

SEQUEL TO APPEALS

MADE TO THE

GOVERNMENT AND PEOPLE OF GREAT BRITAIN,

AGAINST THE

NIGER EXPEDITION

BEFORE ITS DEPARTURE FROM ENGLAND.

WITH

A LETTER,

ADDRESSED TO

THE RIGHT HON. LORD STANLEY,

PRINCIPAL SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES, &c. &c. &c.

By ROBERT JAMIESON, Esq.

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LIVERPOOL, *25th January, 1843.*

TO

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
LORD STANLEY,
&c. &c. &c.

MY LORD,

TOWARDS the end of 1841, I took the liberty of communicating to your Lordship, some particulars from a detailed account which I had just then received from Mr. Becroft in Western Africa, of his exploration of the Benin River in my Steamer *Ethiope*.

It had been supposed that this river would prove to be the main branch of the Niger, by which access might happily be found to the interior, without coming in contact with the swamps of that river's delta to the Southward, so deleterious to the health of Europeans,—but Mr. Becroft's exploration established that no such access to the Niger is to be found—that the Benin is an entirely separate river.

There still remained a possibility that an approach to

the Niger, such as was desired, might be found by Cross River, which flows into Old Calabar River, in the Bight of Biafra. To ascertain this, I instructed Mr. Becroft to explore it; and I now take leave to place before your Lordship the result of his recent investigation upon that river.

He entered Cross River with his Steamer on the 7th September last, and anchored on the evening of the following day at the town of Ommann, a place of some importance, situated on an island of the same name. Proceeding upwards, the next town of consequence he came to is called Acoono-cono, and the next again Ocoom. Continuing his ascent, his progress was unexpectedly stopped by powerful rapids, caused by the sudden narrowing of the bed of the river to the breadth of about forty yards, by the projection of high precipitous cliffs of sandstone. The downward current here was so strong that the steamer became unmanageable, from insufficiency of power in her engine (of thirty horses) to force her ahead; and there was no alternative but to drop her down to the first convenient place of anchorage. Mr. Becroft then ascended in his galley, with a view to ascertain the character of the river above these rapids, and with difficulty succeeded in passing them. He found the river to open out as before,—and he proceeded up three reaches, trending N., N.N.E., and N.E., passing a town situated on high ground on the

left bank, the name of which he did not learn, as he was fired upon by the natives on approaching it on his way back to the Steamer.

Next day he again ascended to the rapids, accompanied by his Surgeon and Engineer, to examine if it was possible by any means to pass the Steamer through them. Upon sounding, no bottom was found with twenty-five fathoms of line out—the depth immediately above them being from four to five fathoms. The water they found so violently agitated and broken, and the strength of the confined current so great, as to be quite conclusive that any attempt to stem it with a vessel of the *Ethiopia's* power, must be attended with the certain risk of serious damage, and very possibly of the vessel being carried upon the rocks and bilged. “With heavy hearts, therefore,” writes Mr. Becroft, “we returned to the Steamer, and commenced our descent to the coast,” which they reached, that is, the Old Calabar River, on the 26th September.

Mr. Becroft describes the country he passed through by this river, as both well-cultivated and populous, and the natives as carrying on a considerable trade in Palm Oil, with native traders from the coast. Great fear and apprehension were shown at the first appearance of the Steamer, and the natives frequently came to the banks of the river armed for resistance. They were, however,

invariably pacified on being told, by the interpreters, that the vessel came for "trade and peace, and not for war." "I saw fine cattle," says Mr. Becroft, as we were passing along, and the Chief of Acoono-cono made me a present of a fine cow." "To have come to anchor at every town and village, would have caused a stay in the river of some months."

A draft of the River, on a small scale, reduced from Mr. Becroft's sketch, is given in the annexed Map.

I have the honour to be,

&c. &c. &c.

ROBERT JAMIESON.

SEQUEL TO APPEALS,

&c.

THOSE of the public who take an interest in African affairs, may have in remembrance the Appeals I made against the Niger Expedition before it left England. These Appeals were disregarded and impugned by the projectors of that Expedition: and it may not be impolitic or un-instructive shortly to review some of their leading points, and the results which have followed.

