insane by the time the ship touched the first island.

In some cases, many of these unhappy incidents could have been avoided, but for the ruthlessness of some of the slave-masters themselves. Very infrequently, slaves were forced into crowded canoes and taken to the ships, as they were continuously whipped on the back. On the Christmas eve, 1721, a slave-ship from the Guinea Coast bound for Virginia stopped at Cape Coast to collect a cargo of slaves. The slaves, about thirty in number showed some reluctance in embarking the ship, as Christmas fell the next day. The Captain of the ship was enraged, and used whips to force the chained slaves like cattle to join his ship. The slaves were frightened, and some of them died of shock as a result.

The introduction of the Slave Trade encouraged the building of more forts and castles, especially after the middle of the 17th century. The hazards, perils and dangers which the victims of the Slave Trade experienced have been described at length. It would be apt to mention briefly at this stage before closing this chapter that out of these evils came forth abundant primary evidence which convinced the anti-abolition champions of the Trade to put a timely end to it. This aspect of the Trade which also arose out of the existence the Gold Coast forts and castles has been fully described in previous chapters.

\* Davies, K. G.: *The Royal African Company*, page 211.





*Fort Vernon, Prampram, almost the last trading fort to be built in the Gold Coast. It was built in 1780 by the English.*

## CHAPTER 9

## NO MORE FORTS AND CASTLES

THE very last of the trade forts and castles was built at Teshie in 1784, and was named **Fort Augustaborg**. Sixty years or so earlier, only one such small-sized fort had been built, namely, that in Tantumkwerri, near Cape Coast. The tendency during this century was to put an end to the building of more forts and castles.

The reason for this state of affairs is obvious—the primary reasons or wants for the building of forts and castles were by this time fully satisfied. There was no more need to live in fear of other European nations or Africans; and it was no longer necessary for any of the European Powers to assert false claims to any monopoly rights of trade in any district on the West Coast. The Slave Trade which encouraged the building of more forts and castles had reached its peak at this time, and only some fifty years hence or so it was abolished.

Apart from this negative side of the problem, there were positive reasons that called for a definite halt to the building of more forts and castles. There were about this time (1750) as many as thirty forts and castles in this country, which were fairly well distributed in various parts of the coastal towns—enough to cope with the volume of trade then. By this time, slaves were the leading items on the export list of the West Coast trade, and there was no need to build any more forts for that purpose, as the trade had reached a stage of increasing returns. Any further increase in that factor of production, that is, increase in the number of forts and castles would have shown decreasing profits, and consequently it was deemed at least economically desirable to put an end to the building of more forts and castles.

In addition, it was a formidable burden on the part of trading companies at this time to maintain the forts and castles that had already been built. In fact most companies could not afford to increase the few forts and lodges that they already possessed even if they were bestowed upon them as gifts in view of the increasing costs of maintaining them and the personnel therein. It cost several hundreds of pounds sterling annually to maintain them.

Furthermore, the 18th and 19th centuries witnessed voluminous tides of troubles in this country, which not only affected trade prospects adversely but also threatened the very existence of these forts and castles very much. For that reason, European national governments were reluctant to be overburdened with the extra responsibility of building more forts and castles. A few of these troubles are as follows: the Anomabos attacked the **Anomabo Fort** in September, 1794, and the Ashantis attacked it in June 1806; the **Cape Coast Castle** was bombarded in 1803; **Elmina Castle** was bombarded by the English, for H.M.S. *Leander* in 1781 and in 1783 besieged a part of the town; **Fort Amsterdam**, Kormantin, was captured by the English under Captain Shirley in 1782, and was surrendered to and occupied by the Ashantis briefly in 1806; **Fort Conraadsburg**, Elmina, was attacked by the English under Captain Mc Kenzie in 1781; **Ussher Fort**, Accra, was captured by the English under Shirley in 1782; the English fort in Sekondi was captured and destroyed by the Dutch in 1782; and the English fort in Winneba was blown up and the town destroyed in revenge for the cruel murder of Commandant Henry Meredith by the Winnebas. No European national government, in short, wanted to risk funds in putting up forts and castles that stood a danger of destruction any day thereafter.

There were only three European powers on the Gold Coast at this time, and to all intents and purposes, there was perfect understanding as to the limits of their business as between themselves on the one hand, and between them and the Africans on the other hand.

The Portuguese, the Swedes, the French and the Brandenburgers had all left by 1708, leaving the field for the Danes, the Dutch and the English.

The Danes possessed about this time the following forts and castles:—

1. **The Christiansborg Castle**, Accra.
2. **Fort Augustaborg**, Teshie.
3. **Fort Friedensburg**, Ningo.
4. **Fort Koningstein**, Ada.
5. **Fort Prinsentein**, Keta.

In addition to considering as dependencies the territories in which these forts and castles were situated, they had under their sphere of influence the native Kingdoms of Akwapim, Krobo, Shai and Adangbe. The headquarters of the Danish government on the Gold Coast was Osu, and the Governor lived in the Christiansborg Castle.

The Dutch possessed the following forts and Castles:—

1. **San Jorge d'Elmina**, Elmina.
  2. **Fort Conraadsurg** Elmina.
  3. **Fort Nassau**, Moree.
  4. **Fort Crevecouer**, Accra.
  5. **Fort Hollandia**, Princess Town.
  6. **Fort San Antonio**, Axim.
  7. **Fort Sebastian**, Shama.
  8. **Fort Goede Hope**, Senya Beraku.
  9. **Butri Lodge**, Butri.
  10. **Dutch Komenda Fort**, Komenda.
  11. **Fort Orange**, Sekondi.
  12. **Fort Leydsameid**, Apam.
  13. **Fort de Veer**
  14. **Fort Naglas**
  15. **Fort Java**
  16. **Fort Scomarus**
  17. **Fort Batenstein**
- } ... Lodges in Elmina.

In addition to the afore-mentioned settlements and the towns and villages in which they were respectively situated being considered their dependencies, the Dutch had under their sphere of influence the entire districts within a canon range from the limits of their forts and castles. Elmina was their headquarters, and the Governor resided in the Castle there.

The English, for their part, possessed the following forts and castles:—

1. **Cape Coast Castle**, Cape Coast.
2. **James Fort**, Accra.
3. **Appollonia Fort**, Benyin.
4. **An English Fort** in Sekondi.
5. **An English Fort** in Komenda.
6. **Fort Victoria**, Cape Coast.
7. **Fort William**, Cape Coast.
8. **Fort M'Carthy**, Cape Coast.

9. **Queen Anne's Point Fort**, Queen Anne's Point.
10. **Fort William**, Anomabo.
11. A fort at **Connor's Hill**, Cape Coast.
12. **Tantumkweri Fort**, Tantum.
13. **Winneba Fort**, Winneba.
14. **Fort Vernon**, Prampram.
15. **Fort Metal Cross**, Dixcove.

The English similarly had their dependencies and certain spheres of influence. Included in either category were the Fanti native kingdoms generally. Cape Coast was the headquarters of the English, and the English Governor resided in the Castle there.

Obviously, therefore, the castle-settlers' responsibilities had widened at this time: Dutch interest was not limited to Elmina only, but extended to certain inland districts where for obvious reasons it would be out of place to build forts and castles. Similarly, Danish interest extended beyond Osu (Christiansborg) and Keta. They had responsibilities in Akwapim, Krobo, Akyem and other inland towns. So were the English whose sway extended east and west (in isolated towns and villages), but included most of the Fante-speaking districts. In short, the whole of the Gold Coast Colony was now in the hands of the three European Powers afore-mentioned.

Up to 1850, these three European nations carried on trade in this country. Although antagonism, trade rivalry and even wars hampered good relations a great deal, there was a large measure of security. It was now unthinkable that any European nation would be wiped out or attacked on the west coast because another European nation claimed any monopoly rights, as was formerly the case.

But trade prospects on the West Coast, especially immediately after the abolition of the Slave Trade grew duller and duller. The three European nations that remained out here were in fact determined to abandon their trade and go back home during the second half of the 19th century.\* The first of these to carry out their determination were the Danes. They were then followed by the Dutch, and then the English who stayed on until a decade and a half ago.

In 1850, Denmark, ceded her settlements on the Gold Coast to the English. By a treaty of 5th March, 1867, the Netherlands exchanged four of her Gold Coast settlements east of the Sweet River (between Elmina and Cape Coast) for four English settlements west of the Sweet River: the Dutch forts were those in Moree, Kormantine, Apam and Accra, and the four English forts to be transferred to the Dutch were those in Benyin, Dixcove, Sekondi and Komenda. Furthermore, England ceded to the Netherlands the rights of "sovereignty and jurisdiction" over the inland tribes of Wassa, Denkyira and Appollonia (or Nzima). The English headquarters continued to be Cape Coast, whilst the Dutch held on to theirs in Elmina. But this arrangement did not work out, and ultimately led to the Dutch packing up completely from this country.

On the 17th of February, 1872, the treaty for the cession of the Dutch settlements to England was ratified at the Hague. All the Dutch forts were transferred to the English, and it was furthermore provided that no natives should be blamed or punished on account of any quarrels they might have entered into whilst they were under the Dutch. It was also stated in the Articles of transfer that "any former Dutch subjects might, within a period of six years, be free to move to any other Dutch Possession or foreign country."\*

\* It was this resolution on the part of the English to go away that led the Fantis (allies of the English) to establish the Fante Confederacy—to protect themselves against external aggression, and to promote and advance certain lofty aims, e.g. education, sanitation in Fanteland—something that had been the responsibility of their English masters.



The English paid the Dutch an amount of £3,790: 1s: 6½d being the value of the stores in the forts—nothing was charged for the buildings themselves.

Thus England came to be the sole owner of all the forts and castles in this country as from thence. From the administration of merchant adventurers, the reins of government passed into Crown hands on the 27th of March 1822 with the appointment of Brigadier-General Sir Charles Macarthy and ended with the appointment of Major J. J. Ricketts on 5th June, 1828 as Governor. After the government under the Committee of Merchants (1843-1847), the government reverted to the crown again from 1843 to 1850. Subsequently, the English settlements were controlled from Sierra Leone (1851-1874); followed by a period of Union with Lagos (1874-1885); and then from 1885 onwards a separate administration was established for the Gold Coast Colony.

Above all, the development in the political administration went side by side with development in other spheres of life: schools were springing up, business firms and mining industries were established, and various religious organisations were being introduced into this country. The slave Trade came to an end, at last by law, in the early part of the 19th century, and the Industrial Revolution which flooded the markets practically everywhere with a relatively unlimited supply of goods to all intents and purposes filled the vacuum adequately.

