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Exploration of the Benue and its Northern Tributary the Kebbi.

By Major CLAUDE M. MACDONALD (H.M. Commissioner to the Oil Rivers).

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Map, p. 512.

Two hundred and thirteen miles almost due north from the mangrove swamps of the Niger mouth, the waters of the Niger or Quorra are mingled with those of the Benue, or, as it is sometimes called, the Tchadda, or Chadda. By this latter name nearly all old books of travel —Barth, Lander, Burchardt, Laird, Baikie, Hutchinson, &c.—speak of the river which I had the good fortune some eighteen months ago to follow from the confluence to within a few miles of one of the most important and unknown of its sources.

A short history of the Benue may be interesting.

In 1830 Richard Lander and his brother, having struck inland from the coast at Badagrey, reached the Niger at Bussa, and, after many vicissitudes, drifted down that river in a canoe. On the 25th October 1830, they discovered "that the Benue or Tchadda flowed into the Niger."

The first Europeans to navigate this river were Messrs. Laird and Oldfield, who ascended the Benue about 104 miles, as far as Dagbo. The narrative of this expedition is very sad reading. They entered the Niger by the Nun mouth. The expedition consisted of forty-nine Europeans, of whom only nine lived to return. Their outfit consisted of the steamers *Qwara* and *Alburkah;* and they reached Rabba on the Niger, and Dagbo on the Benue. Richard Lander accompanied the expedition, but was shot when returning, by people of the Hugrammah tribe, on the Lower Niger. He died, and was buried in the island of Fernando Po.

The celebrated but disastrous expedition of 1841 was the next attempt to open up the waters of the Niger and Benue. It consisted of the steamers *Albert, Wilberforce*, and *Soudan*, and was undertaken under

Governmental auspices, and manned by officers and blue-jackets of the Royal Navy. The first of these steamers reached Egga, on the Niger; but the expedition, after landing materials at the confluence for a model farm, retired with a loss of thirteen officers and twenty-six men. The expedition had only been a little more than sixty days on the river.

In 1849, Mr. Richardson, accompanied by Drs. Barth and Overweg, made an expedition, starting from Tripoli through the Sahara to Damuju, whence they travelled in different directions, making arrangements to have Kuka, the capital of Bornu, as their rendezvous. Mr. Richardson, however, died on March 4th, 1851. Drs. Barth and Overweg met at Kuka, and went in company to Kanem, to the north of Lake Chad. Dr. Overweg, after having circumnavigated the lake and launched a boat named the *Lord Palmerston* at Maduari, died at this place in September 1852.

In May 1851, Dr. Barth journeyed from Kuka to Yola. On June 18th, 1851, he struck the Benue at Tepe, where it is joined by the Faro, which flows from the south; this was the first sight obtained by any white man of the waters of the Upper Benue. Some days later, on the 22nd June, Dr. Barth reached Yola, at which place, however, he only remained four days, being very inhospitably received by the then Emir, Mahommed Lawal. He then returned to Kuka, crossing the Benue at the same place. At this time it was uncertain whether the river which Dr. Barth had crossed was the same stream which had been partially navigated by the expedition under Laird and Oldfield. To ascertain this point, the Admiralty entered into a contract with Mr. MacGregor Laird to build and equip a suitable vessel.

Mr. Laird was possessed of considerable African experience, and took the keenest interest in matters appertaining to this part of the West Coast; he was therefore eminently fitted for planning and arranging all details of such an expedition. The Admiralty instructions were, "first to explore the river Tchadda from Dagbo, as far eastward as possible, and to endeavour to meet and assist Dr. Barth."

This expedition was the most successful of any that had entered the Niger, in that it left it after a sojourn of 108 days without the loss of a single man from sickness; and the river Benue had been navigated as far as Dulti, and its course mapped out. The expedition was ably carried out by Dr. Baikie—a name very familiar at Lokoja to this day. An account of this voyage appeared in 1856.

To come down to more recent times, and the establishment of regular trade on the Benue:—In 1874, the West African Company started purchasing ivory at Bomasha. In 1876, the Central African Company commenced trading operations. In 1879, the West African Company's warehouses were plundered, and an agent murdered, by natives in the Mitshi country, and all European traders left that part of the river. In 1880, the amalgamated firms, called "The United African Company,"

started at Loko. The United African Company proving successful, it was proposed to create a great public company, with a subscribed capital of one million. In 1882 this was done, and the new company was called "The National African Company," and had as its president Lord Aberdare. Almost immediately afterwards, two French houses which had entered the Niger regions commenced strenuous efforts to obtain political influence on the Niger. At the end of 1883, the factories belonging to the French firms exceeded in number, though not in importance, those owned by the National African Company.

Previous to the sitting of the Berlin Conference the French firms had disappeared from the Niger basin, and no commerce existed in the Niger except that of Great Britain; this was due to the skill and energy of the officials of the company, both at home and on the Niger. Amongst the latter stands pre-eminent the name of the late Mr. David McIntosh, a man of infinite resource and indomitable energy.

In July 1886, a Royal Charter was granted to the company, which is now know as "The Royal Niger Company, Chartered and Limited." In 1880, the Church Missionary Society's steamer *Henry Venn* navigated the river as far as Yola. In 1885, Messrs. Wallace and Dangerfield, of the National African Company, established trade at Yola, a trading hulk being moored at that place. The Emir of Yola objecting to this, the hulk is now moored at Garua on the north side of the river. In 1886, the company sent up a steamer to Bubn Jidda for trading purposes; but for political reasons it was withdrawn, and the frontier trading station of the Niger Company is now at Garua, in the Ribago province.

We entered the Nun mouth of the Niger on Wednesday the 24th July, and reached Lokoja, which is situated at the confluence of the Niger and Benue, on the 2nd August.

The scene at the confluence was a very striking one. The waters of both rivers, at the period of my visit, were in flood. As to size and grandeur, and in the volume of water that each river contributed, there was not much to choose between the two; if anything, the Benue was the wider by some 400 yards. From Lokoja—a large and, so far as the native part is concerned, decidedly dirty town—over to where the villages of Igbebe and Gandu line the steep mud-banks on the left or southern shore, is a distance of over three miles.

Lokoja is one of the most important centres of the Niger Company, and they have here large storehouses for native produce, as well as European wares, mostly Manchester goods. Here also they have a considerable force of constabulary. Lokoja will doubtless be a place of very considerable importance in the near future; it is here that the Mahommedan tribes of the Western Soudan, with their powerful Sultans of Sokoto and Gandu, come in contact with the Pagan tribes of the Lower Niger; it is to this parallel of latitude that the Fulbe and their

descendants have driven back the Pagan tribes, burning villages and capturing slaves; and but for the river, which to a great extent forms a natural boundary, and for the presence in force of the Royal Niger Company's constabulary, they would have carried their slave raids to the coast itself.

I had the good fortune to spend several days at Lokoja, and when not engaged in the work of my special mission, inspecting the factories of the company, and holding palavers with native chiefs, both Pagan and Mahommedan, took rambles through the town and neighbourhood, while Captain Mockler-Ferryman, of the Oxfordshire Light Infantry (who was my companion during the four months I spent in the Niger territories), was busy with his camera.

I was accompanied on some of my rambles by a Haussa named Frederick Fowell Buxton Abigai. This man was an astute trader, and a most amusing old rascal; his history was somewhat singular. Originally a Haussa slave, he became as a lad the servant of Drs. Barth and Overweg, and accompanied them on most of their travels. He was taken to England by Dr. Schön, the worthy chaplain of the expedition of 1841, a pious and learned man, author of several standard works in the Haussa language. By Dr. Schön he was baptised in the Christian faith, and returned to his native country, to be, as Dr. Schön hoped, "a worthy instrument for the propagation of the Gospel." On his return, however, he soon became a Mahommedan, and is now the happy, or rather unhappy, possessor (for I believe they lead him a somewhat tempestuous existence) of four wives. He was a most amusing companion, and full of reminiscences of Drs. Barth and Overweg. Though over seventy, he is, as they say, "as hard as nails," a fair shikari, and prepared to do a deal in anything, or with anybody.

The view from the slope of Mount Patteh, at the back of Lokoja, is very fine. The country here has been cleared and put under cultivation, principally by the members of the Roman Catholic mission; the reverend fathers and lay brothers might be seen any afternoon working in the fields. Not many yards from the narrow path which wound through fields of Indian corn and millet towards the mission house, was the little God's Acre of the white man; it is a peaceful spot, and commands a fine view of wooded hill and winding river. Here lie many members of the Niger Company, and a monument sent out by the company has been erected to their memory. Humbler crosses mark the graves of four sisters of the Roman Catholic mission who have laid down their lives in the service of their Master.

Mount Patteh rises 1200 feet above the river, and, like the majority of the surrounding hills, is tabular in formation. The top is an almost level plain, some mile and a half in length and three to four miles in breadth, well wooded, and in the dry season well stocked with deer and other game. The hill itself is wooded to the summit, and commands

lovely views of the surrounding country. On the cultivated lower slope of the hill is situated the Roman Catholic mission, as also a very handsome stone house, the only one in the Niger territory, and the property of the Church Missionary Society. It was, when we were there, the residence of a native priest, the Rev. Archdeacon Johnson. Here I had the great good fortune to renew my acquaintance with Bishop Crowther, the native bishop of the Niger, whose name is intimately and honourably associated with every expedition which has visited the Niger since and including the one of 1841.