The African Civilization Society (if they would confess it) are now aware of the truth of what was stated in these Appeals;—namely, that contrary to their allegations while urging upon Government the expediency of that Expedition, slave traffic had ceased on the Delta of the Niger in the Bight of Biafra, and a flourishing legitimate commerce already reigned in its stead. But, neither in the Society's recent Committee report, nor in the report of their last Exeter Hall Meeting, is the slightest allusion made to these facts;—facts which, if communicated by them, would have been received with confidence and satisfaction by their friends and supporters throughout the kingdom.

Besides these facts, I stated in those Appeals, that this legitimate commerce, which had taken the place of illegal traffic, had begun to shoot its branches into the interior; that, at that very time, Mr. Becroft was engaged in an attempt to form commerce upon the Niger in my steamer *Ethiope*; and I also intimated, that if the Society's plan of "agricultural settlements" was attempted on that river, this incipient intercourse with the interior would certainly be destroyed. This result was inevitable, because Africa being a country of barter, and merchandise the only medium of exchange, importations of merchandise were indispensable for the execution of the Society's plans, whether called agricultural or commercial. And if these importations were to be made by Government steamers, at the public expense, it necessarily followed, that the natural and relative prices and values of commodities would be deranged, to the prejudice and ruin of the private trader, who conveyed to the same parts similar merchandise, in his own steamer, at his own cost: the expense of conveying goods to a quarter so distant, and so difficult of access as central Africa, and by so expensive a means of transit as steam-navigation, being actually more than the first cost of the property so conveyed. I contended, that thus to injure commercial intercourse, formed, or in process of formation with Africa, was sheer wantonness on the part of the Society, seeing their plans

rested on the theory, that agriculture *must precede* commerce; and, therefore, that the proper quarter in which to test the practicability of such plans, was some locality from which commerce was entirely absent; and I added, that such localities were to be found on the Southern Coast of Africa, at no great distance from the Bight of Biafra—localities, where moreover the slave trade *was* to be found in active operation—localities at all times approachable, and where the situation, climate, and soil, were infinitely superior to those of the site chosen by the Society for their agricultural settlements on the Niger: a site inaccessible during six months of the year, and during the other six, accessible only by the expensive means of steamers, and these unavoidably passing through the insalubrious swamps of the river's delta, so deleterious to the health of Europeans.

In the face of these representations, *which were unhesitatingly condemned as proceeding from interested motives*, the Expedition sailed for the Niger, carrying with it cowries* and other merchandise;—and thus the fairest prospect that ever appeared of an opening commerce with central Africa, such as the Niger may admit of, was ruthlessly borne down and destroyed.

The first act of the Society's plans—plans having for their professed object the promotion of commerce

* Small shells from the East Indies, much prized in the interior of Africa.

on the Niger, was thus to expel from it the only commerce which existed upon its banks; and, as if confirmatory that this expulsion was to be continuous, the next act, had the climate not interfered, was to have been (I speak advisedly) the formation of the Society's "Agricultural Association" into a Chartered Company, with limited liability, and, it is presumed, the use of steamers at the public expense as before. Under such unequal competition, is it possible to conceive that private commerce could continue to exist on *any river*, even supposing it to be the most navigable in all Africa, and that the climate on its banks were the most congenial to the health and habits of Europeans? Besides, commercial demand being thus expelled, where, thereafter, was the African to find a market for the exchangeable productions of the soil, which the Society essayed to induce him to raise by their agricultural tuition? If there were no demand for his produce when raised—if there was nothing to offer him for which he might profitably barter it—was he likely to subject himself to agricultural labour, beyond as before, the mere supply of his own immediate wants? Here then we have *agriculture* and *commerce* alike suspended on the Niger, by plans of the African Civilization Society, *designed for the promotion of both!*

Such is the *working* of the Society's *theory*, that agriculture must precede commerce in Africa. Such is the practical result of speculative plans to

create commerce by "Model Farms" and "Agricultural Associations," supported by grants from the public purse, to the destruction of private enterprise, through which alone commerce has ever risen and flourished. Yet for such visionary schemes not only have upwards of £100,000 of the public money been already expended, accompanied by a melancholy loss of life, but it appears it had been seriously contemplated by the Society, to involve the country further in the waste of both, by foisting upon Government the sovereignty and protection of territory in Central Africa! "The treaty," say the Society, made with the "Attah of Idda," has been ratified by Government, except, "*that Her Majesty declines the sovereignty of any territory in Central Africa, or the proprietary interest in any land agreed by the Attah to be ceded to Her Majesty.*" "Sovereignty and proprietary interest of territory," in a quarter of Africa which cannot be reached at all for one-half the year, and is only approachable during the other half by means of steam vessels, which must pass through some 200 miles of pestilential swamp! What sacrifice of life and property must this have entailed, and for what a purpose! Even by the short stay of a few weeks in the river, negotiating the notable treaty with "the Attah," thirty-nine individuals of the European portion of the crews, of the three steamers composing the Expedition, were laid in their graves by river fever; and, but