It is easy to appreciate that a completely new era had dawned—the former suspicions ceased to exist; it was no longer necessary to live in castles and forts and keep away from the very people on whom the government or the trader relied in all ways, and who also similarly relied on them for their mutual benefits.

Thus, it was not necessary to put up any more forts or castles, except for an entirely different purpose, e.g., as a lighthouse for the safety of ships, to protect the native dwellers and distressed boats instead; hence forts and castles became things of the past — an out-moded sort of edifice.

The English paid the Dutch an amount of £2,700, the sum being the value of the arms and the Dutch military was charged for the buildings themselves.

Thus England came to be the sole owner of all the forts and castles in the country as from thence, from the administration of celebrated adventurers, the reins of government passed into Crown hands on the 29th of March 1662 with the appointment of a governor-General Sir Charles Mordaunt and ended with the appointment of Major J. Richards on 1st July, 1828 as Governor. After the government under the Company's Merchant (1740-1811) the government reverted to the crown again from 1841 to 1854. Subsequently, the Dutch settlements were controlled from Sierra Leone (1841-1854) followed by a period of Unimproved Lands (1854-1859), and then from 1859 onwards separate administration was established for the Gold Coast Colony.

Above all, the development of the national administration went side by side with development in other spheres of life. Schools were springing up, business firms and industries were established, and various religious organisations were being introduced into the country. The slave trade came to an end, at least by law, in the early part of the 19th century, and the industrial revolution which reached the maritime world in the



*Fort Amsterdam, Kormantin (near Saltpond)—the first Dutch possession in the Gold Coast*

## CHAPTER 10

## CUI BONO

THERE is not the slightest shadow of doubt in the universal accusation that the trans-Atlantic Slave Trade brought in its train manifold evils and misfortunes to the world generally and to Africa particularly. But this nefarious trade by which millions of innocent Africans were horribly transported from their natural homes into unknown lands hundreds of miles away to toil on plantations to enrich a group of selfish individuals and organisations formed a substantial part of the Triangular Trade — the trade between Europe, Africa and America.

The foregoing, assertion however, would at best only give the reader a jaundiced view of the picture—as if only the slave traders in Europe, Africa and America intensified the misfortunes of the era by mercenarily engaging themselves in robbing other human-beings to the exclusion of other merchandise and interests. But that was the philosophy of the era.

Bereft of any prejudices and adhering strictly to the evidence of various historians and scholars in divers fields, the reader would appreciate that this Trade had its golden aspect. The beneficiaries of the Triangular Trade (the trade in which the Gold Coast by virtue of its relatively uncountable forts and castles was foremost of all the West African countries), logically falls into three categories, namely:

1. Europe — (a) the sponsors of the voyages to the West Coast of Africa, e.g. King Alphonse V of Portugal; King John II of Portugal; King James II of England; the Elector of Brandenburg; Prince Henry the Navigator; various European governments, e.g. Portugal, the Netherlands, England, France, Sweden, Denmark and Brandenburg; the various accredited trading companies, e.g. The Portuguese East India Company formed by Lancarot, Juan Diaz Gilianez, Esteven Alphonso and Rodriga Alvarez;\* the Dutch West India Company, the Royal Africa Company of England; "The French Company of the West Indies organised under Colbert (which bought out the smaller group in Africa and began in earnest to promote France's interest in the slave trade; Company of the Senegal, the Company of Guinea, and the Royal Company of Senegal, etc.,\*\*\* and the Swiss Company.
- (b) individual licensed traders from Europe who traded in Africa and Europe, e.g. Forster, Jackson and Swanzy of England, Reichter of Denmark.
- (c) interlopers and pirates, e.g. Howell Davis, Roberts, Avery, John Hawkins and Francis Drake of England,
2. Africa — (a) the chiefs on whose lands these forts and castles were built as well as their elders,
- (b) individual African traders, e.g. various merchant-princes of the Gold Coast (like King Ghartey of Winneba, Hon. Robert Hutchison of Cape Coast, F. C. Grant of Cape Coast, Chief W. Addy of Accra, Hon. Samuel Collins Brew of Anomabo, Hon. James Bannerman,

Claridge. p. 40  
Franklin p. 53

Jnr (Mayor of Accra), George Smith (at one time a Commandant of Anomabo), Joseph Smith of Saltpond, W. Addo of Accra, Hon. John Sarbah of Cape Coast, and Hon. George Kuntu Blankson of Anomabo.

- (c) the African generally—via the fusion of culture, the abolition of unsavoury, cruel and barbarous customs, e.g. human-sacrifices, pann-yarring; various benefits of science and technology; the introduction of Christian religion and education; the introduction of certain crops (e.g. cassava, pawpaw, sweet potatoes).
3. America —
- (a) Slave-Owners and plantations owners in America and the West Indies who amassed millions of pounds and heavy capital, made great fortunes, and established businesses, built castles, citadels, etc.,
  - (b) the slaves themselves and their direct descendants—some benefitted through slavery—opportunity to develop their talents and intellects and attained eminence in fields they could not by any stretch of imagination have reached had they continued to live in their natural homes,
  - (c) buccaneers, filibusters, pirates who swarmed the Atlantic Ocean and the Caribbean seas, and who looted and pestered ships loaded with slaves and other products, e.g. gold, sugar, ginger and tobacco.

Added to the foregoing list of beneficiaries is a tenth—the world at large.

Those who gained immediately from the West Coast trade at the beginning were the sponsors of the voyages—the various governments and patrons of those projects. Whatever be the duration of the project—a few years or a few decades; or whatever be the risks—in the teeth of opposition from interlopers or unfriendly Africans, the sponsors of these voyages made huge profits. Commenting on the financial prospects of the slave trade Franklin states:

“As the West Indian plantations grew in size and importance the slave trade became huge, profitable undertaking that was in itself, a great economic enterprise employing thousands of persons and involving a capital outlay of millions of dollars. By 1540 the annual importation of Negro slaves into the West Indies was estimated at 10,000. Even if the figure was not high, there can be no doubt that by the end of the century the business of carrying slaves to the New World was a lively one.”\*

Licensed traders similarly made huge profits, for although they stood greater risks than joint stock companies whose members subscribed hundreds and thousands of pounds each, the relatively small traders were well protected by their national governments against the inconveniences, dangers and attacks of interlopers. Besides they had a wide variety of articles to select from, and bartered in those articles from which they could make the highest returns.

Claridge states that “the gold was obtained by barter, and each nation took out chiefly those goods that were cheapest in his own country, though they were many articles with which they all had to be supplied. . . The principal trade goods were cloths of different kinds, linen, chintz, calico and other materials; spirits; muskets; firelocks; cutlasses and knives; pewter dishes, basins and porringers; powder and flints; lead in sheets, pipes and bells, rings, trumpets, pins and cobs; hair trunks; iron bars and hammers; glass bugles and beds of all kinds; fish hooks, and a variety of other articles.”\*\*

\* Franklin. p. 49.  
\*\* Claridge. p. 162.



The next set of beneficiaries were the unlicensed traders—pirates and interlopers. They hardly had any risks to face, except cruel punishments from accredited companies. The position, however, was that they were more feared than they ever feared. Even at a time when the regular and accredited companies confiscated their goods and tortured them they still made their way bravely to the West Coast.

Claridge again states, "interlopers still frequented the coast during the summer months, and then had nearly all the trade in their hands, as they could sell their goods more cheaply than the companies, who relied mainly on the winter trade. James Barbot, in 1699, saw the three Zeeland ships in Elmina road which had just been captured by two Dutch frigates. One of them was a ship of thirty-six guns, and her commander, who had made a desperate resistance, was to be tried for his life."\*

In the same chapter, he states as follows:—

"In addition to other dangers and inconveniences inseparable from a voyage to the Gold Coast, the seas at this time were infested by pirates, who after the dispersal of the buccaneers from their West Indian haunts, came in great numbers to seek fresh fields for the nefarious trade on the West Coast of Africa, where there were always plenty of ships laden with gold-dust, ivory, slaves or other valuable cargoes, to be met with. They often played great havoc with the trade, and it was mainly on this account that H.M.Ss. *Swallow* and *Weymouth* were sent out to cruise in these waters. Two or three of these marauders usually sailed in company, and were strong enough not only to capture well-armed ships, but even to take some of the forts as well."\*\*

Thus he instances the capture of James Fort in the River Gambia by Howell Davis, the pirate, in 1719; the capture of Bunce Island Fort at Sierra Leone by Roberts, his successor, in 1720; and the capture by the notorious Pirate Avery, of the two Danish men-of-war of twenty-six guns each that had been sent out to resettle Christiansborg Castle in 1693.

In one of his exploits in February, 1722, Roberts was caught by Captain Ogle of the H.M.S. *Swallow*. He found him with three ships at anchor off Cape Lopez. On apprehension Roberts was killed, and in his ships (which were captured) were found prisoners numbering "about 300 Englishmen and 60 or 70 Negro slaves; and from 8,000 to 10,000 pounds of gold-dust, besides enormous quantities of trade goods. . . ."\*\*\*

Among the Africans themselves those who benefitted from the erection of the forts and castles were the chiefs and their elders; for it was they who granted them lands on which to put up the buildings. As landlords, they received ground rents regularly, and were also paid "protection money" to cool down their angry and hostile subjects lest they invaded and pillaged the forts. Chief John Conny's claim to **Fort Groot Fredericksburg** of Princes Town has been cited now and again; he claimed prior-ownership to that fort on the evacuation of the Bradenburghers when the Dutch with armed forces were contending for the same property. As the owner of the soil on which the fort was erected, he was entitled by law and equity thereto, and for at least for the first five years he was the undisputed master of it.

A similar instance is the fort at English Komenda which is presently occupied by the Omanhene (Paramount Chief) of Komenda State.

Another category of people who made a fortune out of the castle trade was the African traders. Although they traded extensively in a variety of goods, many of them in the hey-days of the slave-trade amassed a great deal of wealth through the sale of slaves. They were, therefore, very much opposed to the abolition of the Slave Trade:

Ibid, p. 162.

\* Ibid, p. 176-177.

\*\* Ibid, p. 177

"The real effects of the Abolition Act, however, were not visible until some years later; for the country at this time was convulsed by wars and it was impossible to judge its effects on the trade. The coast people, especially the more influential natives, were more opposed to it, for it deprived them of an easy means of becoming rich. . . ."

