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NUPE AND ILORIN.*

By SEYMOUR VANDELEUR, D.S.O., Lieut. Scots Guards.

I HAD so recently the honour of addressing the Royal Geographical Society on a very different part of Africa, that I feel rather diffident in speaking now about a country of which I have had such a short if varied experience, and my excuse must be that I have been induced to do so by others. It will be difficult to eliminate entirely the military from the geographical aspect of the journey, and I am afraid my attention was quite as much taken up with the former as with the latter.

After a long and tedious journey along the west coast of Africa, I arrived with other special service officers on December 26, 1896, at Forcados, in the delta of the Niger, a place which up to that time had been beyond the scope of most people's geographical knowledge, but was soon afterwards to become widely known as the starting-point of the Benin expedition. Here we were met by Mr. Flint, the energetic agent-general of the Royal Niger Company, who is in charge of all the lower part of the river, and were rapidly taken up in his launch to Lokoja. The lower Niger is too well known to need any description by me, and it will be enough to say that on the second day we left the Forcados branch of the Niger, and entered the main river, up which we steamed for another three days before reaching Lokoja, 300 miles from the mouth. The scenery on approaching this place is very fine, and the river winds through high hills of curious shapes, which is a relief after the flat and uninteresting scenery of the lower river. It was a busy scene here, as preparations were being rapidly made for the forthcoming expedition.

* Read at the Royal Geographical Society, May 31, 1897. Map, p. 464.
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Whilst at Lokoja I went down to the chief Abbega's house to see a dance by various tribes, and it was really as curious a performance as one could wish to see. Women, supposed to be possessed of the devil, jumped up into the air, and then came down in a sitting posture, which was meant to squash the devil. The women who did this were usually old and unwieldy, but they repeated it several times, although it must have occasioned them a good deal of pain. Some men made an iron red hot, and then rubbed their feet along it, one even licking it with his tongue, and one could hear the hissing of the burning flesh. The natives are mostly Mohammedans, and what astonished me particularly, after coming from the East Coast, was the enormous amount of cloth which is worn by the people of these parts.

A great deal of work had to be done in getting the instruments ready and rating the chronometers, and on the day before starting I went up to the top of Mount Pati, a high table mountain lying close behind Lokoja, and 1400 feet above the sea. There is a fine view from here over the confluence of the rivers Benue and Niger, where at this time of year a large extent of sandbank is uncovered, but it was spoilt by the Harmattan wind. This wind, bringing with it minute particles of sand from the Sahara, which obscure the atmosphere, is a perfect curse to the geographer, although it may be the means of keeping off some of the hot rays of the sun. Hills not far distant appear dim and indefinite as in a London fog, and it is impossible to select any point on which to take a bearing.

Everything being organized, we marched out of Lokoja on Wednesday, January 6. A long line it was, with about nine hundred carriers and five hundred soldiers, all in single file, and the column must have extended for over two miles. Threading our way through the town, we passed the magazine fort, and marched in a northerly direction, with the river Niger close to our right and a high range of hills to our left. These hills form a series of buttresses jutting out at regular intervals towards the river, and are divided by streams or rivulets, which make their way down through narrow valleys from the high ground of the interior. It was up one of these valleys we turned in a north-westerly direction after going for two miles, and made our camp at Felela Busa. As might be expected with such a large caravan, starting was not at all *couleur de rose*, and many loads had to be repacked and readjusted. Three hundred of the porters were drawn from the coast, among them being Fantis, Ashantis, and natives from Accra and Lagos; the remaining six hundred being Hausas and Yorubas drawn from the country itself, and the latter were far and away the best and strongest. They struck me as being much better clothed than the East Coast porter, though one could not say this at the end of the expedition, as they had literally lost or sold nearly all their clothes. They were much quieter on the march than the porters of the east, and did not sing like them.

Pursuing the same direction, we came to the small village of Emu on the morning of the 8th, after crossing the small river Gadwanga, and the hills still loomed up in the mist on each side of us. The country, covered with grass 3 feet high and low trees, was very dry and burnt up, and it was a relief to see green palm trees on the banks of the stream, along the course of which we continued for the rest of the day. We camped under a high hill, on the top of which lies the village of Jakuro, which we reached the next morning, situated among a lot of rocks, and shaded by magnificent trees. The houses built by the people here are made of mud and wattle in an oblong shape, with

MARCH TO KABBA.

(From a photograph by Dr. Craster.)

thatched roofs, and around the village were small fields of dhurra. The country now became more hilly and undulating, and we made our way by a rocky path sometimes along narrow ridges, and up and down steep declivities, with always the same arid and barren aspect on all sides. There were no shady trees to keep off the rays of the sun, which was very hot in the middle of the day, and as we ascended to the high ground, the difference of temperature became very marked, the minimum for this day being 59° , and the temperature even at 4 p.m., with a swing thermometer, being 94° . We had ascended a great deal since leaving the Niger, and were already at a height of 1000 feet above the sea. Our camp near the village of Akpara, on the 11th inst., was one of our highest points, by boiling-point 1480 feet above the sea, and

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it is pleasant to think that behind the low and malarious west coast of Africa and delta of the Niger, there are these fine healthy uplands, where the nights are cool.