Shortly after daybreak on the 14th of August, 1889, we left our moorings at Lokoja and proceeded to steam up the Benue. We were accommodated on board the s.s. *Boussa*, a very commodious stern-wheel steamer of 400 tons, belonging to the Niger Company, and built expressly for the river. When loaded she drew five feet, being flat bottomed. The lower deck, which was about a foot and a half above the level of the water, gave accommodation to the Kruboys, a guard of Niger constabulary, and the crew generally. The upper deck, which was supported on strong iron pillars, carried a very commodious dining saloon, capable of seating six or eight, several sleeping cabins, cook-houses, and offices. Above the upper deck was a substantial wooden awning, fastened and riveted to the deck with iron stanchions. In front of the dining saloon was a wheelhouse and charthouse, below which on the main deck was the boiler; two large funnels came through the upper deck, and were carried on through the awning, between the charthouse and dining-saloon. The heat from the boiler and funnels came in very useful for drying our specimens of birds, but was rather trying otherwise; the vibration of the engines also made writing a matter of some difficulty. In all other respects we were most comfortably housed, or rather shipped. In addition to my friend and private secretary, Captain Mockler Ferryman, we had on board Mr. Wallace, Agent-General of the Niger Company, whose intimate knowledge of the Niger territories was very useful to us; Mr. Charles McIntosh, brother to Mr. David McIntosh whom I have already mentioned, and who was at the time Agent-General for the Benue river; and a Mr. Dangerfield, who acted in the capacity of pilot, assisted by the other two gentlemen I have named.

As an instance of how excellent was the pilotage, I may mention that during the whole journey from Lokoja to Garua, a distance of some 600 miles, we were only aground on a single occasion, and that for only a few hours; on the return journey we did not touch ground once. Our ship, with her two lagre funnels placed side by side, and her upper deck and awing, presented a very imposing appearance as we steamed majestically up the river. The two large funnels sticking through the top of the awing inspired great respect in the Upper Benue, where so large a ship had never before been seen; the natives

were under the impression that these imposing chimneys could be lowered from their vertical position at our own sweet will, and fired off with destructive effect.

At Mozum we landed. It is the first village arrived at of any importance, and is prettily situated on the south bank. The chief, who is an Igara, on hearing that the Queen's messenger was on board, came down in state, surrounded by his head men and people. I had a long conversation with him, and he struck me as being a very sensible and intelligent man. At one time he was not so, for on more than one occasion he stopped and plundered the company's trading canoes; but having had an encounter with their constabulary he became chastened by affliction, and is now a great supporter of trade and the company. He told me that even now his people were in the bush picking rubber for the white man, which they would gladly exchange for Manchester cloth, and salt, &c. His people are mostly Bassas, though some few are Mahommedans from Nupe, the chief himself is an Igara from Ida on the Niger.

Baikie says in his travels, "The Bassa people have very dark skins and strongly marked features, and are more typically negro than the inhabitants of Igbira; they had formerly, and still (1854) retain a rather bad character as being turbulent, wild, and dangerous to travellers." As I have said, their turbulence has since been modified and tamed down, and they struck me as being a most cheerful and industrious people.

I walked through the native village, which was clean and well kept. The men of the tribe were armed principally with bows and arrows, and wishing to test their skill I placed my handkerchief on the stump of a small tree, about 60 paces off, and said that I would give a piece of cloth to the archer who could hit the mark. After considerable discussion and pushing forward of unwilling candidates, a young man, who seemed in popular favour to be the William Tell of the village, stepped to the front, and holding his bow horizontally sent a poisoned arrow whizzing into the centre of the mark. The enthusiasm amongst the young men and maidens at this successful display of bowmanship was unbounded; and from the bright glances cast at him by several pairs of soft brown eyes, I should opine that he had rather a "good time" subsequently, the more so as he became the possessor of a bale of cloth, the result of his prowess.

The country opposite Mozum is well wooded, and at one time was thickly peopled; Lander, Baikie, and Hutchinson speak of many villages. Nothing now remains but heaps of ruins blackened by smoke, and of these every vestige is disappearing under the luxuriant wealth of vegetation. This, too, was at one time the great cotton market of this part of the Niger basin; it is now an almost uninhabited waste. This desolation is the handiwork of the Mahommedans raiding in quest of

slaves. They have attempted to cross the river at this point, and carry their raids into the Bassa country; but the people, supported by the Niger Company and the river, have effectually held them in check. At Bohu on the south bank, and at Yamaha on the north, stoppages were made, and interviews held with the natives chiefs.

Bohu is prettily situated, but is a dirty village, inhabited mostly by Bassas. Here we encountered our first tornado, but it was only a baby one, and beyond blowing a gale with thunder and lightning accompaniment for about three minutes, did no particular harm.

We anchored for the night in midstream; the thermometer was 78°, and the night deliciously cool and pleasant. Starting the next morning at daybreak, we passed the villages of Amaran and Amagede; the former is very prettily situated. On the return journey I landed here and had a palavar with the chief; he seemed an intelligent man, and recognised the treaty obligations he held with the Niger Company. He was, however, somewhat nervous of his warlike *vis-à-vis* the Emir of Nassarawa, who during the dry season, when the river did not present such a formidable obstacle, was in the habit of raiding for slaves on to his side of the river.

At 4 p.m. on the 5th, we arrived at Loko. Here the Niger Company have a large trading station, under the management of a native agent; it is the port of the Nassarawa district. The Emir was fortunately at home at the time of our arrival at the village; I accordingly sent him a message informing him of my arrival, and that I had come as the messenger of the Queen of England, to confer with the chiefs and Emirs of the Niger and Benue, and requested that he would come and visit me.

Accordingly, at about 5 p.m., a very considerable commotion on the river bank announced the arrival of the Emir. This was my first meeting with one of the much-talked-of Fulbe Emirs (or provincial governors) of the Western Soudan, and I am bound to say in personal appearance he quite came up to my expectations. He appeared on the bank surrounded by a mounted retinue, he himself being mounted on a small country-bred horse, some 14·2 or 14·3 hands, which was cruelly bitted in the usual native fashion; a peaked saddle of Haussa leatherwork, the usual collection of pieces of leather, string, bits of chain, and charms consisting of verses from the Koran in little leather cases, which collection usually does duty as the bridle of an Arab horseman, and a gay saddlo cloth, completed the trappings of his little steed. The Emir himself was wearing a large white turban with a scarlet peak; round the front of the turban was wound a piece of leather from which hung several charms similar to those which ornamented, and at the same time protected, his horse from evil spirits and other alarming possibilities; from one side of the turban hung a piece of black muslin, which was brought round and in front of the face similar

to the muslin yashmak worn by Turkish ladies. He was dressed in a voluminous "tobe" handsomely embroidered with green silk; very baggy trousers and embroidered scarlet shoes completed his costume.

Our ship lay as close to the bank as her draught would allow of, and was connected therewith by a narrow plank. The Emir negociated the bank with some skill, and then, to my amusement, prepared to ride his horse along the plank; this somewhat novel way of coming on board was not however a success, and would have resulted inevitably in both the Emir and his steed falling into the river, so I sent him a message to say that I should be pleased to see him without his horse; he accordingly dismounted, and, followed by his somewhat dirty retinue, came on board.

The interview was a satisfactory one, and everything passed off harmoniously; the Emir was accompanied by the Endeji, or prime minister, a class of official who, in all my subsequent interviews with Mahommedan potentates of the Niger and Benue, gave more trouble than the potentates themselves.

As the Emir was leaving, the Endeji whispered to my interpreter that his master would like to see me on a matter of importance, but privately; I said I should be glad to see him that evening at nine. Accordingly, at the hour named, two figures were seen approaching through the darkness, which soon resolved themselves into the Emir disguised as a common Arab, but with rather a rakish-looking hat about the size and shape of a hip bath, and the Endeji similarly attired. They were shown with much secrecy into the little deck cabin where I usually held my palavers. There were present Captain Ferryman, my Haussa interpreter, the Emir, and his prime minister. After the usual salutations, the Emir commenced a speech, which had evidently been prepared by the prime minister; he said that he and his people were not tillers of the soil, they did not dig the ground, neither did they barter ivory or palm oil like the merchants from Kano and the north, and like the white men, subjects of the great white queen—no, they were fighting people; they fought the Pagans and made slaves of them. He had to send a tribute of 200 slaves to his master, the Sultan of Sokoto, and had great difficulty in getting them. Now, as I was all powerful, could I not, by the authority of my queen, make the white traders sell him rifles and cartridges, so that he might raid the tribes on the other side of the river and thus get what he wanted. Of course these rifles and cartridges would only be used against the Pagans, and not against the white men.

I pointed out that as he and his men were such warriors, surely they had their swords and bows and arrows, to fight against the Kaffirs, who were only armed with bows and arrows. I said also that the Queen, my mistress, ruled over not only her white subjects but many millions of people of the same religion and colour as himself, and she had found it sometimes very inconvenient to give them rifles and cartridges, which

had been used against her own soldiers. Besides, as he knew, the Queen and people of England hated slavery and the raiding of slaves, and therefore on no account could arms or ammunition be sold or given to him. He said, "Is this truly so?" I said, "It is so." The Emir, but more especially his prime minister, seemed very dejected at my words. I told them on parting that it would in every way be better for them if, instead of raiding their Pagan neighbours, they occupied themselves in tilling the soil. I am afraid, however, that my words fell on very stony ground.

Loko was a place of very considerable importance, but the glory has somewhat departed, as the Haussa traders now bring their caravans of ivory, &c., from the south, through Bakundi and places further east. The place is clean and well kept, being a collection of family enclosures, a certain number of huts being encircled by a sort of fencing about seven feet high, made of matting. It is the principal starting place in the Benue for messengers to Sokoto, and contains upwards of 4000 inhabitants, and is the port of Nassarawa.

At daybreak next morning we left Loko, and towards evening got into the Mitshi country.

