



# A journey up the Niger, in the Autumn of 1877

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NIGER,

*IN THE AUTUMN OF 1877.*

BY THE

REV. HENRY JOHNSON.

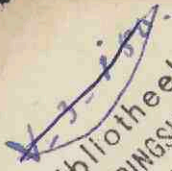


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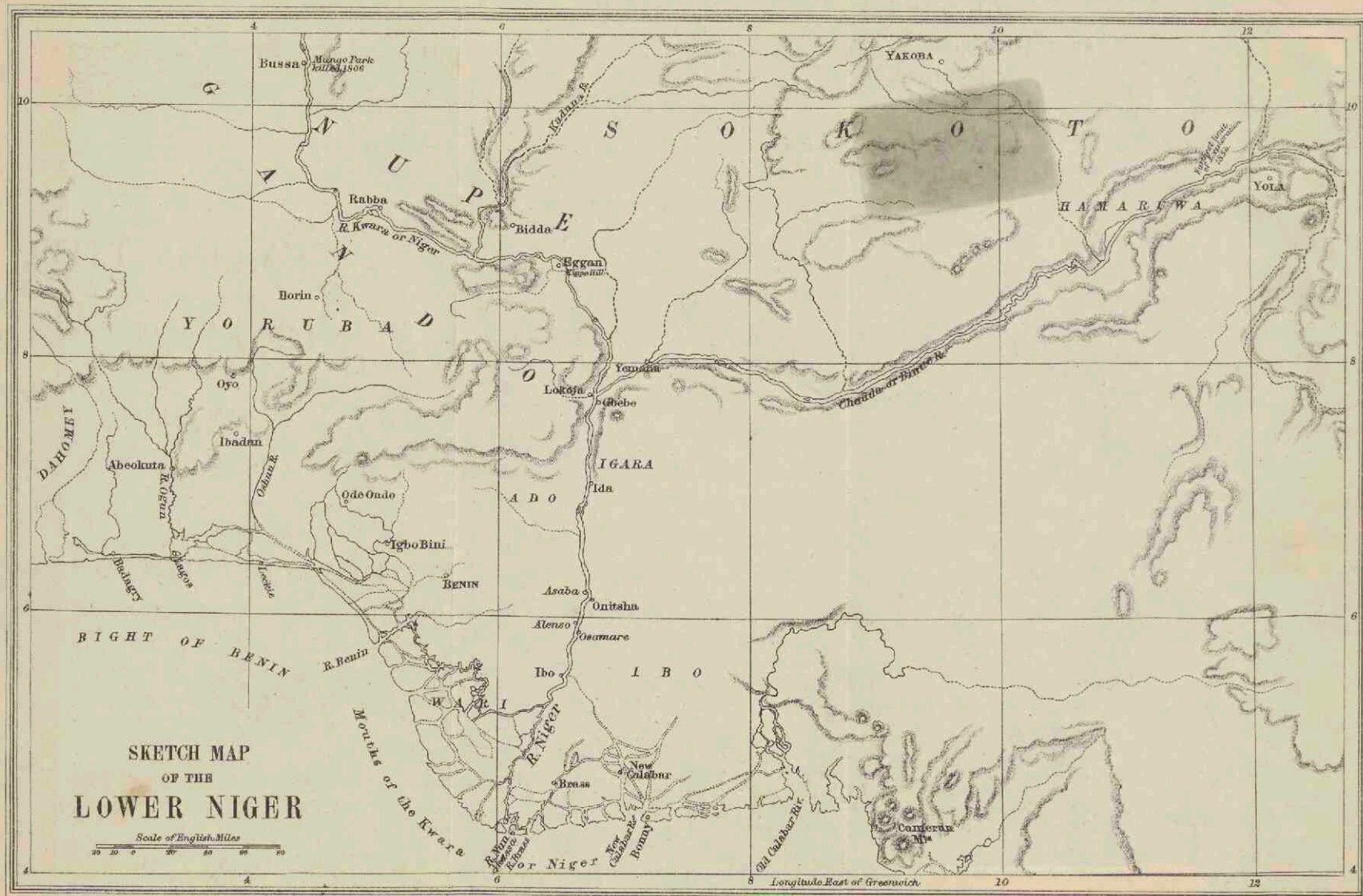
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The REV. HENRY JOHNSON is a Native African Clergyman, well-known in this country, who has laboured in both the Sierra Leone and Yoruba Missions. He is now transferred to the Niger Mission, and has been appointed by Bishop Crowther to be Archdeacon of the Upper Niger, with a view to his assisting the Bishop in the superintendence of the higher Stations on the river. The following is a narrative of his first visit to the Mission in company with the Bishop.

It should be added that the Bishop has also appointed his son, the Rev. Dandeson C. Crowther, of Bonny, to be Archdeacon of the Lower Niger.

# NOTE ON THE NIGER MISSION

OF THE

*CHURCH MISSIONARY SOCIETY.*

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It was in 1830 that the traveller Lander descended the Niger in a canoe to its mouth, thus determining its outlet to the ocean. In 1832-3 the first exploring party, under Mr. McGregor Laird, ascended the stream. In 1841, the Government sent out the celebrated Niger Expedition, with a view to the more effectual suppression of the slave-trade by establishing "new commercial stations with those African chiefs within whose dominions the inland slave-trade was carried on, and the external slave-trade supplied with natives." In the hope that this expedition might open the way for Missionary effort, the Church Missionary Society obtained permission to send with it the Rev. J. F. Schön and Mr. Samuel Crowther, the latter a Native teacher at Sierra Leone, formerly a liberated slave. No immediate results followed, but Mr. Schön was enabled to collect materials for the closer study of Hausa, a widely extended language on the upper Niger, into which he has since translated portions of the Scriptures, besides compiling a dictionary, grammar, &c.

In 1854, a second expedition ascended the river, and was accompanied by Mr. Crowther, who in 1843 had been ordained to the ministry of the Church of England by Bishop Blomfield. He came back with the full conviction that the time had come to begin a Mission on the river. In September, 1856, the Church Missionary Society formally resolved to undertake the work; in 1857 it was commenced, Mr. Crowther being the Superintending Missionary; and ever since it has been carried on by Native agency alone.



No less than fifty Christian Negroes have been engaged in the Mission in the course of the twenty years, of whom seventeen have been ordained. Mr. Crowther himself was consecrated Missionary Bishop of the Niger Territory at Canterbury Cathedral on June 29th, 1864.

The stations at present occupied are—in the Delta, *Akassa*, at the mouth of the Nun, the main channel of the Niger, and the direct route to the interior; *Brass*, on Brass River, one of the numerous lesser outlets; *New Calabar*; and *Bonny*; the last named place being furthest east. Ascending the river, we come to *Osamare*, about 120 miles up, on the east or left bank; *Alenso*, a little higher up on the west bank; *Onitsha*, 20 miles further, on the east side again; *Asaba*, nearly opposite; and, at a distance of 230 miles from the sea, to *Lokoja*, which is on the west bank, at the Confluence of the two great branches of the Niger, the Kworra and the Binue (or Tshadda). Gbegbe, on the other side of the Confluence, and Idda, lower down, were formerly occupied, but had to be given up, owing to the hostility of the chiefs. Ninety miles above the Confluence, on the Kworra, is the highest station, *Kipo Hill*, opposite the ivory market town of Egan. Rabba, yet 100 miles further, was occupied for a short time in the early days of the Mission.

The statistical returns of the Mission for 1877 are as follows:—Native Clergy (including the Bishop), 11; Native Lay Teachers, 14; Native Christians, 601; Communicants, 201; Average Attendance on public worship, 1,257; Scholars, 235. Baptisms in 1877—adults, 48, children 49. In the number of Native Christians none are included for Bonny, in consequence of the disturbed state of the Mission; but the professed adherents there are above 300.

Besides the works in the *Hausa* language already referred to, the Society's Agents have prepared a Grammar, vocabulary, and translation of two Gospels, in the *Nupe* language, spoken at Lokoja and up the Kworra; a Grammar, a Primer, and translations of parts of the New Testament and Prayer Book, in *Ibo*, the language of the Delta and as far as Onitsha; and a Grammar, Primer, and various translations, in *Foulah*, which is widely spoken in West Central Africa.



## A JOURNEY UP THE NIGER.

BY THE REV. HENRY JOHNSON.

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IT was in the early part of August last (1877) that I received a letter from Bishop CROWTHER, dated from Liverpool, intimating to me the Committee's wish that I should go with him to the Niger this year. Not long after the receipt of the letter, the Bishop himself arrived at Lagos.

Exactly a week after his arrival we got on board the "Cameron," and made for Bonny. This was on the 25th of August.

I now proceed to describe the facts which came under my notice, and the varied impressions made upon my mind by all I saw and heard in my recent trip. The inspection was begun at—

**AKASSA.**—I can say, without hesitation, that I am thankful that this is not a specimen Station as regards progress,—the time and labour expended upon it being considered. Had I seen no other Station, or if the rest had been more or less like this, I should have been discouraged indeed. We

had ample time for inspecting it. When the Bishop, in consequence of Mr. JOHN'S absence in Sierra Leone and England, and Mr. PAUL'S removal to the newly formed Station at Kipo Hill, found it necessary to provide for Lokoja, he transferred to it from Akassa Mr. PYTHIAS WILLIAMS, a young and energetic Teacher from Sierra Leone. In his stead, a real "son of the soil," the first fruit of the Akassa Mission, was left in charge. I was favourably impressed by Mr. APRE'S manner. Born, and for the most part bred, in the country, it is needless to say that he was at "home" in the language, manners and customs of Akassa. He had the privilege a few years ago of being taken to Lagos by Bishop CROWTHER. This no doubt accounts for the immense disparity that exists between him and those by whom he is surrounded. As to the latter, I do not know any people apparently more hopelessly degraded anywhere. It is not unusual to see the women paddling away a good canoe's-load of wood, while the men are sitting at home, moping all the day long, not knowing what to do with themselves. Their wants are most easily satisfied:—palm nuts, plaintains, snails, cassada roots, and palm wine form the staple articles of food; but biscuits, pork, and salt beef are much prized and enjoyed whenever they can be obtained by begging from the shipping. At this season of the year, when the river gains upon all the low-lands, the majority of the people are in the habit of betaking themselves to their farms on the opposite side of the river,—access to which can only be gained by small bridle-paths. Their migratory habits make it difficult to get at them; but Mr. APRE said that he occasionally followed after them in order to speak to them the Word of God.

I was told by the Bishop that all the people on the Delta are for the most part of the same character as the Akassans.