Signs of the slave-raiders were now becoming apparent, and we passed two deserted villages which had been raided and burnt by the Bida people; only the blackened walls remained. The country had been completely depopulated by the continuous raids, and the unfortunate natives lived in constant dread of being captured and sent off into the depths of the Western Sudan, with the alternative of dashing off into the bush with their children and some food, and emerging to find their homesteads burnt to the ground.

Akpara, the biggest place we had yet come across, was prettily situated on some high ground with small peaks on each side, and was surrounded by an abundance of plantains, yams, and oranges, the path leading through an avenue of fine trees. The natives crowded together at the cross-roads to see the column pass through, and were mostly dressed in native cloth dyed blue with indigo. After leaving Akpara, the country was barren and deserted until we reached Sura. On January 11, we gradually neared the high rocky hill which is called Pati Sura, under which lies the village, and before halting had a fine view across a valley to the north of Sura, towards a range of hills in the distance. From this place, which is in lat. $8^{\circ} 5' 43''$ N., we altered our course altogether, and steered in a southerly direction to Kabba, the position of which town was at that time uncertain. The track led us close along the base of Pati Sura, and then across a plain covered with low trees and scrub to another ridge of hills, at the base of which we found the river Mimi flowing, a lovely stream of about 30 feet broad, which drains all this country, and runs into the Niger two miles below Lokoja.

We were going along as fast as we could now, without tents and only carrying light loads, and, with the exception of two hours' halt in the middle of the day at the Mimi river and minor halts, we travelled all day. In the afternoon the country became more thickly wooded, and just before halting we reached the village of Epi, hidden away in a dense belt of forest. In the open glades round the houses a great deal of tobacco, yams, and cotton is grown, and the soil seemed very fertile. It was quite like going from light into darkness, and the trees entwined themselves over our heads. We camped on the further side of the forest, at a height of 1660 feet; the monotony of the journey being only broken by the capture of a "dankary," or Nupe soldier, in the grass at the side of the road, who was probably a spy watching our movements. He made a bold bid for freedom, and dashed off into the bush from his captors, being instantly pursued by some carriers and Hausa soldiers, who brought him back in triumph—not, however, without his having bitten a carrier very badly in the mouth before he could be recaptured.

Notwithstanding all efforts to guard him, he managed to escape during the night, and created an alarm in the camp.

When we started the next morning it was very misty, and the grass, here very luxuriant and about 4 feet high, soon wetted every one through and through, until, after going 8 miles, we reached a lovely open country covered with scattered palm trees. We now turned westward again, and crossed a green valley, where signs still remained of a large encampment, probably used by the Fulas some years ago. Two little hills in front gave us our direction, and, after passing

MARCH TO KABBA.

(From a photograph by Dr. Craster.)

between them, we could see the curious-shaped rocky hill at Kabba, and reached the wall of that town at one o'clock after eight days' march from Lokoja. It is a most picturesque place, lying among pine woods, and evidently a shadow of what it had been once upon a time. The mud wall plainly shows the former extent of the town—over a mile from one side to the other—which has been so reduced by raids and slavery for the last quarter of a century, that now there cannot be more than 5000 inhabitants.

The Fula war-camp was situated 4 miles further on, and consisted of an enormous collection of thatched huts and enclosures, covering over a square mile of country. Situated on a slight eminence, the ground round is fairly open, and covered with dried-up grass 3 feet in

height and isolated palm trees. Rocky hills with precipitous sides rise up on each side about 2 miles distant, and form a sort of line of outposts to the camp; the top of one of these overhangs the base to such an extent, that one wonders how it does not overbalance and tumble over. It is a fine country for horses, and there were signs of many of them about the camp, but the Fulas had preferred not to risk an engagement.

The important towns of Gidi and Aieri lie out in this direction. On our return to Kabba, an imposing ceremony was held in the marketplace of the town, where the governor met the chiefs of Kabba and neighbouring towns, and formally proclaimed the freedom of Southern Nupe from the Fula power and the cessation of slavery. The whole force paraded and formed up in two columns facing the town, the seven-pounders drawn by ropes in the centre. The dark green background formed by Kabba hill was covered with groups of natives, perched together on the rocks, and was relieved by the touches of colour of the chiefs' robes. The old king himself was dressed in a red and gold gown very much faded, and a red tarboosh with blue tassel, the others wearing red, blue, and yellow tobies.

