

# QUEER CAPITAL OF BRITISH EAST AFRICA

## Europe is Swallowing the Continent Inhabited by a Very Curious People



"I GAVE HER A FEW COPPERS TO POSE"



A SWAHILI HUT. THE HOUSES ARE OF MUD, THATCHED WITH STRAW

BY FRANK G. CARPENTER.

HAVE left the rocky desert of Arabia and am now on the Island of Mombasa, half way down the coast of 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 15 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 30 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 21 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 \$300 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 Marseilles 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. 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 21 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 \$300 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 Marseilles to Madagascar, and there are occasional steamers from Aden and the Suez canal which are still cheaper.

### The Horn of East Africa.

Have you ever heard of the great Horn of Africa? It is in the easternmost point of the continent and it ends in Cape Guardafui. It begins at the Strait of Bab-el-Mandeb and runs for 700 or 800 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 thin, populated desert

country as big as Georgia, and then sailed for hundreds of miles along desert hills 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, ragged and rugged, and its top is covered with sand. There is sand at its foot, and the sand has lodged in the crevices, making yellow streaks against 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 that of Virginia in April. Going a little further on we rounded the horn, and looked back. The great bluff had now assumed the outline of a sleeping lion, with its tail in the sand. Later still the lion's head was lost, and there was only a great rock rising like a fortification straight up from the sea.

### They All Belong to Europe.

Sailing southward we steamed about a thousand miles along a dry and desert coast, before we reached the Jubu 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 Britera, 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 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.

### The 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 blew 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 cocoanuts, we have on Mombasa, mighty baobabs loaded with green and even its cliffs are moss grown.

The 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 polyglot 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 the main port of the island, and is frequented by small craft. The other could hold all the ships that sail the east coast and the people say here 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 ungodly difficulties. Our ship was anchored far out, and our baggage was taken ashore in native boats. I found the main quay was 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 custom ex- aminations was lenient. The officers looked through our trunks for guns and ammunition and warned us that we could not hunt elephants and hipopotams without a \$50 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.

### A HUMAN TROLLEY.

The word cars savors of electricity or 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 five cents a day upward, and in the interior there are many who will work all day for three 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 every one who is any one 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.

### 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 1482 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 and about 160 years after that time they built a fort here, a 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.

### The Capital of British East Africa.

Notwithstanding this lease, Mombasa really belongs to the British, and the British can force the sultan at any time 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 the British East Africa. It has the chief government buildings, including the treasury, the 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 hold and built the Uganda Railway they did a big business in taking ivory down from Lake Victoria and other parts of Central Africa on the heads of slaves, selling both slaves and ivory here at Mombasa. This business has all been done away with, and the ivory now comes in on the railway.

As to the East Indians, they are mostly retail merchants and traders. There are Parsians with tall hats, Hindus in white sheets and other East Indians who wear little round gold caps, gay vests and calico trousers. Indian women are 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.

### The 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 up with a rusty Standard Oil can. Very few of the huts are more than eight feet high and some 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 the daytime, and the majority of each family sleep on the floor.

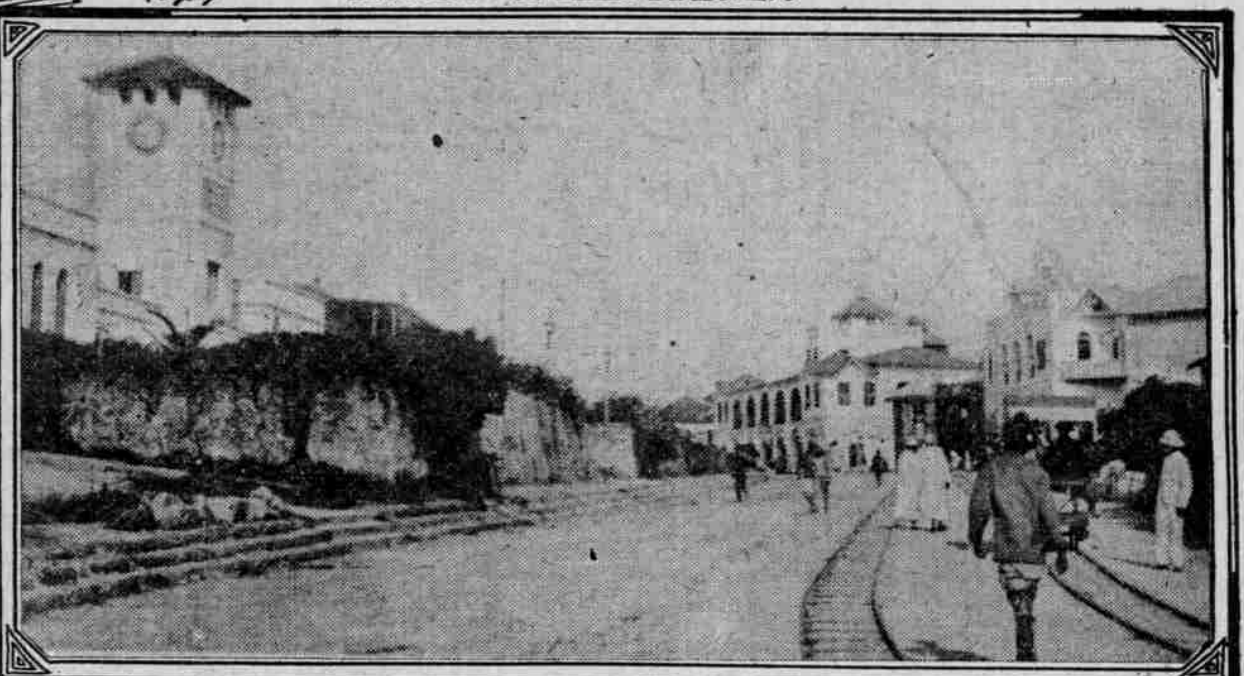
### Among the Swahilis.