In point of time, this Station is the oldest; but for any good result that has flowed from it, it may be considered the very last. It might seem no loss whatever to abandon it altogether, and direct our energies elsewhere; but the very existence amongst them at the present moment of a young man—one of their own kith and kin—of whom something (however little) has been made, is proof conclusive that the whole tribe has not yet degenerated to a condition impossible of improvement. It is not necessary, in order to continue there, to maintain a large establishment.

All the trading Companies on the River Niger have their depôts at Akassa, and three Branch Steamers, belonging to the West African Steam Ship Company and British and African Navigation Company respectively, call here from time to time for the purpose of receiving cargo; so there is every appearance of commercial activity for at least four months in the year. As it is not a producing country, and offers nothing for sale, Akassa will continue to be a place of some kind of importance only so long as it is considered convenient for discharging the trade from the upper waters of the Niger.

On the 31st of August, we weighed anchor and began the ascent of the river. All the day long, and in fact throughout the entire passage, it was necessary to keep a sharp look out, in order to avoid the partially-covered banks, snags, and other things by which the navigation is rendered extremely difficult. We safely cast anchor at 6.30 p.m. without coming into collision with any of the usual impediments to progress. The next day (September 1st), we passed what are generally termed the "hostile villages," but no attempt was made to molest us; on the contrary, all rushed down to the edge of the water—men, women, and children—to gaze and wonder at the large new steamer.

We saw some of the villages that were destroyed by the men-of-war\* : the inhabitants had returned and were again putting up their huts. To some good people at a distance it might seem a very cruel thing to display the deadly weapons of modern warfare against "naked savages," who act, as they often do, from lack of better knowledge. I can sympathise with that view because I have long entertained it; but I confess I am becoming a convert to the opinion that at times it is absolutely necessary to compel these lawless, turbulent people to keep the peace. I was told by the British Consul of the Bights, that the Senior Naval Officer commanding the late Expedition,—a man of humane feelings—was exceedingly reluctant to open fire on those on shore. "Poor people! they know no better,"—that was his constant rejoinder to those who urged the argument of force.\* But the natives misconstrued this leniency, and imagined that it proceeded from fear of them; and so they were emboldened to fire upon the fleet whilst steaming down the river, on seeing which, the Officer was obliged to give the order to turn round and punish the villagers in the only way that was convincing to them. Year after year there is constant opposition from this poor deluded people. Their grievance is that by the Steamers going to the upper waters, their trade is depressed. They would rather that all remain below, and depend upon them for whatever they could bring down in their canoes.

The Niger is truly a noble river, and in many parts it reminded me of the Boom river in Sherbro. The facts I have ascertained in regard to the Niger, for example, as to

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\* This was in June, 1876. Two trading steamers had been attacked by the Natives, and the offending villages were destroyed by Commodore Hewett. (See *Church Missionary Intelligencer*, Nov., 1876, p. 699.)



strength and speed of the current, the depth of water at the height of the season, and so forth, correspond almost exactly with the actual facts about the Boom. The width of both seems identical, as also the imposing scenery in many parts; and it is notorious that hostilities on the part of the natives are constant at Sherbro, and are but too often the cause of stagnation in trade. The Boom penetrates far inland, and rich countries line its banks. The dangerous rapids which bar successful navigation can be easily got rid of by a little effort and skill; and protection to life and property being secured to merchants and traders by the Government, Sierra Leone would enjoy a healthy commercial life of a permanent character. But I am digressing from my subject.

No high land is to be seen from the Nun all the way up to Onitsha. The people living on the Delta are often hard put to, when the river is high, to find a dry place to set their foot on. It is said that not a year passes but several houses are swept away by the current,—the river gaining rapidly upon the land. I myself saw no end of rickety, half-tumbled down huts as we went past. At two of our Stations the Agents frequently had to paddle about to go for whatever they needed. Last year the Bishop took the Agent at Alenso to see the king of that place. They were obliged to go in a canoe right up to His Majesty's door. So at Osamare, about a fortnight ago, we had to be paddled from Mr. DURING's house to the Church. But every one seemed as happy as possible, and did not much mind what to others would have been a serious and fatal inconvenience. Like amphibious animals, they enjoy water as well as land; and I do not believe they have ever suffered from attacks of ague,—the plague, in this country, to people of a different education.

I cannot see how the natives of this section of the country will be evangelised, unless by a system of dry-season itinerancy. It is not possible to build regular Mission houses, as the soil is so very swampy. It would be well to attempt to visit them occasionally, whenever it is practicable to do so. There would no doubt be great difficulty at first, for the natives, as a rule, are wild, suspicious, and grasping. They might interpose all sorts of obstacles with a view to exact large presents, as they do from the Traders. I am even prepared to allow that they might carry opposition to the length of inflicting personal violence, if they were sure of escaping with impunity. But as the knowledge gains ground that our object is simply to do them good, and as they become better acquainted with our conversation and manner of life, I am persuaded that it will be easy to find a way into their hearts. The right men being obtained for such an enterprise, the force of personal character might possibly rob the undertaking of one half its apparently hazardous nature.

**OSAMARE.**—It was on Sunday evening, September 2nd, that we first landed at Osamare. On our return we arrived there on the 27th October, and left again on the following day. The Rev. Mr. DURING is stationed here, and maintains his post with a hearty good will. He is a *magna pars* of all that has happened here since the place became a Mission Station. Of a loving, yielding disposition, none is more suited to cope with the wild spirits about him. In a way which few can rival, he is exerting a very great influence among the people. Formerly human sacrifices used to be most frequent; but they are now kept within bounds, and I believe will before very long become a thing of the past. As soon as he hears an inkling of such a thing

going on, Mr. DURING would go to the place of sacrifice and plead until he prevailed to rescue the devoted person. I saw one who was thus snatched from the jaws of death—a poor emaciated creature. The sacrificing of old women was once a very common practice. The number of those rescued by Mr. DURING, at various times, exceeds ten; and from the circumstance of his interesting himself so much on their behalf, he has been nicknamed “the life of old women.” He has also distinguished himself by acting the part of mediator between hostile parties. The following story will convey to you more accurately than any laboured description the characteristics of the man. A civil war was about to take place on a certain occasion, the two parties being headed by the sons of opposing Chiefs. Guns were loaded, swords were whetted, and war drums were sounding furiously, when Mr. DURING was hurried to the scene. The manner in which he succeeded to prevent the war taking place is well worth the consideration of—I was going to say ambassadors, diplomatists, and Foreign Secretaries. He went to the spot, where preparations were all but completed, and having a large hand-bell concealed beneath his coat, he pulled it out and began to ring it violently, walking about the crowd and pushing away here and there those who seemed particularly excited and determined. He kept shouting, with laconic brevity—“Don’t fight: don’t fight: make peace: war ruins country: war brings misery: disperse: go home.” He continued ringing, like an auctioneer’s man, till his arm ached, and he shouted himself hoarse. He was rewarded for his pains, for the people dispersed without firing a single shot. But I am not so sure that this experiment would succeed twice. Perhaps the very simplicity and novelty of the thing confounded the superstitious people, and acted upon



them like a potent spell. Any way, the desired end was attained, and many afterwards repaired to the Mission House to thank the Missionary for his timely and successful interference to prevent bloodshed, and all other evils attendant upon civil wars. Gradually and surely Christianity is exerting its influence upon the people—the leaven of it is permeating all classes of society; and one result has been the abolition of many of the cruel customs which were formerly observed. For example—there was a time, not long gone by, when it was believed as an article of a creed to be a sin to speak to old women. Young people would never go near them; they would never light from their fires; but now the case is quite otherwise, they may be seen conversing familiarly with the old without any fear of being detected in an unlawful act.

But there is a great deal yet to be done before superstition is completely rooted out of the country. A circumstance took place a short time ago, which I must relate, to show how easy it is to impose upon the credulity of the people. Alligators infest the rivers and creeks which run through the town, and they have been destroying human lives to an extent hitherto unknown; and so the people resolved to do something to check this serious calamity. They had recourse to a medicine-man, who declared that his powerful charms could drive the pests clean away. A public subscription was set on foot, to which all gave most cheerfully and according to their ability. The medicine-man came, and was received with loud rejoicings, and hospitably entertained. He went to whatever house he would, and before he left, was bountifully loaded with presents and all kinds of favours. Now, what was the remedy proposed? No “M.D.” can guess it. It was this—he ordered *guanias*, *lizards*, *snails*, *mashed yams*, *rats of different species*, *palm*

oil, white ant heaps, and other things to be well pounded together and thrown into the river ! The impostor was too wise to wait to see the effect of his strange specific, for he knew what it was worth. The alligators have since destroyed some cows which attempted to cross the river, and have not yet dined again on human flesh, simply because no one has ventured into the deep parts of the water as heretofore. It is really wonderful what people, unenlightened by the Gospel, would believe. They often seem, in matters of vital importance, to take leave of their senses, and hold for truth that which is most palpably false.

It is yet a day of small things at Osumare ; but the seed that is being sown promises an abundant crop.

ALENSO was the next place we visited. It is only recently taken up. We had but two hours at our disposal ; but it was sufficient to see what there was to be seen. The Mission House had formerly been a Factory, and, like similar places intended for the safe preservation of goods, it was raised a good height above the rainy season floods. The roof was ceiled and covered with corrugated iron sheets, and to all appearances it seemed to me a nice, compact, convenient dwelling-house. Adjoining it is a room of moderate extent where the services and schools are held.

Being so lately taken up, there is nothing striking at Alenso to call for any observations from me ; but I trust we may look forward with confidence to the success of the plans already in operation.

The women struck one as being particularly industrious, as I saw them with heavy burdens moving here and there, and in canoes paddling to and from their respective farms. The men wore the same vacant expression and lazy sluggish appearance peculiar to their *confrères* lower down the river. Leaving Alenso, a short run brought us to



ONITSHA, in many respects the most important Station on the Niger.

Whether as regards religious or mercantile affairs, it may be looked upon as flourishing. To a newly arrived person, whose vision is not jaundiced by prejudice, it is calculated to give a good impression—one that cannot but be enhanced by contrast with the disheartening features apparent everywhere in the lower Stations. As the steamer came up, dense crowds assembled to welcome its arrival, and amongst them a large sprinkling of Sierra Leone people.

Onitsha has existed as a Mission Station for twenty years, and was, I believe, the first of all others planted on the banks of the Niger. We had to walk somewhat over a mile to see the Mission House, through a dense luxuriant vegetation. It is a gradual ascent from the river, and pursuing the road in a certain direction you may come to an elevated spot from which you can enjoy a splendid view of country—the winding river giving to the scene a beauty which can rarely be surpassed. The Mission House occupies a ground that must ensure salubrity, and from all accounts, good health is generally enjoyed by the Agents there. If the natives could only be got over their superstitious prejudice against cutting down the groves and bushes by which the town is overrun, Onitsha would be a lovely and desirable place; but, unfortunately, their strength is devoured by the canker of inbred laziness, so that they can do nothing for the benefit of themselves or their country.

