The Sea Route to Siberia

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construction of my apparatus are that the images of moon and star can be made equidistant from the centre of the plate, and that at the same time the observations can be repeated with the utmost rapidity, enabling the observer to take as many sets of lunars as he likes without loss of time or waste of photographic plates. It is evident that the minute accuracy, as well as the practical value of the method, depend on these peculiar arrangements, which are fully described in my paper, and which differ entirely from any "photogrammeter." I may be permitted to add that many experiments, as well as months of labour, were required before I was satisfied with the construction of the apparatus, both as to accuracy and simplicity.

With regard to the preference which Mr. Ravenstein gives to some other kinds of observations, I shall always be very glad to see longitudes accurately determined by these or any other of the old-established methods; but up to the present time strictly accurate results are rare. One of the main reasons why I worked out this new method is the indisputable fact that only a very small number of accurately determined geographical longitudes in the interior of unsurveyed countries exists. It is, however, well known that approximate determinations are numerous; but their mathematical limits of accuracy are very doubtful. Probably Mr. Ravenstein refers to such approximations, when he says in his letter that of recent years quite a number of longitudes have been satisfactorily determined in Africa.

Let the theodolite, the sextant, and the photographic apparatus compete in the accurate determination of longitude, latitude, and local time, and the "survival of the fittest" will soon become evident.

HENRY G. SCHLICHTER.

P.S.—I take this opportunity to correct a printer's error in the table which forms part of my paper (*Journal*, November, 1893). The fourth lunar distance between Spica and the moon should, of course, read 20.672mm., instead of 30.672mm.—H. G. S.

The Sea Route to Siberia.

December 21st, 1893.

I have read with much interest the notes recorded by Mr. Ernest C. F. James, who accompanied the small fleet of vessels that took the consignment of rails to Golchika this year, piloted by Captain Wiggins. I should like to add a few remarks which I think might be useful to anyone who is anticipating making a trade route of the water-way to Siberia. Doubtless the reader will remember that in the year 1890 the Anglo-Siberian Trading Syndicate sent out two vessels (organised under the inspiring influence of the late Sir Robert Morier), the s.s. *Biscaya* and the s.s. *Thule*, the former a Norwegian vessel of 700 tons register, and the latter of 400 tons. The s.s. *Biscaya* carried Mr. Oliver Williams and myself as representatives of the Syndicate, a mining expert, Mr. William A. Mercer, A.M.I.C.E., as well as Mr. Julius M. Price, F.R.G.S., a special correspondent from the *Illustrated London News*.

The *Biscaya*, under the command of Captain Petterson and Captain Crowther, as ice-master, reached the Yugor Straits on August 4th, and Golchika August 13th, and, not meeting the s.s. *Phoenix* with the Company's agent on board, proceeded up the Yenisei, piloted by the little English steam launch *Donna-Anna*, in charge of Mr. W. A. Mercer, to Karul, a distance, as before stated, of 200 miles beyond

Golchika, without any accident or difficulty, where we met the river flotilla. This was the first, and I believe so far the only steamer drawing 18 feet of water that has penetrated the estuary and reached the sheltered bay of Karul, where cargoes can be transhipped without any risk whatever. The s.s. *Thule*, with the tug-boat *Bard* in tow, and commanded by Captain Cordiner (the *Bard* being in charge of the brother of Captain Wiggins), arrived safely a week later, bringing Mr. W. H. Tagart, one of the Directors. After transshipping cargoes to the river steamer *Phoenix* and various barges, the *Biscaya* and the *Thule* returned to England with Siberian produce, while the *Phoenix* and the small tug *Bard* proceeded to Yeniseisk, arriving there safely on October 25th.

According to Mr. James very little difficulty was met with in the Kara Sea as regards the ice. We, on the contrary, experienced great trouble, owing probably to the fact of our being somewhat in advance of the season, and were ice-bound for three days. Once however through the ice-belt, we experienced no further trouble. It is evident that an uninterrupted passage is by no means a certainty, and to provide for any emergency vessels destined for this route should be stout wooden vessels suitably strengthened for ice-ramming; for it is of great importance to be able to force aside the detached floes, thus frequently opening a free passage.

The experience of 1893, as well as of past years, seems to me to prove that Golchika is unsuited for the port of transfer owing to its being an open roadstead, exposed to sudden storms. We clearly demonstrated that ocean steamers, drawing upwards of 18 feet, can safely be piloted by steam launch as far as Karul, where, as before observed, there are natural facilities for discharging cargoes.

J. GOLDSMITH PROCTER.

OBITUARY.

Sir Samuel White Baker.

By E. G. RAVENSTEIN.

It is with regret we place on record the death of Sir Samuel White Baker, which took place on December 30th at the deceased's country residence, Sandford Orleigh, near Newton Abbot. Baker was born at Thorngrove, near Worcester, on June 8th, 1821. He received an excellent education, and, when still a young man, in 1845 he joined a brother at Nuwara Eliya in Ceylon. The farming operations in which they engaged did not prove a success, but an eight years' residence in Ceylon afforded Baker an opportunity of gaining experience and even renown as a sportsman.* After his return to Europe he was engaged for some time upon the railway which now connects Ruschuk with Varna. This occupation, however, could afford no satisfaction to a man of Baker's adventurous spirit and love of sport. Ample private means enabled him to follow his inclinations. His friends Speke and Grant had left Bagomoyo in October 1860 in search of the true source of the Nile. Baker determined to meet them. His young wife, a lady from Pest, insisted upon sharing all dangers and hardships. On April 15th, 1861, Baker left Cairo. He was able to travel leisurely, for Speke and Grant were not expected on the Upper

* 'The Rifle and the Hound in Ceylon.' London, 1854. 'Eight Years' Wanderings in Ceylon.' London, 1855.