

Basel Mission Archives

"Tschopp to Basel"

Title: "Tschopp to Basel"

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Description: Describing the clothing in which Christians attend street-preaching. One was barefoot, bare-headed wearing only a blue and white striped cloth from Selaga, another wore a length of European cloth and a European hat: another wore with his cloth a straw cap from Lagos and a pair of sandals from Salaga or here, another wore trousers, jacket, coat, hat and shoes (although no socks or shirt) and had an umbrella, another with another selection of European clothes. Tschopp remarks that the way into Abetifi leads past some half-finished huts that were being put up at the time of the visit of Inspector Praetorius. There are 'several' coffee plantations fruiting twice yearly. He describes the prohibition against shooting the apes along the path into the town as connected with the fact that it is near a cemetery. The Dente shrine has been re-roofed and whitewashed recently. Describing the scene at street-preaching he says you see 'several' men weaving down an alley-way, and while some houses are broken down, others have sleeping quarters with only three walls (a palm-leaf woven fence serves for the 4th wall at night); some have no window openings at all; there are some neatly painted with white earth outside, and red earth inside, with window shutters, and carpentered doors. Judging by his emphasis on the numbers of people working although it was Sunday he lay a lot of emphasis on the correct observance of Sunday. One of the forms of seating for people listening to the street preaching were two elephants' jaw-bones. Painting of parts of the body seems to have been fairly common - children had blue red or white stripes on their faces or the upper parts of their bodies, apparently as decoration; adults wore red rid stripes on their breast or shoulder as signs of mourning; children were entirely covered with white for decoration but for some religious purpose. Children were to be seen wearing leather amulets around their necks, and especially the small ones had their hair full of all manner of cowries and other things as a protection against accidents and ill-luck. Clearly the quiet which was a notable part of street-preaching in Kwahu did not extent to the whole environment. He reports a varied respons to the preaching - some are still firmly convinced that their fetishes are real, others are sceptical and believe that what the missionaries say is the truth. In September they passed, after street preaching, a party sacrificing to Dente. Tschopp reports the petitions as including one against useless work, for strength and success in hunting, health. Upon the missionaries striking up conversation with the people they expressed a variety of reactions, including the suggestion that the missionaries should leave everyone to follow his own god, and they should leave the old people alone - they can have the children.

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