Going and returning, we spent in all about three weeks in the town, and the Bishop had ample time to meet the Agents in a body as well as singly, for the transaction of business. Alenso and Asaba being close by, the Agents of those places came over, and they, with those of this Station, formed a goodly band.

The Mission House stands conspicuous within a mighty enclosure, called here a compound, and comprising the residences of the ordained Missionary, the Catechist and Schoolmaster. In another end of the town a small Station has been formed, and a small Chapel built. We visited it on Sunday, the 14th, and the Bishop preached to a small congregation. The resident Missionary seemed to be an energetic young man. He courageously maintains his ground on a spot which is rather a bed of thorns than of roses. I was very much pleased to find that he had been paying good attention to the work of translating portions of the Bible; but more of this anon.

I must say a few words about what may be termed the Mother-Church of Onitsha. The building was planned originally after a style and manner altogether out of proportion with the exigencies of time and place; but the conception could not be carried out, money being wanting.

The "living stones" of this Church gave us, I am happy to say, greater pleasure.

The two Sundays we spent at Onitsha filled my soul with joy, and strengthened my faith in the future of this Station. They were indeed "times of refreshing." On Saturday, October 13th, I witnessed a sight, the occasion being the annual appearance of the King, which made me feel as if the labour of twenty years had been expended in vain. I shall refer at length to this incident below. On the Sunday following, when I saw over 200 converts in the Church, decently apparelled, and joining in the services with all the outward marks of devotion, I felt great relief, and my spirits rose high. It was gratifying to see the young men who had left School, and were pursuing handicraft trades, come to Church with their books, and take their part in the responses, just as in other Christian places of

worship. Prayers were said partly in English and partly in the vernacular, as all have not yet been translated into the latter. It only requires a little more effort in this direction, and then worship can be carried on in that perfect uniform style in which it is done in the Yoruba Mission. On the second Sunday I preached in the morning, when there was a very good congregation, consisting almost entirely of the natives of the country. I was glad of this latter feature, because I felt that the Teachers had those on whom they could always depend.

The natives compose the real congregation. In estimating the number of attendants in any Station, it is usually my practice to overlook the strangers and temporary residents, for they only come for an object, and when that object is gained, they soon "take wings, and fly away." The correctness of pursuing this plan in making an estimate was tested on the two Sundays we spent here. The first one being very fine, there was a large attendance of mercantile agents, traders, clerks, and so forth, but the second being rather wet, only a few of them put in an appearance, and that not until the service was nearly over; but the natives mustered in force, and there were but few absentees.

One could not help observing how strong the English element is at Onitsha. A day was appointed by the Bishop for an Examination of the School children, and most of the members of the Mission were present. The subjects comprised English History, Geography, Grammar, Arithmetic, &c. The Examiners questioned in English, and the children replied in the same language. I was pleased with the progress which they seemed to have made. The senior pupil would do remarkably well, if he could be taken over to Lagos or Sierra Leone for further instruction; but the



Bishop remarked that he could not do it with safety, owing to the foolish customs that prevail among the people. You will hardly believe it, but the fact is true, that should the boy die while at a distance from home, his relatives would demand him back, or else life must go for life. Unless a hand, or head, or any portion of the body can be produced in proof of death having really taken place, the natives would seize the child of any Sierra Leone or Lagos resident, and let its life atone for the loss of that of their own. They make no allowance for accidents, or what is called the act of God. The doctrine that "whom God loves dies young," is utterly repudiated here. And yet, strange to say, they do not permit people to live to extreme old age among them. When it is thought time for anyone to die, and he is slow to take his departure, a story is soon trumped up about his being guilty of witchcraft. Evidence or no evidence, such an one is forced to drink poison, or ruthlessly clubbed to death. Onitsha would have made much greater strides in civilization than it has done, had it not been for the many silly customs and superstitions so tenaciously clung to by the people.

But I must not lose the thread of my remarks on the English element prevailing here. To people who know no language but the English, it might be delightful to hear parts of the Service read in correct style in that language, and hymns sung just as in English Churches. You may hear hymns from Kemble's Selection, wedded to tunes from "Ancient and Modern," any day at Onitsha. Acting-Consul Tait, who was present at Church on Sunday, October 14th, expressed his astonishment at hearing such good singing. The praise thus bestowed was deserved; but I hope we shall bear in mind the fact that the Christianity of Onitsha will grow weak and sickly, and that it

will be devoid of all inherent vitality, if English be allowed to supersede the native tongue. By all means let the English language be taught at Onitsha, but only as an extra accomplishment.

I was glad to see that one or two of the Agents possessing some qualifications for the task are carrying on the translation of the Psalms. At a Meeting convened for the purpose of looking into what had been done, the Bishop offered a few practical suggestions, which were intelligently received. A Comparative Dictionary is being compiled, of the various dialects of the Ibo spoken in the country, and I believe that, if completed, it will be a useful volume. The Rev. S. PERRY, of the Iyawa Station, may yet turn out a useful and valuable Translator, as he seemed to possess the faculty of recognizing fine shades of meaning in words of apparently similar import.

Speaking generally, I would express it as my humble opinion, that there is a great deal that is encouraging in the spiritual work now going on in this place, and that one may well thank God for it, and take courage.

But my notice of Onitsha will not be complete if I omit to mention what I saw of native life, under the most favourable conditions. The 13th of October was the day appointed for the annual custom of the King appearing in public. (It must be known that the rule is that Royalty is always to be shut up at home, and not to be frequently gazed upon by vulgar eyes.) The Consul expressed his desire to see the ceremony, and all of us being of the same mind, four o'clock in the afternoon was fixed upon for the procession of our party. It was a gala day at Onitsha. From early dawn we heard cannons booming, and hand-guns rattling. There was a good deal of drumming, fifing, dancing, and every conceivable token of joy. The hour



came, and with it the Consul, riding on a horse. There was quite a sensation caused by the unconscious beast. Crowds were soon attracted, whilst one called to another to "come and see a man on the top of a *cow*." It is not often that a real live horse is seen at Onitsha, and very likely many among the assembled group that day never saw one in their life—to say nothing of a white man on the top of it. It was difficult to say which attracted the greater notice—the horse, or the ceremony of the day. Chairs were carried from the Mission House by boys, for our accommodation; as His Majesty does not undertake to treat his visitors to the luxury of seats. The crowd gathered thicker and thicker as we advanced, until, on arriving at a large open space where multitudes had been in waiting, all, of every age, and of both sexes, put forth a fiendish yell of delight, and so closely hemmed in the Consul, as to completely prevent his progress. Knives and swords were flashing in the sun, and guns were fired over our heads. I was unused to such sights, and therefore I may be pardoned for saying that I entertained rather mixed apprehensions of what might happen. I was told it was the peculiar way the people had of testifying their pleasure: true, it was *very* peculiar. The Consul was obliged to dismount, and in the midst of that surging, seething mass, we forced our way as best we could to the King's quarters.

His Majesty was sitting before the entrance to his courtyard, surrounded by his trusty servants. Having saluted him, and congratulated him on the event of the day, we were asked to sit down and look at a dance. We put our chairs as far back as the grounds permitted. A ring was formed, and the dance commenced. I regret to say that it beats me to describe accurately what it looked like; nor can I give you an idea of the intensity of the din caused by the

musical instruments which accompanied the saltatory exercises. In due course the King stepped forward to take his part. He was bound by the law of the country to dance on this festive occasion. He is a man of about forty years of age, of good height, and rather agreeable in countenance. His head was adorned with feathers, stuck through his hair. In one hand was held a long black cow's tail, and in the other a kind of short sabre. The movement was very quick, and he went on shuffling with his feet until he was bathed in perspiration. I will not venture to say how many cases of gin were broached that day, but I can positively assert that there were very few who looked sober among those who danced with the King, and filled his courtyard. To end the story. The play was continued until it began to be dusk, when the King retired to his apartment, to which the Consul and the rest of us were invited. The King expressed his great pleasure at seeing the Consul, and apologized for not being able to give us more of his time, on account of the many congratulatory visits which were paid by his people. After this interview we had to undergo a second operation of fighting our way through the nude citizens and denizens, in order to get home before the tornado, which threatened ominously, should blow. For the greater part of the night I could not shake off the word "Pandemonium" from my thoughts; it appeared as if all the inhabitants of the lower regions had come out to hold their court for a few hours in the very heart of Onitsha. Christian teachers have indeed a work before them: and unless they are assisted from above, it is vain to expect that of themselves they can curb the wild spirits, whose performances I witnessed this day.

On Monday, 15th October, we accompanied the Consul once more to the palace to witness the signing of a Treaty

between Her Majesty's Government on the one hand, and the King and Chiefs of Onitsha on the other. The Consul was resplendent in his official dress, and being attended by the Bishop, the entire body of the Mission Agents, and representatives of the three mercantile houses here, there was hardly anything wanting to give due importance to the occasion. We had not long been seated when the jingling of a bell announced His Majesty's approach. He came and threw himself down on his seat with an air of nonchalance, adjusted the scanty piece of cloth around his person, looked about defiantly as who should say am I not a mighty potentate, and then nodded salutation to his visitors. This done, the senior Chief present rose up, and standing before the King, offered the usual obeisance in the name of all the subjects. He performed all sorts of strange gymnastics, shaking his fist the while at the King. I was rather confounded by this threatening attitude assumed by one of the King's principal subjects, but it was soon explained to me that shaking the fist at anyone was a mode of salutation implying—'I hope you are as strong as my fist and arm.' On resuming his seat, the Chiefs of secondary rank came forward and performed. Then followed troops of young men who prostrated, touching the earth two or three times with their foreheads, and retreated. Last of all came the children turning somersaults, and making other ridiculous antics, to our intense amusement.

All this occupied but a few minutes, and then, all being seated, and silence having been proclaimed, the palaver began. The Consul read, and the Rev. W. ROMAINE interpreted, clause by clause of the Treaty. It was curious to see how "vested interests" were jealously guarded by even these simple-minded natives. Every clause was turned and twisted about and nibbled at before it was



reluctantly agreed to. The very first was opposed by the King. It provided that the King and Chiefs shall undertake to do away with human sacrifices. (That abominable custom, alas ! is being carried on, and the victims are infants of tender age, and grown up people of every age, being slaves.) He would not have the clause insisted upon—said that it was a thing done by his command only, and not by the people indiscriminately ; that he was not prepared to cede his just rights by agreeing to that first provision, and so forth. Every time he spoke he turned round and looked at the Chiefs and common people, like one looking for approval. He knew what he was about ; he knew that his people would take him severely to task if he ventured to do away with any customs to which ages of use had given a sort of prescriptive right. The Consul, however, made him understand that he was not expected to abolish the custom all at once, but that he was simply to undertake to do away with it gradually. Then he ungraciously acquiesced, reserving to himself his meaning of the word “gradually.”