Very good cloth is made in the Western Sudan, and there is a great industry at Kano, where cloth is dyed blue with indigo. A great deal of it is worn on the body, and often immense folds wound round the head as a turban. The natives are ugly and unprepossessing, and bear traces of the slavery which has laid such a heavy hand on them. We arrived back at the camp we had left at Sura with the reserve supplies on the 16th, where we found all well; and, after a halt of one day, started on our march to Egbon, which was now almost due north of us. After leaving Sura village the country was wooded and uninhabited, and we descended gradually over rocky and gravelly soil to the Feraji river, which flows to the eastward north of Akpara. Five miles further on we reached the village, which bears the same name, where there is lovely clear water drawn from wells. The country round is very thickly wooded; a great deal of cotton is grown, and I noticed women in a house at work on the looms, which are most ingenious. Just before reaching Feraji we passed by the left of a range of hills running east and west, and I was able to get a glimpse of the country in front of us by ascending a small hill near the track. It seemed fairly level, though to the westward two or three high hills were noticeable.

On the 19th we reached a watercourse and re-entrant into the hills, up which we advanced, and camped beyond the village of Shale. This was an interesting point for us, as we noticed the water was now flowing the other way in a northerly direction into the middle Niger. The country became very barren and arid as we approached the Jakpana hills, and at a cross-roads just before reaching them, a little path led down to a water-hole, which, after being cleared out assiduously, yielded

about three pints of very dirty water. We ascended the hills by a steep path over stony and volcanic ground, some of the lava rocks over which we marched being extremely hot and trying to the naked feet of the porters, and it was a difficult march for them. There are three distinct peaks, the centre being a triangular rock without a particle of vegetation on it, which is visible for many miles, and would seem to have been specially placed there as a point for surveying. We passed over the col between two of the small peaks, and descended into the valley the other side. Before leaving the ridge we had a fine view over the valley to

MARKET CANOE AT EGGA.

(From a photograph by the Earl of Scarborough.)

the west, and, on looking back, two twin peaks of no inconsiderable size, which we had hitherto missed seeing owing to the thick bush, now came into view, forming a gateway at the end of the valley. From this elevation, 1180 feet above the sea, we descended into the plain which borders the Niger, and as we left the rugged sides of the hills, fields of cultivation appeared, and the country became much more prosperous looking. Here we first came upon a Nupe village—Kosobeji by name—utterly different to any village we had yet seen, and remarkable for the neatness of its walls and the structure of its houses; these were nearly all circular, and made of red mud walls with very neatly thatched roofs. Intermingled with little structures of the same

sort for grain, raised from the ground, they were crowded together into the smallest space imaginable, so that one wondered how the natives could move about among them. Nearly every house had a miniature courtyard, separated from the next house by a small wall. An enormous quantity of corn was found here, and it proved to be a food depôt of the southern Nupe army, which had been dispersed at Kabba.

From Kosobeji, a very gradual descent across a great plain covered with dry grass 4 feet high led to the Kampi river, at this time only a few yards broad, but which is evidently a very fine river in the rains, about 150 yards broad, flowing between sandy banks, and emptying itself into the Niger near Egga. As I noticed throughout, this country would present an utterly different appearance in the rains; little ravines and sandy river-beds, which we crossed dryshod, doubtless become seething torrents, and render travelling very difficult, if not impossible, for caravans loaded as we were. On approaching the Kampi river in the early morning, a peak towards Egbon loomed up out of the mist in the distance, the very image of one of the pyramids in Egypt, the side turned to us being lit up by the sun's rays with a beautiful soft yellow colouring, strengthened by the blue shadows on the edges, whilst away over the brown dried-up grass a belt of dark green palm trees indicated the course of the river, making a brilliant contrast with the surrounding country. An hour further on we reached Padda, a large Nupe town of 4000 to 5000 inhabitants, which was flying the Company's flag, and contained many fine circular houses and markets. The people were friendly, and brought out plenty of food—plantains, chickens, and eggs—to the camp, which was posted on an undulation to the west of the town. A road branches off here to Egga, keeping to the north side of the river Kampi. From Padda we soon reached the Niger, passing to the right of three of those curious flat-topped hills peculiar to West Africa, which rose up almost perpendicularly from the ground, echeloned from right to left. They are called the Egbon hills, and are visible from a ridge near Bida; the pyramid peak lies a little to the south of them. Between Padda and the river several small farms, with fields of cultivation round, lie scattered about, the property of the Nupe princes, and worked by their slaves, sent across the river for the purpose.

It was pleasant to see the great river again, after seventeen days' marching through the bush, and we camped at Egbon, a small village, where there was an open space in the woods which border the river, and where the bank shelved steeply down to the water's edge. Close to the side lay the flotilla of armed stern-wheelers and launches which had made their way up from Lokoja under Mr. Wallace, C.M.G., at the beginning of the month, for the purpose of patrolling this portion of the middle Niger; and we realized the advantages of sea power, or what would be more appropriately called river power, by replenishing our stock of provisions, which were by this time running somewhat

short, and getting a certain amount of soda-water, which was a treat after some of the liquid we had been obliged to drink *en route*. The patrolling had been most successful, and by the strategy adopted the two Nupe armies were effectually separated.

Before crossing the river, it may be interesting to give some account of the people against whom we were proceeding. The rulers of all the Hausa states in the Western Sudan are a race known as Fulas. Resembling the Wahuma in Uganda and the Lake regions, they are lighter in colour, taller, and finer looking than the indigenous population. Their history is unknown, but they would seem to be an offshoot of the great race of Gallas in Somaliland and North-East Africa. Coming from the north,

NUPE VILLAGE.

