

The life of Mary Kingsley

Mary Kingsley was born in London in 1862.

Mary's father George let his boys go to school, but he only let Mary learn German. This was so she could help him read his books about plants.

She had to learn everything else by herself from books. She loved books about explorers. Mary also studied medicine.

Mary looked after her parents when they were sick. When she was 30 they had both died. Then she was free to travel to West Africa. She wanted to know what Africa was really like. Mary helped people and saved some baby twins.



Mary was not happy because people from Britain tried to make people in Africa change the way they lived. She said they must respect African culture.

At that time, women did not travel alone. Lots of men and women said to her, "Where is your husband?"

Mary loved looking for animals too. Once, she fell into a trap full of spikes. Fortunately, her thick skirts stopped her getting hurt!

When she got back from Africa, Mary wrote a book about her travels. This made her famous, and she went all over England to tell people about Africa.

Mary Kingsley died in 1900. She was only 37 years old.

Questions:

1. When was Mary Kingsley born?
2. Which continent did she want to explore?
3. What saved her from getting hurt by the dangerous trap?
4. How did people find out about Mary's adventures?

Challenge: Imagine you are Mary. You really want to go to school like your brothers. Write a note to your dad to *persuade* him to let you go too.