There was a clause providing that whenever a robbery is committed in any of the factories, and complaints are brought to the King, he shall take steps to detect and punish the crime, and restore the stolen property. Of course no one had the hardihood to oppose that clause openly, but some well-known tactics were resorted to, with a view to divert attention from the subject. I never saw such a childish simplicity. The clause being read, the senior Chief came forward, saluted, and insisted upon being heard before the King could say “yes” or “no.” He began by thanking the Consul for all that he had done, and then begged for assistance in guns, powder, and rockets, against their enemies in the interior, of whom they were in perpetual dread. It took some time to convince the old trickster that



his request was out of time, and that his speech was wholly irrelevant to the subject then in hand. He only retired when he saw that all were against him. The secret of his untimely interruption was owing, as I understood afterwards, to the fact that his son was the most expert thief in the land, and therefore his affectionate parent felt a personal concern in the matter, and thought that by introducing an entirely new subject, the robbery clause of the Treaty would be forgotten altogether. Poor innocent! The little scheme having collapsed, he went away crest-fallen, and the clause was at length added to the Treaty without opposition.

Another paragraph stipulated that the lands now occupied by the C. M. Society, and commercial firms, respectively, shall be considered as belonging to them so long as they remain in the country; and that Missionaries shall be exempt from giving annual dashes or presents, as merchants do. All being agreed to, then came the work of signing the Treaty. With the greatest difficulty could the King and Chiefs present be brought to touch the pen. They attached to the act some superstition or other, and were afraid of some awful consequences which nobody, themselves included, knew of. After much pulling and hauling, the documents were duly signed; one was left with the King, and the other taken away by the Consul. Presents after their liking were presented to the authorities, and then each one tried to find his way home as best he could in a very dark night, and under high bushes.

I have dwelt sufficiently long on Onitsha and its affairs; I pass on to the upper Stations visited by us.

**LOKOJA.**—We left for Lokoja on September 5th, and when we returned to it on October 7th, we spent about four days there. Before arriving we passed several towns and

villages of importance, among which were Idda, with its bold red cliffs, and Gbegbe, formerly occupied, but since abandoned. You will remember the story about Idda, and also the circumstance which led to its being given up.\* The natives of both places are now begging the Bishop to return to them. Captain BROWN, late of the W. A. Company, a European gentleman, who visited Idda not long ago, told us that he saw the Mission House in a very good state of preservation. Under the conviction that the Missionaries will surely return, the people have kept the mud floor constantly polished, and the entire building was being looked after. He said that the fruit trees were bearing profusely, and that everything appeared as though the premises had not been left a single day. Now, when it is remembered that ten years have elapsed since the Missionaries removed from that place, the facts thus communicated to us are are something more than interesting. The people of Gbegbe are no less importunate in their demands for our return; but, unfortunately, neither they nor the Iddans would give a sufficient or reliable guarantee that we shall not again be molested or driven out of the country. It is open to question whether self-interest be not the ruling motive for this urgent plea for our return; for the truth is that, some way or other, the natives look upon trade as following in the wake of Missions; and they believe that should we come back, factories will again be established, and all their former privileges and advantages will also follow. One can hardly expect a purely disinterested motive as a ruling principle in ignorant heathens;

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\* In 1867, the chief of a village near Idda forcibly detained Bishop Crowther, and demanded £1,000 for his ransom. The Bishop escaped; but as the Atta (king) of Idda refused to promise protection to the agents, the Station was given up.

but I trust they will continue to urge our return, and that the Providence of God will soon open a way for it.

On Thursday, September 6th, at 4 p.m., we arrived at the important Station of Lokoja, beautifully situated at the confluence of the Niger and Binue rivers. As at other places, the news of the arrival of a steamer soon brought half of the population down to the water's edge, the colour and variety of whose costumes gave just grounds for many critical remarks. I was struck, at the very first view, with the difference between the people of this place and those in the lower part of the river. The former have attained to a degree of civilisation which contrasts very favourably with the almost total absence of it among the latter. Nude bodies are here the exception, and not the rule. A glance, too, was sufficient to show that Mahommedanism held sway. Flowing tobés and turbaned heads issued from every quarter. But let me crave pardon to say that to nickname the inhabitants as "the Great Unsoaped," would do them no injustice whatever. The tobés were red with the dirt and dust of years. It is said that from the time when they are put on, new, to the time when they become so threadbare as to be unfit for any further use, they are never dipped in water. The smell of musk (with which these tobés are besmeared), is agreeable to their olfactory nerves, and they are afraid lest the superstition of washing might deprive them of that delicious odour! The Koran speaks of a river in Paradise (Salsabeel), being perfumed with the smell of musk; no wonder then that "the Faithful" in this part of the world are so fond of that particular odour.

Mr. and Mrs. JOHN had been labouring here for twelve years, and were just returning from their first visit to their friends at Sierra Leone, after their first absence from the Station, Mr. JOHN having been summoned to England to



assist in the Hausa translation work. The welcome which they received from the people was most gratifying to behold. There was intense joy when it was perceived that they were among the passengers. Some waved their handkerchiefs and others their hands. Their landing was waited for with impatience, and no sooner was that done than they were surrounded on all sides and most cordially saluted. Few things are more refreshing than the sight of an affectionate people grouping round their beloved Pastor. I wanted no other proof to convince me that Mr. JOHN'S labours have been acceptable at Lokoja, than the spontaneous outburst of welcome which I saw greeted him and his on their return to the scene of their labours.

This is a Station of no small importance. As a base of operations its position is such as enhances its value enormously. No trading or exploring party can overlook the advantages of Lokoja, as affording all the requisites of a convenient starting point. It is on account of its importance, I suppose, that the Agents, both industrial and evangelistic, are so many,—some waiting here for any providential openings that the Lord may be pleased to point out to us.

We spent a Sunday here on our return from the upper countries, and the Bishop preached in the morning, and I in the afternoon. As compared with Onitsha, the number of converts is small; but I am neither surprised nor disappointed, knowing how difficult it is for Christianity to make way in a country that is professedly Mahomedan. There is a small Chapel, built expressly for the Bunu people. The Bishop preached there to a very attentive congregation. I could not visit it, as I was then engaged in the principal Church.

Mr. P. WILLIAMS, whom I mentioned before as having



been brought to this Station from Akassa, on the removal of Mr. PAUL to Kipo Hill, in the absence of Mr. JOHN, has made during the year one or two important Missionary journeys, particulars of which he has given to Bishop CROWTHER. He took the Binue branch of the river, and went as far as the town of Yimaha, whose King earnestly entreated him to come and settle there as a Christian Teacher. From all I have heard, that town seems to be a key to important countries in a direction that is not yet explored.

About a month ago a German *savant* came out for the express object of exploring the river (Binue); but I regret to say that he was obliged to return through a severe attack of dysentery. He was ordered to Lagos, where medical aid could be easily procured, and much anxiety was felt for him. I have not heard any thing of him since. Dr. BAIKIE and Mr. (now Bishop) CROWTHER ascended the river in 1854, for upwards of 300 miles, but were obliged to return without solving the problem of its rise. In a book recently published on this part of Africa, the writer, after balancing a series of probabilities, gave it as his opinion that the Binue will be found to have issued from the same neighbourhood with the Congo. If only this supposition could be established by actual experiment! it will then be clearly seen how desirable it is for us to push forward to the great Lakes, and connect our Mission with that which is now penetrating from the East. Any way, we should not be slow in responding to the call of such places as Yimaha. That the King of that place, unlike that of Idda, is not actuated by sordid motives in his request for Missionaries, is evident from the fact that trading factories are already established in his country. The other journey made by Mr. WILLIAMS, was to Ipara, far away over the mountain that flanks the town of Lokoja.

He took, from choice, a long round-about route, which gave him a good general idea of the country, and the opportunity of speaking the word of God as he went. He was every where well received. As his report, or the substance of it, will be sent to you by the Bishop, I need not say anything more. The report contains the clearest evidence of the intense desire of the inland people to hear the Gospel of the grace of God.

Having spent four days at Lokoja, I had sufficient time to form an idea of the proficiency of the Mahommedans there in Arabic. The result of my enquiries was that their knowledge of Arabic was ridiculously meagre. If I except one of the priests, I did not come across a single person with any decent idea of reading. The priest I have alluded to has compiled a history of the Nupe Country, in Arabic, part of which he gave to the Bishop. I have not yet seen the copy; when I do I shall try to make it out to see whether it be of any literary value. There was a man with whom I spoke Arabic, but he hailed from Waday, and his was a vulgar dialect spoken quite independently of Grammar. However, I was able to make out his meaning. The few who attempted to read out of my Koran managed but indifferently. Unless I made the beginning, they could not open any where and go on by themselves. They professed to be unused to a printed copy, and said that their lack of fluency arose from the fact that mine was so. This was but a lame excuse, for as a rule they recite the Koran *memoriter*, and, therefore, if they had ever learnt it, it would have made no difference to them whether a copy was manuscript or printed. But I am bound to say on their behalf that the Lokojans make no sort of pretension to book learning. Their Mahommedanism is of a blind, imitative kind. From what I could gather, many of them are convinced of the

superior excellence of the Christian faith, but for the sake of worldly advantages, and with a view to stand well with the masters of the country, they don the Moslem garb. It is a pleasing fact that many of them come to Church as visitors.

Besides being situated at the junction of two rivers, Lokoja is also a confluence of languages. The Hausa, Nupe, Bunu, Igara, and Igbira languages may be heard any day in the streets. It is impossible to estimate the amount of good which might be done by a strong band of devoted energetic Missionaries located in that place. The town is the common resort of strangers from the interior, and, through the blessing of God, such persons might return to their country with the blessed seed of Gospel truth sown in their hearts. The result of twelve years of labour may seem somewhat disappointing; but no one can doubt that there is a bright future in store for this important Station.