(From a photograph by Joseph Thomson.)

they gradually asserted their superiority, and conquered this country by means of superior military organization and skill, and the havoc wrought by their cavalry. It is hard to realize at home the enormous population existing in Hausaland, which forms the larger portion of Sokoto and Gando. It is estimated by Mr. Robinson at fifteen millions, or one per cent of the world's population, and of these a large proportion are slaves, who, in fact, form a species of coinage in the country. Nupe has always been one of the largest and most important states in the Sokoto empire, and the emir is said to have declared at one time that his rule extended from Guari or Zaria in the north to Asaba in the south, and from Bussa in the west to Keffi in the east—literally, over about 70,000 square miles of country.

Masaba, the founder of the Fula dynasty in Nupe, was a Sokoto prince, related to Othman wad Fodio, the African Napoleon, who, at the commencement of this century, created the immense Fula empire of Sokoto and Gando. Masaba was so deeply indebted to one of his generals, Omru, that he decreed that Omru, though not of royal blood, should succeed him on the throne of Nupe, subject to the assent of Sokoto, but on condition that on Omru's death the throne should return to Masaba's family. Accordingly, Meliki, a Masaba, succeeded Omru, while Muhammed, Omru's eldest son, was given the rank of Markum, or third in succession to the throne, the heir-apparent always holding the rank of Sheaba, and the next heir that of Potum. During Meliki's reign the rank of heir-apparent or Sheaba died out, as successive holders died of poison—one of the disadvantages of having anything to do with the throne in these countries—so that the Potum, Abu Bekri, a Masaba, refused to accept the rank which was left vacant. On Meliki's death, in 1895, Abu Bekri became Emir, or Sultan, and it is with him that the troubles which led to the expedition began, and the Markum Muhammed is the man who has been recently appointed Emir. The Hausas themselves are an intelligent race of traders, and capable of much development. That they can be made into good soldiers was proved during this expedition, and although Mohammedans, the religious question did not occasion any difficulty.

On January 23 we commenced to cross the Niger, which is here about 800 yards broad, and found high grass and very thick bush on the northern bank, through which we made our way by a circuitous path to a creek $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles from the river. This proved to be rather an obstacle, as it was very deep, and on the day following a man was drowned there. Two native canoes were found in the creek, and a steel canoe was transported here from the river, by means of which the crossing of the whole force was effected. This was not the only obstacle in the way, for on the day following a swamp nearly 200 yards broad was met with, which reminded me much of the river swamps in the Lake regions, with the exception of the papyrus, which, fortunately, does not exist in this country. The heavy guns were sadly encumbered by it, and it took severe exertions to get them through. After leaving the swamp we passed several villages and plantain groves, the country being very flat and wooded.

Before reaching the village of Lokicha, where we camped, we had to cross another small swamp, fringed with palm trees. Villages now became very numerous, and the country was thickly populated. On all sides were fields of cultivation, and it was here we came into touch with the enemy, who opposed our advance for the remainder of the march to Bida. As the parties of cavalry were driven back, and we neared the city, the enclosed country gave way to enormous open undulating plains, with here and there a village or farm nestling among a small clump of

trees. It was an ideal battle-field, and as we came down to the ravine, or nullah, through which flows the Rafi Shanu stream, we could see the Nupe army extended along the opposite ridge, and as they retired, and we surmounted this ridge, we had a really magnificent sight towards the town, outside the gates of which, and on the further side of the stream, which passes through the southern portion of the town, were drawn up the Emir and Nupe princes, and the whole of the Nupe army. We were forced to retire on this day, and it was only on the second day that we were able to advance in square with the guns and take the town.

The Fula army consists of hordes of irregular cavalry, with bands of footmen. Firmly fixed in their high-peaked saddles, with enormous

TAKING GUNS ACROSS CREEK.

(From a photograph by Dr. Craster.)

brass and iron stirrups, they galloped along on their long-tailed ponies, covered with gay trappings, waving their swords or spears in the air, with their white robes flying in the wind, accompanied at the same time by the clamour of their small drums, and the deep-based horns which were encouraging them to the attack. Very often an enormous straw hat surmounted the turban which was wound round their heads, or was allowed to fall back and hang over the shoulder. Some of the leaders were splendidly dressed, and wore flat-heeled riding-boots of red leather, which are excellently made in this country.

Bida is a striking place to find in Central Africa, and makes all the

more impression on one, after one has arrived at it from the delta of the Niger, where the natives are of the lowest order of civilization, and a most degraded-looking race, with instincts tending to cannibalism. It is situated on slightly rising ground, and watered by two streams, one of which rises only a short way from the walls; these join together in the southern portion of the town, and flow through a beautifully green valley to the east. A strong wall, 10 feet high, made of red clay, and crenelated with ditch in front, extends round the town, broken down in a few places, and from where we first saw it there appeared to be a mass of lofty thatched houses and high walls, forming enclosures, which, intermingled with fine trees, extended to the north as far as the eye could reach.

