

THE STORY OF ASHANTI.*

BY LUCY WARDEN BROOKING.



TYPICAL HEAD OF WEST AFRICAN.

In the eightieth report of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society for 1894, we find the following:

"Our work in Western Africa is the oldest in which we are engaged, older than the Society itself! Its history is a long and pathetic record of sacrifices, the latest of which is the death, two months ago, of our young brother Johann Franz Mühlleder. But those sacrifices have been part of the price paid for great results. Tens of thousands have been rescued from idolatry, superstition and sin, and the moral and social fruits of the Gospel have ripened in regions long cursed with heathenish influences. In the districts of Sierra Leone and Gambia, Gold Coast (including Ashanti) and Lagos, there is now a membership of 15,554 souls, with 2,003 on trial. The native ministers number forty-six, and 14,953 children are receiving instruction in our day and Sunday-schools."

We Canadian Methodists should have a twofold interest in this distant field as the veteran mission of our beloved parent Church, and, also, because our own land was in the circle through which the light first travelled to reach West Africa!

After the American War of Inde-

pendence many of those negroes who forsook their masters and served in the British forces, were carried to Nova Scotia with the U. E. Loyalists and there declared free. Others went with the British regiments to England, and were finally conveyed to Africa and formed the colony of Sierra Leone. During this time Mr. Wesley's missionaries were working in Nova Scotia; many of the negroes were converted to God, and when, in 1792, a fleet sailed from Nova Scotia to Sierra Leone, containing eleven or twelve hundred blacks, "they carried the savour of divine grace with them; and being attached to our doctrine and discipline they established the worship of God among themselves, according to the plan of the Methodists. Two or three officiated as local preachers and others as class-leaders. As their lives were exemplary others soon joined them, and in process of time a preaching-house was erected! In the Minutes of Conference for 1792, we find, under the head of 'What numbers are in the societies?' the answer is, 'Sierra Leone, coloured people, 223.' This is the first official record of Methodism on the continent of Africa."

The work did not extend to the Gold Coast for some years. Indeed, our earliest connection with the coast of Guinea was anything but creditable—the consent of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth being given (though reluctantly) for the continuation of the slave trade by the Royal African Company of England. We sigh and say, "How very inconsistent!" when we read that these

* This admirable record of missionary heroism possesses an added interest to us in Canada from the fact that Mr. Brooking, one of the pioneers of the Ashanti mission under the burning sun of Africa, was also one of the pioneers of the Methodist missions in our own remote North-Land. It has been a work of filial affection for his daughter, Miss Brooking, to prepare this beautiful tribute to her beloved father.—Ed.