Our next Station is Kipo Hill, on the left or east bank of the river, opposite to

**EGAN**—the great ivory market town, distant from Lokoja about ninety miles. In going up we could not do the whole distance in a day, owing to the strength of the current; but on our return we glided smoothly down in seven-and-a-half hours. The country through which we passed was beautifully diversified. The scenery in many parts was bold, and rich table-lands extended as far as the naked eye could discern. All the way from the Nun there is nowhere a larger population. The houses at Egan are built with conical tops, and so near each other as to make you think, when at a distance, that there is no space between them. The number of inhabitants (exclusive of strangers)



is variously estimated at from 8 to 10,000. As applied to Egan, that saying is true—"distance lends enchantment to view." No one could look at the factories, with their galvanized iron sheet coverings—the steamers moored beside the house of each firm,—and the river and creeks covered with a countless number of canoes plying about with articles of merchandise, or conveying passengers from one section of the island to the other, without congratulating himself that he was approaching a town with a higher type of civilisation than he had yet met with since leaving the Coast.

But, alas! cultivating a closer acquaintance with Egan, you are reminded of another proverb, equally true—"all that glitters is not gold." There are no streets, but narrow crooked lanes, some leading no where. Walking out with the Bishop on one occasion, we took by mistake a wrong turning, and not until we were on the point of invading the sanctity of a private dwelling house, did we know that we had left the right track. Refuse of all kinds is shot into the streets. Can you wonder, then, that all the senses are offended at once whenever you would take your walks abroad? It is wonderful that people could live and thrive in this fetid atmosphere; but such is the nature of habit, that after residing here for a certain period of time, even those who were originally born and bred in the purest atmosphere seem utterly insensible of the malarious poison which floats about them continually. I used to think that houses could hardly be built "more close to each other than they are in certain quarters of Lagos; but the architects of Egan are far more skilful and more economical of space. I believe that it is possible to traverse the town by leaping from one house-top to the other, but for the shape of the roofs. These are the



physical drawbacks: but the merchant can risk anything—life itself—to make money. And he *does* make money at Egan. The mercantile houses here make together several thousands of pounds annually, by their trade in ivory and shea-butter. Who can say that that is not worth a consideration? And it seems that the trade is capable of unlimited development. Whereas at the beginning only five casks of shea-butter could be had at this market (*teste* BISHOP CROWTHER), now one Company alone can easily secure between 300 and 400 casks. Ivory traders have come from Adamawa and other places on the banks of the Binue. Really, no one can tell what amount of trade will be carried on when that river shall have been thrown open to the commercial world.

While at Kipo Hill, I had the opportunity of making more than a merely distant acquaintance with Egan. On one occasion I crossed over to it for Divine Service. The crews of three ships, besides Agents and other servants on shore, composed the congregation, which was so large that there was not sufficient accommodation for all who would come. The Service was held on board the "Victoria." The Rev. C. PAUL read the prayers and I preached. We were all plainly visible to the natives on shore, who assembled in overwhelming numbers to see us go through our religious exercises. The scene was an impressive one to them. I am quite sure that the moral effect must have been good, when they saw men like the Consul, and the Captains of two of the ships, joining with us publicly in worshipping God. It must have been evident to them that our religion was not a mere device of the Missionaries, but the acknowledged need of all of every race,—of merchants as well as high government officials. Mr. PAUL remarked to me, that formerly it was thought by the people that we

were infidels, and that we only refrained from work from habit, and not because it was a day to be devoted to meditation and prayer. Their notions have undergone a modification since they found out that we could, and that we *do* worship God in a regular formal way. The idea of separating one day of the week as a day of rest from all worldly employment, strikes the natives as being very excellent, and though under no pressing obligation to do so, they hasten to adopt it. Hence you will find, just as I did, that the Mahommedan town of Egan is as quiet on Sundays as in most Christian countries. Business is for the most part suspended, and the hurry and bustle observable on other days of the week is checked into order and stillness when Sunday comes round. Friday, the day of Assembly, is less scrupulously observed than the Christian Sabbath. Merchants and other business people scarcely know how much indirect good they may be the means of doing, by being consistent in their observance of the Sabbath, especially when they are amongst heathen and Mahommedans. Let them not fail to recognize the sacred obligation of that day, and one serious impediment in the way of the successful preaching of the Gospel to our benighted brethren will have been removed.

**KIPO HILL** is our furthest Station up the River, and was granted to Bishop CROWTHER quite recently by the King of Bida, after repeated importunities. Its elevation causes it to be distinctly visible from a great distance. We arrived here on the 8th September, and continued off and on until the 6th October. Kipo is most pleasantly situated. Only two years ago it was overrun with long grass and thickets; but now it has become a desirable habitation. Its elevation, and the fact of there being

no villages at the back, ensure for it a pure atmosphere, and nothing hinders it from being made an excellent sanitarium. Over and over did I test its superiority over other parts of the river as a place of residence. Egan enjoys the unenviable reputation of being as hot as an oven. Scarcely a whiff of air blows to cool your panting breath. But just when you are so tormented with heat, go across to Kipo, and you will there enjoy the delicious breeze that perpetually blows over it from the hills. The native village, from which the Hill derived its name, is about a quarter of a mile on the east of it, and the market town of Kasa is a mile beyond that; so that we are almost, but not quite solitary. But this is a wonderful country for villages and towns springing up with the rapidity of mushrooms. Since our occupation of Kipo Hill, the local governor of Egan has made a most extensive farm on our left, stocked with maize and other marketable products. It took the Bishop, Mr. PAUL, and myself about half-an-hour to get from one end of the farm to the other; and I was told that before long we shall have large and flourishing villages beside us. The truth is, that the people long for protection, which, under the present system, they do not enjoy; and they are gradually strengthening themselves in the belief that their safety largely depends upon their making themselves our friends and neighbours.

An interesting and pertinent illustration of this is to be found in the following story. I must premise that the whole of the Nupe Country is considered as the personal property of the King, who is himself subject to the Sultan of Gondo. The latter monarch, though politically independent of the Sultan of Sokoto, yet yields him precedence, and offers annual presents to him as the elder brother. It is the custom to assign districts and provinces as mensal lands for



the support of each of the children of the Sultans; and these Princes appoint officers over their possessions to gather the taxes. Some of the officers are a rapacious set, who grind down the people by exacting nearly as much again as the princes may have chosen to impose. Wherever their Highnesses pass, they take away from the inhabitants their hard-earned property, so that their progress through any district very much resembles the ruin caused by a plague of locusts. On such occasions they would never limit themselves to the lands regularly made over to them, but would settle down upon any that lie in their route, and make the most exorbitant requisitions. Once, news came that a son of one of the Sultans was going to Lokoja *via* Kipo. The villagers in the neighbourhood were frightened out of their wits. Some left their houses entirely and went to stay in the bush until this tyranny were overpast. The majority, however, brought their beds, cooking utensils, cowries, and all their belongings to our Mission House for safety, and filled the parlour, bedrooms, piazzas, and garret with their worldly goods and chattels. Mr. PAUL was away from home, but had left word that the Prince should not be allowed to enter the house, but that his wife was to send him handfuls of kola nuts, the usual token of welcome and goodwill. In due time the Prince came, and Mrs. PAUL faithfully observed her husband's directions. He was too polite to take advantage of the absence of the master of the house to force himself in, and so, after gazing about a few minutes and expressing his admiration of the house, he took his departure. The next thing heard of him was, that he had plundered a distant town of all the sheep, fowls, goats, and corn, and compelled the unfortunate inhabitants to provide ever so many bags of cowries.

It is needless to say that the villagers to whom our



premises proved such a refuge in a time of distress were profuse in their thanks, and when I saw them last they were all settled at their homes in peace. When the man, who is the governor of the villages, and who had been absent with the King on a war expedition, heard of the conduct of the An-nasaras (as we are commonly called) to his people, he was full of joy, and is said to have remarked that he never expected it of us,—and that those whom at first they were not pleased to see in their country had turned out their best friends. I need not say that I was glad of the observation. Little incidents of this kind will help to clear the confused vision of the people as to our real character. By being punctual in observing the duties of reciprocity and benevolence,—obligations which are scarcely recognized by others in their dealings with them,—we shall find a key to their hearts. Practically, these natives are hostile to us on account of our creed; we need, therefore, to be cautious and circumspect in our movements. Having already obtained a footing, it will be difficult to turn us out: we may, therefore, safely strengthen our hold by buildings, and other evidences of a full possession. There being no large towns in the immediate vicinity of Kipo Hill, is by no means a permanent drawback to its utility. I have already stated my grounds for believing that in a short time it will be the centre of flourishing towns and villages around it. Besides, our aggressive movements require that we should have such a place as this for a rendezvous. Evangelistic tours can issue from it to Egan and other large towns on the Kwofra branch, and return to it after a few weeks or months, both for the purpose of enjoying a needful rest, and of maturing fresh plans of attack on the strongholds of Satan.

Everything about Kipo has a commencing appearance. While we were there, the Bishop pointed out a very eligible

plot of land, which will serve for the purposes of an Industrial Institution. It was being rapidly cleared when we left, and a list of plants to be cultivated was given to Mr. PAUL, the Missionary in charge of the Station. I look forward with a very sanguine hope to the future usefulness of this advanced post in our Mission.

**BIDA**, the present Capital of the Nupe Country, and residence of the King Umoru, was the utmost limit of our northward journey.

Mr. J. CROWTHER, second son of the Bishop, and Agent General of the West African Company (Limited) very kindly allowed us a passage in his steam launch to Wunangi, where we disembarked, and took the land journey to Bida.

We were detained at the former place, first by the lateness of our arrival there, and then by frequent and heavy showers of rain. A messenger was despatched to announce to the King our near approach to the capital, and to request him to send horses for our party. That same evening he forwarded to us a kettle of kola nuts as a token of welcome, and horses to convey us to Bida. But it was impossible for us to set out that night, and, as I have said, the next day was a rainy one. Evidently the King did not think the rain a sufficient reason for our remaining so long behind, for he sent horseman after horseman to meet us; who, seeing nothing of us, came on to Wunangi. Our number gradually increased, so that when we set out we formed a cavalcade of 14 horsemen, accompanied by a large band of footmen. One of the messengers informed us that the King could not sleep all night, from the excitement occasioned by our arrival.

The road to Bida is by no means a bad one. Minus a little depression in one or two places, it is generally level,

and a good tramway might be laid to the Capital from Wunangi, to facilitate the carriage of produce. We passed through fields of guinea corn. The land is rich, and the eye could wander freely over a vast sweep of country until it rested upon rising hills at the distant horizon. The pedometer registered  $8\frac{1}{4}$  miles, and this distance we cleared in two hours. But for the wretched country saddle put upon my horse, I should have enjoyed the ride both ways. As it was, it was like doing penance, sitting upon that hard horny substance, and no wonder that I felt the effects of the ride a long time afterwards.