This tribe have an exceedingly bad reputation, being savage and treacherous; they have no paramount chief or head, being split up into numberless families, they are thus exceedingly difficult to deal with, as a treaty made with a man representing himself to be a chief is simply laughed at by the rest; they have kept the Mahommedans in check, and occupy both banks of the river. At one time a considerable trade was done with them, and they had a wholesome dread of the white man, thinking that he had descended from the skies and was invulnerable. On a certain occasion, in the year 1885, a slight dispute arose with an agent of one of the trading companies whose stores had been robbed by some of the Mitshis. In the heat of the argument one of the young men of the tribe slipped a poisoned arrow from his bow, it is generally supposed in order to test the so-called invulnerability of the white man; the arrow just grazed the neck of a white clerk named Hoyland, scarcely breaking the skin. As the demeanour of the Mitshis was exceedingly threatening, the agent, named Griffiths, and his clerk retreated to the river, only a few hundred yards away, but before they reached it the unfortunate clerk had succumbed to the poison in the wound. The Mitshis finding that, so far as invulnerability is concerned, the white man very much resembled themselves, rose generally, and burnt the various factories and massacred as many white men as they could find. The agent Griffiths was treacherously murdered in December of the same year, and his skull is still used as a fetish by the Mitshis. Retribution was dealt out to them by the Niger Company in 1886, and several of their villages were destroyed.

The Mitshi country is a very fine one and well wooded, it is traversed by the river Katsena Allah, and there are silver and galena mines on

the right bank of the Katsena, which were being worked at the time when the disturbance took place. At the time of my visit to the Benue, all communication between the Niger Company and the Benue had ceased, and we steamed through without stopping. We passed several villages. The people turned out in considerable numbers; they seemed to be physically a fine race. The men leant on their spears and gazed at our big steamer without any symptoms of fear, while the women and children peeped out of the doors of their huts. Their villages were of the usual family enclosure order—a number of little huts, mud walls and thatched roofs, surrounded by a 7-foot fence of matting.

On Wednesday the 7th of August, we passed the mouth of the Katsena Allah; no mention is made of this river, or of the Donga and Bakundi, in Baikie's account of his exploration of the Benue to which I have alluded. The country is now more open, and freer from forest. Patches of green park-like looking grass appear; this grass, however, on closer acquaintance, is found to be some seven feet high, it dies down in the dry season, when the country swarms with game, the deer roaming about in large herds. At the time of our visit, the river having overflowed its banks, the deer and other wild animals had retreated into the thick jungle; we occasionally caught a glimpse of them, and in the Bakundi river shot a fine water buck, also saw an elephant swim the river in front of us, but could not get a shot.

At 9 p.m. on the following day we arrived at Ibi; this is a large station of the Niger Company, and their headquarters in the Benue; the people here belong to the Djuku tribe, and seem most intelligent, peaceful, and good tempered. Their king came on the following day to pay his respects; he declared himself to be perfectly happy and contented under the rule of the white man, and indeed nothing could be more friendly or good-natured than the behaviour of his people. The king was dressed in voluminous robes and a white turban; though he and his people are Pagans, they are independent of the Emir of Muri, who, however, surrounds them on all sides.

That afternoon, by special request, a number of Djuku warriors and Djuku belles paraded in their best clothes, the warriors armed to the teeth, each man carrying a bundle of spears, their poisoned barbs being protected, in some instances, by a sort of cylindrical cap made of deer-skin; the women were attired in bright-coloured cloths, usually two in number, one being brought round the body under the arms, and the other, which was generally of a brighter colour, thrown over the shoulders. Captain Ferryman produced his camera, and several groups were taken which promised to turn out very well—they were, however, all spoilt. The ladies of the tribe, on being told that we were taking sun pictures of them, were immensely interested, and grouped themselves with great readiness. I wandered about with a small hand camera and took furtive shots, some of which have come out fairly well.

Experience taught me that the removal of the cap from the lens when photographing was invariably followed by the hurried removal of the subject about to be photographed, who, apparently thought that the removal of the cap would be followed by an explosion or the letting loose of the fetish which the box undoubtedly contained. I consequently used to come into action with the camera ready loaded, the cap in my pocket, and with the instantaneous machinery prepared; I would then gaze into the sky and down into the camera, when I saw a nice picture reflected in the little detector, I would press the pneumatic ball, a slight click, and all was over. The Ibi photographs were the only ones in the Benue where the subjects had the least idea that they were "being took."

The next morning, August 11th, we left Ibi, thermometer, at 9 a.m., 75°, very cool and pleasant. We steamed the whole of that day without stopping; having covered about 50 miles of ground, we anchored at sunset in mid-stream, the river being some two miles broad. Soon after we had anchored the moon rose grandly over a low dark line of forest-covered hill, and threw her silver reflection on the magnificent expanse of water—a truly lovely sight. The whole of the day we had seen very few villages. Shortly after leaving Ibi, we passed the mouth of the Donga river, which we left for the return journey; also near the mouth the town of Zhibu, where Baikie and his companions were very rudely treated by the Emir. This town has always kept up a reputation for turbulence and general refractoriness, and has twice been punished by the Niger Company. Nominally it is under the Emir of Muri, who, however, seems unable to keep the place in order, and has to rely mainly on the Company to punish his turbulent subjects. Matters were very peaceful when we passed.

In the early morning of the 12th August, we up anchor and got under weigh; saw a herd of antelope, but they were too far off to get a shot. The scenery became still more open, though villages were few. At mid-day we passed the entrance of the Bakundi river; at 6 p.m. we anchored at a small village called Mainaraiwa. This is a "wooding station," where depots of wood are kept for the use of the Company's steamers.

The people here seemed to be somewhat wild and savage. We received a visit from the Emir of Muri's executioner, who happened to be in the neighbourhood. He explained the process, which consisted in first clubbing the victim on the head, and then cutting it off with a sword. He seemed to take a pride in his profession, and was withal a most cheerful executioner. In the morning, Captain Ferryman shot some white egret, with beautiful back feathers, and I bagged a fine spur-winged goose—the spur on the wing being as large as a tiger's claw.

At 1 p.m. on the 14th August, we reached Lau. We were still in the

jurisdiction of the Emir of Muri, and the people were by way of being Mahommedans, though their Mahommedanism was very much on the surface. Here we saw a good number of women, who were Fulbe, or rather had Fulbe blood in their veins; they dressed their hair in a peculiar way, viz. over a pad in shape resembling a policeman's helmet, though not quite so high. The hair, which was about a foot long, was brought up and dressed over the pad; down the centre of the helmet were stuck a variety of ornaments; the two side locks were plaited and brought down on either side of the face.

There is a considerable trade done here in tin, which is collected by the natives in the streams which come down from the hills; they melt it down and bring it for barter in the shape of wire about half the thickness of one's little finger. The tin is of very good quality. Gum copal, gutta-percha, rubber, and gum arabic are the other articles of trade.

The scenery, after leaving Lau and before arriving at Djen, is very fine. Ranges of hills appear on both sides, the Muri range on the north, some six or seven miles from the river, rising to a height of several thousand feet, and the Fumbina to the south, some 15 miles from the river.

The country is very thickly populated and completely unexplored on both sides of the river. Great future possibilities in the way of plantation exist here, for the climate seems suitable for tea, coffee, and rice. We passed several villages, where the people fled *en masse* and hid in the surrounding fields of millet. We could see warriors armed with bow and spear standing as outposts at the corner of the fields, whilst hidden in the corn were their wives and children. We shouted salutations to them, and they would then in some instances return to the bank and run along shouting and laughing and clapping their hands.

We stopped at Djen to purchase live stock. Here the people were very friendly, though their costume was somewhat startling, the ladies of the tribe being the principal offenders in this respect, the majority of them being absolutely without clothes of any kind. Barth, in his travels, says:—"I have observed that many of these simple tribes deem some sort of covering, however scanty it might be, more essential for the men than the women."

The people of Djen closely resemble those of Lau. They are Battawa, speaking the Djuku dialect. The members of Baikie's expedition in 1854 were the first white men the people of Djen had seen, and it was with considerable difficulty that they were able to get away. We passed other villages, amongst them Dulti, where Baikie's expedition turned back. The people looked wild and savage, and for the most part fled into the bush at the sight of our two black funnels pouring out smoke.

On the following day, August 16th, we started at daybreak, and at 10 a.m. arrived at Numan, a prettily situated village on the south bank,

surrounded for some distance with cultivation, principally millet, Indian corn, and cassava. The king or chief of this place is a very old man, exceedingly friendly with the white men and most anxious to trade. I went on shore to see him, and we held a palaver under some trees on the river bank. His people had, however, all fled on the approach of our steamer, and the king and his court—some half-dozen naked and very savage-looking men—alone remained. I told the chief to send messengers to collect his people and tell them to come in and not be afraid. As the palaver continued, groups of men, women, and children kept coming in, and I must say they were a savage-looking crew, have the reputation of being good fighters and also good agriculturists. The men were all armed with bows and spears; indeed, in the whole of this part of the Benue it is very rare to see a man or a boy without a bow or spear. We had a very friendly interview, and parted with many protestations of goodwill. These people were owners of several herds of cattle and some really very good-looking ponies. Getting under way, we arrived at noon at a place called Bula. This consists of a collection of some half-dozen villages, and the people bore rather a bad reputation for plundering and savage propensities generally, and are at war with most of their neighbours, including our friends at Numan, who call them "bad people." One of their villages had been burnt down in 1888 by the Niger Company as a punishment for having attacked and plundered a surf boat coming down the river. Ours was the first steamer that had visited this part since that episode, and we were consequently doubtful of our reception. On our approach the villages were deserted; not a sign of a living being was to be seen, except, far away in the fields of millet, the occasional gleam of a spear denoted where the people were in hiding; we, however, anchored close in to one of the villages, and sent one of our interpreters on shore, who was a Haussa, but could speak Djuko. We heard him, wandering about through the deserted streets of the village, shouting out messages of peace in the Djuko tongue; at last, from the inmost recesses of one of the inclosures an old man appeared, and, after some demur and palaver in the millet fields, some more men came, and eventually an evil-looking individual, in a very tattered cotton night-shirt, who they said was the chief. We instantly began to barter, paying rather fancy prices for wood and live stock, and in twenty minutes were surrounded by half the village, all talking at once and in the best of tempers. I took a walk through the village, which was of very considerable extent, and consisted of the usual collection of huts, each enclosure fenced in by matting. We stayed here two hours, until confidence was thoroughly restored, and parted very good friends, and the chief presented me with his own spear, which is looked upon as a great honour, so our interpreter informed us. At 7.30 the same night we anchored off Gire. The people here are Battas, and their language is spoken on the north

bank, from Bassama to the east of the Taburi marsh. It is also spoken along the Faro river beyond Mount Alantika, and also the whole region north, from these rivers as far as the southern boundaries of Bornu, and is different from the language spoken by the people of Bula, with whom the Battawa have no communication, and also look upon as "bad people." It is in their language that the river has received its name, Be signifying "water," and nuwe "mother," hence Mother of Waters. Their prince, Kokomi, was, previous to their conquest by the Fulbe, the most powerful chief in the country.