for the prompt succour afforded by Mr. Becroft in the steamer *Ethiope*, to one of these vessels in distress up the river, (every person on board being laid down with fever, except two medical gentlemen, one sailor, a marine, and an officer's servant,) the list of mortality would, in all human probability, have been doubled.*

This brings me to notice the Society's extraordinary and most disingenuous defence of the sacrifice of life thus incurred.

“It is very unjust” of the public, say they, “to press more heavily on the misfortunes of pure unmixed benevolence than on those of mere gain.

“The merchants of Liverpool were allowed, not only without blame, but with commendation for the hardihood of their enterprise, to send 48 white men up the Niger, for the development of the commercial resources of the country, and to bring back only eight of these men. Not only was no cry raised against them for staying at home while they exposed others to dangers, but, on the contrary, the loudest expressions of public approbation were bestowed upon them for their enterprise. Why is it that the benevolence of this country is to be considered as cruelty for incurring those risks which the mere objects of gain are considered to be entitled to call forth?”—*Report of last Exeter Hall Meeting.*

* The swampy lands of the river's delta extend nearly to Attah, (see Map), and it is after vessels enter these and lose the sea breeze, that fever prevails amongst their crews. Palm Oil traders on the coast, from having the benefit of the sea breeze, are comparatively healthy, although at times great mortality takes place among their crews also, but certainly not greater than frequently occurs in our own West Indian colonies.

This positively forms the whole substance of the Society's defence. They keep entirely out of view *the warnings repeatedly and publicly given before the Expedition sailed from England*,—given not only as to the sacrifice of life which would inevitably be incurred by the ascent of *three* steamers in the first instance, but also as to the impossibility of reaching the locality chosen by the Society for a settlement on the river, without the *continued recurrence* of this sacrifice. Keeping this out of view, the Society first assume an equality in the circumstances under which their Expedition entered the river thus forewarned of consequences, in 1841, and those under which the Liverpool Expedition of 1832–3, visited the same river *for the first time it had ever been navigated*;—and they next, with no small degree of modest assurance, assume, that benevolence of purpose rests solely with the Society and their supporters,—that the missions to the Niger, which *preceded theirs*, were undertaken from motives of *mere sordid gain*;—and that the community at large have no sympathy for misfortune unless endured in the pursuit of such gain.

The disparity of circumstances embraced in the first of these assumptions is too obvious to need comment; but it is needful to refute the second assumption; and the details which I proceed to give for that purpose, will show, not only the Society's want of charity to their neighbours, but

the cruel injury they have done to the prospects of commerce on the Niger, and thereby to Africa.

Upon the discovery, by the Brothers Lander, that the waters of the Quorra, or Niger, flowed into the Bight of Biafra, a number of Liverpool merchants determined to attempt, by means of steam navigation, the prosecution of commerce up that river, supposed to be of great magnitude and commercial importance. The benefits, both civil and moral, which would flow to Central Africa from a commercial intercourse with England, were distinctly contemplated in the projection of this enterprise, as is amply proved by the instructions which were given to those who conducted it, of whom Messrs. Laird and Oldfield are now the only survivors. To say that *gain* was not expected from the mission, would be to say that it was not commercial: mutual benefit, from the exchange of commodities, forming the very essence of commerce, and without which commercial intercourse cannot last; and as commerce is the precursor of civilization, the first step towards the introduction of civilization must be the formation of a mutually *remunerative* intercourse. Unhappily the mission referred to proved a complete failure in this respect; the pecuniary loss it incurred was almost total, and was besides accompanied by such a fearful mortality amongst the ship's company, as not only to deter its projectors from any repetition of

the spirited enterprise, but almost to threaten the complete abandonment of further attempts to introduce commerce upon the river for generations to come.