We rode straight on to the King's, accompanied by the Ndeji (lit. father of the country)—an officer that may be regarded as Prime Minister and Lord Chancellor rolled into one. We found the King sitting among his Chiefs, Captains, and people of distinction, anxiously awaiting our arrival. The welcome he gave to the Bishop and his son, with whom he had been long acquainted, was extremely hearty. Short of embracing them he showed a warmth and genuineness of affection which was extraordinary, as coming from one whose religion inculcates a by no means conciliatory spirit towards Christians. I was introduced, and the King shook hands with me cordially, and then we were ushered into the reception room. It was a large and spacious rotunda, called in Nupe a *Katamba*, where business is usually transacted by the King. As soon as he was seated, he again saluted us, and expressed his great pleasure (which was very evident) at seeing us. Though King UMORU could have conversed with us directly, yet Court etiquette forbade his doing so. The Ndeji was commonly the medium of communication between him and us. The Nupe, Hausa, Foulah, and Yoruba are equally familiar to him, and he can express himself readily in each.



He is a man somewhat above the middle stature, much inclined to obesity, of a very pleasing countenance, and keen powers of observation. Unlike the former King (a description of whose acts puts one in mind so much of that infamous Pasha of Acre, surnamed Al Jezzaz, or the butcher), UMORU is of a religious turn of mind, quiet in disposition, and fonder of the arts of peace than those of war. The Bishop told him that good friends in England enquired after him, at which he was much pleased. We alluded cursorily to the Russo-Turkish war, and to the strong hostile feelings at present existing between the two brothers, Abeokuta and Ibadan.

The general reception over, we were conducted to our lodgings,—the Bishop and my self occupying one, and Mr. CROWTHER and his assistant another. Before our arrival, the King had caused a herd of bullocks to be driven to the front of his palace, that he himself might have, he said, the pleasure of pointing out the two which he had intended to give for our entertainment. Besides the bullocks, the King sent us fowls, turkeys, yams, shea butter, oil, mats, rice and other things, for our use while we remained his guests. Over and above all this, every evening two large bowls of cooked provisions were usually brought in. The quantity would have sufficed for twenty-four persons, however hungry they might have been, but we never could touch them owing to the peculiar mode the Nupes have of preparing their dishes. No people are more scrupulous in showing to strangers the rites of hospitality. The house at our disposal was of similar construction to the King's reception room,—only that it was of much smaller dimensions. A thoroughfare ran right through, and horse, sheep, and rude little urchins came and went incessantly. After a little while it was found

impossible for us to allow of such obtrusion into our privacy, and hence the Bishop requested the landlord to have the animals taken elsewhere, and thus put a stop to the needless going to and fro of the children. The request was instantly complied with, and we proceeded leisurely to arrange everything to suit our convenience. We had hardly shaken down properly when an occurrence took place which set the whole compound adjoining our lodging into a most frantic commotion. At first a subdued moan arrested my attention, and I observed to the Bishop that something was wrong with our neighbours. I had no sooner made the remark than we were hastily called to the scene; and what was our astonishment to see our landlord, who, but a few minutes before, was arranging things for our comfort, stretched helpless in the hands of his wives? He was suddenly seized with a fit of epilepsy. The Bishop ordered some hot water, took a piece of cloth and gave me another, and we began to bathe the hands and feet of the patient, to restore animation. In the mean time some one had gone and prepared a drink of cayenne pepper, which was poured down his throat, and the pungency of it made him turn about a little. Still he was not restored to consciousness. Not long after, a regular doctor came and took the case in hand. He went about it with the air of one who knew his business. When we next looked in, the sick man was sitting up and expressing his thanks to those who had shown such anxiety on his behalf. His wives and children contributed not a little to increase the confusion that prevailed. They were uttering piercing shrieks and ejaculating prayers for help to Mahommed. Had the man died, the weeping, mourning and woe, could not have been more loudly expressed. Poor souls! no doubt they were being tormented with apprehensions of what the future would bring to them

should their worst fears be verified. But the Lord was merciful, and before many hours were over, their sorrow was succeeded by unbounded joy.

The day after our arrival was the time fixed for entering upon regular business. All the morning we waited in vain to be called. It was not until after 2 p.m., that is, after the mid-day prayer, that a messenger came to say that we were wanted. Accompanied by the Ndeji we went direct to the reception room, where we met the King looking after trading affairs. Immediately all the men and women present were ordered out of the room, and we were seated. The usual preliminaries having been gone through, Mr. J. CROWTHER began to address the King on the subject of trade, and after concluding, he produced a few pieces of cloth, extremely beautiful, which he offered to the King, as the annual dash or present from the Firm which he represented. The cloth was very much admired. It was handled and viewed from different points, and there was but one opinion entertained in regard to its wonderful texture. The King thanked him again and again, renewed his protestations of friendship, and expressed in hearty, grateful terms his special obligations to Mr. CROWTHER for certain help rendered him last year.

The Bishop followed, but before bringing out his presents, he introduced me in a formal speech, and told the King the object of my visit to his country. He was informed that I could read and speak the Arabic language,—at which the King was greatly surprised. When he was further told that in order to do this I was sent to the East, and that I visited Egypt, and was two years in El Kuds (Jerusalem), more surprise was expressed. But the climax was reached when the Bishop said that I was a native of this part of Africa, as my father came from Ilorin, where also my grandmother



died last year. The King stared. It provoked a smile to see the marks of astonishment standing out in bold relief on his ample brow. He seemed puzzled to understand what could have been my object in travelling so far to study the Arabic, being a Christian. The Bishop gently insinuated that it would be well if his co-religionists could try to make themselves acquainted with our books, as we are trying to learn theirs. He replied mechanically, "*Gaskia, gaskia,*" "true, true." Seizing the opportunity I produced my copy of the Koran, which he took and examined. That it might serve my purpose, I had had it interleaved, and had made my notes everywhere. The King wanted to know what my writing meant, and I explained everything to him. He requested the Bishop to stop his speech until he had sent for a young man whom he attached to himself as being a good Arabic scholar. There being none to satisfy him at Bida, he had requested his friend the Sultan of Kano to send him this young man, who could always read Arabic to and with him. He came, took up the copy of the Koran, and read on without any hesitation. His reading was clear; his accents pure; and intonation very pleasing. I complimented him with some Arabic phrases, and the King turned round and asked in the same language whether I had understood the reading of his Chaplain; I replied in the affirmative. He was very much pleased. As a specimen of my handwriting, I produced an extract from the Gospel of St. Luke, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord thy God is one Lord: and thou shalt love the Lord thy God, &c." The King read the extract fluently and in a manner which convinced me that he understood its meaning. I was greatly impressed by what I perceived of his intellectual powers.

The Bishop then continued and ended his general remarks, and brought out one by one the presents which he had

chosen for the King. A large arm-chair, made at Kipo Hill, by one of our carpenters, of the wood of the shea-butter tree, was the first present. The King had thought that the chair was brought from England. He could hardly credit the fact that it was made so very near his own door. After that, half-a-dozen pieces of brick, burnt at the same Kipo Hill, were also produced, and the Bishop tried to show that it was possible for the King and his people to have improved dwelling-houses if they wished, and also told him that we should be quite ready to teach carpentry and brick-making to any number of children that the King might send to our establishment. Before we left him he promised to send three. The next thing brought out was a globe. The relative position of places was pointed out. Russia and Turkey were shown, and the Bishop gave some information about the war between the two countries. The King said it was all true, and that it confirmed a report which he had received from the Sultan of Kano, who had heard particulars by the overland route. Last of all came two splendid rolls of carpet, which exhausted the Bishop's store. I have no language to express the exquisite satisfaction evinced by the King throughout the proceedings. He listened intelligently to information, and took in good part whatever advices were given which were intended for the good of his country. In this pleasant interview three hours sped away imperceptibly. But the interview was not carried on with closed doors to the end. The most important things being said, those who had business with the King were freely admitted. Some brought presents for the entertainment of his strangers. Tributaries came with their accustomed offerings. Debtors brought payment for what was due, to each and all of whom the King gave audience while conversing with us. He transacts all business *in*

*propria persona*, it matters not however humble; and he does all with ease and despatch.

I must now point out one or two dead flies in the ointment, that my account may not seem to have a partial and one-sided appearance. With all his enlightenment, the King has not yet seen that it is for the advantage of his country that the cursed and degrading system of slavery should be abolished; on the contrary, no one seems more earnest in upholding the institution. While in the audience chamber, a poor man who could not pay a debt of  $2\frac{1}{2}$  head cowries (5s.) offered instead a little slave boy. The King accepted the exchange with a smile. Himself pointed out to us a white horse for which he gave ten slaves, and told us that that beauty and another, which I afterwards saw, were attended daily by fifty slave boys! Slaves are a medium of exchange here like cowries. They are offered for sale in the public markets daily. It is nauseating to hear accounts of the miseries which these wretched beings suffer from the cruelties of their owners.

There was another thing which distressed me very much. The former King had a set of cannibals kept in the town, who were used on special occasions as ministers of his vengeance. The present King retains them apparently for the same reason. He told us that at a recent war in which he engaged by the special request of his suzerain of Gondo, he actually caught the King of the enemy with his own hand. (By the way, this extraordinary feat has since raised him very high in the estimation of his subjects and near neighbours.) On the army returning home, the King gave the unfortunate Chief to the head of the cannibals, who with his companions devoured him greedily. We were told that we might see the skull if we would, but none of us showed any curiosity that way. Most sickening are the



stories told of the habits of those wretched specimens of humanity—the cannibals. The Turkey buzzards, which are so numerous at Bida, are not more fond of offal and carrion than these human buzzards are of the flesh of *incurables*. Lepers are not permitted by them to live; like scavengers they would pounce upon them and devour them with a gusto! I was told that on one occasion they made a journey to Lokoja. No sooner did the news that they were approaching become known than seventeen lepers crawled away and effected their escape to the other side of the river, and thus saved themselves from the horror of being killed and eaten. While we were at Egan they got hold of an incurable, and we could see them paddling away at a distance, and hear them singing merrily and rejoicing at the prospect of the good feed they were going to have. Why should I continue any longer in this strain? There is much to distress the heart of a Christian man when he contemplates the dark deeds which are daily perpetrating in this dark corner of the earth.

I have dwelt long enough on Bida, and must therefore wind up my story. We had intended to have left the day after the long interview with the King; but he advised the Bishop to delay a day longer, in order that we might take occasion to visit four of the principal chiefs, who are all nearly related to the late King Masaba. The day came, and we went the round of the four authorities, who received us more or less cordially. When the time came for us to depart, the King could not be seen early. It was not until 10 o'clock that we were invited to the Palace. He had no mind to let his guests go away so soon, and so he went on spinning long yarns on the same topics, till we were fairly wearied out. He offered to accompany us by the way, but this offer the Bishop declined, as it would have involved

further tedious delays. In fine, instead of getting to Wunangi at 9 or 10 a.m., as we had hoped to do, we did not arrive there until 3 p.m., when it was altogether too late to embark in the steam launch for Egan.

