

Basel Mission Archives

"Ramseyer to Basel"

Title: "Ramseyer to Basel"

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Description: Attempting an etymology for Abetifi, he reckons it is not derived from abe + tifi to mean 'palm-summit', but from abotan (sometimes shortened abo) + tifi, meaning rocky summit. You can still meet older people who use the first (earlier) name (it's not clear whether he means 'abotantifi' or 'abotifi'). The rest of the letter is a description of the station - on the path towards the station which the missionaries had cleared to 6'-7' the Abetifi graveyard is on the right - the monkeys in the nearby patch of fetish wood have noticed that they are not troubled in that place and to live there. There are three different species, the largest and most handsome is black with long hair, a white beard and a white tail. Concerning the station itself perhaps the most interesting is the description of the husbandry and gardening - the cows go about with bells in the Swiss style - they are not tended and this helps to have them brought in at night. In the garden (north of the mission house) are carnations, Spanish cress, balsam, zinnia, cabbages, beans lettuce, spinach, onions, cucumbers, and a few vine cuttings - though they are pessimistic about the chances of the latter. From his description here (as in the sketch in Heidenbote) - the old missionary path to the station is approximately along the line of the present surfaced road. The dimensions of the mission house (excluding verandas) are given as 82x16' - there are four rooms on each floor. In the final paragraph he adds that a few days before a chief from the town whom the youngmen especially suspected of poisoning fled to the station because the young men wanted to kill him. As far as they can discover on the station he is really innocent, and no longer in danger of his life. However, there is a fine to pay, and the man is still living in the catechist's house. Ramseyer says it is according to the Kwahu and Asante custom that you take in someone fleeing in this way.

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