

occasion to refer to the performances of the "steam rappers" at Chatham. It appears two of these are now to be sent out. There seems no reason why they should not be able to travel in the country: there is no artillery to fire at them; they are provided with changes of wheels and can go on soft ground, or with pegs in their tires up very deep slopes, and they are not liable to suffer from fever. The greatest objection we see to them is that their width is not in keeping with the rest of the train. From memory we are not able to say what advantage the trench steam engine now in use at Chatham has in narrowness of track, else we should have thought that modification of that engine might have been found preferable to the "steam rappers."

"About 2,000 railway sleepers, roughly sawn deals tarrered over, have been made by the workmen in the Royal Arsenal Woolwich, and were on the wharf ready for shipment at the beginning of the week, but they will, it is understood, wait for the next ship. These sleepers will be laid transversely in the usual way, and not longitudinally, as at first expected, the latter plan being regarded as bad except where there is firm foundation. It is thought that the line of rails will be laid about forty miles from the point of debarkation, whether it be Cape Coast Castle, Accra, or some place in the Volta, according to the selection of Major-General Sir Garnet Wolseley, the Commander-in-Chief of the Expedition.

"The War Office having called for Volunteers from the corps of the Royal Engineers to lay the railway, more than fifty at once came forward to offer their services. Six of them were selected and sent on to Liverpool, and another six were sent to Woolwich, from the School of Military Engineering at Chatham for conveyance in the *King Bonny*. They were clothed in the new uniform adapted for the expedition, a tunic and trousers of the Edo grey tweed, and gaiters, in which they much resemble the London Scottish Volunteers. They also wore the new pattern helmet designed for the service by an officer at the Army Clothing Depot at Pimlico, mainly composed of cork and canvas. The helmet weighs a trifle over six ounces, and is provided with an inner isolated zone to fit the head outside of which there is a space for ventilation—an object further insured by a perforation at the top. The whole of the British troops employed in the expedition will be provided with this outfit and puggarees and cap covers of white linen, padded with wadding, to protect the head and neck. They will have no fatigue cap except their own regimental one, which they may wear at pleasure, but every man will have two suits of clothing. The tunic introduces a novelty into the army in the shape of outside pockets, of which there are three, one on each hip and one on the left breast, wide, deep and strong. The garment fits loosely about the neck and chest, is confined at the waist by a belt of its own material. There is no stiffness in the collar, and it is altogether a comfortable and serviceable dress. The soldiers who have been fitted with it highly appreciate it, and especially praise the pockets.

"On Tuesday a hundred leathern bags, to contain from 10lbs. to 20lbs. of gunpowder, for bursting gates and blowing up stockades, were shipped in the *Bonny*, in anticipation of rough sort of warfare which may be expected from the Ashantees, and the inde tactics which even in modern times have been servicable at Delhi, Magdala, and among the Maories in New Zealand. Rockets, also

which, from their imperfect range and accuracy are little esteemed in wars among civilized nations, are sent in great abundance, the conformation which similar missiles created among King Theodore's half-savage troops, being regarded as mainly instrumental in achieving the triumph of the Abyssinian expedition. A great number of Hales' rockets, which are fired without sticks, are being sent out in the ship which is about to sail from Woolwich. When fired from a tube or trough, they preserve their pivot upon their longer axis by jets of fire which escape from holes which surround the base and cause them to rotate, and, when they are spent, a shell in the head explodes, completing the havoc which their fiery flight has begun. The news brought by the *Congo*, which is the *Bonny's* sister ship, of the healthy state of the Gold Coast, has been received with much satisfaction by the crew and the troops who are going out. The non-commissioned officers of the Royal Engineers who embarked on Monday finding they could not have a fire on board to cook their meals, because the vessel was shipping ammunition, were permitted to go on shore again, and were messaged at the Royal Engineer Barracks, in Woolwich, until they could take possession of their borths. Previous to leaving the Royal Arsenal they were photographed in their African outfit, at the chemical establishment. Their outfit includes a pint water bottle (cased in wood), and several hays provided themselves with pocket filters, for fear that they might find those articles at a premium on the coast. The officers who have gone have had contrived for them a sort of pouch for the waist belt, containing a knife, fork, spoon, and other necessities, the outside case of which forms a drinking flask. The breechloading revolver which most of them wear attached to the waist-belt will carry a half ounce bullet with force enough to kill at sixty yards, and they can be loaded and fired at the rate of forty rounds per minute. Canteens, or drinking flasks, with straps for the shoulder, were sent on board the *Bonny* yesterday afternoon to the number of a least five thousand, and took up all the room there was left in the main hatch. A portion of the "pickled" sleepers for the railway was also got on board, and the Engineers when they arrive at their destination will find all the materials and tools ready to begin their work. They have with them hydraulic jacks and patent lifts, and a chest of gimlets, each half an inch thick and two feet long, presumed to be for the same service. It is a noteworthy, though perhaps an accidental, circumstance that all the men in the engineer squad are unmarried. Twelve more ovens, or rather the iron plates for constructing them, were also shipped in the *Bonny*. The Royal Carriage Department has constructed, six more carriages for Gatling guns, which are to be supplied by contract, and the department has also completed two more of the little carriages for Cohorn howitzers. In the Royal Laboratory, men and boys are still busy manufacturing buckshot and bullet ammunition, and a large number of additional hands have been taken on. An order has been received for nine millions of ball cartridge for the Martini Henry rifle, and there is no doubt that this order has some connection with the preparations for the Ashantee war.