Bida is a very large town, but the population is rather sparse. It is not remarkable for its neat and well-kept appearance, for grass grows everywhere, and large pits and ditches are left uncovered. Not unfrequently, as I learnt, fatal accidents have taken place, owing to this culpable neglect of leaving the pits open. The blind, in their haste to get out of the way of the tramping of horses, have often dropped in, and there ended their cares. The people all seemed hard-worked, as in all countries where everything is performed by slaves. The state of things will not last long, let us hope. I look to Christianity and civilisation to repair the broken fabric of society, and to impart their peculiar and special blessings to the thousands who are thirsting after them.

Before we left, the Bishop prepared the King for a visit from the British Consul, who was said to be on his way to Bida. On reaching Egan again, we found the Consul had already arrived there. He was the bearer of some costly presents from the Home Government to the King, for the protection which he had afforded to the lives and property of British subjects carrying on trade within his dominions. There is nothing that the King prizes so much as friendship with the English. We are thankful for this disposition in him, and hope that nothing will happen to mar the good understanding at present existing. It is said that a gunboat will ascend the river regularly every year, with a view to keep it open for free navigation. Annual visits will also be paid by a Consul. Might not the Society use its influence to prevail upon the Government to re-establish

a Consulate at Lokoja? I am of opinion that, considering the rapid growth of commerce, and the steady influx of British subjects in the river, such a step is more desirable now than at any previous time. Six steamers are now plying backwards and forwards every year. I understand that two new Companies with two or three steamers will open trade next year. The Binue will soon receive a due share of attention. This being so, I conceive that British interests here are of a substantial kind, and that they need being well looked after.

One other evil the presence of a Consul will tend to eradicate. I am ashamed to say that many in the Niger have grown so bold as to be carrying on the odious traffic of slave dealing. Under cover of the word "ransom," they unblushingly pursue that nefarious system from which their fathers and mothers, and in some cases *themselves*, had suffered so cruelly before they were providentially rescued by British ships and landed at Sierra Leone. Their so-called "ransomed" ones are by no means free to stop or go as they please, but are treated not one whit different from domestic slaves—let me say like goods and chattels—for when the whim takes possession of their owners they would sell their victims as coolly as if they were bargaining for palm oil or shea-butter. The Consul took away from Lokoja, and sent down for trial to Lagos, a Sierra Leone young man who was said to have been deeply compromised in that foul practice. He sent him down hand-cuffed, and one of the victims of his unrighteous traffic was also sent as an evidence against him. If he is convicted of the offence, it is said that he will be safe for fourteen years' imprisonment. A striking example is wanted to frighten others, who are equally guilty—perhaps more so. A few names of notorious offenders in this line were supplied to the Consul; but he



could not bring the parties to book, as those who knew were afraid of giving public evidence. That men whose relations and friends have been rescued from the iron fangs of that "accursed thing" should yet be found practising the same themselves, is one of those strange developments which make one feel quite "ashamed of his own species."

### *THE COAST STATIONS.*

The inspection of the lower Stations of Brass, Bonny, and New Calabar, concluded our tour; and having made brief observations upon each of them I shall close my remarks on this interesting visit.

**BRASS.**—We arrived at Brass on the 31st of October. The hand of civilisation was plainly visible in the superior buildings put up by the European merchants along the river. The front view of our Station appeared, at a distance, most charming, and I can testify that a nearer inspection did not deprive it of much of its real beauty. I was pleased to see every thing trim and neat. A dense impenetrable bush formed a pleasing background to this picture of neatness and order. I was greatly struck with the advanced character of everything about the Station, the comparatively short time that has passed since work was commenced there being considered.

In the year 1867, Bishop CROWTHER met with King Ockiya at the Nun. The King hailed the "God man," and begged of him to come to his country to establish Schools, and do for his people what was being done for Bonny. "Assuredly gathering that the Lord was calling him" to work in Brass, the Bishop hastened to that place, where he was soon joined by the King. It did not occupy

a long time in making arrangements and fixing upon a suitable site for the new Station; and the following year saw the work actually begun. The Lord greatly assisted His servants, so that in less than three years the work had assumed such a decidedly aggressive attitude as to alarm the Juju priests, and make them tremble for their own reputation and their future means of subsistence. About this time a Chief was won over to the cause, and also several young men from the influential families in the country; and when the priests saw that the interests of the gods were being neglected, they felt that the strange religion should be at once crushed. Smallpox having broken out in the year 1871, the cause was traced to the introduction of the new religion into the country, and so a violent persecution was set on foot at the instance of the crafty priests. The lives of the converts were exposed to the utmost danger. The Chief above alluded to was obliged to run away stealthily from Brass town, leaving his family and property behind him, when he was apprised that a Council had been held to murder him. One of the converts was tied so cruelly that the cord made a deep indent into his flesh. In this manner he was dragged to the place of sacrifice, and frightened with a drawn sword; but his faith stood firm and unshaken, and his persecutors were foiled in their purpose to induce recantation. Powerless to stem the torrent of popular passions, the King could afford no protection to those whom he himself had invited to the country; but, thank God! he would not encourage the persecuting zeal of his subjects. Feelings ran high, and matters came to such a pass that the resident Teacher, Mr. (now Rev.) T. JOHNSON, found it prudent to follow the advice given to him to betake himself to the shipping for a time; as his house was threatened to be burnt over him,

and his life was otherwise in the greatest danger. But in the midst of all this excitement he did not cease to go among the converts to encourage by his presence and advice those whose faith was undergoing such a severe trial. At length the fiery storm blew over, but only to revive in a fitful blaze in 1874. However, its force was spent, and it soon died out, and in all human probability will never be revived again.

Now, what is the result of nine years of unremitting labour at Brass? The Church has been enlarged once. On Sunday, November 4th, there were no less than 480 persons present at the morning service (including six Europeans), and in the evening, notwithstanding a drenching shower, there were as many as 226. The next day being the first Monday in the month, the usual Prayer Meeting was held, when the Church was nearly half filled. I had thought that being held at a busy time of the day, (10.30 a.m.), the attendance at the Prayer Meeting would have been small; but I was agreeably surprised to see a great many men and women present. The King and some of his Chiefs residing at the Village of Tuwon were present at both the services and the meeting. It was most edifying to see them listening to the Gospel of our salvation. The next day, (November 6th) saw the Church once more filled. A Confirmation Service was held, and the Bishop administered the holy rite to fifty-eight persons. Those three days—Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday—were among the happiest I spent in my trip to the Niger Mission. In no other place did I observe such a striking exhibition of the mighty power of the Gospel. I am sure that you will soon hear that the present Church, though recently enlarged, is becoming too strait for the worshippers. On the Sunday I have already referred to, it was almost full to its utmost capacity.



More good news. King Ockiya has now asked for a Teacher for Nembe, his capital, which is about thirty miles from the Coast. Thus the work is gradually extending, under the auspices of the King himself, and the influential men of the country. The influence of the heathen priests has collapsed ignominiously. To show with what contempt the gods are now treated, it will suffice to say that wood is cut and carried away from the sacred grove, at which formerly the people would not venture even to look, on account of its reputed sanctity. Social customs which offend against decency and morality are being abolished by the natives, of their own accord. Besides, they are advancing as rapidly in material prosperity as in their knowledge of Divine things. On Saturday, the 3rd November, we, that is the Bishop, Rev. THOMAS JOHNSON, and myself, visited the village of Tuwon, about a mile distant from the Mission Compound. I could scarcely believe what my eyes saw in the house of one of the Chiefs, Samuel Sambo. Very few houses are better furnished either at Sierra Leone or Lagos. The most cultivated taste will admit the house to be a splendid one. Much money has been laid out in pictures, time-pieces, carpets, and every luxury that may be considered indispensable in the residence of a rich civilized gentleman. He has 300 dependents, and through them is accumulating a great amount of substantial wealth. We were taken to every apartment in the house; but there was one room, simply furnished, which gave me the most interest. There was a table, and a great number of forms. That was no other than the prayer room, where, morning and evening, the good Chief assembles his vast household for their devotions. Nine short years ago this man was full of the superstition which reigned in the country. I will not venture to say that, being of a tribe

that practised cannibalism, he has never tasted human flesh. Nine years ago he venerated Juju superstition as devoutly as did his meanest slave; but now, he is another man—a Christian,—and is emulating the practices of his brethren in Christ throughout the world. Once, and that not long ago, he was ignorant of the saving truths of Christianity, and was as poor in worldly goods as in his spiritual health; but now his outward and inward conditions have altered most materially. “Verily, the Lord hath done great things, whereof we rejoice.” I look forward, with an assured hope, to the future, for still greater triumphs of the Gospel among the tribes in this part of Africa. In countries like Brass, you can readily understand that the slaves and lower orders of the people dare not entertain an independent opinion of their own, or if they do, to express it in the face of opposition from the King and Chiefs. Exceptions there may be, and often are; but, as a rule, slaves are timid in their disposition, every particle of manliness of spirit having been squeezed out of them by their oppressive masters. But these masters themselves having embraced the Gospel, and the fear of detection and consequent punishment in the case of slaves doing the same having been removed, it requires no prophetic spirit to foretell that not many years hence multitudes will become faithful adherents of Christianity out of the surrounding tribes, and that the Brass people will themselves become the heralds of the Gospel. It is no news to you that one of the Chiefs has presented the Church with an oak pulpit of the value of £38,—that another gave a reading desk of the value of £6 15s.; and that another has given two chairs for the accommodation of those officiating within the Communion rails, besides a sweet toned church bell.

The prosperity of this Station is not of a superficial or

ephemeral character; there is substance in it, and such as, with God's blessing, will continually expand and become wide-spread. My heart has again and again ascended to heaven, in gratitude to God, for the glorious results which have followed the establishment of the Station of Brass.

Having got into Brass river it was not easy to get out again. The steamers run irregularly. The business of inspection was over on the 6th of November, but we could not leave, much as we wished to, until the afternoon of the 14th. Bonny should have been our next stage, but the Captain of the steamer in which we took passage shaped his course according to his chances of obtaining cargo in any particular place. He steered for Opobo, a town at the mouth of one of the oil rivers. By the strange bungling of some one we were taken past the place in the night, and it was not until the grey dawn of day revealed to us the outlines of the Cameroon mountains, that it was perceived that we had shot past the mark. The vessel was immediately put to the right about, and we came back, after three or four hours, to Opobo. Here we stayed all day and all night, the Captain looking up some palm oil. The next day he steered for New Calabar, and as that was one of the remaining Stations to be visited, the Bishop concluded to land and perform his business there at once, and reserve to be last visited that which would have been the first, had all other things been equal.