To this praiseworthy, though unfortunate expedition, I was not a party; but, with others who interest themselves in African geography, I entertained the opinion, that the Nun branch, through which it had passed, was not the best entrance to the river Niger, and that an approach would be found by the Benin (or Formosa river,) by which the swamps of the delta of the Niger would be entirely left to the southward, and thus be avoided. In this belief, unwilling that the experience and knowledge gained by this expedition should be entirely lost, and enjoying, as I did, the friendship and counsel of its leading projector, as well as of its surviving conductors, I determined to renew the enterprise, on a small scale, by an endeavour to reach the Niger through the Benin. To insure the greater probability of success, I engaged in trade to the coast;—in the prosecution of which my vessels were, in the first instance, sent to the mouth of the Benin, and by the report of their commanders, the opinion of the connexion of that river with the Niger obtained additional confirmation. It was not, however, till the end of five years, during which many expensive preparatory arrangements and experiments were made, that matters could fully be put in train, and offi-

cers, engineers, and others, could be found, acclimated and otherwise competent for the enterprise. At length, in 1840, Mr. Becroft commenced the work in my steamer *Ethiope*; and the particulars of his failure to obtain by the Benin river the desired entrance to the Niger, and of his subsequent entrance to it by what is called its Benin branch, and of his navigation of the Niger to the highest point that has yet been attained, are given in the paper hereto appended, reprinted from the Geographical Society's Journal for 1841.

The object of this, the first of an intended series of annual visits to the interior, was to try the experiment, (the reverse of the *Society's theory*,) whether, if *demand* were brought to bear upon *surplus production*, the African could be induced to industry, and whether there could thus be eventually formed a remunerative intercourse. If such a remunerative intercourse could be formed it would be lasting; and, being open to general competition, *upon equal terms to all*, it would expand, and with its expansion, the elements of Civilization and Christian knowledge would be introduced. Commercially, under this view, this first attempt was entirely successful. Loss upon such an experimental voyage, was, as a matter of course, sustained; yet the amount of produce received, in barter for cowries and manufactures, was encouraging, as the fruits of a visit unexpected by the natives, who all received with delight Mr. Becroft's proposal to

return, during the flood-time of the river, in the course of the succeeding year, and *promised to collect and prepare produce in expectation of it.*

Besides ivory, which formed the principal article of barter, and bullock hides, he brought with him samples of indigo (made at Rabbah,) gums, bees' wax, spices, shea butter, &c.—the indigo being worth, at present prices in this country, from 4s. to 5s. † lb.

There was here ample encouragement for following up the experiment annually for a time; the practicability of which was satisfactorily proved, by the facility with which Mr. Becroft re-ascended the river, through the old entrance, without the slightest sickness or casualty, to afford succour to Her Majesty's steamer *Albert* in distress. His steamer was then manned with native Africans; and he might thus have safely repeated his trading visits to the interior, so long as his vessel could remain in Africa without repairs; a period which would have embraced three trips to Rabbah,* the third

* Rabbah is the largest town on the river, and is subject to Sacatoo. It was more than once mooted by the Arabs at this town, whether Becroft could have come for purposes of trade alone. And as he did not return the next year, but was followed by an armed flotilla and Government agents, making treaties with petty chiefs as they ascended, there is reason to fear that the impression on the whole of that portion of the interior of Africa is, that England had a design upon the country, and that Becroft had been sent to spy the land; an apprehension which would seem to be corroborated by what is stated in the Society's own paper, *The Friend of Africa*, for December last, to the effect, that a message had been received at the Model Farm, from the "Chieftain of Rabbah," signifying that he had re-

of which would have been undertaken in the year just ended. Upon the result of these trial visits appeared to depend the solution of the question, whether commerce *could* be formed with the interior of Africa by the Niger. Before, however, the second ascent could have been made, the Expedition of the African Civilization Society was upon the river, squandering cowries and other merchandise, without any regard to their true value in Central Africa,—giving away expensive presents, a practice which the trader cannot afford to follow, and therefore most injurious to legitimate trade,—and raising the jealousy of the more powerful kings in the interior, by entering into treaties with petty chiefs on the river below, for the cession of territory to the crown of England.