As it was dark, we sent messengers on shore to ask if some of the head people would come off and see the Messenger of the Great Queen. In about an hour's time the chief of the village and some of his retinue came off and had a palaver. Considering that they had in all probability never seen a white man, I was rather surprised at their temerity. The interview was very interesting, and the Battas, as represented by their chief, seem to be a very pleasing people. They informed me that from that day forth the life of a white man should be sacred in all their territories.

We were now on the borders of the great Mahommedan dependency of Sokato, Adamawa, "a Mahommedan kingdom engrafted upon a mixed stock of Pagan tribes—the conquest of the valorous and fanatic Fulbe chieftain, Adama, over the great Pagan kingdom of Fumbina."

On Saturday August 17th, away at daybreak, and at 9 a.m. anchored close along shore on the southern bank. The country hereabouts was very pretty, being hilly, the hills where we were anchored coming right down to the river bank.

On the opposite side of the river there was a fine range of mountains stretching away to the north. Captain Ferryman and myself spent the morning in exploring the country on the south bank and looking for ornithological specimens, of which we got several. We had a very pleasant climb to the top of the hill, from which we got a most lovely view of the town of Yola, which lay at our feet a mile and a half from the edge of a large lake. The plateau on which we were standing was some 600 feet above the river, and completely commanded the town, which was some three miles distant. The town itself is of considerable size, and consists of a collection of brown thatched huts, each enclosure being planted with trees; so from where we stood Yola looked like a collection of several thousand haystacks, in different shades of brown, some large, some small, embosomed in trees, which had a very pretty effect. The lake of which I have spoken is merely an overflow of the Benue; in the dry season it dwindles down to a fourth its present size; as we saw it, it must have covered several hundred acres, and was very nearly at its highest level. To the south-east we saw a fine range of mountains, dark-blue in the distance; to the eastward wound the river Benue, still a noble stream nearly a mile wide.

The plateau on which we were standing, like the remainder of the country round Yola, was cultivated with millet, *Pennisetum typhoideum*, and Indian corn, sweet potatoes, yams, manioc. Pretty little farms were dotted here and there, their brown thatched roofs contrasting very bonnily with the fresh green of the surrounding cultivation. The sun was hot, but a delightful breeze swept over the country and made "waves of shadow" over the fields of maize and millet. The people came out of the farms, and were most polite, though our interchange of civilities was carried on by means of signs; they were Mahommedans, and consequently clothed, their religion also accounted for their civility.

The Emir of Yola was at the time of our visit suffering from a fit of very bad temper, and had declared his intention of never receiving a white man again; and though I sent him a copy of my Commission from Her Majesty (translated into the Haussa language and written in the Arab character), to show that I was in reality the messenger of the Queen of England, together with friendly messages; he was obdurate, and refused to see me unless I could produce a letter from the Sultan of Sokoto, his master. As I had not such a commodity, and it would take several months to get one, I sent him further polite messages, and returned in my steam launch to our floating home, the *Boussa*.

I mentioned that I would be returning in ten days or so, and that I hoped he would then be able to see me. Fits of temper seem to be hereditary in the Emirs of Yola. The Emir Mohammed Lawal, son of the Sultan Adama and brother of the present Emir, ordered the great traveller Barth, the first European who had ever visited the country, out of his territories, after he had journeyed from Kukawa to see him. The command ordering him to leave was brought to him by messengers, and was couched in the following words, which are Dr. Barth's own:—"The Sultan [all these Emirs or provincial governors bear the title of Sultan] had ordered them to beg me to accept his most respectful regards, and to inform me that he was nothing but a slave of the Sultan of Sokoto, and that I was a far greater man than himself. As such a man had never before come to his country he was afraid of his liege lord, and begged me to retrace my steps from whence I had come; but if in course of time I should return with a letter from Sokoto, he would receive me with open arms."

This occurred on the 22nd June, 1851; the message was almost identical with the one sent to me by the present Emir.

Before leaving this subject I may say that, on our return journey, I sent Captain Ferryman, together with my Haussa interpreter, into Yola to see whether the Emir was in a better frame of mind. Captain Ferryman succeeded in seeing the Emir's eldest son, called the Yerima, and his brother, and was well received by them; they said that now they knew who we were, the Emir would certainly see us next day at 10 a.m. Though it had been my intention to proceed down the river

with all possible despatch, as I had yet a great deal to do, I sent a message to say that I would come to the edge of the lake next morning by 10 a.m., and would wait one hour. This I accordingly did; but as there were no signs of any body appearing, I returned to the *Boussa* and steamed down the river. Captain Ferryman reported that the town of Yola was of considerable extent, the house of the Yerima being upwards of a mile from the entrance to the town. The town consisted of enclosures of half a dozen huts, sometimes more, surrounded in some cases by a mud wall about 10 feet high, the whole enclosing a good sized compound, in which corn, millet, and sweet potatoes were growing. The huts of the poorer inhabitants have the usual mat fencing. The whole town was well shaded with trees, and the roads through the town, though narrow, are clean, as the soil for the most part is sandy.

The house of the Yerima was, of course, of the better kind, having an entrance-hut or hall called the "Segifa." From here Captain Ferryman was conducted through a small yard, then through another hut, then a second yard, and then into the reception hut, which was strewn with sand and fine pebbles; this is used by the Fulbe for palavers.

We left Yola on our way up the river at daybreak, on the 19th August, through varying scenery, the hills coming at first close to the water's edge; to the south was the isolated peak of Bagele, one of the last strongholds of the Pagan Batta tribes to the east of Yola. In 1853, Mohammed Lawal sallied forth with an immense host, and after a siege of almost two months, succeeded in conquering the mountaineers and reducing them to slavery. Nearer to Yola the detached cone of Takabello formed a conspicuous object, rising to a height of 1000 feet, while in the far distance the mountain mass of Alantika, the home of several independent Pagan chiefs, towered 8000 feet above the plain.

At 3 p.m. we reached the junction of the Faro and Benue, the former a fine sheet of water, broader but shallower, and with a swifter current than the "Mother of Waters." It was here that, on the 18th June, 1851, the great traveller Barth first struck the Benue, which "far exceeded his most lively expectations." He says, "The principal river here flowed from east to west in a broad and majestic course through an open country, from which only here and there detached mountains started forth. The banks on our side, i. e. the north, rose to 25 feet, and in some places to 30 feet, while just opposite, behind a pointed headland of sand, the Faro rushed forth, coming in a fine sweep from the south-east, where it disappeared in the plain, but was traced by me in thought upwards to the steep eastern foot of the Alantika. The river below the junction, keeping the direction of the principal branch, but making a slight bend to the north, ran along the northern foot of Mount Bagele, and was there lost to the eye, but was followed in thought through the mountainous region of the Bassama to Hamarua, and thence along the industrious country of Kororofa till it joined the great western

river, Kwarra or Niger, and conjointly with it ran towards the great ocean."

After passing Taepe, a small village on the north bank (Tepe, a Fulbe word meaning junction), the Benue narrowed considerably, and in places the channel is not more than 300 yards wide, but flowing with a rapid current through dense jungle, which came to the water's edge. The depth of the channel here was 16 fathoms. At the back of the jungle the country appeared to be open, with isolated hills wooded to their summits, and small ranges, some two miles in length, lying back from the river. On the following day, at about 11 a.m., we arrived at Garua in the Ribago province. The Emir of Ribago is under Yola. He happened to be in town on the day of my arrival; his residence is some distance in the direction of a fine range of mountains which lie to the north-east of the town. I sent a message to say that the envoy of the Queen of England would be glad to see him on board; to this came back a reply to the effect that the Emir was too ill to come himself, but that he would be very glad to receive myself or my vizier. As I was not certain of the truth of the first part of the message, and not wishing to lower the status of an English envoy in the eyes of the Mahommedans, who would only be too quick to notice that I had been to see the Emir, and not that the Emir had come to see me, I directed Captain Ferryman to take friendly messages and compliments, also a present from Her Majesty to the Emir. Captain Ferryman reported that he was met at the landing stage by several attendants, who brought with them a very well-shaped country-bred horse, and preceded by four horsemen and accompanied by half a dozen footmen, all armed to the teeth, he rode up to the Emir's house. The Emir was an old man enveloped in robes, with the usual black veil or lingham across the lower part of his face. He was very friendly, but impressed upon Captain Ferryman that he was under the Emir of Yola and the Sultan of Sokoto, and was personally very desirous of being friendly with the white men. He expressed himself very gratified with the presents from Her Majesty, and made a return present of live stock, which we subsequently ate.

