

men and women, priests and priestesses of this strange religion constitute a numerous order. They are supported by the liberality of the people, and by means of secret agencies through the country, they acquire such an amount of information on all subjects and about all people, as to strengthen the belief in their supernatural powers and enable them to terrorize their dupes.

But light was dawning on Darkest Africa, and some of the people doubted, and finally discovered and exposed many of the priestly tricks. This destroyed the power of their "spells" and opened the way for the spread of Christianity.

A call for help came from Ashanti. One of the members of the first little band of native Christians at Cape Coast had gone to live in Coomassie, as the king's secretary. He had conversed and prayed with some of the princes, and even held worship in the palace. Mr. Freeman's "heart had been set on winning Ashanti for Christ," from his arrival in Africa. "The tales of horror, wretchedness and cruelty which I had often heard respecting the Ashantis wrought in my mind," he writes, "the deepest commiseration, and a constant restlessness to commence missionary operations among them."

Mr. Freeman was expecting the Rev. Robert Brooking as his assistant on the coast. Leaving Mr. de Graft, another member of the first band of Fanti Christians, in charge till the new missionary should arrive, Mr. Freeman commenced his journey to Coomassie, the "City of Blood." Innumerable difficulties, dangers and delays had so retarded his progress that he was more than two months in covering the 170 miles from the coast.

The king of Coomassie sent a messenger on a tour of inspection, and on his return asked the man if he had seen the new fetishman, and had he plenty of drums? On

learning that Mr. Freeman had no drums, and what his errand really was, he was sorely puzzled and exclaimed, "Never, since the world began, has there been an English missionary in Ashanti! What can he want?"

At last came the summons to the presence of the king. A band of music and officers with gold-hilted swords and enormous umbrellas were deputed to conduct the stranger to court. As they entered the city they passed between two new heaps of earth, which Mr. Freeman afterwards learned contained two human victims buried alive, as a fetish to avert any evil that might result from the visit of a missionary! When they reached the marketplace there sat the king in all his barbarous splendour, surrounded by officers of state, captains, soldiers, and vast throngs of people—certainly not less than forty thousand! Each chief in the party was followed by a crowd of slaves and retainers. Most of the slavery in Ashanti is due to this great love of show, each chief desiring to have a more imposing retinue than his neighbour!

Upon several occasions Mr. Freeman held quite lengthy conversations with the king and his chief linguist, a person of great influence. He gave them all possible information as to the object of his visit, but found much difficulty in making them understand his motives. A very lengthy "custom" for one of the king's relations, during which there was horrible human sacrifice, caused much delay and much suffering. Many times during these days the missionary heard the sound of the dreaded death-drum. His interpreter remarked, "Do you hear the drum? A sacrifice has just been made and the drum says, 'King, I have killed him!'"

Of Coomassie itself Mr. Freeman writes that the streets are large, clean and uniform, in some instances quite thirty yards broad, and shaded