

Mystery Land.

FROM STORIES FROM WEST AFRICA.

Mr. Alan Lethbridge, in his book "West Africa the Elusive" (Bale and Danielsson), gives a clear and interesting account of our West Coast Colonies as they are to-day. Their "heat and horror," of their immense wealth, and of their strange medical problems. Wounds in the white man will not heal there and no white child may be born. Nor has the secret of tropical fever yet been mastered, though Sierra Leone is no longer "the white man's grave."

He has some grim stories to tell—one, which is new, of the haunted castle at Elmina, where no one sleeps without a qualm. It appears that a party of three men and one woman were playing bridge very keenly in the tropical night. "Of a sudden the lady put her hand to her eyes as though dazzled. Asked if anything were the matter she denied anything wrong and continued playing. Then again she clasped her hands to her eyes, gave an exclamation, and fainted dead away."

What she had seen she could not or would not say, but the tradition is that a headless woman walks the castle. Nor does Mr. Lethbridge reject the power of native magic. He vouches for one strange story: that at a point in the Niger delta in a hut near a store were a number of native workers, under medical supervision. Their headman said it was "no good place." "One morning a Kroo boy was reported dead; a post-mortem revealed no apparent cause of death. Next morning two men had departed this life and again post-mortems revealed nothing. On the third morning four men were dead and there was something like a panic."

All the men were at once removed and a fresh batch brought up to be placed in "the same sinister house." They too died in the same mysterious way, and it was decided to burn down the hut. "Then something fell to the ground and was seized by the headman, who rushed up to the doctor shouting, 'Here be plenty bad things, sah! Pit to kill all men, sah!' He held at arm's length two human finger bones which had been tied together with a bit of native twine in the shape of a rough cross."

When this ju-ju was disposed of the deaths ceased. The Niger delta is not a place for lonely white men to take walks in the gloaming; an instance is mentioned of one "youngster" who did so and "two days later his mutilated corpse was found waterlogged in the sinister mangrove swamp." Nor is it a place to be buried in; we are told that in digging graves the water is reached, and the mourners have to stand upon the coffin to hold it down.—Daily Mail.

Centenary of Asparagus.

The Pride of Argenteuil.

Asparagus, king of vegetables, is celebrating its centenary this year. At least it is the centenary of the Argenteuil variety, which is practically the only one cultivated in France—the fat, white, luscious sort with purple tips, which is perfect hot with melted butter or mousseline sauce, and even better cold with oil and vinegar. The story of how Argenteuil, a little village on the Seine a few miles from Paris, came to give birth to the giant which replaced the stringy stuff that our grandfathers called "spruce" is rather curious. Formerly Argenteuil and the neighbouring hamlets that slope down to the river produced a rather famous "small" wine much beloved by Parisians.

Ascending the Gournets. . . . But at the beginning of the last century the grape vines were attacked by a disease called pyrale, just as fifty years later all the vineyards of France were destroyed by the phylloxera and had to be replanted with American stock. One day a peasant, standing among his stricken, starveling plants, had the idea of planting asparagus among the rows. Three years later, when they had come to maturity, he was able to send to the Paris markets asparagus of a size and succulence that astonished and delighted the gourmets. "The old peasant had endowed mankind with a new pleasure."

Next year all his neighbours were pulling up their vines and planting the "Argenteuil giant," and even to-day though the place is now a big railway junction surrounded by belching factories, the finest asparagus in the world is still produced in the district, sticks weighing pound each being by no means unusual. And all over the world the thick juicy variety has replaced spruce, fit only for soups and garnishing. But, alas! exactly a hundred years after this rebirth the spirit of the grape is taking its revenge of the usurping vegetable. The Argenteuil plantations are attacked by a certain "fly" with a long Latin name which threatens to destroy the beds. That is why the local authorities have decided to postpone till next year the official celebration of King Asparagus's centenary.