The foregoing is an eloquent testimony of the affairs at the time—when both the Europeans and the Africans carried on with the slave trade privately after its abolition.

But apart from this class of rich men, there were the merchant-princes who amassed a great deal of fortune through their contacts with European traders—not by way of slave trading, but by dealing in other commercial products. Among these men were J. C. Hansen of Accra, "a very extensive trader and respected coloured merchant;" R. J. Ghartey, Esq., King of Winneba, a prosperous financier, manufacturer and well-known merchant; F. C. Grant, Esq., a wealthy Cape Coast merchant of great means and respectability; Chief W. Addy of Accra; Hon. Samuel Collins Brew, a wealthy merchant of Anomabo; the Hon. George Kuntu Blankson of great fame, wealth and respectability, Anomabo; the Hon. James Bannerman, Jnr. (Mayor of Accra); Samuel Ferguson of Anomabo, a distinguished agriculturist and prosperous trader; George Smith, at one time a Commandant of Anomabo; Joseph Smith at one time District Commissioner at Saltpond; W. Addo, an independent trader of Accra; and Hon. Robert Hutchison of Cape Coast".\*

The last named, Mr Hutchison (1828-1863) was a very richman "who claimed to be worth £60,000 in 1855", states a letter dated 10th September, 1855, from Governor Connor to the Secretary of State, Lord Molesworth, enclosed in a Dispatch No. 85 of even date."\*\*\*\*

As to any benefits which the natives of this country obtained through their contact with the white settlers who were responsible for building the forts and castles it may be apt to divide them into two, namely general and specific benefits. Among the former may be cited the spread of education, science and technology, good health, Christian religion, etc. Among the latter may be cited specific instances on the part of the Europeans to abolish cruel and barbarous customs, such as human-sacrifices. The British authorities on the coast clashed on many occasions with African tribal authorities in parts of this country for that reason, e.g. President Maclean and King Kwaku Arkai of Appollonia, the same President Maclean and King Kwadwo Tsibo of Denkyira.

Among such general benefits is the knowledge we have been able to acquire to put up for ourselves proper houses, wear decent clothes, and to eat a wide variety of food, many of which had been unfamiliar to us. Apparently, on their arrival in this country, the early Europeans came across most of the natives naked or not properly clad.

De Faria describes the native gathering that met the Portuguese Commandant, Diego d'Azambuja and his entourage in Elmina on or about the 20th of January, 1482 thus: "they were naked to the waist and wore round the middle monkey skins, or coverings made of palm-leaves."\*\*\*\*\*

The houses were very poor, made of swish, clay and mud, and were roofed with palm-leaves, so that any heavy down pour of rain was sure to pull them down altogether.

→ Diseases were common, and the death rate of both the African natives themselves and the white immigrants, especially of the latter, was very high. The average life of the

\*\* Claridge. p. 255

\* Dr Ephson. p. 40

\*\* C0196134

\*\*\*\* Ellis, p. 18

early missionary on the coast was barely three weeks. The West Coast generally, and the Gold Coast particularly, was so much dreaded that it earned a rather unenviable appellation—the whiteman's grave.

Until the arrival of Europeans on the Coast, there was no form of literary education—there were no schools, colleges or universities. There was no christian religion either, and paganism, fetishism and juju were upper-most in the minds of even the leaders of the community. Through our contact with the Europeans, the castle-builders, we have been able to fill this gap which is necessary for any progressive society. Not only were schools established in the castles, and the christian religion introduced by them, but the white-settlers also took practical steps to abolish all forms of barbarous customs and unsavoury usages that inhibited all forms of progress.

The indebtedness of this country to the early Europeans can easily be detected from our vernacular languages which are full of European words—all due to our contact with them:—

“Examples of such words of Portuguese derivation are: palaver (palabra), panyar (apanhar), fetish (feitico), piccaninny (picania), caboccer (cabeceiro) and dash me (das me). Many of the old Portuguese geographical names, too, still persist, as: Gold Coast (Coastal del Oro), Cape Three Points (Cabo des Tres) (Puntas), Cape Coast (Cabo Corso), Elmina (San Jorge del Mina), River Volta (Rio Volta) River Ankobra (Rio Cobre), and many others.”\*\*

Further examples of words which have cropped into our Ghanaian vernacular languages are:

<i>Foreign word</i>	<i>Ghanaian (Fanti) corrupted word</i>
Asopatir (Ptg.) shoe	Asopatere (Gh) shoe
Book (Eng)	Buuku (Gh) a book
Charta (Ptg.) sheet	Kraata (Gh) paper
Couteau (Frn) knife	Kutow (Gh) knife
Fenestre (Frn) window	Fensre (Gh) window
Fetish (Ptg.) Fetish	Fetish (Gh) fetish
Panis (Dut) Bread	Paano (Gh) bread
Pawpaw (Ptg) Pawpaw	Pawpaw (Gh) pawpaw
School (Eng) School	Skull (Gh) school
Summons (Eng) to summons	Saman (Gh) to summons
L'adron (Frn) rascal	Ewi dadron (Gh) dangerous thief
L'import (Frn) tax	Dampu (Gh) tax*

There are several other general benefits which the African native has gained through his contact with the castle-dwellers, but which space fails us to enumerate fully. Among these can be cited thousands of different kinds of manufactured goods which have found their way into all African cities, towns and villages today.

The European legal system, especially the rule of law and judicial procedures (compared to what obtained in the generality of our African courts) are highly commendable. The observance of law and order, and the introduction of the police system in our society are also worthy of praise. When we recollect the conditions of the days gone by, the past few centuries, the position of the African chief *vis a vis* his subject was like that of a feudal European monarch of the medieval times and his subject, then we need to pay glowing tributes to those who rescued us from the storms and stress of this barbarous age.

\* Claridge, p. 99-100.  
Dr Ephson: Traditional Ghana (unpublished)



Specific instances of the benefits from the castle-dwellers can be cited indefinitely from almost every district, town and village: rescue of innocent people from the horrors of human sacrifices in King Kodwo Tsibo's Denkyira and Kwaku Arkai's Nzima by Governor Maclean; Governor James Bannerman's timely rescue of several lives which would otherwise have been lost through the fiendish and bogus oracle at the Fante capital of Mankessim, and the practical lessons given by Rev. Philip Quarcoo to arrest the spread of juju and fetishism are only a few out of many horrible practices that once prevailed in this country.

Over in America and the rest of the New World, various European government trading enterprises and individual slave-dealers and merchants gained a lot from the Triangular Trade. Franklin states for example, "As the West Indian plantations grew in size and importance the slave trade became a huge, profitable undertaking that was, in itself, a great economic enterprise employing thousands of persons and involving a capital outlay of millions of dollars. By 1540 the annual importation of Negro Slaves into the West Indies was estimated at 10,000."\*

It was not all the slaves or those who went overseas in the cause of the castle Trade who fared badly in the long run. On the contrary, many emerged in course of time as great men in world affairs: Professor Anton William Amo (1703-1756), a native of Nzima, who rose to become a Professor of Philosophy in Germany and a Councillor of State; Holy Sister Fidelle Cincel (1704-56); Rev. Jacob Capitein 1717-1747); Rev. Thomas Jenkinson (1736-1793); and Attabora Kweku Enu (1742-1798). All these people found their way to Europe under unhappy circumstance during and in the course of the Castle Trade. Their success in life has confirmed the oft-quoted saying that "out of evil comes forth good. Indeed the contribution these African celebrities made to civilisation is very significant. \*

It was not only the plantation owners who made fortunes out of even the sordid Slave Trade. Fortune smiled on all category of workers as well, even most conquistadores, buccaneers, pirates, filibusters, interlopers, maroons and other sea-dogs who haunted the Caribbean seas. There were great pirates like Hillman of England, Morgan of Wales, Mansvelt of the Netherlands, Giras Hope of Portugal, Viteberg of Denmark, Lapese of Spain, and L'Olonnis from France. All these men made fortunes for themselves through piracy. They were held together by a common hatred of Spain, and were always ready to plunder Spanish galleys laden with gold and silver, making their way from the New World to Spain.

In St. Lucia, Motserrat, Tobago and Grenada their favourite haunts, these prosperous sea-dogs enjoyed their times hunting for wild cattle as a past time. They were from time to time joined by hundreds of maroons or runaway slaves. Their numbers soon increased, as more runaway slaves came to join them. They set up colonies of their own on various islands, and began to attract honest planters and traders. Many islands, hitherto obscure, followed their example, including the little island of Portugal, which became their headquarters and from which as early as 1627 a Spanish attack failed to dislodge them permanently.

By the middle of the 17th century, the coasts of Hispaniola and Jamaica had so much been swarmed with these seadogs that in their struggle for supremacy, leading European nations had to come to compromise with them. But at the close of the century, they had outlived their usefulness, although some had attained great eminence in society: a notorious private like Morgan was knighted, and he rose to become Governor of Jamaica. Riper Snipe and Le Meme, well-known buccaneers, became leading citizens in the island.

\* Franklin. p. 49

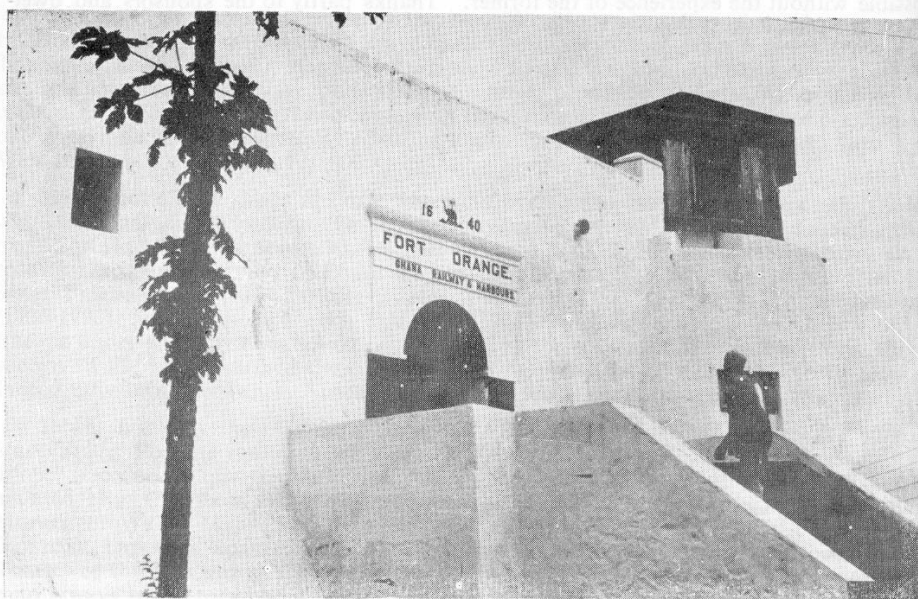
\*\* Ephson. Gallery of Gold Coast Celebrities (1632-1958) Vol. 1



of Anguilla and Bermudas respectively; and James Hescott, who was once confined to the Spanish prisons for a quarter of a century, came out to own a string of castles in Martinique, St. Lucia and St. Vincent.