To those who will view this subject dispassionately, I feel satisfied that the simple statement of facts which I have thus laid before them, will afford ample proof of the falsity of the theoretical positions of the African Civilization Society, and of the disingenuous defence they have attempted to make of the sacrifice of life which has followed the prosecution of their schemes upon the Niger; as well as of the blight they have cast on the prospect of commercial intercourse with central Africa, if

ceived the presents sent to him by the Expedition from Egga, and “ requesting to know *what they wanted, and why they had settled in that country?* ”

this is to be opened in our day by the navigation of that river.

Reverting to the facts mentioned at the commencement of this paper, of slave traffic having ceased in the Bight of Biafra, and a flourishing legitimate commerce having taken its place, it is worthy of remark, that, for a period of nearly twenty years, these trades co-existed in the Bight,—were carried on side by side in it,—the chiefs under whose influence slaves were supplied to the slave dealer, being the same under whose influence palm oil was supplied to the legitimate trader;—the slave trade all the while gradually decreasing, the palm oil trade steadily increasing,—until, finally, the latter triumphed, and the slave traffic ceased. What a proof is here furnished of the folly of the attempt which the theorists of the anti-slavery party are now making, to prohibit, by legal enactments, intercourse between British merchants on the coast of Africa, and natives, or residents, who are, or have been, slave traders;—this being a recent *addition to former theories* for suppressing slave traffic. To show the absurdity of it, it is only needful to ask, whether, had such a restriction been in existence during the past twenty years, we should at this moment have seen the Bight of Biafra, once the greatest slave district of all Western Africa, now her greatest mart of legitimate commerce? What a proof further, of the ignorance and want of foresight, of those who malign the British

merchants, who are the first to introduce into a slave-trading country or even port, that legitimate commerce which thus rivals and ultimately supplants illegal traffic! What a proud contradiction of the allegations so publicly proclaimed and industriously circulated, that British merchants are aiders and abettors of the odious traffic, by supplying the means for its prosecution.* If this were not false, how could the very quarter, in which British commerce most abounds, be the first in all Western Africa to yield up the unholy traffic? † The fact in itself establishes, that, so far from the

* “Although the flag of Great Britain is not prostituted in slave traffic, yet her merchants generally, as well as those of the United States residing in slave-holding and slave-trading countries, or trading to the coast of Africa, furnish the means either in capital or goods by which no small part of this dreadful commerce in mankind is carried on.” *Vide the Anti-Slavery Society's Committee Report.*

† There is an extraordinary discrepancy in the representations of the Anti-Slavery Society and Mr. Bandinel of the Foreign Office, in regard to the present extent of slave traffic.

According to the Anti-slavery Society, in their last published report —“The slave-trade, so far as its movements can be traced in official and other authentic documents, is but little diminished in its extent; . . . and it is found, that just in proportion to the vigour of the means used for its forcible suppression, is the ingenuity of its abettors successfully exercised in carrying it on. Cuba and the Brazils are, at the present time, the largest markets for the sale of slaves.”

According to Mr. Bandinel, in his recently published work on the slave trade, which is considered as semi-official:—“For fifteen years, ending in 1835, Cuba imported about 40,000 slaves annually. In 1838, the number imported had decreased to 28,000; and, in 1840, to 14,470. The number of slaves imported into Brazil, was, in 1838, 94,000;—in 1839, 56,000;—in 1840, only about 14,000.”

British merchant aiding and abetting the traffic, he is a principal in the work of its suppression, by introducing legitimate commerce in its stead.

And here I may be allowed, before closing, to advert to the distressing fact, that although commerce has done her part towards the introduction of civilization to the quarter of Africa I have been speaking of, by establishing a lasting and increasing intercourse between England and the Coast, and by introducing the English language as the medium of that intercourse, yet that the climate precludes the missionary or teacher from residing there. Few Europeans outlive a residence on shore in the Bight of Biafra, even for a short period; and it is questionable whether it would be otherwise with native Africans who had at all acquired European habits and manner of life. At Bonny, which is the principal mart of trade, no Englishman would venture to reside on shore even for a few days, although previously acclimated so as to be in no particular danger from living on ship-board in the port, at all events for the period usually needful to trade and obtain a cargo; for the risk of mortality increases as the stay is prolonged. The climate in the *interior* of the continent is salubrious, but, as I have shown, the difficulty is to get to it in the possession of health. The river which Mr. Becroft has just explored, as referred to in my letter to Lord Stanley, is easier of access than any other yet known in

these parts; and supposing it were, upon further investigation, found to be healthy, Commerce I maintain, (with all deference to the opinion of others,) must first prepare the way for the Missionary, during a period of friendly intercourse, by which the jealousies of the natives may be removed and their confidence secured, and, through the continued communication thereby kept up, his personal safety be the better insured amongst a barbarous people, whose superstition and prejudices it would be his object to overcome. In the meantime, an educational establishment, at the Island of Fernando Po, appears the only feasible mode of instructing the natives on the coast; that is, those few of them who could be persuaded to send their children to it, and who possess the means of doing so.