On leaving the King's house, Captain Ferryman met and had some conversation with the representative of Bornu at the Court of Garua. Most of the provincial governors, Muri, Yola, Bautshi, Zaria, &c., have representatives from Bornu and the Houssa kingdom staying with them.

Garua is, as I have said, the chief town of a province which is a dependency of Yola, of which indeed it may be said to form a part. The town much resembles Yola, only it is about one-third the size. The people are Fulbe or their descendents, and seemed remarkably pleasant and friendly, and I saw some very good-looking women amongst them, with most cheery and expressive features. The country round is open and under cultivation. The principal feature, however, is the fine range of mountains which I have mentioned, and which is distant about

15 miles E.N.E. of the town. They run north and south, the southernmost spurs coming right down to the north bank of the river. They are, I should say, between 2000 and 3000 feet high. I went out with my gun and shot some large kinds of stork, also some crown birds or Balearic cranes, which latter are extremely common in the Benue and Upper Niger.

The range of mountains of which I have spoken are peopled by a wild and warlike race of Pagans, who have defied all attempts of the Fulbe to subdue them, indeed have almost always come off best in their encounters with the Mahommedans, and have raided the ivory caravans travelling to Kano and Kuka right up to the walls of Gurua. In 1887 this tribe, who are called Tangalia, a section of the Battawa, attacked a caravan of ivory merchants on the outskirts of Garua, killing thirty-five men, and escaping with their booty. An encounter had taken place about a fortnight before we arrived, in which the Mahommedans had to retire with a loss of eleven killed. The Tangalia are under a chief named Shabana, who has a lieutenant called Fere, and their word is law. The Tangalia wear no clothes, the men wear a string of cowries, from which depends an apron of skins, the women wear nothing but a string round their waists; those who wish to excel their sisters in the matter of frocks, beat out the bark of the Kuka tree till it resembles a horse's mane, and wear it as an apron.

In 1885 the Emir of Yola sent an expedition against them, but lost forty men in the attack and beat a hasty retreat.

The Tangalia number upwards of 1000 fighting men; they practise polygamy when they can afford it, and their only pursuits are growing corn and raiding the Fulbe.

We had now reached the farthermost station of the Royal Niger Company. The river was still a fine stream, at this season of the year some six or seven hundred yards wide, and six or seven fathoms deep in the channel. Half-a-mile above the town on the north side it had overflowed its banks and formed a good-sized lake, now covered with waterfowl; to the south and south-east the country seemed flat. On making inquiries amongst the Niger Company's officials and the people of the place, I ascertained that the main river for some distance flowed from the east, but shortly after being joined by a river called the Kebbi, which appeared to come from the north-east, the Benue proper took a southerly course and had its source in the Bub'n Jidda mountains. The company at one time carried on trading operations in the Bub'n Jidda country, and had navigated the river as far as the mountains of that name, until it became little better than a mountain torrent. With regard to the Kebbi very little was known; it had never been navigated by a white man, but it was supposed to come from Lake Chad.

Barth, writing in 1853, says, "That this river, the Benue, is anywhere called the Chadda, I doubt very much, and I am surprised that

the members of the late expedition in the *Pleiad* (Baikie) do not say a word on this point. I think the name Chadda was a mere mistake of Lander, confirmed by Allen, owing to their fancying it an outlet of Lake Chad."

Though I was aware that the local rumour with regard to the Kebbi having its source in Lake Chad was nothing more than a rumour, I thought it would be interesting to explore this river; firstly, because it had never been visited by a white man, and secondly, to verify and reach, if possible, the southernmost point of the Tuburi marsh, laid down by Dr. Vogel, one of Barth's lieutenants, in 1854.

Barth, writing of this, says, "Dr. Vogel, accompanying a slave-raiding expedition undertaken by the Fulbe usurper, Abd-el-Rahman, in the rainy season of 1854, pushed on into the very country of the Tuburi, and laid down that most interesting point by astronomical observation, although the great lake which my friend thought to find there was apparently nothing but a widening of that stagnant water-course which forms the north-eastern branch of the Benue, namely, the Kebbi."

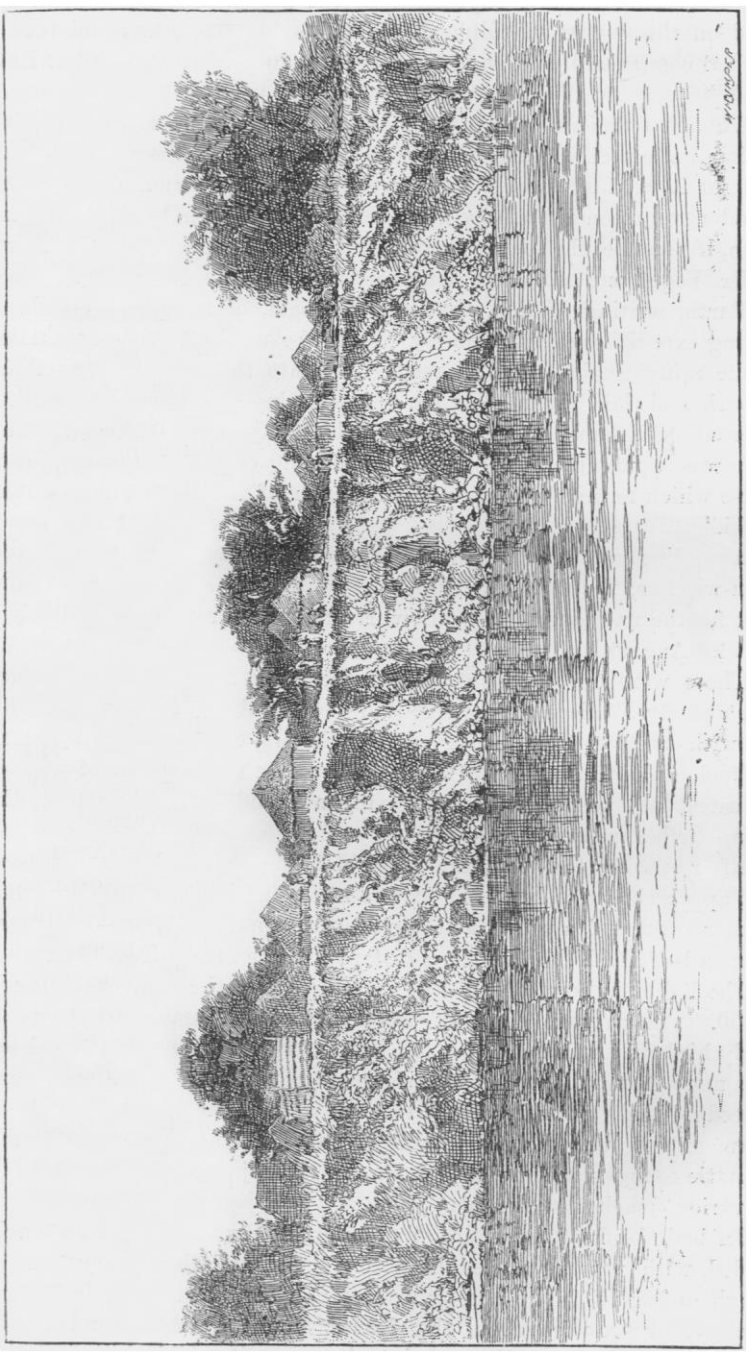
Accordingly, having obtained the use of the Royal Niger Company's stern-wheeler, *The Benue*, a little craft eminently suited and specially built for the navigation of shallow rivers, we started on Wednesday, the 21st August, at 11 a.m.

There were on board our little craft, beside myself, Captain Ferryman and Mr. Wallace, acting Agent of the Royal Niger Company. We had with us 25 natives as servants, engineers, crew, and interpreters, and took a plentiful supply of Manchester goods for purposes of trade—the safest and best means of receiving a friendly reception from the strange tribes we expected to meet.

After passing the mountain range of the Tangalia, which, as I have said, approaches closely to the river's bank, and which from our little steamer presented a grand and picturesque appearance, we arrived at the mouth of the Kebbi, which is distant some ten miles from Garua.

The Kebbi is here some 250 yards wide, while the Benue is upwards of 600. The average depth of the Kebbi at this season of the year, nearly high water, is from 10 to 12 feet. As our little craft only drew little more than a foot we had no fear of grounding. We at once commenced to make a survey of the river as well as the limited supply of instruments at our command would permit of, taking bearings with the prismatic compass, and plotting down the river, judging the distance of the various reaches by the eye.