Finally, the benefit which the Castle Trade brought to the world at large was enormous. Through this Trade, the foundation was well laid for an ever-increasing commerce that has re-linked important ports and markets of the world today; the sources of raw materials, the optimum labour and accumulated capital were all assured and made ready for the Industrial Revolution that was soon to follow with glowing prospects.

The world has long passed the age of ignorance; it has passed the age of man's inhumanity to man; and the relatively easy life of this scientific age would not have been possible without the experience of the former. Thanks partly to the sponsors and dwellers of the forts and castles.



Fort Orange, Sekondi, built in 1640 by the Dutch. It is now used as a light-house.

## CHAPTER 11

## WHICH OF THE FORTS SURVIVE TODAY?

THE first fort or castle in this country, Fort St. George of Elmina, was built in January 1482 by the Portuguese, and the last one, Fort Augustaborg at Teshie, was built in 1784 by the Danes. It has earlier been noticed, however, that in April, 1820 the English Governor Phipps, built at Cape Coast a small fort which was known as **Phipp's Tower**, later re-named **Fort Victoria**.

On the whole some fifty castles, forts and lodges were for various reasons built during this period of nearly three and a half centuries. Today, more than half of them are completely untraceable; some six of them are now in visible ruins; and about twenty-two are in active use.

In this chapter we shall find out in which of the three categories each of them falls—starting according to their geographical sequence, from the Volta Region to the Western Region.

1. **Keta:** Danish **Fort Prinzenstein**, Keta, purchased by the English on 12th March, 1850 and abandoned in 1856. It is now in active use, as prison quarters (for male prisoners only).
2. The Danish **Fort Konigstein**, Ada, purchased by the English on 15th March, 1850 is in visible ruins.
3. **Ningo:** The Danish **Fort Friedensborg**, purchased by the English on 8th March, 1850 together with other Danish possessions, is now in visible ruins.
4. **Prampram:** The English **Fort Vernon**, Prampram, abandoned in about 1816, seems to have fallen into ruins subsequently for a long time. A great deal of alteration work has been done to it, e.g., the walls around. It is presently used as a Rest House, and this use is very much commended:

“This use is appropriate, and is much appreciated because of the situation, close to the beach among coconut palms, where the fishermen of Prampram, followed their calling.”

5. **Teshi:** The Danish **Fort Augustaborg**, purchased by the English about the same time as Fort Friedensborg, was never occupied by them. It is also untraceable now.
6. **Accra:** The Danish **Fort, Christiansborg Castle**, similarly transferred to the English, is now used as the seat of Government. It is in excellent form, and recent additional buildings have been erected thereto, “which seem to me to be a great embellishment to it, both, internally and externally.”\*\*
7. **Accra:** The Dutch **Fort Creve Couer** transferred to the English in 1868 (when it was renamed **Ussher Fort**) is now used as prison quarters.
8. **Accra:** The English fort, **James Fort**, is presently used as prison (for both male and female prisoners). It is the smallest of the three forts in Accra so far mentioned.
9. **Senya Beraku:** The Dutch **Fort Goede Hope** abandoned by the Dutch in 1816, was resuscitated by the British in 1872, and was very well repaired.

\* O'Neil. p. 15

\*\* Ibid. p. 23

It is one of the most satisfactorily well-kept forts in the country, and is used as a Rest House. It is recorded that "the keeper keeps it tidy and visitors can see nearly all the fort without intruding on any one who may be using the Rest House."

10. **Apam:** The Dutch **Fort Leydsamheid**, taken by the English in 1782, but restored to the Dutch three years later, and abandoned by them, was similarly resuscitated by the British in 1872; and is very well repaired.

There is much to say about its structure—much of interest to see and to say about it: its prominence on a low hill besides the town and the beach; its three small cannons near the entrance, thickly coated with tar.

Presently, it is used as a police station. Its walls are secured and are neatly white washed, so that it appears clean and glitter in the sun.

It is reported that "this is the most satisfactorily maintained fort in the Gold Coast so far seen." \*

11. **Winneba:** The English fort in Winneba, destroyed by the English Commodore Irby in revenge for the cruel murder of an English Commandant of the fort, Mr Henry Meredith, by the townspeople in 1812 was rebuilt in about 1844. It was subsequently abandoned and neglected. Today, like a few of the forts, the Winneba fort is in visible ruins.

12. **Tantumkwerri:** The English fort here built prior to 1726, and abandoned sometime in early 1820, is completely untraceable.

13. **Amoku:** The French built a small fort at Amoku in 1794 from which they hoped to capture the English trade at Anomabu after they had failed to capture the Cape Coast Castle. No trace of this French Fort can be seen now.

14. **Egya:** The English lodge in this town built sometime in 1663 was captured the same year by the Dutch. The following year the English under Holmes recaptured it, and on 7th February, 1665 the English themselves blew it up to prevent its capture by the Dutch "and in an attempt to destroy the latter." No trace of it today.

15. **Anashan:** The English lodge in this town built in 1663 was abandoned in 1685. There is no trace of it today.

16. **Anashan:** When in 1679 the Portuguese regained the Christiansborg Castle they sought to revive their interest in the central part of the coastal district. They, therefore, built a small redoubt at Anashan in that year, but in less than ten years they abandoned it.

Today, there is no trace whatsoever of this redoubt (made of turf).

17. **Kromantine:** The Dutch **Fort Amsterdam** abandoned in 1816 is not completely in ruins. It had originally belonged to the English. (The English built this fort in 1631, but was captured by the Dutch on 8th February, 1665).

Parts of the forts are now cracked, e.g., the north-western bastion and the western side. "The whole building ramparts, bastions, spurs, and internal building" says O'Neil in his Report on the Forts and Castles of Ghana, "should be treated as a ruin, with courtyard cleared of debris and kept tidy by a custodian because, it is one of the most interesting and impressive buildings in the Colony"

At the present day, this fort is in visible ruins—only as a relic of the past for sight-seers to view, whilst the compound therefore is used for drying fish.

\*\*\* Ibid. p. 22

\* Ibid. p. 22



Although much ruined and overgrown with trees and bushes, it is prominently pitched on the top of the Kormantine Hill (about 300 feet above sea-level) overlooking the Gulf of Guinea and the main Accra/Cape Coast-Takoradi main road.

It is significant to note that this fort constructed with red bricks (and all brick house built in James town, Virginia, U.S.A. by 1636) is the oldest English building in this country.

18. **Anomabo:** The present **Anomabo Fort, Fort William**, built by the English in 1673-74 was bombarded by the French in 1794, attacked and besieged by the Ashantis on 15th June, 1806, a day after which it capitulated.

The fort is almost a square large acutely pointed bastions in the north-west and south-east, with a smaller bastion at the south-west angle and a still smaller one at the north-western angle."\*

Its eastern block is used for a Rest House, and the low northern block as a post office

19. **Moree:** The first Dutch building in this country, **Fort Nassau**, was re-built by the Dutch in 1624 (it had originally been built in 1598). It was captured by the English in 1624, recaptured the following year by the Dutch, captured by the English again 1782, and was restored to the Dutch in 1785. The Dutch, however, abandoned it in 1816.

The fort is built on a soft ground, very easily eroded, and consequently it is in a most ruinous condition.

It is very much in ruins today, but all the same contrary to expectation, it is used as a public lavatory—a most unpleasant sight!

20. **Queen Anne's Point:** The Dutch had prior to 1682 built a lodge on a hill in this (eastern) part of Cape Coast, but soon abandoned it. There is now no trace of it, however.
21. **Queen Anne's Point:** In 1720, the English also built a small fort, which they named **Queen Anne's Point** after Queen Anne of England (1711-1714), but they subsequently abandoned it. There is no trace whatsoever of this fort now.
22. **Amanful:** The Dutch **Fort Fredericksburg** was built in 1658. It was purchased by the English in 1685, and renamed **Fort Royal**. The English rebuilt it in 1699, but subsequently abandoned it. There are few visible ruins—not of much use now.
23. **Fort M'Carthy:** The English hurriedly built a lodge here, which they named **Fort M'Carthy**, but allowed it to fall into ruins soon afterwards.
24. **Cornor's Hill:** The English Naval Brigade built a redoubt here which Brigade landed for the protection of the town. The fort was called **Fort Frederick**. They did not maintain it. Today it is completely wiped out—there is no trace of it whatsoever.
25. **Fort William:** This fort was built in April, 1820 by the English Governor Hope Smith, and was named **Smith's Tower**. Prior to 1838, it was converted into a lighthouse, and renamed **Fort William**.  
Its use as a light house is still maintained.
26. **Fort Victoria:** This fort was built in 1821 by the English Governor Phipps, and was named **Phipp's Tower**. At a later date it was renamed **Fort Victoria**, after Queen Victoria of Great Britain.

\* Ibid, p. 25  
\* Ibid, p. 26

It is now desolate, but has an impressive appearance. Perched on a hill on the western part of Cape Coast town, it overlooks not only the Atlantic Ocean, but also the historic town of Elmina as well as the several College buildings of Cape Coast itself. It is, however, less attractive than Fort William, which is in active use. There were rumours a few decades ago that it was haunted by dwarfs, but there is no truth in that matter.\*

27. **The Cape Coast Castle:** The seat of English authority in this country for upwards of two centuries (1662-1876). The Cape Coast Castle is one of the six most magnificent castles in this country.

It is, however, not well maintained. It used to be occupied by a number of Government departments, e.g., Education, Health, Police, Post Office, Forestry, Customs, Agriculture and Prisons. Now most of the rooms are vacant, whilst some are used for storing tar barrels, and others for housing prisoners.

An opinion has been expressed that "it should be maintained (more properly) as a previous possession of England for the sake of the past and for the present use. . .\*\*"

28. **Elmina: Elmina Castle,** truly described as the first European building in this country it is both most impressive and beautiful. It was built by the Portuguese in 1482 and they named it **San Jorge d'Elmina**, but was captured by the Dutch on 29th August, 1637. It was subsequently improved upon by them, and the **Bastion de France** incorporated with it.

