

Basel Mission Archives

"Ramseyer's Report for the Year 1897"

Title: "Ramseyer's Report for the Year 1897"

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Description: In several months the new mission house should be habitable. They are building it mostly with the help of craftsmen who are only apprentices. The future garden is marked by piles of black earth and they plan a coffee plantation. The most obvious sign of progress is in their Asante schools. Altogether the number of pupils has increased from 90 to 311, and by and large though the mothers were suspicious of schools before, now they are getting more in favour of them, and ask the missionaries to see that their children are brought up good. In Kumasi the figure at the end of the year was 63, of whom 38 were Kumasi children. The top class is already reading well, and the pupils write letters to each other. They are lodging on the station - the teachers are Catechist Adayi and Teacher Okraku. There are 24 slave children remaining - at least 14 are 'girls and small children', at least 4 boys of an age to live in the school with the others. They are all now healthy, though in the school somewhat backward through having to learn Twi. With the adult slave-women comparatively little progress has been made - they have had many sad experiences with them, the nearby Hausa quarter exerts a great attraction, and they do not attend services unless constantly encouraged. Admittedly few speak Twi and the missionaries still have to use the girl Yaa as interpreter. On Christmas Day the first Kumasi baptisms were celebrated - 2 young men in their early twenties from a nearby village, an old lady who had been a sort of slave of an Asante under-chief, but had lived for a long time with her son in Akwapim, coming back to Kumasi when she heard that the missionaries were there, and has attached herself to the station with a large-part of her family. (NB the son was a Christian). They would have baptised a wife of one of the young men, but she was backward in the baptismal instruction, and her family situation was not very favourable. The first Asante baptisms had already taken place in Kumawu, where they had been warmly pressed to send a teacher by the chief, and where D. Aboagye now has 32 pupils. Three young men had been baptised there in early December. Ramseyer was very impressed with their answers at his examination, they seemed already to be speaking out of inner experiences. Aboagye warned against baptising the wife of one of them - she was somewhat quarrelsome, had only recently moved onto mission land and should be given a further trial period. She accepted this warning quietly. The mission has land in Kuwawu, Mampong, Agona, and Brodeko. The catechist who was stationed in Affidwase has been transferred to Asokorte, where he was immediately able to increase the number of pupils in the School by 201 Christmas, with a decorated tree, and presents from various Swiss bodies, was a major event. In *Le Missionnaire* 1897 pp28-30 is a letter dd. 12 January 1898 from Mrs Ramseyer concerning the ex-slaves and the celebration of Christmas.

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