It was on January 29 that, as some paper described it, Sir George Goldie made his triumphal entry into Benin, which is as far off from Bida as Paris is from London, and with no railway connection between the two. The main thoroughfares are fairly broad, and lead from one gate to another, bordered by great enclosures and compounds surrounded by lofty walls excellently made, and often 18 feet in height, and the doorways are in some cases roughly carved outside. The walls of the large buildings are very massive, and very often the roofs of the rooms are arched and supported on pillars of black clay, which is polished, and looks exactly like stone. The principal of these palaces are those occupied by the princes of the two great families, the Massaba and Omru. Outside the late Emir Meliki's palace lies the slave-market, where formerly it used to be a common sight to see two hundred slaves exposed of an evening for sale to the highest bidder. Unfortunate creatures raided from various parts of the kingdom, even south of Lokoja in the Company's territories, they used to be sold here as a source of revenue to the Nupe princes.

The entrance to the Emir's palace is covered with a high dome made of bamboos resting on thick walls, and supported at the bottom by short carved wooden pillars. Some tame ostriches and a deer were the sole occupants left in the big outer enclosure, in one of the numerous inner courts of which there is a lovely well of pure water. A great variety of articles were found, including some very good swords, an English general's sword, a claymore, and, curiously enough, a sword belonging to an officer in the 11th Hussars, with a monogram and coronet on it. About 350 rifles, with several tons of gunpowder, different-coloured cloths, silks, and an innumerable quantity of brass basins, lay heaped up on the square. Between the main roads there is a network of narrow streets with walls on each side, and there are many mosques, though none of any size or importance. Round Bida there are some curious little hills of red sandstone, and to the east a stream leads to the Wanangi creek, which in the rainy season forms the nearest means of approach, boats being able to come up to it from the Niger.

On the 31st the governor left the town to meet a large body of traders at the Zongo camp, not far from the walls of the town. A curious assemblage they were, collected from all parts of the Hausa states and the Sokoto empire. Some came from Kano, and others from Kuka on Lake Chad, the inland sea in this western half of Africa, where the valuable blocks of potash are found. There were even traders from Tripoli on the Mediterranean, distinguishable from the others by their spotless white garments and red fezzes; and amongst them stood the inevitable Arab, light coloured, and with black flowing beard, the very picture of a slave-dealer. They were told that they could in future use the shorter route *viâ* Kano, Zaria and Keffi to Lokoja, instead of coming to Bida, where they would be able to dispose of their goods on the Niger, and would not be taxed in any way. The importance of

FULAS ON THE MARCH.

this trade question, and the opening up of the Niger territories, will be understood when it is realized that at present most of the European goods come across the great Sahara into the Hausa states from the north, several thousand camel-loads of goods coming annually into Kano from that direction, besides quantities of salt, which is in great demand, as it is found nowhere in Hausaland. Camels come down as far south as Bida.

After the governor had returned to the town, I accompanied Major Cunningham, D.S.O., on a reconnaissance to the north. A lovely open country lay spread out before us, across which one could apparently gallop for miles and miles. A few rocky hills stood out on the horizon,

and several villages, consisting of a few curious little circular houses, lay scattered about. As we approached one of them in a slight hollow near a rivulet, two of the enemy's horsemen came into sight, and, dis regarding the shots fired at them, immediately galloped off, hotly pursued by a dashing Hussar officer, who died of fever, to our great sorrow, not long afterwards. He had a fast horse, and the wild horsemen of the Sudan were no match for him; a Nupe warrior was seen subsiding out of his unwieldy saddle and ponderous stirrups under the magnetic influence of a revolver-barrel. The horse was a good one, and far the more valuable capture of the two, but now the difficulty was how to secure the pair. This was soon solved by the Nupe making off into some thick grass as hard as his legs could carry him. A mile or two further on we reached a small hill, passing through a cloud of locusts, on the way, which quite obscured the atmosphere; and it was at a village just beyond this, called Sheshi, that we surprised a party of the enemy's horse, and made the lucky capture of Prince Esa, brother to the Markum Muhammed, and one of the most important Nupe princes. The villagers and the few natives we met on our return prostrated themselves on the ground when they saw him.

Bida is an interesting place, with its schools and institutions, and a great many books and boards with Arabic writing, also a very tattered old lion skin with a plan and some Arabic characters marked on it, were found here. There are numerous dye-pits in the town, and indigo forms a valuable article of commerce. The people themselves are great workers in leather, and make very good saddles, scabbards, and slippers; they are also workers in glass. The people are very superstitious, and carry charms wrapped up in little leather and leopard-skin cases, and they even tried to bring disaster upon us by planting little sticks with writing on in the pathway.