It was purchased by the English on 6th April, 1872, together with other Dutch possessions in this country.

For 155 years it was the seat of Portuguese government in this country, and for 135 years the seat of Dutch authority as well. The **Elmina Castle** has still a magnificent and imposing appearance.

It is presently used as headquarters of the Ghana Mobile Police, and is satisfactorily maintained. However, proper white washing, as it used to be made, would enhance its magnificence and beauty—"a brilliant advertisement of efficiency."

29. **Elmina: Fort Conraadsburg or Fort Saint Iago**—built by the Dutch in 1637 when they took Elmina Castle, and in the following year received the name **Fort Conraadsburg**. It was besieged for ten months (1680-81) by the Elminas, attacked by the English in 1781, and on 6th April, 1872, purchased with other Dutch possessions by the English.

It is magnificently situated on the top of the Iago Hill overlooking the Elmina Castle and the Gulf of Guinea. It was built mainly as a defence for and protection of the Elmina Castle.

This fort is variously used at the present time: a few of the rooms are used as an office and stores for the Leprosy Control Section of the Ministry of Health; others for the Monument Section of the Museum and Monuments Board of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports.

It contains a number of pictures and relics of the Dutch Colonial era on the Gold Coast, of their Trans-Atlantic Voyages, and the Dutch royal families of 16th century.

30. **Elmina—Fort de Veer:** This fort was built in 1810-11 on the shore of the western part of the Elmina Castle. It was built by the Dutch—to protect their magnificent fortress. There is no trace of it today.

\* I have myself visited it in 1935, 1937, 1940 and 1942, and never saw any sign of a dwarf, except a few lizards and insects. The surroundings are overgrown with weeds.

\*\* O'Neill, p. 30

31-34 **Elmina:** (four other forts) In 1810-1811 and 1828 other forts were built to protect the town of Elmina during the Fanti Elmina Wars. \*

**Fort Naglas** was built near the Cape Coast road; **Fort Java** was built on the Java Hill; and the two others, namely **Fort Scomarus** and **Fort Batenstein** at the back of the town.

There is no trace today of any of these forts.

35. **Komenda (English):** There were two forts in Komenda which were built by the English and the Dutch in 1663 and 1688-89 respectively.

The English one was originally a lodge which they rebuilt into a fort in 1673-74, and named **Komenda Fort**.

It was transferred to the Dutch in 1868. It was bombarded in the same month—January, 1868 by the Dutch warship *Metalen Kruis*, and on 6th April, 1872 purchased by the English with the other Dutch possessions.

The buildings are much ruined, and the forts itself affords very little interest to the sight-seer. Its archeological interest is of great interest though. The south-western bastion is in good condition, and is being occupied by the *Omanhene* (the local big chief) and his family.

36. **Komenda (Dutch):** The Dutch **Fort Vredenburg**, built in 1688-1689, was attacked by the Komendas in 1695.

In 1782, it was captured by the English under Governor Richard Miles, and much damage was done to it. In 1785, it was restored in its ruined condition to the Dutch, who occupied it until 1872 (except for a short period in 1809 by a force of Wassaws (who completed its ruin) when together with other Dutch possessions it was transferred to the English by purchase.

It is now in a deplorable state of ruins, but the villagers use part of the area of the fort for drying fresh fish and fishing nets. This retards the growth of vegetation, which is useful for them.

37. **French-Komenda:** In about 1400, the French allegedly had a trading post here. In 1688, they established a factory here too, but the Dutch pillaged and destroyed it in 1688-1689.

38. **Shama:** The fort here was originally a lodge built in 1526 by the Portuguese, who named it **San Sebastian**.

They abandoned it in 1600 and subsequently in 1642 it was occupied by the Dutch. It was taken by the English under Holme in 1664, and retaken by the Dutch the same year. The Dutch rebuilt the same year, and retained the same name still.

Although the Dutch abandoned it before 1870, it was on the 6th of April, 1872 together with other Dutch possessions transferred to the English by purchase.

**Fort San Sebastian** is one of the most attractive forts in this country. What is most attractive about it is its round tower with vertical wall at the south-western corner of the inner curtain. There are three blocked gunforts at the first floor level. Another round tower with vertical wall is situated at the opposite corner—on the north-east corner.

\* The Fantis went to war with the Elminas at this time because the latter (who shared a boundary with them and spoke precisely the same language) failed to come to their aid when attacked by the Ashantis, hundreds of miles in the interior, in 1806. The Fantis had reason to suspect that the Elminas had undermined and betrayed them to the Ashantis. But the truth is that as a small and pacific state, Elmina could not afford or help to encourage or be involved in unnecessary and useless wars. Besides Elmina was under Portuguese control, whereas the Fantis were under English sphere of influence. The Fantis wrecked similar vengeance about the same time against the Gas (Accras). Ironically, the Fantis took to and respected the Akyims (who shared a boundary with the Ashantis) as perpetual allies. They failed to appreciate that the Akyims too had betrayed the Ashantis—seeing they share a common boundary language, etc., with the Ashantis.

The architectural and historical importance of this fort cannot be gainsaid, for there is very much to be said about every part of it—its outer walls, the doorway, the inner court-yard, the gateway, the inner curtain, the guns inside the fort, and the cannons outside it.

This fort is variously used at the present time—The base of the round tower together with the adjacent vault on the northern part is used as a Post Office; the eastern wing as Treasury of the Local Council; and the northern wing also as a courtyard and clinic of the Local Council.

39. **English—Sekondi** (or Essikadu): The English built a fort here sometime in 1645. On 1st June, 1698, the Ahantas plundered and burnt it. But before 1726, the fort was rebuilt. In 1782 it was captured and destroyed by the Dutch. In 1785, they restored it to the English in its damaged condition.

The English abandoned it in 1820. There are very little traces of it—of not much value, archeological or architectural.

40. **Dutch Sekondi**: Sometime in 1640, the Dutch erected a fort here, very close to the beach at old Sekondi, and named it **Fort Orange**. In September, 1694, it was plundered by the Ahantas.

41. **Takoradi**: Earlier accounts of the building of factories, lodges and forts in Takoradi date as far back as 1390 when the French allegedly built a factory here. This was subsequently followed by the Swedes until 1657 when the Danes captured it.

In 1600 the Dutch built **Fort Witsen**, and it was captured by the English on 9th April, 1664, recaptured by the Dutch on Christmas Day the same year, and blew “it up as useless”.

In 1685, the Brandenburgers too built a lodge here, but abandoned it in 1708.

There is no trace of any marked importance of any fort or lodge at the moment, although the inhabitants at Takoradi “point out a bill on which they say the French fort stood at some distance from that or which they can still show the foundation of Fort Witsen.”\*

42. **Butri**: In 1598, the Dutch built a lodge here, which they subsequently fortified in 1644, naming it **Fort Batenstein**.

In 1816, it was abandoned. Between 1830 and 1860, it was intermittently occupied by the Dutch, until on 6th April, 1872, they transferred it to the English by purchase together with other Dutch possessions.

It is in complete ruins, and is hardly worth preserving.

43. **Dixcove**: The right to the ground of this fort was between 1683 and 1690 a bone of contention between the English and the Brandenburgers. The former gained the upper-hand in 1697, and named it **Fort Metal Cross**. After the Ahantas failed to besiege it the same year, the English enjoyed an unbroken occupation thereof until 1868 when they transferred it to the Dutch by exchange.

On 6th April, 1872, it was returned to the English after the Dutch had agreed to leave this country.

This fort is one of the best preserved in the country. The north-western bastion of this fort is the best preserved and has a gun post in each flank and each face, roundheaded and with a low cill also six musket holes. . . The north-western bastion has been similar, and retains the base of the doorway to a turret, but its

\* Claridge p. 602.



four gunports have been altered for large guns, the heads having been removed and the cells”\*

These are several parts of this fort that would excite the curiosity of the visitor as well as would interest the archeologist and the architect: the gunports of the spur bastions, the storehouses in the spur, the iron guns on the ramparts of the spur, the bricks and cannons, and the guns therein. It is said to have “the most interesting guns so far round the Gold Coast”\*\*

It is presently used as a Post Office and a Rest House. There are store-houses in the Spur which are occupied by the family of the Post Master.

Maintenance of this fort generally is far from satisfactory.

4. **Akwida**—The Brandenburgers built a lodge here in 1683, but the Dutch captured it in 1690, enlarged it and named it **Fort Dorethea**. In 1698 the Dutch West India Company ordered them to restore it to the Prussians.\*  
No trace of it at the present day.

5. **Takrama**: The Brandenburgers also built a small fort at Takrama “to guard the adjacent watering-place, where they levied a toll of £10 from every foreign ship that put in for wood and water.”\*\* In 1708, they abandoned it when they closed down their trade on the West Coast of Africa.

6. **Princes Town**. The Brandenburgers first raised some temporary defences here in May, 1682, and built a fort in the following year, which they named **Groot Fredericksburg**. They abandoned it in 1708, when the local chief, John Conny, took possession of it. In 1720, the Dutch unsuccessfully attacked it, but five years later they succeeded in capturing it, renaming it **Fort Hollandia**.

Throughout their trading activities in this country, the Brandenburgers kept this fort as their headquarters.

It is a large square fort “solidly built and worthy of the Germans. . . the fort proper comprises a square area, enclosed by a thick curtain of rubble masonry, well mortared but not plastered externally. From each corner there projected a large bastion with acute salient angle. The north-western and north-eastern bastions are much ruined and overgrown and the south-western has lost much of its parapet. . . .”\*\*\*

It is at present used partly as a Rest House (the South-Western bastion).

7. **Axim**: Chronologically, the fort at Axim is the second of the Portuguese forts and castles in the Gold Coast. They built a fort in about 1502, but was destroyed by the towns-people in 1514.

The following year, the Portuguese built the present fort, which they named **Fort San Antonio**.

It was captured by the Dutch in 1642, captured by the English in 1664, and recaptured by the Dutch in 1665.

In 1872 it was transferred to the English by purchase.

The fort is itself not very much of an attraction, but has marks of archeological value, e.g. 17th-18th century panelling.

It has been variously used in recent years, e.g., as offices for the Ministry of Information, Ghana Tourist Board, and Local Authority Offices.

8. **Ankobra Mouth**: Between 1650 and 1670, the Dutch built a small fort here which they named **Fort Elise Carthago**. They had a prosperous gold mining trade here,

1, p. 46.

p. 47.