PAPER REFERRED TO IN THE PRECEDING
SEQUEL.

*On Benin River and the Upper Course of the River Quorra,
or Niger,—republished from the Journal of the Geographical
Society for 1841.*

EXPERIENCE appears to have now set the stamp of her authority on the position, that if an intercourse with Central Africa, of any extent or practical utility, is ever to be established by the navigation of the Quorra (or Niger) by Europeans, some new channel of approach to the main body of that river must be found by which the pestiferous swamps of its delta will be avoided. This, for a considerable time, has been the impression with many who have turned their attention to African geography; and the Benin, or Ferosa river, from its magnitude, its relative position, and its proximity to the Niger, had been supposed likely to furnish such an approach.

Participating in this impression, Mr. Jamieson, in 1839, (not being aware that a Government expedition was in contemplation) built and despatched a steamer, of suitable dimensions and power, to endeavour to solve this important problem; and, at the same time, to endeavour to establish a commercial intercourse with the interior.

In April, 1840, Mr. Becroft, in command of this steamer, the "Ethiophe," ascended the Benin; his ship's company consisting of fifteen Europeans, including officers, medical men, an engineer, and seamen, with a full complement of blacks, or Kroo-men, besides interpreters—one of whom was Mina, who had accompanied Captain Clapperton and Lander.

For about 40 miles from the sea, including windings, he found the Benin a fine bold river, with from 6 to 3 fathoms water. At this point, a bifurcation took place—both branches proving to be highly tortuous, and much narrower than the main trunk of the river, but having a depth of not less than three fathoms, so far as the steamer was able to ascend them. This, Mr. Becroft computed to be, from the bifurcation, from 40 to 50 miles on the one, and from 60 to 70 miles on the other, windings included. His further progress was obstructed at each of these respective points, not from want of water—for that continued as deep as before—but from an impenetrable forest of large aquatic plants, which choked up the streams so as to render a further passage impracticable, except by cutting *a way* through them, which could only have been accomplished by considerable labour and with great loss of time. This he did not feel justified in risking, more especially as the extreme limpidness of the water of both streams, when compared with that of the Niger, which Mr. Becroft had navigated some years before, gave a sufficient proof that the Benin is an entirely separate river—taking its rise probably in the high lands N.W. of the Niger. He therefore returned with the steamer to the anchorage at the mouth of the river, which he had left eleven days before.

His sketch of this river, as reduced by Mr. Arrowsmith, is here given. Both of its branches are described as being beautifully wooded; and at the highest point attained in the southernmost arm, extensive plains open to the view, upon which, however, neither inhabitants nor symptoms of population of any sort could then be discerned. The Sooba Country is the name given to this district by the natives lower down the river, who represent it as forming part of the kingdom of Benin.

Foiled in the accomplishment of this their main object, Mr. Becroft and his party resolved to try whether a good entrance to the Niger might not be found by what is called the Warree branch of that river. This branch they entered by passing through a creek of some magnitude, (called “Young Town Creek”), which

flows out of the Benin, to the southward, at some distance from its mouth ; and they succeeded in reaching the Niger at the point of bifurcation with its Nun branch a short way below the town of Eboe. In their progress thither they passed three openings or passages to the sea, which they presumed to be the rivers Escravos, Forcados, and Ramos, as laid down in the charts of the coast. The difficulty of navigating their way through this new and intricate passage, made it the work of a fortnight ; during which time sickness unhappily appeared among the European portion of the steamer's crew, and continued more or less among them during the whole of the time she remained in the Niger ; eventually terminating fatally in the cases of the first officer Mr. Harrowar, two seamen, and two boys.

