

Queer Capital City of British East Africa and Its Curious Inhabitants



BRIBING A BELLE TO POSSE.

(Copyright, 1907, by Frank G. Carpenter.) OMBASA. (Special Correspondence of The Bee.)—I have left the rocky desert of Arabia and am now on the island of Mombasa, East Africa, and just below the equator, where old Mother Earth is widest and thickest. If I should stick a pin in the old lady's waist and go westward in a straight line I would soon reach the upper end of Lake Tanganyika, and a little later would come out on the Atlantic just above the mouth of the Congo. Crossing that great ocean, my next landing place would be South America, at the mouth of the Amazon, and going up the Amazon valley I should pass Quito, in Ecuador, on my way to the Pacific. From there on the trip to the pin stuck in at Mombasa would comprise sixteen or more thousand miles of water travel. I should cross the Pacific and Indian oceans, and the only solid ground on the way would be the islands of New Guinea, Borneo and Sumatra.

East African Steamship Rates.
This place is far below the latitude of the Philippines, and is just about a day by ship north of Zanzibar. It is thirty days from New York, and yet it may be reached easily and cheaply. The through fare from the United States on the best steamers would not be over \$300, and there are boats from London that make the trip in twenty-one days, at a cost of \$250. The German East African line, which has vessels going around the whole continent of Africa, has a rate of \$200 from Hamburg to Mombasa, and the Austrian Lloyd has a service from Trieste which costs just \$25 less. In addition there are French boats that call here on their way from Marseille to Madagascar, and there are occasional steamers from Aden, and the Suez canal which are still cheaper.

My trip here was made on the German East African line, and the accommodations were fairly good. Our decks were covered with canvas, we had electrical fans in the cabins and other arrangements for modifying the heat of tropical travel. I bought my ticket to Mombasa, but afterward arranged with the captain, by the payment of a few dollars more, to make it read to Beira, in Portuguese East Africa, which is about two weeks south of here. This allows me to stop off at the ports and save more than \$50 in the passage money. The buying of through tickets with stop-overs is the best way to travel along this coast. The German East African line has boats every two or three weeks, and I shall not be delayed by the transaction.

Horn of East Africa.
Have you ever heard of the great Horn of Africa? It is the easternmost point of the continent and it ends in Cape Guardafui. It begins at the Strait of Bab-el-Mandeb and runs for seven or eight hundred miles out into the Indian ocean. It was along the Horn that I traveled in coming here. Leaving Aden we first skirted British Somaliland, a thinly populated desert country as big as Georgia, and then sailed for hundreds of miles along other deserts belonging to Italy. The Italian possessions begin some distance before one reaches Cape Guardafui. We went quite close to the cape and rounded it, starting south. It is a mighty bluff rising almost straight up from the blue waters of the Indian ocean. Its sides are of black rock, rugged and rugged, and its top is covered with sand. There is a sand at its foot, and the sand has lodged in the crevices, making yellow streaks along the black background. Beyond the cape extend sandy hills, which roll over one another until they are lost in the distance. The country all about is desert and neither trees, bushes, habitations nor animals are to be seen. The clouds hang low over the cape, and out at sea the air is as moist as country of Virginia in April. Going a little further on we rounded the Horn, and looked back. The great bluff had now assumed the outlines of a sleeping lion, with its tail in the sand. Later still the lion's head was lost, and there was only a rocky ridge rising like a fortification straight up from the sea.

They All Belong to Europe.
Sailing outward we steamed about a thousand miles along a dry and desert coast, before we reached the Juba river, where the British possessions begin. Italian Somaliland is about as big as Montana. It consists of a strip of desert as wide as from New York to Boston, and as long as from Philadelphia to Chicago. Its population is made up of nomadic Somalis and Gallas, tall, straight, black people, who live largely in tents and drive their flocks about from place to place to find pasture. As far as I can learn the country is practically worthless, and this is also true of Eritrea, on the Red sea. Italy's only other possession on the continent. She tried to get Abyssinia, but her soldiers were defeated by Menelik, and I am told she has now her eyes on Tripoli, which lies just over the way from Sicily.