11, p. 48-49

but they did not maintain it for long on account of an earthquake which occurred soon afterwards in a nearby town, and the hostility of the local inhabitants, whose superstitious beliefs made them misinterpret the unfortunate occurrence as due to the presence of the Portuguese on their land—at Egwira. There is no trace whatsoever of this fort at the present day.

49. **Egwira**—In 1623, the Portuguese built a fort up the Ankobra River, and named it **Fort Dumé**. It was, however, shattered by earthquake in 1636. The Dutch rebuilt it in 1694, but they soon abandoned it.

There are also no traces of it at the present day.

50. **Benyin**: In about 1750, the English built a fort here which they named **Appolloni Fort**, but they abandoned it in 1833.

It was temporarily occupied in 1835 by an English expeditionary force led by Governor Maclean to confront King Kwaku Arkai of Nzima, the legendary tyrant.

In 1863, it was transferred to the Dutch who partly rebuilt it, but abandoned it soon afterwards.

On 6th April, 1872 it transferred to the English by purchase together with other Dutch possessions.

The fort is in excellent position, and is presently under construction. It intended to be used partly by the Monuments Section of the Museum and Monuments Board, and partly as a rest house.

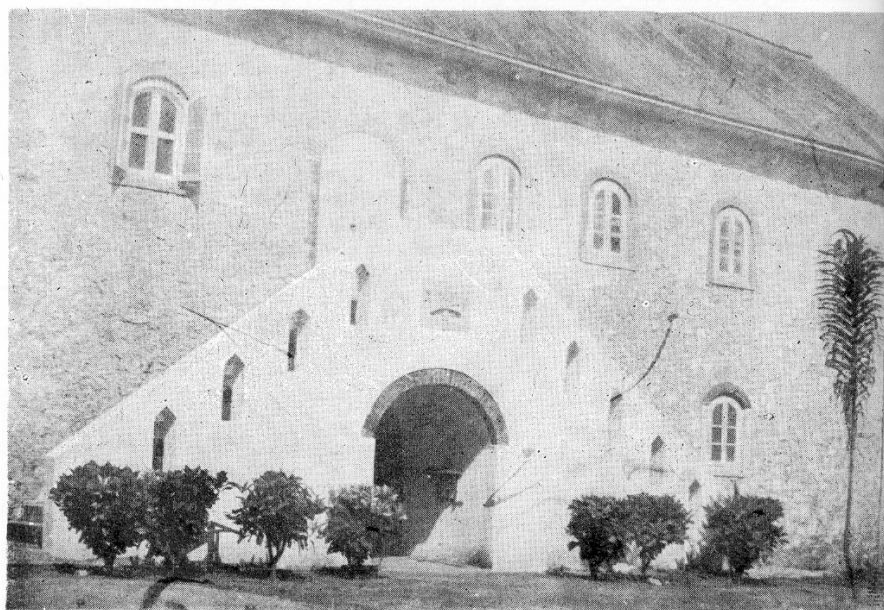
but they did not maintain a long wayward of an earthquake which occurred some afterwards in a nearby town, and the building of the local inhabitants, which were destroyed, made them another, and the unfortunate accidents, a side of the pleasure of Dr. Paragrat on their visit in 1811. There is no trace of the fort at the present day.

49. *Figure*—In 1821, the Portuguese built a fort up the Arakobu River, and gave it the name of "Fort Duval". It was destroyed by earthquake in 1840. The Dutch built it in 1836, but it was destroyed in 1841.

There are also no traces of it at the present day.

50. *Figure*—In 1720, the English built a fort here which they named Appollon Fort, but they abandoned it in 1811.

It was temporarily occupied in 1811 by an English expeditionary force.



*Fort Groot Fredericksburg, built in 1683 at Princes Town by the Brandenburgers (Prussians).*

## CHAPTER 12

## CONCLUSION

The successive antagonism shown by European interlopers and African inhabitants against the early European licensed traders and *vice versa* coupled with fears of what might emerge from the blue justified the wisdom in and the necessity for erecting forts and castles on the coasts of West Africa—to protect the Europeans themselves and their trade.

In addition to the Papal Bulls, the false propaganda spread in Europe about the perils of white immigrants penetrating into the hot tropics (e.g., that it was an impossibility to proceed hither except in specially constructed boats which only the Portuguese could manufacture) and other measures to prevent encroachment on their preserves, the early Portuguese adventurers made doubly sure to live in well-fortified communities, hence the building of the early forts and castles, but it was no easy matter for a stranger to land on another's land. It was by trick rather than by voluntary consent that on many an occasion they succeeded in getting the local chiefs to apportion them a piece of their lands for building purposes in the beginning.

Nevertheless, something good came out of this contact. Both the Europeans and the Africans somehow benefited so much so that eventually the early suspicions, antagonism and ignorance gradually faded away despite occasional troubles between them.

As the centuries passed by, more forts and castles were built, for fresh causes and reasons offered themselves from time to time for the purpose, as other European Powers, Great and Small, entered the scene. After the Portuguese came the Dutch, the English, the French, the Swedish, the Danes, and the Brandenburgers. This time there was no question of picking the landlord. On the contrary, it was the other way round—the local chiefs sometimes invited the Europeans to build on their respective lands and to give them protection against hostile neighbours from without and against internal trouble-makers.

By this means, the mission of the castle-dwellers widened, so that by the middle of the nineteenth century it had transcended from trade interest to political responsibility. There came a triarchy by this time—the Danes, the Dutch and the English held the reins of government with their headquarters in Christiansborg, Elmina and Cape Coast respectively. In 1872 when the English won the race and assumed sole political control of this country.

Throughout the previous chapters the difficulties encountered by the castle-dwellers have been recounted, and so have their triumphs. It has been amply shown that this country has benefited tremendously in nearly all fields through its contact with the castle-dwellers. Many things the African would have considered impossible or hardly imaginable are now before his very nose. Whether he makes good use of them is another matter.

On the negative side, on account of this contact with the castle-dwellers, the Gold Coast African, and alas the African generally, lost his sense of initiative. Until independence was won, he was placed in an inferior position, politically and economically, and this position adversely affected his social and other positions—a serious drawback which will take several decades to heal.

Worse still, the Castle Trade or the Triangular Trade necessarily entailed the Slave Trade—the shameful and deplorable method of solving the labour problem, a measure which resulted in a mass exodus of millions of the best of our manhood from Africa. In connection with the Slave Trade must also be mentioned the disgraceful conduct of the European Powers out here who instigated the various African tribes to go



to war with one another and thus provided prisoners of war as a source for the supply of slaves overseas.

Incidentally, it is worthy of note that many Africans were themselves to blame for encouraging slavery and slave-trade in the beginning, as evidenced by the writings of Torre de Tombo and Ramusis:

"In this connection there is one further point of interest. The Africans' commodity, gold, was light in weight for its value. But the objects which they desired and obtained in exchange were bulky or heavy or both. For their journey to the trading post they could carry their goods, but for the return journey they needed the help of porters. The Portuguese could supply these too. They had established themselves on the island of St. Thomas in the Gulf of Guinea, and were obtaining slaves from Benin, where, according to a writer of 1540, parents thought they were doing their children the best service in the world by sending them to be sold to other lands, where there was an abundance of provision, and where also, of course, there were slaves captured in tribal battles. Thus it came about that the first traffic in human bodies between Europeans and Africans, wanted porters. The earliest recorded instance of such a sale appears to have been in 1480, when Cartilians sold slaves at Mina, although on that occasion they are not specified as porters. In later accounts slaves regularly appear amongst the goods exchanged for gold along with clothing, armlets, shaving bowls, pots, iron kettles, blankets and shells."\*

It has often been doubted what the state of development of this country would have been, if the process of castle-building had not matured into colonisation, or had not taken place at all—whether the African would have advanced more than he has done today. It is easier for the optimists to cite the case of Japan and China who though were never colonised are equally advanced as many European countries, if not more advanced than most of them. These optimists hold the view that it was because the peoples of this country subjected themselves politically and economically to the Castle-dwellers, the latter advanced at our expense in all fields.

The fact must be appreciated that long before 1482, that is to say, before the advent of the Portuguese, European explorers had reached the West Coast. The reverse was not the case. There was also a wide disparity between the countries that sponsored the European castle-dwellers and the African inhabitants they met at the time. Certainly, Portugal, the Netherlands, England, France, Sweden, Denmark, or Prussia of the year 1500 was much more advanced in nearly every field than the Gold Coast of that time. With most other African countries the position was even much worse.

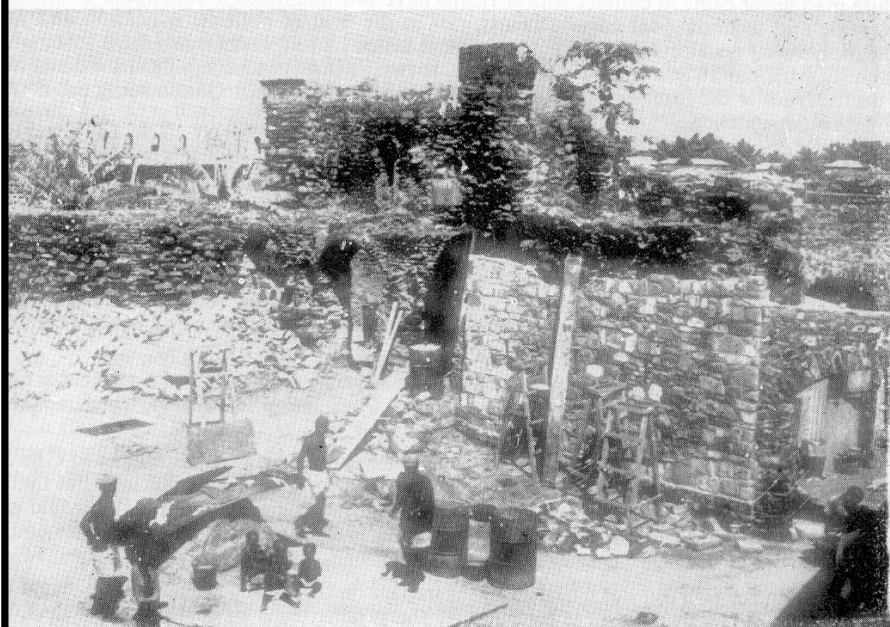
If De Faria's description could be taken as authoritative that the native inhabitants who met the early Portuguese squadron "were naked to the waist, and wore round the middle monkey skins, or coverings made of palm leaves. They were armed with spears, shields, bows and arrows, and wore a kind of helmet made of skin thickly studded with the teeth of sharks, which gave them a very war-like appearance. . . "† then there is little to be said in favour of any promising state of affairs in the native African's development at that time. Compared with the African shabbily dressed, the leader of the Portuguese delegation to Elmina, Azambuja was "sumptuously attired for the occasion and wore a rich gold collar, prepared to receive the chief in state. . . "

The fact can still be appreciated that during the several years intercourse the Castle-dwellers as representatives of their respective governments shared with their African hosts

\* Ramisio. G.B.: *Navigazioni e Viaggi* I, 125 *Revue hispanique* IV 174-201

\* Ellis, p. 8

\*\* Ibid, p. 18



*Komenda English Fort, Komenda, built by the English in 1663. Transferred to the Dutch in 1688, it was soon bombarded by the Dutch Warship **Matalen Kruis**. England regained it on 6th April, 1872 by purchase.*

a substantial lot, if not all, the blessings of the former's civilisation. Many Africans were able to utilise the opportunities that came their way, but most for various reasons, were and have been unable to profit thereby. In the circumstances, the disparity between the two races, unlike that between any two European nations, is very wide indeed—even now.