Proceeding up the Niger, they arrived off the town of Eboe on the 20th of May. From thence they proceeded upwards on the 26th of that month ; but, in consequence of having entered the river, as they found, before its periodical rise had fully commenced, the rains of that season proving also unusually light, they were unable, from want of water, to reach the town of Rabbah till the 25th of August. Notwithstanding every precaution in sounding, &c., as they ascended, the steamer, though not drawing more than from $5\frac{1}{2}$ to 6 feet, was constantly taking the ground, and frequently could not be got off again without much labour and loss of time, more particularly as the European part of the crew continued incapable of any duty or exertion.

As the river from Eboe to Rabbah had been previously explored, it is needless here to name the various towns and villages they called at in that portion of it. The following are condensed extracts from the Journals of Captain Becroft and his medical men, during their progress *above* that point.

“ *September 7th.*—Sailed from Rabbah, in the hope of penetrating as high as Busah, while yet the river was rising. At first found the river divided into two channels by a long low island, and then running along the base of a range of mountains, known as the Kisey Mountains. Its width here, is about half a mile, and the current we found, from $2\frac{1}{2}$ to 3 knots ; depth from

eight feet to three fathoms. Anchored for the night in three fathoms.

“8th.—Having weighed, passed through a narrow channel, rocky on each bank, and at noon came to anchor abreast of a high and extraordinary-looking rock in the bed of the river (called Kiskey Rock), with other smaller detached rocks a-head, resembling the piers of a bridge, separating the river into several channels and causing between each a strong downward current; the scenery all around being very beautiful. After taking soundings, ascended through the channel formed by the two smallest of these rocks, near the eastern bank—its width being not more than 15 yards, with soundings of 11 feet—and soon afterwards, having passed the town and island of Midjee, anchored for the night.

“9th.—About eight, *a. m.* passed the town of Kalimah, and, further on, the village of Agoghie, (abreast of which is a ledge of rocks,) the old village of that name being on the opposite or western bank—with a plantation of bananas, plantains, and yams. The soundings here gave two fathoms; there are a good many sunken rocks (as shown by the eddies), and others show themselves just above water. Towards evening, having passed the village of Buckoe and a small rocky island in the centre of the river, cast anchor for the night in two fathoms, off an island at a short distance below Lechee.

“10th.—Came to anchor for the day off Lechee, in two fathoms water. The river is here certainly not more than half a mile wide. This town looks poor and miserable, being apparently much oppressed by the Felatahs: its whole population cannot exceed 300. The chief, who was very eager for rum, brought out a decanter (such as are called on the coast *trade decanters*) containing some ardent spirits, together with a wine-glass—articles which he said he had purchased at the town of Raka, in the Yarriba country—from which it would appear that there is a communication between Raka and the coast, probably with Whydah or Lagos.

“11th.—Weighed anchor and proceeded, passing the village

of Buzzanghie, then the island and village of Tykboo. At this part of the river its banks are very rocky, and its bed is contracted to about 300 yards, with soundings from 5 to 6 fathoms. Having afterwards passed New Bajibo, and the old town of that name on the opposite bank, came to a part of the river where, from the position of the rocks, the channel is not more than 50 yards wide. The current was here found to be so strong that the steamer could only just go a-head, and was very ticklish to steer. There was no safe anchorage, the bottom being foul and rocky; and two leads, with a part of the lines, were lost in sounding. By perseverance, however, succeeded in getting through this passage; but shortly afterwards came to another somewhat similar, where the channel is not more than *thirty yards* wide, with an increased velocity of current. The full power of the engine was now only able to keep the steamer in a secure position; and had the current caught her on either bow, she must inevitably have gone upon the rocks, as there was not room for her to recover herself.

“It being now obvious that further progress upwards by a vessel of the Ethiopie’s power (thirty horses) was impracticable; and seeing that to have attempted to come to an anchor in such foul and rocky ground, with such a current, would in all probability have caused the loss of the anchor, there was no alternative but to yield to circumstances, and relinquish all attempt at proceeding farther. This accordingly, though reluctantly, was done, and the steamer dropped down to Bajibo, where she was anchored in four fathoms. The people from this town came alongside in canoes, and were allowed to indulge their curiosity to see the “white man” and his “fire-ship,” by coming on board in small parties at a time. They also brought yams and firewood for sale; but, with the exception of a little ivory, had no produce to barter for merchandise. The old town, on the western bank of the river, from the appearance of its ruins, must have been a place of some importance. It had been destroyed by the people of Yarriba, for what reason could not be ascertained; but it was intimated that it was to avoid their future

attacks that the new town had been placed on the opposite or eastern bank."