At present, with the exception of Abyssinia, the whole of East Africa belongs to the great powers of Europe. Egypt and the Sudan, which are ten times as big as



VIEW OF MOMBASA—LAW COURTS AT THE RIGHT.

the state of Colorado, are practically controlled by the British, and the same is true of this great protectorate where I now am, which is more than ten times as big as the state of Ohio. A few miles below here, on the other side of the Rovuma river, German East Africa begins. That territory is ten times as big as Indiana. It runs several hundred miles along the coast, and below it is Portuguese East Africa, which is ten times the size of South Carolina. South Africa, an empire of itself, is a British possession, and John Bull has also great territories in the central part of the continent. With the exception of Italy and Portugal the powers are doing all they can to improve their territories, and many important development projects are under way which I shall describe during my travels.

Island of Mombasa.
I find Mombasa refreshing after my long stay in the desert. So far the most of my way through this continent has been in the sands, with only a patch of green now and then. I was close to the Sahara in Morocco and I traveled many hundreds of miles over it while in Algeria and Tunisia. In Tripoli my eyes were made sore by the glare of the Libyan wastes and their dust blow across the Nile valley during my stay in Egypt and the British Sudan. The Arabian desert was on both sides of us as we came down the Red sea, and its sands several times sprinkled the ship. We had the roughest of all deserts in southern Arabia and that of Italian Somaliland was not any better.
The surroundings here remind me of Solomon's song. All nature seems joyful. The rain has conquered the sun and there are moss, vines and trees everywhere. The shores of the mainland are bordered with coconuts, we have on Mombasa mighty baobabs loaded with green, and even its cliffs are moss grown.
This island is, in fact, a jungle of green on a foundation of coral. It is only a mile or so wide and four miles in length, but it rises well up out of the sea and is so close to the continent that one can almost hear the wind blow through the coconut groves over the way. On the island itself the jungle has been cut up into wide roads. There is a lively town with a polygot population at one end of it, and the hills are spotted with the homes of the British officials. There are two good harbors, a little one and a big one. The little one is in the main part of the town and is frequented by small craft. The other could hold all the ships that sail the east coast and the people say here it is to be the great port of this side of the continent. The big harbor is called Kilindini, a word that means "deep-water." It has only a few warehouse sheds and a pier above it, and the main settlements are across the island four miles away.
It was in Kilindini that I landed and that under difficulties. Our ship was anchored far out and our baggage was taken on shore in native boats. I found the main quay crowded, and had my boatman go direct to the custom house and let us out on the beach. The custom house is a little shed about big enough for one cow. It is situated high up above the water, and our trunks had to be carried in upon the heads of the negroes. The water came up to their middles, but nevertheless they waded through it and took both us and our baggage to the land. The customs examination was lenient. The officers looked through our trunks for guns and ammunition and warned us that we could not hunt elephants and hippopotami without a \$250 license. A little later the negroes again took our trunks and carried them about a quarter of a mile to the top of a hill, where we got the cars for Mombasa.
The word cars savors of electricity or



GIRL GETTING HER HAIR DRESSED.

steam. The cars I took were run by men. Here in East Africa human muscle forms the cheapest power. The wages of the natives run from 5 cents a day upward, and in the interior there are many who will work all day for 3 cents. The result is that the trolley cars are pulled by men. Each consists of a platform about as big as a kitchen table, with wheels underneath and an awning overhead. On the middle of the platform is a bench accommodating two or four persons. The wheels run on a track about two feet in width, and each car is pushed from behind by one or more bare-legged and bare-headed men, who run as they shove it up hill and down. There are such car tracks all over the island, with switches to the homes of the various officials. There are private cars as well as public ones, and everyone who is anyone has his own private car with his coolies to push him to and from work. At the beginning and closing of his office hours, which are from 8 until 12 and from 2 until 4, the tracks are filled with these little cars, each having one or more officials riding in state to the government buildings.