At Bida the average minimum temperature was 78°, and the maximum 97°, and we were not sorry to leave it on account of the plague of flies and other insects. It was under very different conditions we marched away across our old battle-field, and reached the former camp near the ravine, and the long line of porters, natives, and refugees extended for miles, confident of being no longer harassed by the enemy, and in danger of their lives. The nine-pounder had broken down, the wheel having been broken the day before, and it looked in a very helpless condition lying at the bottom of a ditch, and it was indeed lucky that this did not happen in the advance. The African porter, with his usual intelligence, decided that, after the fall of Bida, his work was at an end, and that loads of ammunition and provisions were quite a secondary consideration compared to his own loot—an enormous pile of usually the most inconceivable rubbish. With this he tried to steal out of camp in the morning, but was bitterly deceived when he arrived at the deep creek, 2½ miles from the river, and found people there to stop him.

A considerable number of officers and men were invalided from Egbon, and the remainder, consisting of 23 Europeans and 320 soldiers, embarked on the stern-wheelers and launches for transport to our new base at Jebba, a distance of over 90 miles. The night before we left a tornado of rain swept over the camp, making it very unpleasant for every one, and the rain soon penetrated the light sun-decks of the stern-wheelers, and came down in torrents on people underneath. We used to steam all day, and in the evening drew up alongside the bank, when the men were marched off the ship and bivouacked for the night, and we resumed our voyage early again the next morning. The river

FULA EMISSARIES ENTERING CAMP.
(From a photograph by the Earl of Scarborough.)

is about 600 yards broad, though narrower in places, and some of the reaches even remind one of the Thames, though one is soon disabused of this impression by coming across a native village, with a crowd of black people yelling and gesticulating on the bank. Especially was this the case at a large village called Babefu, where the people were in a great state of excitement, and ran along the bank with us to show their delight at the defeat of the Fulas. The river at Rabba, where the old capital used to be before the days of Bida, is quite lovely; the left bank is about 40 feet high, and rocky, but at the water's edge a few green bushes, and even some palm trees, have found a footing, whilst in

the distance an island divides the channel in two, and beyond it lie the hills behind Jebba. The stream is strong, and navigation intricate; our pilot was quite a character, and kept waving his thin, bony hand to the man at the wheel to point out the course. Jebba, where we arrived on the 8th inst., is very nearly the end of the navigable portion of the river for steamers and launches, as only a few miles up commence the rapids. High hills dominate the right bank, and we could see the high rock called Baikie's seat, which is defended from all intruders by swarms of bees. There is a large island in mid-stream, on which the Company's station and the native village are situated.

The Ilorin country, into which we were now going to march, is bounded by the Ibadan country on the south, which is governed from Lagos; and it was the fact of the Ilorins having attacked the frontier forts held by the Lagos Constabulary which brought on the present expedition. To the north-east lies Borgu, visited by Captain Lugard in 1894, and to the north, on the west side of the Niger, the Bussa country, which was recently entered by the French at the time we were fighting the Ilorins. On February 10 we started on our march south along the same route traversed by Mr. Fowler in his survey, but which I believe has never been described to this Society. Making a short march the first day, we reached a village called Bodi Sadu the next, which forms a regular sort of custom-house for taking toll from the traders who pass along the road. The country was frightfully burnt up and dry at this time of the year, and the difficulties of marching considerable. A sandy path led through low trees and bushes, and across, at times, open spaces covered with dried-up grass, and the aspect of the country during the first part of the march is very similar to the waterless plateau called the Haud in Somaliland. All food had to be carried, and the water in some places was very bad. On the third day, beyond an important village called Lanwa, the only water we could get to drink was unfit even to wash in, and very soon clogged all the filters brought to bear on it.

At first we travelled due south close to a range of hills, which was on our right, whilst on the other side lay the wooded valley in which runs the river Osin, flowing into the Niger not far from Jebba. Several dry watercourses were crossed, and on the 12th we camped at a small stream called the Orere. The small villages we came upon were similar to those we had seen in the march to Kabba, and consisted of big oblong houses, untidily thatched and tumbledown looking, very different from the neat huts in the Nupe country; these were usually arranged round a square, which forms a courtyard and market. The country improves vastly as one enters it and ascends on to the high ground, and there are some very fine trees—acacia trees with red fruit, and baobab trees, also a species of poplar; the villages are often surrounded by rubber trees and small banana groves.

Lanwa is a very large village, and was thronged with natives, mostly dressed in the blue native cloth. At the Arebi river, where we arrived on the 14th, we were already 1100 feet above the sea, having ascended 700 feet from the Niger at Jebba, and we camped near a village which was surrounded by fine rubber trees, slashed by matchets to get the rubber.

As we went on along the road to Ilorin the country began to assume more and more of a park-like appearance; as it was on approaching Bida, the tangled bush and undergrowth gave place to rolling plains, dotted about with fine trees of all sorts, and we passed little villages

RIVER NIGER.