Alas, even after the Abolition of the Slave Trade it has amply been exemplified in the text that many responsible African leaders stood against the idea—they persisted in perpetuating slavery and the slave trade, for their personal gains.

Consequently, in a large measure the African has himself to blame for failing to make full use of the opportunities brought to our shores by the castle-dwellers. In other words, the people of this country have gained much from the erection of these forts and castles. *A priori*, as explained earlier, had the Forts and Castles not been built the African would probably not have improved his position appreciably. Possibly epidemics and inter-tribal wars would have retarded, stagnated, imperilled or thwarted his progress a lot.

By parity of reason, other places where castles and forts were not built, or where the white man never came in contact with Africans have not had much to contribute to modern scientific and technological advancements, nor in the field of politics, education and law. The more rapid development of the Gold Coast which had at least fifty of these forts (when the rest of the countries of West Africa had just two or three)\* to a significant extent confirms the truth in the foregoing assertion. Perhaps that accounts for Ghana being the first to gain its independence.

It would be apposite at this juncture to cite specific examples in divers fields wherein the Castle-dwellers have wholly and voluntarily initiated a number of projects to the benefit of this country's growth, development and progress. These divers fields cover religion, education, administration, the legislature, the judiciary, commerce, architecture, health, scientific research, communication, transport, agriculture, and the military and police systems.

To start with, I would like to stress in some greater detail those of education and religion (a twin pair of projects), because they are the index to all manner of developments, especially in those days and in this part of the world.

Orthodox christian religion was unknown in West Africa until the Portuguese arrived in 1482. The first mass was said on a small hill at Elmina (at the foot of which an altar was set up) on which the royal Portuguese hoisted their banner:

"This mass was heard by our men with many tears of devotion, and thanks to God for allowing them to praise and glorify Him in the midst of those idolaters; asking Him that as He was pleased that they were the first to erect an altar at so great a sacrifice, he would give them wisdom and the church which they would found there might endure until the end of the world."\*\*\*

Christian religion did not make a serious impact on the local people at first because the early Portuguese themselves were obsessed by the prolific trade in gold. Nevertheless, the idea of converting the people of their newly discovered lands to christianity was constantly maintained. On his accession to the Portuguese throne in 1521, King John III intensified his country's interest in this respect. For example, in 1529, he appointed Estevas da Gama Captain of the Elmina Castle and directed him to provide instruction in the Christian faith for the people living in the village and for those from further inland who came to trade in the castle . . . . . "Take special care to command that the sons of the negroes living in the village learn how to read and write, and how to sing and pray while ministering in the church," he commended.

\* A few forts outside Gold Coast were built in the Gambia, Sierra Leone and Whydan (Dahomey), e.g. James Fort (Gambia) and Bunce Island (Sierra Leone).

\*\*\* Bartels. F. L. p. 2

Throughout their occupation of Elmina and other parts of this country, the Portuguese showed a keen interest in spreading the gospel among the inhabitants of their settlements. This interest continued unabated, although trade (their chief attraction hither) was always upper-most on their minds.

Side by side their religious instructions, the Portuguese established a school in the Castle to which many children of prominent Africans, especially of those who had accepted the new faith, were admitted. Some progress was made even at this time, although it was not very spectacular.

Nor did Europeans of other nations who followed the Portuguese neglect the spiritual guidance of the Africans. In 1638, two Catholic French priests, Fathers Colombia and Cyril of the Order of Capuchins of France, arrived at Axim "in flight eastwards from Assinie where a friendly people, among whom they had worked since 1633, were becoming hostile." These French Fathers succeeded in winning the hearts of the people of Axim and the surrounding districts. They established a school and a church at Axim where they successfully worked for some years.

Later after the capture of the Elmina Castle from the Portuguese by the Dutch in 1637, the new masters introduced the Dutch Reformed Church in Elmina and their other settlements in this country—Axim, Moree, Senya Bereku and Accra. One of their most well-known chaplains during their 235 years' occupation of parts of this country was a native of this country—Rev. Dr. Elisa Johannes Capitein (1717-47). Next in rank to the Governor of the Elmina Castle, Capitein had a great deal of responsibility, particularly in seeing to the spiritual purity of both the Dutch and the African subjects of the Dutch West India Company in this country. He was a very successful clergyman, and was a very popular school teacher who also conducted divine services in the castle. He was reputed to have reduced the local Fante language to writing. He also translated and published in the Fante language the Lord's prayer, parts of the Catechism and the Twelve Commandments as well as several Biblical lessons, particularly of the New Testament.

Towards the end of the seventeenth century, the Anglican church also appeared on the scene. Clergymen of that church had established a school in Cape Coast as far back as 1692, and in the course of the early part of the next century they embarked upon their religious assignment. Their religious work was intensified during the occupation of the Cape Coast Castle by the Royal Africa Company. When James Phipps was appointed Captain-General of the Cape Coast Castle, he was instructed from England "to ensure that morning and evening prayers were regularly read by a minister of the Church of England or by some persons fitly qualified to perform same."\*

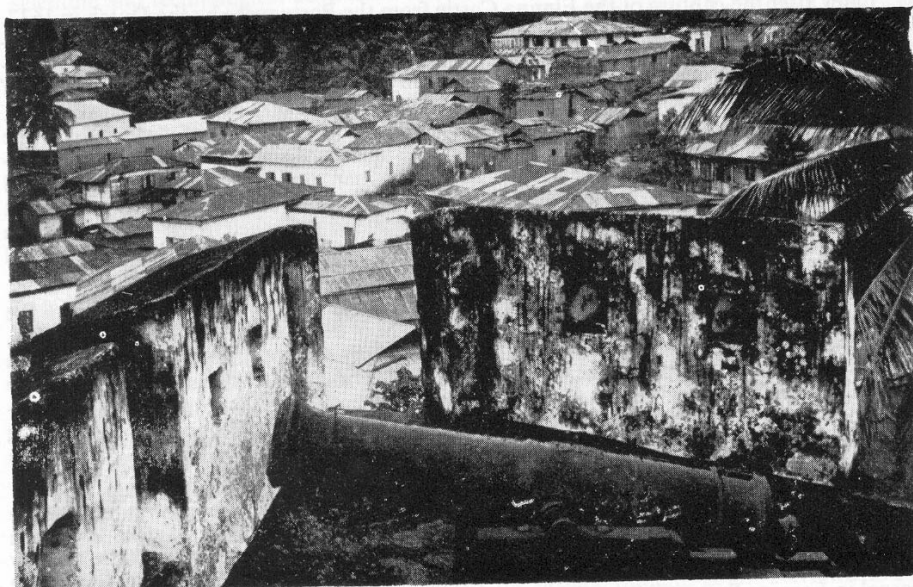
The religious and educational work of the Anglican Church suffered from time to time and for a long time owing to frequent outbreaks of diseases and deaths among the European personnel in the Castle. Nevertheless, it was intensified in the course of the 18th century by Rev. Thomas Thompson, the first missionary from the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (SPG) to Ghana, and by the Rev. Philip Quarquo, the first African Chaplain, who ministered for fifty years (1765-1816). He opened branches of his church in several parts of the coastal towns, particularly at Accra, Anomabu, Tantum, Winneba, and Dixcove. "What is more," states Bartels, "he planted a school among the people at Cape Coast at his own expense."\*\*

Philip Quarquo's death in 1816 did not put an end to the Castle's interest in its educational programme. James Henry Short, an Englishman in the service of the Royal African Company, was put in charge. Although much happened at this time to upset the smooth running of the Castle School, subsequent Governors of the settlements by their wise ad-

\* Public Records Office. T 70/66 Royal Africa Co. 1st July. 1720.

\*\* Bartels. F. L. p. 4





*Fort Metal Cross, Dixcove built by the English in 1691 — notorious for cheating passing ships by exchanging false gold for precious articles.*

ministration helped a great deal to obviate any obstacles with considerable success. It is reported that "by the time Sir Charles Macarthy arrived (28th March 1822), the school had grown to seventy and had moved out of the Castle into a hired building in the town, to make room for a girls' school. There were three African teachers, all of whom had had the advantages of some education in England—Joseph de Graft, John Sackey and John Anderson. For adults between the ages of twenty and forty-five, these men opened a night school."\*

Sir Charles Macarthy died in 1823, but he had set the ball rolling; he extended the Castle administration's educational and religious activities to several parts of the Fante coastal towns.

Rev. A. Denny took over the chaplaincy of the castle in 1828, and "put life into the divine service in the Castle and into the work of the school."

The products of his school formed the nucleus of the early Methodist Church which was established some ten years later in 1835, for in the course of his administration Sir Charles Macarthy had as early as April, 1822 ordered to be shipped a large consignment of books, namely 20 dozen psalters, 20 dozen prayer books, 10 dozen Bibles and 10 dozen New Testaments, in favour of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge. Even though the consignment reached this country a few months after Sir Charles' death, a number of enthusiastic and devoted African converts received the stock all right and embarked upon their studies in Cape Coast, Dixcove, Anomabu and Accra with astonishing success.

