

# Basel Mission Archives

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"Stanger's Report for the Second Quarter of 1854"

**Title:** "Stanger's Report for the Second Quarter of 1854"

**Ref. number:** D-01.05.II..18

**Date:** Proper date: August 1854

**Description:** In the introductory paragraph he writes that although he had had it in mind to write about the culture, he had not thought that it was a very important matter until recently when he has had to do with the recently baptised people at Damfa. Now he has seen that to the development of the community agriculture is central. He reports that the people are back on the farming villages and very busy. The main part of the report is a detailed account of the Danish road to Sesami, along which he says plantation produce was carried by asses, horses, and oxen. Little is left of the enterprise but the straight line of the road, and a half rotted wagon still standing just outside the Fort. From Osu the road lands up onto a small hill called Friedrichsburg, and on each side are small fields of maize, stockyams, groundnuth and earth beans. They are hedged with cactus to protect them from cattle. On the hill are two houses built by the Danes. Before the house were built there were extensive Danish gardens up here, but these were reduced and the houses built once the produce was being brought from inland by draught animals. The English government has neglected house and gardens. The road to Legon is rather monotonous, leading through wide valleys and over small hills - here and there are unfenced fields with crops, with a watchmans hut in each. Nearer Legon the vegetation is higher, and the trees more sturdy partly because it rains more, bit more because this far from Accra the trees are not exploited for firewood (Though the mission sends out here for firewood). A quarter of an hour before Legon is the first significant settlement - Dokutso, somewhat on the right of the course of the road. Legon itself lies somewhat to the left of the road in a valley. Yams and corn are planted here successfully, because of the greater rain and the better soil. On the east side of Legon, and also to the right of the road there is a fairly high hill on which grow only low grass and a few trees. If you go up there after living in Osu or Abokobi, it is just like going up the Feldberg from Basel. You breathe so easily, and there is such a pleasant breeze, that one's the thoughts turn straight away to setting up a small house here. A Danish official had had this idea - he was called here Herr Schönning, and Brother Dieterle had made the drawings, but Schönning was recalled and the idea lapsed. From Legon the road went to Sasami - the Danish government-plantation, where the government house welcomed you with its white walls (he describes a house set up on the lines of a modern rest-house, to which one could go and buy food). This used as the Basel Mission resting-place on the journey to Akwapim before Abokobi was bought. It had a covered gallery from which one could admire the government coffee, orange, lemon, plantations and the bamboos. The plantation was the pride of-the Danes and of 'the local people who worked on it, but when Stanger visited it recently it was in ruins, and the plantation had reverted to bush. Nowadays when you travel from Legon to Ahokobi you are constantly

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meeting people, because this is the great road of commerce from Akin and Akropong to the sea, uncounted loads of farm products going south, esp. palm oil, and a new commodity this year, called oke in the vernacular, and Firnis (varnish) by the Europeans. This is also a very vigorous farming area, although to the passer-by it would look more like a wood, since areas which have been farmed go back to woodland in a very few years. In Abokobi he found farming activities going forward - land was being cleared of trees and there was a good crop of limes. Wood was being burnt just because it was in the way. Stanger suggests that a non-missionary European, though a Christian, should be encouraged to come out to run a business based on wagon-transportation of produce etc from the farms to the coastal towns. He reports the Christians in Abokobi and Damfa are very willing to learn about farming, but have to be shown how to do everything out of the ordinary like planting coffee or tobacco. (The bulk of this report is published in HEIDENBOTE pp.15-17, 1855.)

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