Real Estate Boom May Overthrow Lucca's Walls

ROME, Jan. 8.—Destruction threatens the walls of Lucca, once deemed an impregnable defense. Destruction threatens the walls of Rome, which have defied the assaults of time and barbarians.

The walls of Lucca took a century to build, from 1044 to 1066, a score of the most celebrated engineers of the time directed the construction, and they cost 1,000,000 scudi. The best artillery was used to test their strength and solidity, and after each trial they were altered and partly rebuilt, until they were rendered perfectly impregnable, and such they were admitted to be by the celebrated Vauban.

Naturally as a modern fortification the walls of Lucca are useless, but as they have remained intact for about three centuries one might suppose that no effort would be spared for their future careful preservation. Yet, these old historic walls, which form the chief attraction of Lucca today, seem now doomed to disappear, and even if saved from being pulled down altogether, they will gradually be reduced to ruins.

The municipality of Lucca proposed in 1906 to open a breach in the walls for the passage of a tramway line. The inhabitants of modern Italian towns are in the habit of disregarding everything relating to the past, provided that by so doing they are enabled to obtain what they call modern improvements. Lucca is a small and sleepy place, and tramways would be entirely out of place in it. Still as larger towns had tramways Lucca wanted a tramway, too.

The question became one of national prominence. The ministry of public instruction opposed the proposal to make a

breach in the walls; the municipality protested that the walls were the property of the city and hence the people were at liberty to do as they pleased. Carducci, the poet; Puccioni, the composer, who is a native of Lucca; Rom, Pascoli and other men prominent in literature, archaeology and art, added their opposition to that of the government and the walls were saved. Only for a short time, however. The desire to have a tramway has evidently been forgotten by the good people of Lucca, but not that to rip open their old walls. Instead of a tramway the time it is a suburb and instead of a breach a gate is demanded.

The suburb is called Sant' Anna and consists of a few farm houses. Its inhabitants do not exceed a couple of thousands, but it is held by the municipal authorities that they would increase and the suburb would become an industrial center were the distance between it and the town diminished. The walls are in the way, of course, so the municipality proposes to

open a gate, a new gate only two hundred yards away from the old one of San Donato, and thus afford a short cut to the inhabitants of Sant' Anna.

It has been pointed out that as the new gate will be further away from the market in all probability the old existing one will continue to be preferred, but that does not seem to matter. The government opposes the project, prominent men are writing against it, but the municipality of Lucca insists on the new gate.

One fine day the gate will be opened, other gates leading to equally insignificant suburbs and hamlets will follow, and in all probability the old existing one will continue to be preferred, but that does not seem to matter. The government opposes the project, prominent men are writing against it, but the municipality of Lucca insists on the new gate.

Lucca has got the example to Rome, where the new popular and democratic municipality, led by a man of roving life and composed of socialists and republicans, few of whom are genuine Roman citizens, is eager to destroy the old in order to make room for the modern. The remains of the walls of Rome, murt urbia, which are erected in seven successive periods, by kings, emperors and popes, to fortify the city are now doomed to disappear. The walls were carefully preserved even in the darkest periods of the middle ages.

It is proposed to pull down the walls of Aurelian, between the Porta Pinciana or Belisarda, built by and named after the Byzantine general and the scene of his exploits during his defense of the city against the Goths in 537, and the Porta Salaria of Honorius, injured by the Italian bombardment of September 20, 1870, and rebuilt in modern style by Veispignani. Here the walls are in good preservation and the only perfect tower is found out of the 281 originally in the circuit.