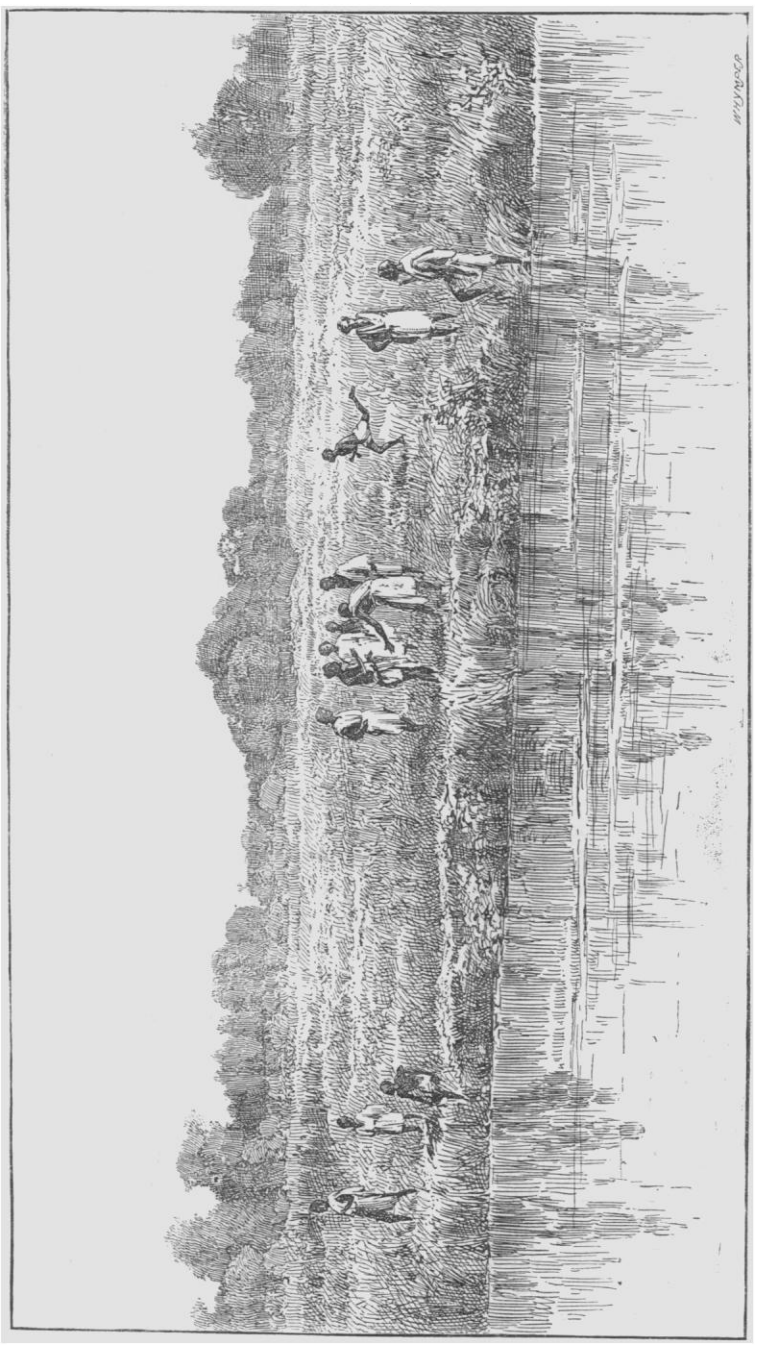
On both banks for the first five miles the country is flat and well wooded, with patches of bright green grass, and looks very gamey, though owing to the high grass we saw no deer. A noticeable feature some five or six miles from the river is Mount Katie, a rounded hill, some 800 feet high, well wooded to its summit. This hill, from its



DINGHI.

isolated position, served as an excellent point on which to take angles for mapping purposes. Patches of cultivation were now to be seen on both banks, and after two hours' steaming we passed the Fulbe village of Dinghi. The inhabitants, though they had never before seen a steamer or a white man, did not seem much disconcerted, and, when shouted to in their language, returned our salutations in a very friendly manner. After passing the villages of Be and Malum, on the left and right banks of the river respectively, we anchored at sunset in 1½ fathoms. Starting next morning at daybreak (22nd August), after two hours' steaming against a 4-knot current, we approached a large village, standing about half-a-mile from the river on the left bank. We noticed several women and lads hiding in the corn, and saw by their clothes, or rather by their being clothed, that they were Fulbe. So we told one of our interpreters, who was a Fulbe, to hail them and tell them that we were white men and would like to talk to them. Running our little ship alongside, we made fast to a tree. The hiders in the corn came out by twos and threes, and gradually we had quite a large crowd, and this notwithstanding that they had to wade across a small lagoon, the water of which in most instances came up to their waists. We very soon saw that we had to deal with the purest-bred Fulbe we had seen so far. The crowd consisted almost entirely of women—by far the best-looking we had as yet seen in the Niger, and indeed the best-looking I have seen in either east or west Equatorial Africa. They wore the usual piece of cloth wound round their bodies, leaving their arms and shoulders bare, and reaching down below the knee. Their features, in most cases, approached the European, and their expression most gentle and modest, yet full of vivacity. They told us that the name of their village was Pamu, and that it was governed by an Emir, who was under the jurisdiction of the Emir of Yola. The men were armed with spear and bow and arrows, though they are said to be an agricultural people, and certainly it would seem so, for every yard of ground in the neighbourhood of Pamu was under cultivation. We asked them if they would bring us provisions in exchange for cloth; this they readily did, and we soon were hard at it, bartering pieces of cloth, salt, &c., for live stock, weapons, ornaments, and indeed anything. The whole time nothing but the greatest good temper prevailed, and I was much struck by their gentleness and courtesy; albeit the ladies were very good at a bargain, and I noticed that when it came to bartering their ornaments, members of the fair sex who were not so young or so fair as their more fortunate sisters in this respect, surreptitiously handed their ornaments to the latter to dispose of, hoping thereby to get better value, and I am bound to confess they did.

The people of Pamu seemed to know very little of the country to which we were going, and could give us no information as to where the river came from.



PAMU.

We left Pamu at 10 a.m., after promising our fair traders most faithfully to look in on our return journey.

The river now ran due north and south, and we passed two little hamlets, Chow and Piske (both inhabited by Fulbe), the former at noon, and the latter at 1 p.m., after leaving which we steamed for the rest of the day without seeing a human being or habitation of any kind. Due west of Chow we saw, at a distance of 10 or 15 miles from the river, a fine range of hills, the highest peaks of which must have been 1000 feet high.

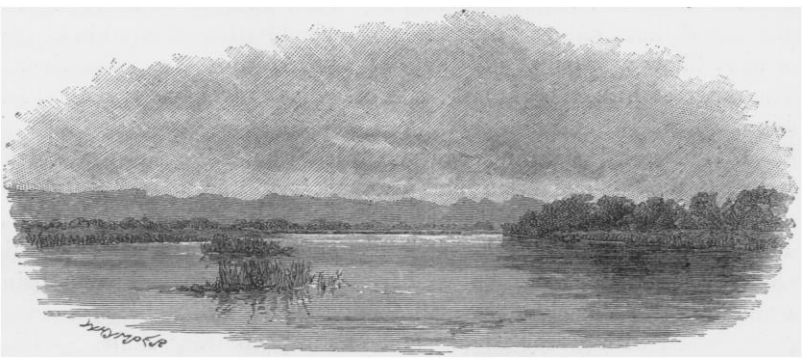
This deserted strip of country, which was evidently the barrier between the Mahommedan and Pagan tribes, was of an undulating character, with isolated hills, and well wooded. We saw numbers of birds—kingfishers, fish eagles, pelicans—and later in the afternoon disturbed some hippopotami, but as I have said, not a single human being or habitation. The river was still about 100 yards wide, but commenced to be dotted with grassy islands, and was in parts very shallow with a sandy bottom. At sunset we anchored in mid-stream. On the right, about a mile off, was the commencement of a range of grass-covered hills, from 1800 to 2000 feet high, while straight ahead and almost due north was a magnificent range of rocky peaks, with what appeared to be a chasm through which we conjectured the river might find its way. This rocky range was apparently some five miles distant. Some of the peaks were, I should say, quite 2000 feet high.

We passed a quiet night, disturbed only by the wallowings of an occasional hippo.

At daybreak we were under steam again, and were all alert, as the country seemed to be about to assume a completely different character, the undulating grassy plain dotted with small hills giving place to a more mountainous region. The river now narrowed again and made a sharp bend to the eastward, and, rather to my disappointment, approached the grassy range of mountains, leaving the higher range to the north. Half an hour after starting we arrived at the foot of the grassy slopes of the former; a pathway, which we could trace for a considerable distance, wound up the face of the mountain and disappeared over one of its grassy ridges. Patches of cultivation could be seen dotted here and there; the main valley stretched back some three or four miles, but we could see no signs of a village.

We were, however, not left long in doubt as to whether the country was inhabited or not, nor as to the character of the inhabitants, for down the winding path, which was distant some 600 yards from where we were, came a line of warriors, some 200 in number; the majority of them were quite naked, though some few had a small cloth round their waists. They were all armed, mostly with spears, the almost invariable number being three. Leaving the pathway, they advanced in excellent order across the boulder-covered grassy piece of ground which lay

between the river and the mountain side. We accordingly moved into mid-stream, which was only some 15 yards from the bank, and dropped anchor in about 4 feet of water. Our friends advanced straight at us, not a word being spoken, but an excellent line being maintained, when



THE KEBBI BELOW CHOW.

suddenly they all took cover behind boulders and tufts of grass, nothing being visible but the gleaming points of their spears. It was a source of some gratification to us that the points were gleaming, for it showed that at any rate they were not poisoned.

There was now a pause. Then our Fulbe interpreter, under my directions opened fire in a dialect of the Battawa, with satisfactory results, for they appeared to understand him. Their first question was as to whether "we were Mahommedans? because if so we could not pass, as they were the outposts of the Pagan tribes, and had orders not to allow Mahommedans to pass." We assured them that we were not Mahommedans. They then told us, in answer to our queries, that the name of their village was Katsho, and that it lay back from the river amongst the hills; they said that if we went on we would come to more villages. After a great deal of persuasion two of their number consented to come on board. So we sent a six-oared gig, which we had towed up with us in case of accidents, to fetch them. They were fine, well-made men, but were trembling with fright at the sight of the steamer and white men, and prostrated themselves on the deck at our feet. These two men wore loin clothes of native manufacture; the great majority of the others were, as I have said, naked.

After getting as much information out of these men as we could, which information, on account of their terror and the difficulty in interpreting, was somewhat meagre, we proceeded on our way.

By this time large numbers of men and boys had assembled, and ran along the banks gesticulating and pointing at our little ship. They, men and boys alike, were all armed, mostly with spears; we saw very few bows and arrows.

