

1830

At the Village of Godome (Africa)

Friday July 23 Cloudy and rain the first part of the day. Don Andres and myself within doors, and making our habitation in order. Had a table made in the same manner as the bedstead was formed. Went to the woods hunting in the afternoon but took no game. Don Francisco went to Whidah.

Saturday 24 Captains Fein and Ambas went on board their vessel.

Sunday 25 At 3 P. Don Andres went to Whidah and there is now no one white here except Don Romauldo & myself.

Monday 26 Wrote my father, the letter to go to Whidah, and from thence to Barbadoes to Prince's Island, to be forwarded by the first vessel for the United States.

Tuesday 27 Capt. Ambas returned. My idle time has been employed in reading, Darwin (Durward), and Wood.

Wednesday 28 Don Romauldo and myself have been to the woods to hunt. Saw some monkeys but they were too cunning for us, and we got nothing but a few small birds.

Thursday 29 Employed myself in cutting and making a pair of pantaloons which to me is a new trade, but as the cloth is found for me & necessity being the mother of invention I have no doubt through patience and perseverance I shall succeed in making them so as to be serviceable.

Friday 30 Part of this day employed on my pantaloons, and spent in reading Scott's Life of Napoleon Bonaparte.

Saturday 31 Employed the same as yesterday and finished my pantaloons, which fit very well, and wasted no cloth.

Sunday August 1st For the week past the weather has been cool though to be comfortable and quite pleasant. I have now formed something of a regular plan as regards myself. I generally arise about sunrise and take a walk a mile or two from the village and return and breakfast at 8 past 2. Then work or read until the dinner hour which is 1 P.M. Return to the forenoon occupation to continue until 4 or 5 P.M. Spend the time until supper, which is about 7 P.M. in sitting with the other gentlemen conversing in some cool place, and after supper reading the histories.

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Tuesday 1st August This day has been what they call a great Fatish day. Their religion is in what they call a good and bad Fatish, being the same as a Good & Evil Spirit. Their Priests or Priestesses are some elderly negroes who devote their whole time to the service of the temple. These they look upon, as being sent by the good fatish, and whatever they say, is implicitly to be followed. Their temples are in enclosed spots of ground, being more constructed open hut, and in them are placed bits of broken earthenware, with grains of some sort and drops of blood from different birds. Also these things are often placed in the paths, which no one must touch, but step over or walk aside from them. When the Priestess walks over the village she is dressed with all colors of fanciful cloths, wrapped round her, and being the most predominant, and attended by two others fancifully attired, their heads bare, and she as grey-headed as a mouse, day and shiver blue up, appearing to my imagination, the idea I always formed of the witch of Endor. Whenever she meets any of her people they halloo, striking their mouth three times, then fall on their knees bowing and kissing the ground, when she goes to them, and lays her hand on their heads, muttering some unintelligible words, when they arise with cheerful countenances.

In the afternoon they turned too, with about one hundred more, dancing and working their bodies into all manner of shapes, around a large tree near their temple, to the sound of a hollow log covered with sheepskin, and kind of whistle and striking on a hollow piece of wood.

At sundown they repaired to the temple to the customary dance. Wednesday 2nd The negroes still keeping Fatish, which is a sort of holiday to the village. While I was looking at the dance around the tree, in company with Don Romauldo, a snake about 3 1/2 feet long dropped from the tree in the path of their dancing, which he saw and killed, and the negroes took it to the temple. Received a pair of shoes, sent from Whidah by Don Andres.