(From a photograph by Dr. Crosse.)

hidden away in banana groves. At the first few villages we passed the natives remained at their doors, and everything seemed perfectly peaceful; but as we went on and came down the slope towards the Oyon river, it became apparent that we should have to fight before we entered the town of Ilorin, and we were soon afterwards attacked from all sides. Major Arnold pursued the same tactics as before, and on the second day the square advanced again to the walls of the town, which was entered that afternoon, the 16th, and too much praise cannot be given to the steadiness of the black soldiers. After crossing the Oyon river, a ridge was surmounted, and after passing through some villages and clumps of trees on the top, we came in sight of the town, which

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lies on the further side of the Aza river. On all sides lay an open plain, broken here and there by a small village and some cultivation, and perhaps two or three isolated palm trees, and to the north the great Sobi rock formed a prominent feature of the landscape. The Hausa colony all took refuge with us on our approach, with their goods and chattels, and among them the soldiers recognized many of their own relations—the scene in rear of the position, where they were all collected, being a very strange one, and a perfect babel of sound went up from it. These Hausas, most of them peaceful traders, had wished to join us

INSIDE EMIN'S PALACE, ILORIN.
(From a photograph by Dr. Craster.)

before, but had been forcibly prevented from leaving the town. The Emir still refused to come to terms, and, after two hours' delay to allow of negotiation, the bombardment took place, and in the afternoon the force, preceded by the buglers, marched into the town to a large open space with shady trees in front of the Emir's enclosure. The first thing we noticed on entering the square was the gruesome spectacle of the corpse of some malefactor, having been probably executed with untold cruelties, and exposed as a warning to others on a heap of stones. The destruction of the palace—rather a misnomer for this collection of rude stone buildings—was indeed complete, and the market-place, where we pitched our tents, was still filled with the smoke and smell of burning. A curious episode was the fact of the “Fall in” for the guard being sounded that

evening in the market-place of Ilorin by an ex-bugler in the Lagos Constabulary, a few hours previously a slave in the same town, and still with the chains on his legs. Several of the soldiers found brothers and relations who were slaves in the town, and I believe several of them came away with us and enlisted.

The town, though not nearly so imposing as Bida, seemed to cover an immense area of ground, and I afterwards found out, whilst employed in making a plan of it, is 9 miles in circumference,

HAUSA PRIEST AND SOLDIER.

(From a photograph by Dr. Crosse.)

and, except on the north-east, surrounded by a dilapidated mud wall. From the many gateways well-used roads lead in all directions across the open grass country. To the south the houses become more detached, and a large extent of meadowland is enclosed within the outer wall. Magnificent baobab trees, affording splendid shade, adorn the open spaces in the town. The water-supply at this time of year is not first-rate, and there are only some evil-smelling stagnant pools of water at a few of the cross-roads, in addition to the

limited number of wells in the town itself, and the water is mostly drawn from the river Aza outside. The baloguns, or generals of the Ilorin army, and the chief traders have large enclosures and houses, and I entered one of these where a covered-in gateway, with a heavy wooden door made out of three planks about 9 feet in height, admitted one to a courtyard about 40 yards broad, round which the dwelling-houses were situated; the walls of these are massive, and in some cases roughly carved. The occupants had evidently left in great haste, and things were scattered about pell-mell in all directions; on the walls were fastened a few gaudy advertisements and pictures obtained from Lagos, and on the floor there were a number of Arabic manuscripts lying about. Through a door in the further wall one entered into an inner yard, where a lame horse was tethered, and round it there were more horses, probably for slaves and attendants. In the main doorway was fastened a miniature pair of leg-irons, such as is used for manacling slaves, which was reported to be a fetish of some kind to ward off the evil spirit.

The Emir and his chiefs had fled to villages far and wide, but were induced to surrender themselves, and on the 18th a small cavalcade, consisting of the former and his principal generals, arrived to make their peace. Mounted on their small horses covered with picturesque saddle-cloths and head-collars, they presented a curious appearance, and the old Emir himself looked an extraordinary sight with his head wrapt up in several folds of white cloth, forming a great bunch at the back of his head, one fold of which completely covered his face with the exception of his eyes and nose, and the whole was crowned by an enormous native straw hat. During the interview and the parade of troops which followed, they were very nervous and apprehensive of what might happen to them. The troops were drawn up in the square where the British flag was flying, and a treaty was signed giving complete power to the Niger Company over the country and settlement of the Lagos frontier, and the Emir was reinstated.

We set out from Ilorin on our return march on February 19, one of the hottest days I have felt, marching out of the town through what is known as the Hausa gate. Crowds of Hausa people, traders, refugees, and slaves, left the town with us, carrying their goods on donkeys and in baskets on their heads, and blocked up the road. The Harmattan wind was blowing during the march back to the river, and it was hot and dusty. At every few hundred yards little groups of men and women were sitting under shady trees to rest themselves on the journey, their loads lying on the ground near them. Some of the latter were enormous, and must have weighed fully 80 to 100 lbs. The Ilorins are a Yoruba-speaking people, and it is interesting to record that, according to Captain Mockler Ferryman, a desperate fight occurred in 1840 over exactly the same ground that we fought over, between the Yorubas, aided by a

small contingent of Borgus, and the Fulas, and that, after a prolonged contest, the latter eventually utterly routed the pagans, who had lost heart owing to the death of their leader.