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Utilizing Old Battleships

NEW YORK, Nov. 12.—Naval re- trenchment is being put into practice with the utilization of naval repair ships in the salvage of old battleships and otherwise materially assisting in the countless jobs which ordinarily have gone to navy yards. It has been the custom heretofore to allow repair ships to undertake small necessary jobs for the fleets only when they were anchored far from navy yards or other land bases. Through the rearrangement of ship repair allotments, it now has been found practical to have these indispensable "mother" ships do much more than was formerly required of them. So henceforth they will spend long periods in the navy yards and it is expected, effect economies in naval work.

The Prometheus, Atlantic Fleet re-

pair ship, and the Black Hawk, flotilla ship are lying in the New York navy yard after having engaged in dismantling the "pre-dreadnoughts" which cruised around the world in 1908 and now lying out of commission in the Philadelphia navy yard. Machinery, motors, blowers, searchlights, telephones, copper cable and even furniture, which may have future usefulness, have been removed and brought from Philadelphia to be used in the outfitting of the Great Northern as flagship of the Atlantic fleet. Extensive alterations are to be made by the Prometheus, with a force of 350 artificers. This work will be completed in time to allow the Great Northern to leave for the winter maneuvers early next year. The Prometheus, of 12,000 tons gross, was converted from a collier, in 1915 to a modern repair ship. It is equipped to handle heavy machinery and blacksmith work or such

fine tasks as adjusting of chronometers and binoculars. It is commanded by Captain Paul Foley. It is expected that another source of economy will be the establishment of a reclamation store at the naval operating base, Hampton Roads. There, all salvaged material of further usefulness will be stored and issued.

All for the Best.

MR. GOSLINGTON PHILOSOPHIZES ON HUMAN ILLS.

"Glimmerby, my friend Glimmerby," said Mr. Goslington, "propounds the theory that both poverty and worry are conducive to longevity, and I think there is something in that. I am not so sure about the worry, and yet, I think even that may be true! I can see, for instance, that if a man worried hard enough he would keep himself lean and so escape the ill and inconveniences attendant upon obesity; but that poverty tends to lengthen life I have no doubt whatever."

"The man who is poor, as we most of us are, has to work for a living. Surely it is in work that we are most blessed; and if we have work to do in which we are interested, that appeals to us, then are we fortunate indeed; we find a pleasure in labor and a joy in accomplishments; and it makes me smile to think how in such work we forget our worries entirely. "So we don't really need to consider whether worry is a life prolonger or not; all we want to lengthen our days is to be poor, poor enough so that we have to work and keep plugging; but I do wonder that Glimmerby did not mention along with poverty and worry, as among the things that might tend to prolong life, our physical ailments."

"Some years ago a friend of mine began to lose weight and he kept on in that way until he had lost 25 pounds. Then he consulted a doctor. It was something that could be checked, controlled and perhaps entirely cured if the patient would follow faithfully the prescribed treatment; and then he was told that the general benefits he would derive from the treatment were such that his life might be prolonged to a greater limit than it would have reached if he had never had this ailment at all. "I might add that this friend has now recovered several of his lost pounds, he is feeling very chipper and cheerful and he fully expects to live to be a very old man."

"The fact is that many things that we may look at, when they come upon us, as drawbacks are in reality blessings in disguise."

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MUTT AND JEFF

OLD MUTT GOT THE SURPRISE OF HIS EVENTFUL LIFE.



—By Bud Fisher

Interesting

One hotelman, who spent at Uniontown, Pa., in a recent year, in his hotel, that they attract "bottle-gazers."

James D. Noe, weighing 325, lost 100 in a recent year, but couldn't get a gathering in the

There's only one air from growing, making short men, ph-like and that fine system. The statement of a man at a meeting of the Medical Society, which consists of still a secret from

A circus acrobat, declared legally dead, when he arrived there. He had not written that he had nothing

Ryder's Alley, one of the oldest, few New York stranger to.

"Marked back" in City Hall, recently, almost, the would-be game

"I'm stronger, you don't believe it," was the statement of a job when, the ad of "Strong

To St.

After have decided for the principal cause. It has Mayor the will be improved. I am done with a better newspaper my suggestion, they event, only, have pockets.

THE is a de storm, ing mo on the liquid trely, could pedest street cure". Street". Cordia taxpayer nov17.1

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