The name of the next ship for the Gold Coast was not known at Woolwich yesterday and she will probably, like the *Adela*, arrive alongside the pier before any information is given respecting her. Without regarding the railway, which alone is expected to re-

quire two or three ships for its exportation there is still a vast quantity of stores to be sent out for the expedition, but three months have yet to elapse before the date when operations are likely to commence, and there is time, if necessary, to despatch a dozen more ships. The authorities have had under consideration the desirability of sending out a gang of English "navvies" to lay the railways, as was done at Balaclava, but it is thought that, under the superintendence of the Royal Engineers, of whom more are to be sent, the Gold Coast railway can be laid down by the Gold Coast natives. The wagons sent to Woolwich with the convertible traction engines are thought to be unnecessarily strong and heavy for the slender rails provided, but one containing a water tank will probably be attached to each locomotive as tender, and the rest of the train made up of lightly built trollies, of which a half a dozen have been received as a sample. The barrack-room stores brought home from Canada on the withdrawal of the British army have been of some service in fitting out the present expedition, a large number of iron stands for barrack room tables and other articles of furniture having been brought out from store, and placed on the wharf ready for shipment. The tops of the tables, although the old ones were brought home from the Dominion, are provided anew. On Thursday a number of Thames watermen arrived at Woolwich with another fleet of surf boats for landing the troops. These were built by Forrest, of Limehouse, under a contract, and from their shape, their length, and their bright yellow colour, presented an unusual appearance on the river. They are built with double skins, copper fastened, and have no decks, except in the stem and stern sheets, which are precisely alike. Stores from the Control warehouses at the dockyard and other places are accumulating ready for the next ship.

A correspondent of the *Western Morning News* writes as follows, his letter being dated Cape Coast Castle, Saturday, Sept. 6:

"If even Europeans so well acclimatized as myself feel enervated, what wonder is it that those who have but recently arrived at the coast are so thoroughly prostrated as to be almost unfit for duty. Of the others and men on shore few, if any, are really fit for active exertion. Sickness is very prevalent, and the number who give in almost daily increases. The hot damp exhalations from the swamps and lagoons, called "the smokes" penetrate through the whole system and act as a malarial, especially at night. Nor according to my experience, will the dry hot season, now rapidly approaching, bring much improvement. Many things might be had to improve the condition of Europeans, but as fancy prices are asked for everything of this kind now the money at our disposal is quite inadequate to procure them. The *Sinoom* anchored off the coast, doing duty as a hospital ship. The marines on board—those she brought out originally—are reported to be fairly well; the men wounded in the late affrays are recovering. But Lieutenant Cheetham, Royal Marine Artillery, and seven marines are invalided home. Sergeant Sidebottom died on Thursday. Of the officers and men brought out by the *Borraenta*, Colonel Festing, Captain Despard, Lieutenant Allen, and five men alone remain on the coast.

"The fact of chief importance since my last is the extension of the blockade westward from Cape Coast Castle to the Assinie River, nearly 200 miles along the coast, to the extreme west of the Ashantee territory.