Owing to the knowledge gained of the road and the watering-places, the return march of 52 miles was much quicker, and we reached Jebba in four days. Some of the Hausa people were transferred to the north bank to return to their homes; others were offered a free passage down to Lokoja in canoes. Curiously enough, although the middle of the dry season, the sky was nearly always dull and overcast at Jebba, and we had several small showers of rain. Fortunately, the night before we left there was a clear sky, and I was able to take observations.

The journey down river was a most delightful one, and our rapid voyage down to Lokoja was only broken by a stoppage at Moragi, where the governor received the Emir of Lafiagi. He went up the river again from here to Bajibo, to receive an answer from the French officer commanding the expedition which had entered Bussa, and of which he received the first intimation on the road to Ilorin by a messenger from the king of Bussa himself.

Quite an exciting experience was jumping the sandbanks, and the stern-wheeler I was on, called the *Empire*, proved so good at this that it soon distanced the remainder of the fleet, who one after another ran aground, and were lying inert like crocodiles on the treacherous banks of sand, having to drag themselves off by an iron cable. On the 24th we passed Egga, an important station of the Company's, and quite a fine-looking place, with rows of warehouses covered with corrugated iron, and reached Lokoja on the 25th, where there was naturally great excitement at the return of the troops.

People here had had little news of what was going on, and a report at one time that the expedition had been cut up before Bida, and the Nupes were advancing south on Lokoja, caused a general exodus from the town. During the following few days before leaving, Major Cunningham and I went down river in a canoe, and, pitching our tents on the river-bank, did our best to secure some West African antelope without success. We saw a few hartebeest, kobus kob, and wart hog, and the sable antelope and small gazelle exist also. It is difficult for me to give any account of the game in the country, as the expedition was much too large, and conducted in too hostile a country to allow of leaving the column for any distance.

On the high ground above Jebba there are plenty of hartebeest, and on the approach of our advanced party at the first camp from there, an officer saw a lion making off, angry at being disturbed from his resting-place. North of Bida there are also lions. It was on our way down river that we heard of the sad news of the massacre at Benin. The Patanis, a tribe living in the Niger delta only about 80 miles from Benin, whom we went against with a small expedition, were wise in

their generation, and rendered hostages for their good behaviour; so the attack did not take place, and, steaming on rapidly, it seemed like a dream to find one's self again on the mail steamer, which was luckily waiting for us at Forcados. Thanks to the wonderful organization and the success of the operations, we were able to return to England much sooner than had been expected.

It was a great pleasure, on my way home, to receive the news of the honour which had been awarded to me by this Society, which is not only a great encouragement, but recompenses one for the discomforts and hardships unavoidable in African travel.

Before the reading of the paper, the PRESIDENT said: It seems only yesterday that Lieut. Vandeleur read to us his account of the work he had done on the eastern side of Africa—I believe it was the day before he went down to Windsor to receive the reward of his services from Her Majesty the Queen. He has given himself no rest, and since that time—a very short interval—he has been doing admirable work on the western side of Africa, and, judging from his former paper, I think we may promise ourselves a most interesting evening. I will now ask Lieut. Vandeleur to read his paper.

After the reading of the paper, the following discussion took place:—

The PRESIDENT: Sir George Goldie, under whose command Lieut. Vandeleur had the honour to serve when he did this excellent geographical work, will commence the discussion of the paper.

SIR GEORGE GOLDIE: I have one fault to find with Lieut. Vandeleur's paper, namely, that he has not told you enough about himself. I may hope that, as he grows older, he will become cured of that failing. We have heard in this hall a great number of African travellers at various times, but I doubt if any can surpass Mr. Vandeleur in the all-important points of accuracy of astronomical observations and careful mapping, under circumstances so trying as those in which he found himself. In ordinary African travel you can make your camp as spacious as you please, and if troubled with the tumult inside you can go outside, but you cannot do that when making war against vastly superior numbers. Our little zareba used to be crowded every night with 30 Europeans, as many horses, 500 troops, 1000 carriers, and a host of camp-followers, and of course a mass of provisions, war material, and equipment, and I used to admire the calm imperturbability of Mr. Vandeleur in the midst of this, doing his geographical work at such moments as he could be spared from his more important military work.

Then there is another point. You may have gathered from his paper that the health conditions were not exactly of the best kind, notwithstanding the immense precautions which I may say the company took for the comfort of the officers, and the careful and constant attention which Major Arnold, excellent soldier that he is, gave to this matter, but with bad water and exposure to the equatorial sun the health was not good. I may tell you, from the day we started from Lokoja to the day we came back we had with us altogether less than forty Europeans, yet our medical staff had to attend to no less than thirty cases of fever and dysentery, and out of these thirty patients eight were invalided as unfit to proceed further. But then Mr. Vandeleur, though you would not think it to look at him, is an old and hardened African, and I never saw him disabled for one moment from taking his sights through his sextant or his equally important sights over the barrel of his maxim gun.

PLAN OF BIDA.

PLAN OF ILORIN.

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