The scenery now was very picturesque, to our right, i. e. the south of the river, some few yards from the water's edge, the mountains rose in some places quite abruptly. These mountains were for the most part covered with green wavy grass very pleasant to the eye. One or two streams trickled down the mountain side, forming now and again picturesque waterfalls. The river had suddenly broadened out to a lake, or more properly speaking, marsh, some three miles long by two wide. The range of grassy mountains I have mentioned ran along the southern shores of the lake and terminated with it. The country on the east and north shores of the lake, as far as the eye could see in the direction of the Tuburi marsh, was open and gently undulating, while from the western shores of the lake the beautiful range of mountains, with their needle-shaped peaks, stretched back apparently for many miles. In the north-east corner of the lake we saw a very large village some two miles distant, this we afterwards ascertained was Bifare. The channel of the river evidently followed the base of the southern hills. We accordingly steamed gaily along, followed on the shore by an ever increasing crowd, till we arrived at a large village prettily situated almost on the edge of the lake. The houses or huts were built in clusters, each cluster apparently belonging to a different family. The huts were very well constructed, having round walls some 6 feet high, with flat roofs formed by beams covered over with mud and thatch.

The walls of the huts were made of black and in some places red mud, and the workmanship of both walls and roof was excellent.

Several hamlets were prettily situated on the slopes of the hill, surrounded with patches of cultivation, and had the appearance of the country places of the richer inhabitants of the village.

A large crowd had now assembled, and regarded our movements with great curiosity. We asked to see the chief of the village, and after a good deal of palaver, a man appeared attired in a very tattered "tobe" or gown. He had something of the Fulbe in his countenance and was a tall fine man, though of rather forbidding appearance. He came on board, and we endeavoured to get what information we could out of him. He said the name of the big water we saw was Nabaret, but that it was only a fourth that size in the dry season. The name of his village was Kaku. The channel of the river ran along by the mountains. He knew of the Tuburi marsh, but had never been there; he did not think the river came from there, as it was distant many days' journey. He knew of no other big water, but would give us a guide to show us the way.

The people of the Nabarat district are possessed of cattle but no horses, they live principally on dhurra, which they cultivate largely, and on fish which abound in the lake. They also hunt the hippopotami, of which we saw a dozen in the lake, though doubtless there may be many more.

As the demeanour of the people was apparently friendly, we ran our

little steamer alongside, and were immediately surrounded by a crowd of warriors, who walked into the water and examined every part of the ship with great interest, surrounding her on every side. The women of the tribe now began to show themselves, usually a guarantee that no immediate hostilities are intended. They were not unpleasing in appearance and possessed of very good figures, most of them had nothing on except a piece of string round their waists. I noticed one young girl of about sixteen who had bracelets of tastefully arranged beads on her arms and legs, and was evidently a young lady of distinction; she was standing up to her knees in the water amongst the crowd of men, and regarding our ship with the greatest interest. I asked the interpreter to ascertain who she was; directly the question was put the men round seized her in the twinkling of a eye, and amidst much laughter, landed her on the deck dripping at my feet. The poor girl immediately sat down and began to weep; the chief, who turned out to be her brother-in-law, pacified her, and a small present of cloth soon made all right.

While we were making arrangements for a guide, the warriors began to be somewhat boisterous, and one of their number seized a flag belonging to the Niger Company, which was lying folded up on the side of the steamer, and placing it in his canoe, sat on it and paddled off with great celerity. The chief was, or pretended to be, very wroth, and shouted after the man, who, however, paid not the least attention, and we never saw that flag again.

After bidding farewell to the chief and his sister-in-law, and telling him that we were going to proceed up the river as far as we could, we slowly backed out into the stream. At the first turn of the paddles and rush of steam there was a general stampede on the part of the women, and several spears were poised and quivered in a most ominous manner, the result, perhaps, more of fear than of any hostile intention.

I think it not improbable, however, that had we remained longer, an attack would have been made on the boat, as the natives had evidently no knowledge of firearms, and seeing that we possessed no spears or weapons of any kind, would doubtless have attempted to capture our little steamer.

We took our guide on board and endeavoured to make for Bifare, already mentioned, which appeared to be a village of quite six thousand inhabitants, situate on the north-east shores of the lake, and distant some two miles from where we were. After proceeding about 100 yards we found that the water shoaled to about a foot, and even less, and though we made every effort to proceed, we were completely baffled; turning back, by direction of the guide, we went for an opening in the high dhurra, which grew in immense quantities about here, and found ourselves once more in the channel of the stream, which was, however, only some eight yards wide and 2½ feet deep, flowing with a swift current.

After proceeding with great difficulty for almost a mile, with fields of dhurra growing to a height of eight feet on either side and completely shutting out the view, the navigation became so difficult that we had to turn back, having already smashed in the bow of our gig, bent our rudder into the shape of a bow, and more than once berthed our little ship amongst the dhurra stalks. The stream was so narrow that we could not turn, but had to float down backwards for a good half mile. The highest point reached was a mile and a half from the village of Kaku, and from what the people said, a good thirty miles from Dawa, in the Tuburi country, the furthest point reached by any European entering Africa from the north, viz. Dr. Vogel in 1854.

The stream at the point where we reluctantly turned back was not more than two feet deep, and from fifteen to twenty feet wide, and this at the period of high water. I should say that in the dry season (and this is corroborated by the natives themselves) that a man could step across it. It is more than probable, therefore, that had we been able to proceed another three miles or so, we should have arrived at its source.

Barth, writing of the Chad basin in January 1852, utters some prophetic words. He says: "Of course in a country politically rent into so many petty principalities, where every little community, as in ancient times in Latium and Greece, forms a separate little state in opposition to its neighbours, no considerable intercourse is possible, and the natural high roads with which nature has provided those countries, and the immense field therefore which is open in these regions to human industry and activity, must remain unproductive under such circumstances; but it will be turned to account as soon as the restless spirit of the European shall bring these countries within the sphere of his activity. This period must come; indeed I am persuaded that in less than fifty years European boats will keep up a regular annual intercourse between the great basin of the Chad and the Bight of Biafra."

Once more in the lake of Nabarat we repaired damages, and stood in close to the village of Kaku, where, taking a friendly farewell, we turned our steamer's head homewards. Previous to our leaving I had a few words with our guide, who, during all the time he had been with us, had never for a moment parted with his three spears. On paying him in cloth, which we did handsomely, he said it wasn't enough, because we had given the king five pieces of cloth, and he only got two. What had the king done? Nothing; whereas he had shown us the way. I said, "Oh, but he's a king, which makes a difference—wears a shirt." "A nice sort of a king! He's only chief of a family—not of mine. I'm just as good a man as he is, and done something for you, and he hasn't. I want more cloth." Though my friend certainly could have done with a good deal more, I pointed out that the cloth was mine, and if I chose to give the king five and him two, that was my business. It was only when we were some distance from his village that he jumped

into his canoe, which we were towing alongside, and paddled off, using, so far as I could judge, unparliamentary language. I mention this little incident to show the difficulties of dealing with some of these Pagan tribes, who are split up into families, none being paramount.

We now had the current with us, and went along at a great pace, some 10 to 11 knots an hour, and at 1 p.m. on the following day came alongside the s.s. *Boussa*. Though our little piece of exploration partook more of the nature of a picnic than anything else, I venture to think that we may have added one very small grain of geographical knowledge to the amount that has already been collected. It was a matter of great regret to me that we were unable to reach the Tuburi marsh, and thus join hands with European exploration from the north; but I venture to think that we established the fact that the Kebbi has no communication with the Chad basin, and that we had arrived within a few miles of the watershed that here divides the basin of the Niger and that of the Chad. I cannot, I think, close this paper on the "Mother of Waters" better than by re-echoing the words of Barth, written when he first saw the Benue on the 18th June, 1851.

"I had now with my own eyes clearly established the direction and nature of this mighty river, and to an unprejudiced mind there could no longer be any doubt that it joins the majestic watercourse explored by Lander, W. Allen, Laird, and Oldfield. Hence I cherished the well-founded conviction, that along this natural high road European influence and commerce will penetrate into the very heart of the continent and abolish slavery, or rather those infamous slave hunts and religious wars which destroy the natural germs of human happiness spontaneously developed in the simple life of the Pagans, and spread devastation and desolation all around."

After the paper,

Sir GEORGE T. GOLDIE:—I assure you I was quite unprepared to be called upon to make any remarks, as I came solely as an auditor; I hope therefore you will excuse my cutting short what I have to say. We have all listened with the greatest interest to the admirable paper of Major Macdonald. To myself, although the places are only too familiar to me, it seemed quite a new story to listen to him: he managed to impart to the country an air of romance I had no idea it possessed. I may perhaps be allowed to say one or two words on this region which we of the Royal Niger Company are administering under delegation by Charter from her Majesty. We have to deal, in the lower regions of the Niger and its affluents, with some of the lowest types of humanity. By degrees, and as you go inland, you reach natives of a higher type, capable of a higher organisation and of more intelligence; then gradually you come to the region where there are mixed Pagan and Mahommedan races, and finally you come to Sokoto and Gandu, the northern portions of which contain comparatively pure Mahommedan races. I should like to warn you against one great error constantly repeated in books, that is, that our part of the central Soudan is really Mahommedan as a rule. This is not so; the vast masses of the population—and I am speaking from information culled from hundreds of sources—are Pagan at heart. The ruling race are the Fellatahs, fanatical Mahommedans;

then comes the very large and important race of Haussas, the original people of those regions, and a race of traders; they have practically no religion whatever, although nominally Mahommedans. The great masses of the people of the southern regions of Sokoto and Gandu are in their superstitions and manners as Pagan as before the Fellatahs came. We have not to deal, as has been the case in India, with civilised races, but gradually to train many millions of people more or less quite unaccustomed to work. That is the first great difficulty to be encountered in all Central Africa—labour. I have already kept you longer than I intended; and having given you an idea of one difficulty we have to contend with, this should explain to you the slow progress we must expect. It will be a matter of generations before these peoples will be able to understand law, government, and work. I believe the time will come when our grandchildren will reap the fruits of what we are doing; we are laying the foundation, and must be content to raise the building a very little distance.

