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The River Kuta of Lupton Bey

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Danish Expeditions to Greenland.—Lieut. Jensen, of the Royal Danish Navy, accompanied by Herr Lorenzen, geologist, and Herr Riis-Carstensen, artist, left Denmark last month for Holsteinborg, on the west coast of Greenland. Lieut. Jensen has visited Greenland for scientific purposes on three former occasions, lastly in 1879, when, accompanied by Lieut. Hammer and Prof. Kornerup, he made a careful geological survey of the country lying between Holsteinborg and Egedsminde. The object of the present expedition, the expenses attending which will be defrayed by the Government, is to work down southwards from Holsteinborg to Sukkertoppen, where the "outskirting" land between the coast-line and the inland ice is of great breadth, viz. about 80 English miles. This portion of Greenland has never been explored by Europeans, and the only accounts of it have been given by natives who state that there exist deep fiords separated by high-lying plateaux, partially covered with isolated glaciers. The expedition is expected to return to Copenhagen in October.—Another expedition to the north, in boats, along the *East Coast* of Greenland will be undertaken this summer by Lieut. Holm, of the Danish Navy.—A third expedition, for natural history investigation, consisting of Prof. Warming, botanist, and M. Holm, zoologist, is also about to leave Denmark for West Greenland.

CORRESPONDENCE.

The River Kuta of Lupton Bey.

CAIUS COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE, *May 7th*, 1884.

SIR,—I have just read the interesting letters from Lupton Bey, published in the May number of the 'Proceedings,' and I should like to be permitted to make some remarks on the question in which their interest mainly centres, viz., where does the great river Kuta, of which he has obtained more definite information than we before possessed, flow to?

It appears that the accounts sent by Lupton very materially alter the position of this problem, and make it a still greater puzzle than before. In the first place, if we accept the identity of the Kuta with the Welle, it is settled that the latter cannot be the Aruwimi, as suggested by Stanley. Secondly, owing to the great size of the river where visited by Lupton's agent, which seems greatly increased since the lowest point hitherto known on the Welle, it is impossible, as Mr. Lupton says, to believe that it is the upper course of the Shary, a comparatively small river at its mouth.

It may, however, be a tributary of the Congo, joining the latter below its confluence with the Aruwimi—perhaps the river of Bangala, though nothing is said by Stanley leading us to suppose this of any very great magnitude, which seems necessary for its identification with the Kuta. It would be by no means improbable

that Stanley in his voyage down the Congo should have passed the mouth of a great river unnoticed, considering the way in which he was forced to keep to the island channels, in order to avoid collision with the inhabitants on the mainland; and indeed he did see a channel, having the appearance of a river, on the right bank. On his recent expedition, however, to the Stanley Falls, when he would of course be on the look-out for large tributaries, he apparently did not discover any remarkable one, else he would probably have ascended it in preference to the Aruwimi, or at any rate have mentioned it in his letters. Another objection to the idea that the Welle-Kuta belongs to the Congo system is that it appears to trend to the W.N.W. instead of the W.S.W. as would be natural in that case.

It is now many years since the rumours of a great river flowing east and west in the district north of the Equator first reached Europe. Mr. Browne, in the beginning of the century, spoke of such in the country of Dar Kulla, which was taken by Mungo Park to be the Niger on its supposed course to the Congo. Dr. Barth also heard of the "River of Kubanda," which is evidently the Kuta; and, lastly, Dr. Nachtigal was told of the "Bahr Kuta," a river larger than the Shary, and flowing to Adamawa. These accounts, obtained from various quarters, all point to a river with a course mainly from east to west, and not turning south at about the 20th meridian to join the Congo.

The question then remains, by what channel can this river find its way to the sea? The Binuë is now out of the question, since its source has been recently discovered by the German explorer Mr. Flegel. Is it just possible that its mouth may be found in the Old Calabar river, and that the magnitude of this has been overlooked, as that of the Congo long was, owing to its narrowing as it passes through the mountain rim of the continent? I cannot find any information as to the volume of this river at its mouth, but one would think that to form such an estuary—10 or 12 miles wide for the first 30 miles from the sea—it must be considerable. Mr. Edgerley, an account of whose ascent beyond the furthest point previously known appeared in the 'Proceedings' for 1882, says that at one point it widened to over a mile broad, though beyond this he says nothing as to the size of the river.

The position in which the lake and river Liba or Riba are believed to exist would fall on the course of the river if it flowed thus, and it seems that the Old Calabar or Cross river is also called higher up Deba or Riba, which is at all events a curious coincidence.

Lupton Bey's own speculations are unfortunately influenced by his uncertainty how far north of the Equator the Congo reaches, which makes him incline to the opinion that the Kuta is the Congo—a probable view at first, when it was found that the latter flowed east and west north of the Equator, but now negatived by the fact that the Kuta flows north of 5° north latitude.

EDWARD HEAWOOD.

The Secretary, R.G.S.