Mr. Becroft is of opinion that from the point above-mentioned, at which his progress up the river was stopped, he could have reached Lever in two hours, but that the ascent thence to Busah and Yaooree could not have been accomplished under a month, and in that time only by taking advantage of the eddies; such was the increasing force of the current, from the daily rising of the river.

Returning to Rabbah, they remained at that town till the 20th of September. On the morning of that day, having fired a salute in honour of the king, who, with large numbers of the people, had come to the beach to witness their departure,—“At nine, *a. m.*,” says Mr. Becroft, “the king made his appearance on the bank of the river. I went on shore to wait on him. On my landing he dismounted. Mats having been spread, he seated himself, and desired me to sit down by him. He wished Ramadan, the Arab, to sit down also; but he modestly declined. After the usual compliments and salutations were over, I thanked him for the ostrich he had sent to me on the day before, and explained the accident by which it had been injured (it had got one of its legs broken while being sent on board); he said that when I returned he would give me another. He then presented me with deer-skins, and a tanned hide blackened on one side and neatly bound with coloured leather; likewise a metal jug, *apparently* of European manufacture, full of Gooroo nuts. I asked if he would accept of my sword if I sent it on shore to him. He said he would, and would be proud to wear it. I told him that I would send it with the flag which I had promised to him, as soon as I went on board. He thanked me—desired me to remember him to the Queen of England, and hoped she would think him worthy of her notice. Here the ceremony ended. I wished him and his people health and happiness, and thanking him for his kindness and attention, stepped into the boat, the

trumpets sounding. Sullikan Yiki, King of War, was present, with a numerous mounted retinue.

“ I accordingly sent, by the return of the boat, my sword and belt, with an union jack ; weighed anchor at ten, *a. m.*, and steamed about a mile up the river. I then turned the steamer’s head down the river, and fired a salute of five guns in passing, which was responded to by loud shouts and the sounding of trumpets, and we were soon out of sight of Rabbah.”

They then proceeded towards the coast, which they reached through the Warree branch and the Benin river, on the 30th of October, having called at all the principal places on the river for trade, as they had done in ascending.

Throughout this six months’ sojourn on the Niger, Mr. Becroft and his party experienced nothing but friendship from kings, chiefs, and people. At Rabbah, which is the largest town on the river, they were particularly well received and entertained, having had frequent interviews with the king. This personage signified his wish to Mr. Becroft, that, besides a number of brass cannon to protect his town, he would bring for him, on his next visit to Rabbah, *two sofa-beds and a large trunk !*

Mr. Becroft and his party describe the country in the interior beyond the swamps of the Delta—that is, above the town of Iddah, some 200 miles from the coast—as being beautiful, the soil fertile, the climate agreeable,* and the natives peaceable and desirous of commerce, though as yet possessing few articles of produce to give in exchange for European commodities. Cotton and Indigo, however, are indigenous productions—the former is spun and manufactured at various towns in the interior, and the latter, well prepared and of good quality, was found for sale in the market-place of Rabbah, though only in a very small quantity. There can be no doubt, however, that these and other tropical productions would be cultivated extensively by the

* The usual range of the thermometer in the cabin of the steamer while in the river was—at 6 *A. M.*, 72° to 76°—at noon, 82° to 86°—at 6 *P. M.*, 80° to 82°.

natives, were there a steady demand for them when raised and prepared. This demand commercial intercourse with Europe alone can supply, and yet the pestilential swamps of the river's delta unhappily deny to Europeans the prosecution of such intercourse. It remains then, that commerce on the Niger can only be followed by means of steam-vessels manned entirely by native Africans, under the direction of European officers and engineers well inured to the climate. But even in this mode of prosecuting the desired intercourse, there appears too formidable an array of difficulties to render it likely soon to become of any considerable practical benefit to Africa or to Europe:—first, in the danger of navigating to and from Africa, vessels constructed so as to be of sufficiently light draught of water for the ascent of the river, and consequently badly adapted to the open sea;—next, in the great expense attendant on the employment of steam-vessels in so distant a quarter and in such a climate;—then, in the impossibility of having them repaired in case of accident to the engineers, or of any *serious* injury to the machinery;—and finally, in the fact, now well ascertained, that the river itself is not navigable except during the few months of the year when it is flooded.