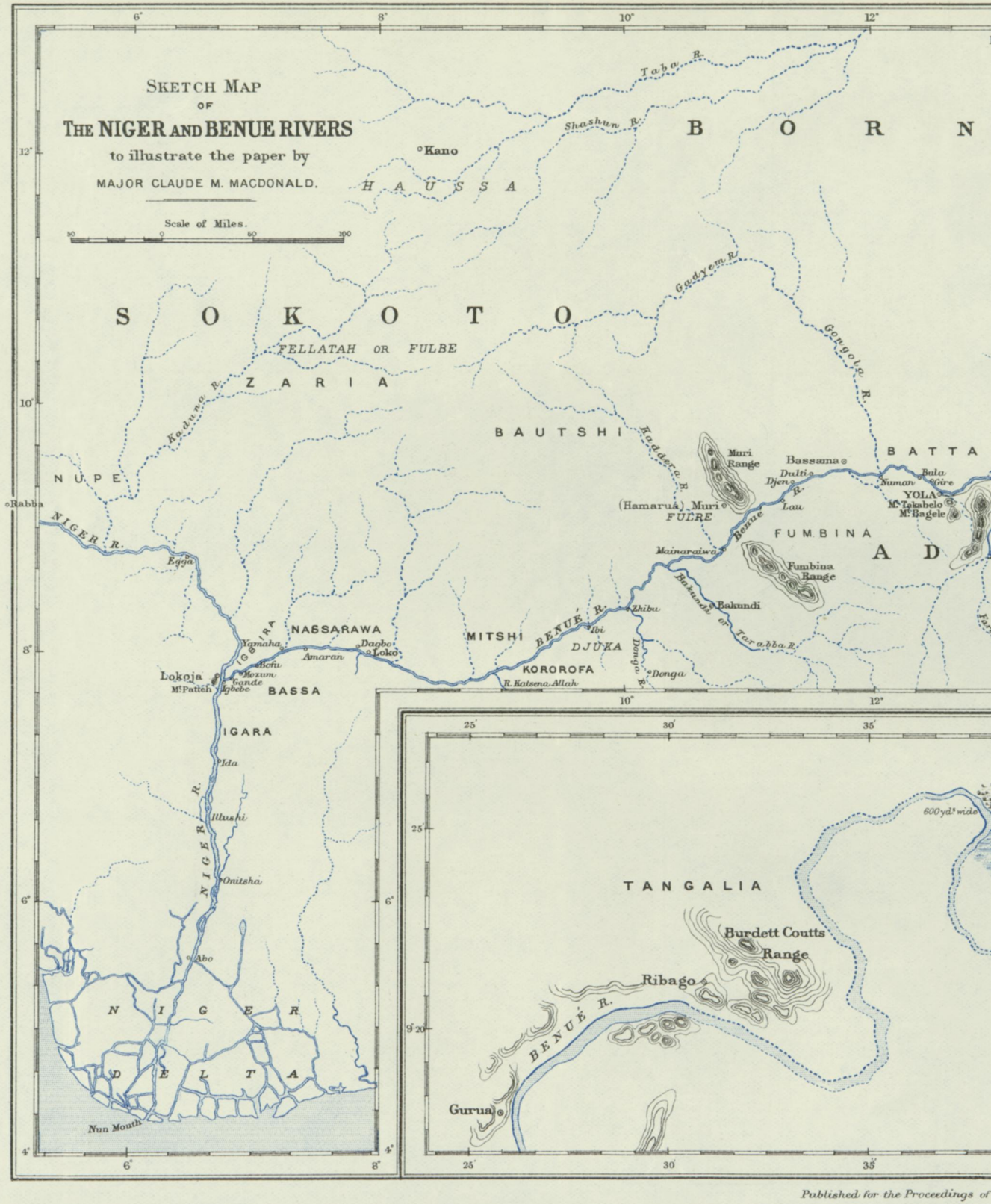
The CHAIRMAN: I beg to return a vote of hearty thanks to Major Macdonald for his very interesting lecture.

The Volcanic Lake of Tritrìva, Central Madagascar.

By the Rev. JAMES SIBREE, Jun.

THE great island of Madagascar is not at present one of those regions of the earth where volcanic disturbances occur; but there is ample evidence, from the numerous extinct craters found in various parts of the island, that at a very recent period, geologically considered—possibly even within the occupation of the country by its present inhabitants—it was the theatre of very extensive outbursts of subterranean energy. The whole island has not yet been examined with sufficient minuteness to determine the exact extent of these old volcanoes, but they have been observed from near the south-east coast in S. Lat. 23°, and in various parts of the centre of the island up to the north-west and extreme north, a distance of 680 miles; and probably a more careful survey would reveal other links connecting more closely what is at present known as only a series of isolated groups of extinct craters. In the central provinces of Madagascar there are two large clusters of old volcanic cones and vents; one of them in and about the same latitude as the capital (19° S.), but from 50 to 70 miles away to the west of it, in the neighbourhood of Lake Itàsy; the other in the district called Vàkinankàratra, situated about 80 miles to the S.S.W. of Antanànarìvo, and south-west of the great central mountain mass of Ankàratra.

This second volcanic region stretches from 20 to 30 miles from Antsìrabè away west to Bétàfo and beyond it, and contains numerous and prominent extinct craters, such as Ivòko, Iatsìfitra, Vòhitra, Tritrìva, and many others, some of which have been described by the graphic pen of the late Dr. Mullens, in his 'Twelve Months in Madagascar'



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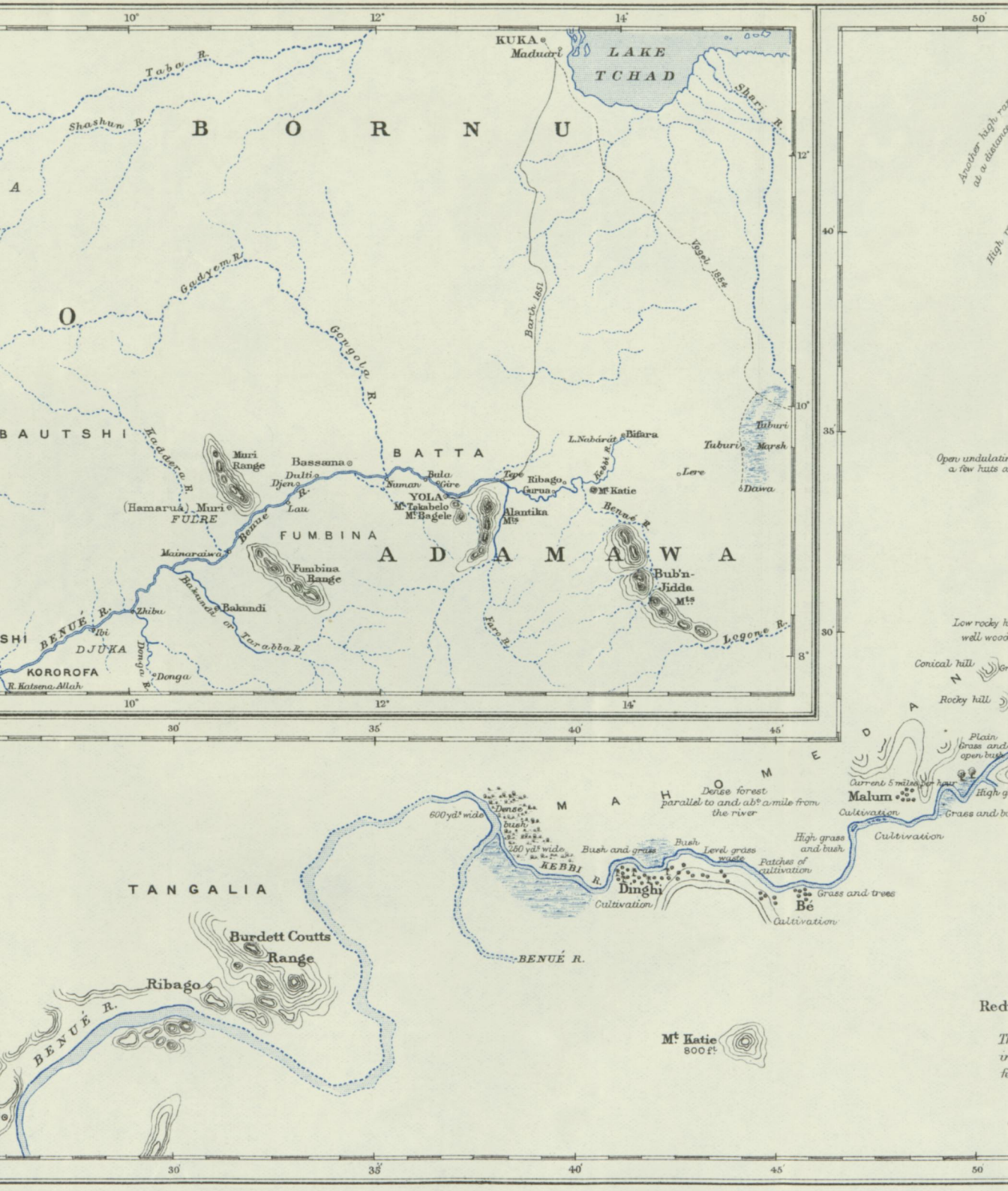

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THE KEBBI RIVER

FROM ITS JUNCTION WITH THE BENUÉ TO THE BIFARA MARSHES

Reduced from a drawing by Capt. A.E. Mockler Ferryman, O.L.I.

The ascent of the River was made by Major Mac Donald's party in the stern wheel steam launch "Benué" length about 60 feet drawing about 15 inches of water.

Scale of Miles.

0 5 10

The Royal Geographical Society, 1891.

F.S. Weller, lith.