The story of the foundation of the Methodist Church was even more eventful. It followed a mass appeal from Sir Thomas Foxwell Buxton, Member of British Parliament, and a champion of the Anti-Slave Trade Movement (of which William Wilberforce was a foremost champion) Buxton presided over the Annual Missionary Meeting of the Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge at Exeter on 5th May, 1834, "Remember the wrongs of Africa; and remember that the only compensation you can offer is religious instruction . . . . . I conclude by saying again, one hundred missionaries, if you please! I cannot be content with one less than a hundred from this Society."\*\*

His appeal was favourably responded to. Thanks to Dunwell (the first Methodist Missionary to Ghana) to effectively respond to the call, and Captain Potter, a sea-captain of the *Congo*, who brought him out here. The success of Ghana Methodist Church in both its religious and educational programmes since 1835 when it was first established in Cape Coast cannot be gainsaid. The success of this Mission's educational and religious works is spectacularly self-evident.

It is worthy of note that Captain Maclean, President of the Company of Merchants whose headquarters were at the Cape Coast Castle "was at the door of the castle to receive Dunwell and offer him hospitality in the castle until a home could be found for him."\*\*\* It is further recorded that "the resident European merchants, fourteen men and one woman, received him in the politest manner."\*\*\*

In the eastern part of the country, the Danish governors of the Christiansborg Castle similarly encouraged the spread of religion and education among the Africans under their sphere of influence. At the invitation of Major Richelieu, a former Danish Governor of Christiansborg Castle, the Basel Evangelical Missionary Society, Switzerland, dispatched four missionaries, namely, Karl Ferdinand Salbach, Johann Gottlieb Schmidt, Gottlieb Holzwarth and Johann Philipp Henke, to the Danish trading settlement at Osu (Christiansborg).†

\* Ibid p. 7.

\*\* Methodist Mission Society. *Missionary Notices*. 1833-4. vii 477, 480-4, 487.

\*\*\* Bartels. p. 13

\*\* Ibid

† Within 3 years the first three died out here, leaving the last named missionary who died on 27th November, 1831.

More missionaries were sent out later on, and although difficulties came their way now and again, the Basel Evangelical Missionary Society flourished considerably, especially in the eastern parts of the country, such as Akwapim and Akyem districts.

With its headquarters established at Akropong, the Basel Mission intensified both its educational and religious programmes with considerable success. Later on, it pursued agriculture in many parts of the Eastern Province, where a wide variety of plants, including pears, cassavas, nuts, oranges and even cocoa were cultivated;—although the English had earlier experimented the growing of a wide variety of crops at Beulah, Cape Coast.

The founding of the A.M.E. Zion Church was also made possible by the kind gesture of a Castle dweller—a West Indian, who was a soldier at the time of the British expedition under Sir Garnet Wolsey against Ashanti. This West Indian, John Bryan Small, a native of Barbados, was a sergeant in the British Army, and had since 1873 been resident at Cape Coast. He “was shocked to see the immorality, nudity and poor living conditions in certain parts of the country.”\* He was determined to establish a church to help combat those ills, and consequently on his return home to America, he gave up his military career. Later, he took to the Holy Orders. After being ordained a priest, he was consecrated Bishop of the A.M.E. Zion Church—the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church.

It was he who got in touch with Rev. Egyir Asaam, then Head Teacher in Cape Coast Wesleyan School in 1898, to send over a suitable African student to America for training as a clerk man and educationist. Dr. James Aggrey (of Africa) was the first to be dispatched followed by the Rev. Frank Ata Osam Pinanko, and later Rev. Ntedu-Chinibuah. All these three figures ranked among the celebrities of this country.

“The well-known Aggrey Memorial College at Cape Coast founded under the auspices of the Zion Mission Church is a living testimony of Dr. Pinanko’s evangelical and educational accomplishments.”\* Thanks, by and large, to a Castle-dweller.

In the field of administration, whether of the Central or the Local government, it must be mentioned that until the establishment of the three territories, comprising the Gold Coast Colony, Ashanti and the Northern Territories, at the end of the last century there was no proper system of public administration in this country.

Although a tolerable form of local public administration existed in the areas under the jurisdiction of the European powers out here it was not until the Bond of 1844 was signed that British authority became formally recognised especially in the Fanti-speaking districts. The following correspondence and Declaration respectively are worthy of note:—

#### GOVERNOR H. W. HILL TO LORD STANLEY: FANTI RELATIONS, 6 MARCH 1844

“My Lord

“An opportunity offering for England tonight I am induced thus hurriedly to acquaint your Lordship that several of the Chiefs from different parts of the Country adjacent to Cape Coast Castle, have visited me today in great state, to pay their respects on the transfer of the Government.

“I have for some days been aware that an idea was believed by the natives, of its being the intention of Her Majesty’s Government to pronounce freedom to all Slaves within the limits over which jurisdiction has been exercised.

\* Dr Ephson. p. 110

\*\* Ibid. p. 111.



*James Fort, Accra, built by the English in 1672 and named it after James 1 of England, a Patron of the Royal Africa Company. Now it is used to house both male and female prisoners.*



"I need not tell your Lordship that an attempt to carry any such measure, would cause a revolution.

"The Chiefs were delighted on my informing them it was quite an idle report, and that the Export Slave Trade was all that we prohibited, they expressed satisfaction on my telling them they were not at liberty to ill-use their domestic Slaves, and if a person inherited a Slave, that person was not at liberty to sell the Slave again, but such Slave was to be considered a member of the family.

"I consider it a good opportunity of establishing an agreement to their being under our Jurisdiction, and drew up the document of which the enclosed is a Copy, and which the Chiefs readily signed.

"This will I hope my Lord meet with your approbation, and I think it is quite sufficient to establish the Powers of the Foreign Jurisdiction Act.

"I beg to mention the Chiefs expressed great satisfaction of the appointment of Captain Maclean to preside over the Trial of offenders . . . .

#### **"DECLARATION OF FANTI CHIEFS (THE 'BOND')" 6 MARCH 1844**

"WHEREAS Power and Jurisdiction has been exercised for and on behalf of Her Majesty the Queen of Great Britain and Ireland, within divers Countries and Places, adjacent to Her Majesty's Forts, and Settlements, on the Gold Coast: We Chiefs of Countries, and Places so referred to, adjacent to the said Forts, and Settlements; do hereby acknowledge, that Power, and Jurisdiction: and declare, 'that the first objects of Law, are the protection of Individuals, and of Property.

"Second Human sacrifices, and other barbarous Customs, such as Panyaring, are abominations, and contrary to Law.

"Third Murders, Robberies, and other Crimes and offences, will be Tried, and Inquired of, be'ore the Queen's Judicial Officers, and the Chiefs of the district, moulding the Customs of the Country to the general Principles of British Law.

"Done at Cape Coast Castle before His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor on this 6th day of March in the year of our Lord 1844 . . . ."

Towards the end of the last century, Ashanti and the Northern Territories became British possessions through conquest and annexation respectively. Hitherto, their contact with the forts and castles was necessarily indirect and remote.

Whatever be the merit or impropriety of their acquiring this country, the castle-dwellers were able to establish a very strong form of Local Administration and a unitary Central government which had hitherto not been known in this country. In other parts of Africa, the position was even worse, as evidenced thus:—

"The tribes of the Gold Coast Colony have had organised political intercourse with Europeans for over a hundred years, a history without parallel in Tropical Africa save for Sierra Leone."\*

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\* Wight, p. 21

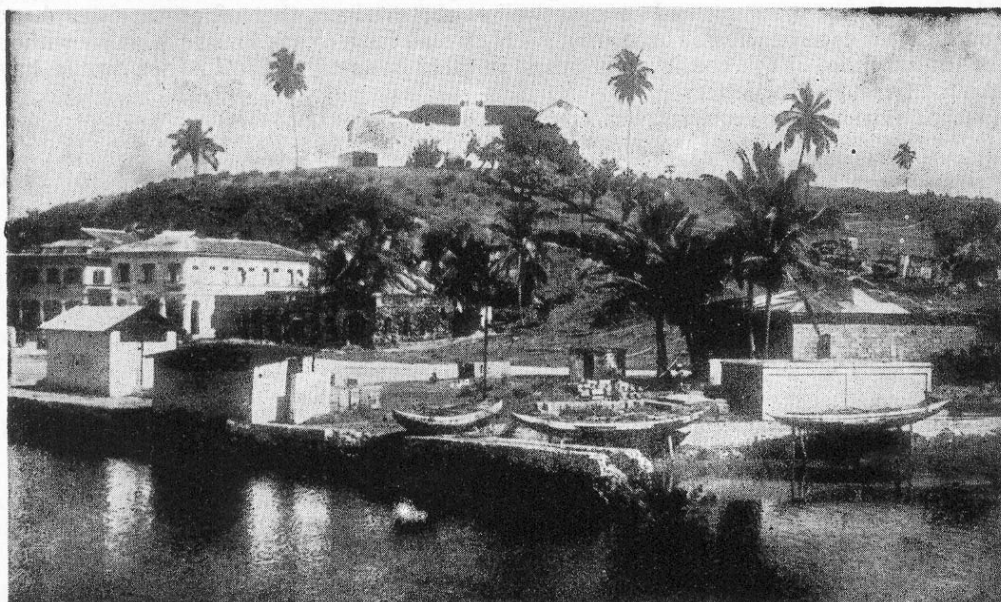
Finally, it is enough to mention that with a well-established system of government, blessed with competent personnel to run it, success in other fields, such as, the legislature, the judiciary, commerce, health, etc., was automatically assured. As the years passed by progress and developments in all governmental activities widened. A further evidence would, therefore, be superfluous and unnecessary to give in order to corroborate evidence of this country's indebtedness to the owners, builders and dwellers of the Castles and Forts and their respective governments for their enormous beneficial contribution to this country's growth, development and prosperity, despite inevitable wrongs and injuries our contact with them has simultaneously ensued from the hands of these same benefactors, e.g. introduction and intensification of the commercial Slave Trade and Slavery, instigating one native tribe to go to war against another, and subduing the people of this country politically and economically.\*

Whatever be our appreciation or misgiving as regards the Europeans' interference with our state of development, whether it be on the positive side of their contribution or the negative side thereof, the reader is invited to look at the Forts and Castles on the one hand, and the magnificent aqueducts, bridges, chapels, dams, engines, factories, harbours, schools, colleges, museums and zoos, as well as the products thereof, on the other hand, and form his own conclusion accordingly. He would have to ask himself whether without the former those of this country and others in other parts of tropical Africa would have had the benefit of the latter:

*"Si monumentum requiris, circumspice"\*\*\**

\* To subdue or enslave a people politically and/or economically indefinitely is however a serious and unpardonable wrong.

\*\* (Trans), If you seek a monument, look around.



*Fort St. Jago, Elmina — built by the Dutch in 1637 when they captured Elmina Castle from the Portuguese, and in the following year received the name Fort Conraadsburg.*

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