I find this African village the most interesting part of Mombasa. Its inhabitants number 20,000 or more and they comprise natives of perhaps 100 tribes, each of which has its own dress and its own customs. The most of the women are bareheaded, bareshouldered and to a large extent barelegged, and some of the men are clad in little more than breechcloths. Now and then one sees a girl bare to the waist, and the little ones wear only jewelry. On the mainland all go more or less naked.

The most numerous of the natives here are the Swahilis. These are of a mixed breed which is found all along the central coast of East Africa. It is said to have some Arab blood in it, and for this reason perhaps its people are brighter and more businesslike than the ordinary native. The Swahilis



"I TOOK A SNAP-SHOT OF TWO GIRLS UNDERGOING THE PROCESS OF HAIR-DRESSING"



VIEW OF MOMBASA. LAW COURTS AT THE RIGHT

are found everywhere. They have little settlements in the interior in the midst of other tribes, and the Swahili language will carry one through the greater part of Central and East Africa. The British officials are required to learn it; and one can buy Swahili dictionaries and phrase books. I shall take a Swahili guide with me during most of my journey, or rather a black Swahili boy, who will act as a servant and also a guide.

I wish I could show you a picture of the Swahili women as I see them here. Their skins are of a rich chocolate brown and they shine as though oiled. They have woolly hair, but they comb it in a most extraordinary way, using a razor to shave out partings between the rows of plaited locks, so that when the hair is properly dressed the woman seems to have on a hood of black wool. I took a snapshot of two girls who were undergoing the process of hair dressing yesterday, and the girl looked at me out of the tall of her eye and smiled.

A single twist under the armpits, might slip. A little further on Jack made a photograph of another giddy maiden clad in two strips of bright-colored calico and numerous earrings, while I gave her a few coppers to pose for the picture.

At the same time on the opposite side of the street stood a black girl gorgeous with jewelry. She had a brass ring as big as the bottom of a dinner bucket in her nose, and her ears had holes in their lobes so big that a hen's egg could be put through them without trouble. Not only the lobes, but the rims were also punctured, each ear having five little holes around the edges of about the size of my little finger. These holes were filled with rolls of bright-colored paper cut off so smoothly that they seemed almost a part of the ear. The paper was of red, green and blue and it looked very quaint. As I started on, the girl looked at me out of the tall of her eye and smiled.

## Bookbinding Present-Day Craze

OF all the fads which the American girl has taken up within the last few years, that of bookbinding is the most interesting, as well as being for many besides the most worth while. Nor is it exactly fair to call this book-binding a fad, for a large majority of those who have gone into it have kept conscientiously at the work throughout the necessary winter's course, and have also kept up their enthusiasm to no small extent afterward, while, contrary to most fads, this one has already survived three or four years, and there is no abating in interest among those who have really gone hard to work at the profession. Nor is book-binding easy work—far from it in fact—for in order to succeed one must work conscientiously many hours a week, and the work is both difficult and fatiguing.

If a girl is possessed of any talent for drawing or designing, bookbinding is a delightful work, as it calls for all the originality and individuality of which she is capable. Naturally, anyone at all interested in the best in literature and art will find the work all-absorbing, for in no other way is it possible to come into such personal touch with an author as in the selecting of a design for the cover of a book or in originating chapter headings that will be in keeping with the story.

From a financial point of view also there is much in favor of learning the art of bookbinding. Many girls, while possessed of a fairly comfortable income, would still like to feel that should anything dire occur they would be capable of earning a livelihood, and bookbinding is a real and recognized profession that, once learned, could at any time be turned to account. There is really more to be made in getting up a class in bookbinding than in the actual work itself, for a book to be well bound by hand requires some weeks of steady and patient labor, but for a rare

old edition a good price will be paid, and for a handsomely bound collection of the works of a long-familiar author, a most satisfactory sum can always be obtained.

To learn the art well at least an entire winter must be pretty well given up, and at the end of that time a girl with the least enthusiasm will invest in her own implements, and these are by no means few, set apart a room in her home, and go at the work in earnest, binding old volumes for herself, and making gifts for her friends, or, if she is at all hard up, she will turn out editions for sale.

If it appeals at all bookbinding is a fascinating occupation, and as a profession is assuredly far and away more interesting than the average means of earning one's daily bread, and for this very reason has it grown so tremendously popular among girls who, although at present possessed of all that money can buy, nevertheless feel that they would like to have something upon which to fall back.

Are They?  
New York Times.  
I have an income, safe and sound,  
A house, a yard or two of ground,  
An healthy, temperate (fairly so),  
I should be happy here below,  
No doubt I am. But am I?  
I've pals of various sorts who treat  
Not very many weeks ahead,  
She vows that when I am oppressed  
With goblin, spook, or banshee,  
He'll take my head upon her breast,  
And drive them off. But can she?  
There is a girl I mean to wed  
Not very many weeks ahead,  
To hear the hopeful parson talk:  
He says, to gild the colour dim,  
Which cloud our earthly bliss,  
That Fate will furnish her fun  
In Kingdom Come. But will he?