

miles, opening occasionally into the sea. These to a slight extent feel the effect of the tides, but in a large number of cases, the water in them is stagnant, the bed muddy and lined on either side with thick jungle and assume the general characteristics of swamps.

This stagnant water has the effect of rendering the atmosphere very humid, and when the hot rays of the sun beat down upon it, the vapour given off can be likened to that experienced whilst taking a steam bath.

This leads on to the question of *Diet*. Necessarily, fresh meat will not keep in this kind of temperature.

I have seen the meat of a freshly killed bullock become tainted and covered with a greenish mould within four hours after dressing!

This being the case, canned meats have to be resorted to. With all due respect to the various canning manufactories, it is a well-known fact that canned meats lose a great deal of their virtue in the process of canning.

Resource is made, therefore, to the native chicken and duck, both very diminutive affairs. A well-known coast saying is—that a man gets such a surfeit of chicken on the west coast that he is unable to look a hen in the face on his return to England. Fish, of course, can be obtained in abundance, and forms a staple dish.

Not only is there a scarcity of meat foods, but there is also a scarcity of vegetables. Strange as it may seem, no vegetable will grow on this coast, except in a very few places. Hence, such commodities as potatoes, onions, etc., have to be imported.

The substitute used is rice, the food of the native.

To simplify matters, I will give a brief *résumé* of the bill of fare of an ordinary coaster, not, of course, taking into consideration the fare of those who have the good fortune to be stationed in seaport towns:—

Native fowl, goat, bullock or sheep, canned meats and fresh fish.

Rice, yams and Indian corn.

Fruits in fair abundance, i.e., bananas, pines, cocoanuts,