The reason assigned for the destruction is the need of a suburb outside the wall and of several hotels, modern flats and tenement houses within, in the Ludovical or high quarter. In Rome, unlike Lucca, it is not intended to open breaches or new gates, but to pull down the walls outright. The cross streets of the Ludovical quarter, mathematically exact, perfectly straight and parallel to one another and at right angles to the main avenues, as modern streets should be, are now blocked at one end by the old walls. So walls must be

out to afford them an outlet and not to spoil the symmetry of the model modern quarter. The inhabitants of the suburb can now enter the city through the two gates, which are hardly half a mile apart, but it is intended to afford them the facility of as many entrances as there are streets within the walls. The value of the land will increase, new buildings will rise up and Rome, "la Terra Roma," the third Rome as modern Italians love to call the capital of united Italy, to distinguish it from the first Rome of the past and the second Rome of Christianity, will be further modernized as befits the chief town of a new kingdom.

There are too many ruins and ancient monuments in the city, the progressive municipality says, and some of them must disappear. The Ministry of Public Instruction and Fine Arts and the Archaeological commission, which forms one of its departments, oppose the demolition, but their opposition is half-hearted. The walls belong to the municipality, but the state claims a right on them owing to the fact that they are considered national monuments, but state and city decline to shoulder the necessary expense of keeping them in repair.

Old Mombasa.
I wish I could show you this old town of Mombasa. It began before Columbus discovered America, and the citizens can show you the very spot where Vasco da Gama landed when he came here from India, shortly after he discovered the new route to Asia by the Cape of Good Hope. He landed here in 1498 at just about the time that Columbus was making his third voyage to America. Even then Mombasa was a city and da Gama describes it. A little later it became the property of the Portuguese, about 160 years after that time they built a fort here, part of which still stands. It has been rebuilt and is now used by the British as a prison. After the Portuguese were driven out, the Arabs held the island for many years, and it was an Arab ruler, the sultan of Zanzibar, who owned it when the British came in. It still belongs to him in a nominal way. He has leased it to the British for so much a year, and his flag floats above the British flag everywhere on the island.

Capital of British East Africa.
Notwithstanding this lease, Mombasa really belongs to the British, and the British can force the sultan to give them a clear title to it. This is what the Germans have done as to German East Africa, and what the British will probably do at some time in the future.
As it is now, the place is the capital of British East Africa. It has the chief government buildings, including the treasury and law courts and the state's prison as well. The town has now about 40,000 people, and of these less than 200, perhaps, are Europeans. There are altogether about a half dozen different settlements, each inhabited by a different class of Asiatics or Africans. There is an Asiatic mercantile quarter, a residence quarter, a large Swahili village and a business street, which is almost European in character. There are two hotels which claim to be first class, an English club, the Bank of British India and quite a number of respectable stores. The native people of the city are of all shades of yellow, black and brown, and they come from every part of the African coast.

Some Queer Asiatics.
But first let me give you some idea of the Asiatics who have come here from Arabia and East India. The Arabs wear turbans and gowns and constitute an important element of the community. They were formerly slave traders, and until the British took their claim to be first class, Indian women were to be seen everywhere, and some of them, the wives of Mohammedans, go about clad in yellow from head to foot. I saw two women on my way across the island who were apparently moving without seeing at all. Their yellow dresses were fitted over padded skull caps, covering the head and face and falling clear to the ground. I could not see how the women could make their way along without stumbling until I observed a little veil about the size of two postage stamps sewed over a hole in front of the eyes. These women never go on the street except when so clad, and they are the strictest of the Mohammedans.

African Village.
The most of the population of Mombasa is African. There are people here from all parts of the interior, some of them as black as jet, with a scattering few who are chocolate brown or yellow. These natives live in huts off by themselves, adjoining the European and Asiatic quarters, and comprise a large village. Their houses are of mud plastered upon a framework of poles and thatched with straw. The poles are put together without nails. There is not a piece of iron in any of them, except on the roof, where here and there a hole has been patched with a rusty Standard Oil can. Very few of the huts are so low that one has to stoop to enter them. They are so small that the beds are usually left outside the house during

Walls Outside St. Paul's Cathedral.
The walls outside St. Paul's Cathedral in Rome, showing the main gate, Porta S. Pietro, and portion of Lucca's walls.

Walls of Aurelian Rome.
The walls of Aurelian Rome, showing the main gate, Porta S. Pietro, and portion of Lucca's walls.

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