**NEW CALABAR.**—We arrived here at 11 a.m. on Friday, the 17th November. The Station is built entirely by itself, as the swampy nature of the soil prevented our having a dry footing in the town, which is about nine miles off by water. But as regards the natives, the distance is by no means formidable, and does not act as a deterrent



against their coming to us. As a matter of fact they make nothing of it, for they come nearly every day to the shipping, which is but half an hour from us.

Work was begun here only in 1874, and, therefore, there are not many of those peculiarly interesting details about it which may be found in Brass.

The chief feature is the Boarding School, which has been established on the self-supporting principle. It has been in existence nearly three years, and very encouraging are the results in that short space of time. Soon after our arrival, the Bishop ordered letters to be sent to the town, inviting the King and Chiefs to an examination of the School, on Tuesday, the 20th. The letters were received, but they were not opened. As soon as they learnt verbally from the messenger that the Bishop had come, and that, according to custom, an examination would take place, without sending a messenger to apprise us of their intention, on Monday we saw them all coming in their gigs with streamers flying, and their canoe-boys keeping time with their paddles to music of their own composing. When they arrived, they said that they had come to see the examination, and to have a good dinner after. There was no help for it, orders were given that the children should be got ready, and at 11.30 o'clock the examination was begun. King Amachree and eight of his Chiefs were present. I need not enter into the details of this examination, which bore the same likeness with those of a similar kind which have been held elsewhere. I cannot, however, refrain from expressing my profound astonishment at the progress made by the children. They were examined in reading, writing, arithmetic, &c., and the result reflected much credit on themselves and their teachers. The senior boys were told to write letters on their slates, while the other classes were being examined. It was amusing to hear

how some of them expressed themselves. Some were very original. Others preached pointed sermons to the Chiefs present, on the evil of worshipping the Juju, and refusing to receive the Gospel. The Chiefs merely smiled, and said nothing.

There are 41 children, each of whom is supposed to be paid for by his guardian. Unfortunately, many of these guardians have been shockingly remiss in their duty, and the Bishop found it necessary to expose them to the censure of the rest. They had once complained that the fee of one puncheon of palm oil (valued at £12 sterling) was too much, trade being very dull; and so it was reduced to half a puncheon, or £6. But notwithstanding this liberal reduction, many of them had not paid for two years—the chief offender being King Amachree himself, who had recourse to many subterfuges in order to evade payment. Being fairly caught now, he was ashamed of himself, and there and then promised to pay his seven puncheons (the remainder of his share of payment for the founding of the Mission) the next day. He was wise. The Chiefs had determined to come down upon him for thus disgracing the country by his conduct. The King having paid, it was easy to deal summarily with the ordinary delinquents. At a Council held three days after, a law was passed that the 24 puncheons due shall be paid within as many days. The penalty of non-payment was heavy; the obstinate debtor was to be debarred from trade. His canoes were not to be permitted to go to the oil market, or come down to the shipping, and himself was to be deprived of the privilege of taking breakfast on board with the Supercargoes. (The latter is considered a very severe punishment.) I am happy to say, that from letters since received by the Bishop from Mr. CAREW, payment is being made as rapidly as possible,

and in a short time I believe all will have paid their dues.

Of the 41 children on the roll, only three are girls. The natives could not see the smallest necessity for educating girls. It will take some time before the notion which they entertain on the subject is exploded. There was a Chief, however, who promised in my presence to send a girl in place of a boy already in School on the ground that "the fee for a *woman-boy* was not so great as that for a *man-boy*." (They have no word for either "girl" or "sister" in their language, so that the expression above is a literal rendering from his vernacular dialect.)

There was another thing I observed which looked very stupid and absurd. Not more than six or eight of the children were free born. The Chiefs would send their slaves rather than their own children,—as if education were such a degrading thing that none but slaves might partake of its benefits. This used to be the case at Lagos formerly, as Bishop CROWTHER says; it is only of late that the absurdity, as well as mischief, of the notion has been perceived, and heathen parents and guardians are now regretting their past folly and ignorance.

The boys are being trained in correct style. The teachers are taking care that the inculcation of intellectual and civilised habits shall not render them weak and useless. They can cut down bushes, hoe the ground, and handle their paddles with the same earnest purpose as they manifest in their studies.

On Wednesday, the 21st November, we paid a visit to the supercargoes on the river, in seven hulks, and enjoyed a friendly interview with them. It is a pleasure to speak of them as a very nice body of men, kind and liberal, and not gifted with that narrowness of mind which is the fruitful



source of all kinds of prejudice. Their intercourse with the Rev. W. E. CAREW, the Missionary in charge of the New Calabar Station, than whom none is more frank and straightforward in his manner, is of the most friendly character; and, unless hindered by circumstances, they are always regular in attending the Sunday Services.

We spent a day at New Calabar town. Leaving the Mission House at 3.30 a.m. on Thursday, the 22nd, we were carried on by the tide, and landed at 5.30 a.m. Chief West Indy, at whose house we lodged, is a man who affects the English style, both in his dress and in the furnishing of his house. His is such a house as I have described that of Sambo, of Brass, to be. Even the King does not boast of such a comfortable residence; and the best part of the matter is that he did it all himself, with the aid of his boys, and never employed a professional carpenter or builder. Whenever Europeans go to the town, West Indy's house is always their place of common resort.

New Calabar is a most filthy place. It looks much like a fever-breeding den, with its surroundings of mangrove and swamp. The streets are so covered with mud and water that you do not know where to set your foot. They are even narrower than those at Egan. Houses may be seen falling on their sides on either side of the road, and kissing each other in the middle; and if you must needs get to the other side of the road, you have no alternative but to crawl under as well as you can. The premises of the King and Chiefs are well filled up, dry, and comfortable; but they so love their town that not one of them cares to clean a yard beyond his own door!

We were paddled to the town by sixteen of the boarders; and as they all came from New Calabar, no sooner was permission granted to them, than they were scattered all

over the place, enjoying themselves. Each one spoke of going to see his "father" or his "mother," and they looked quite pleased to have a few minutes at home. And I must say that, generally, their "mothers" received them kindly, and treated them as if they had been their own children; for they gave them food to eat, and in going away loaded them with yams, corn, and other edibles.

I could not help being drawn out in soul towards these poor slave boys, who, in the spirit of true philosophy, have fallen in with the conditions of the situation in which they have found themselves, and made the best of them. Their real fathers and mothers have no doubt been killed in slave-hunting wars, or sold elsewhere; and the children now call "mothers" those who shaved their heads when they were first brought down as slaves. I allow that their treatment is often good and gentle, but this is only during good behaviour. And what are they but slaves? And who can ever love a slave as he does his own child? I learnt that, should any of them commit an offence, he is immediately put in irons; and for the second offence, he is liable to be sold to the cannibal tribes, who make savoury dishes of him. My language in speaking of slavery can never be apologetic, let the form which it assumes be ever so mild. I have no patience with those who, being themselves free, would scruple not to hide the system under a heap of mitigating pleas, as if it were not a thing which deserves reprobation and total execration. You will often hear,—“Well, the masters are kind and good to them, and value them highly,” &c. Not a doubt of it. They take pleasure in them just as I do in my nice breed of poultry, or cattle, or any other thing from which I derive my wealth. No, liberty is the birthright of every man, and no treatment can reconcile me to the idea of being deprived of my freedom. What is it that has

degraded the people of Africa so that efforts to elevate them have been all but unavailing? It is the state of servitude in which they have been for three centuries. But I fervently trust the day of redemption draweth nigh.

To wind up my account of New Calabar. For an indefinite number of years past the natives have been in the closest contact with Europeans; first, during the slave trade period, and then since legitimate commerce has superseded it; but notwithstanding, they have professed and practised Jujuism most zealously until now. They themselves have openly confessed that their country is becoming different by Missionaries living there. The leaven is working silently, and faith in the gods is much shaken. We went to the town on what is called a Calabar Sunday—(their week consists of eight days)—when nothing was done but eating, drinking, dancing, and sacrificing to Juju. We called at the grand Juju temple, and the Juju king, as well as its priest, came to us. They looked confused as those who are caught perpetrating an unlawful act. A figure-head, dressed up, answered for the deity. The Bishop asked them whether they thought that the Liverpool merchants would have permitted them to have that figure-head if it had really been a god that could have done good to themselves? They smiled and replied "No!" There are a great many of whom I heard, who though they have not yet openly professed themselves Christians, are yet so indifferent about their country's gods that they are never to be found in a Juju temple. All power belongs to God, and I believe He is quietly causing all things to conspire towards the universal reception of the blessed Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ by the heathen tribes in this part of Africa.

On the 24th (Saturday) we left for



BONNY, where we arrived at 10 o'clock in the forenoon. This was the last Station visited. The steamers which I saw lying inside of the river, and the many hulks also, were evidences to me of the importance of Bonny as a trading port. Large vessels can come in without difficulty, as the mouth of the river is deep and more easy of navigation than either the Brass or New Calabar or Opobo rivers.

Bonny would have been one of the most flourishing of our Stations, if not the first of them all, but for the fiery persecution which has been raging these three years.\* Instead

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\* The Bonny Mission has a chequered history. It was founded in consequence of a letter from King Pepple (the present king's father), who had visited England and embraced Christianity, to the Bishop of London, in 1864. Bishop Crowther forthwith visited the place, and in the following year a school was opened; the "Juju"-worship rapidly fell into disfavour, and in 1867 the lizard-gods were publicly destroyed. Two churches were subsequently built, one for the native converts, and the other for the English-speaking (though mostly coloured) traders and super-cargoes. The Juju priests, however, could not surrender their power without a struggle; and in consequence of a crowded service at the native church on Christmas Day, 1873, they persuaded the chiefs to issue a decree forbidding their slaves, from among whom the converts had mostly been made, to attend church. For the last three years the persecution has been continued, notwithstanding the expostulations of the Bishop, and the friendliness of King George Pepple, whose power is only nominal. One convert was cruelly murdered in November, 1875, and others were confined and half starved for many months. (See *Church Missionary Gleaner*, August, 1876, and July, 1877.) Another, as Mr. Johnson relates above, has recently been starved to death, and of this case the Rev. Dandeson Crowther writes:—"Another convert, I regret to say, has—as recently as the 25th of October—sealed the faith by being starved to death. His name is Asenibiega (= 'I cannot make any progress'), belonging to the same house and master as the late Joshua Hart. From the reliable account that reached us, it is said that a sacrifice was made to propitiate the gods on behalf of two canoes about to set out to the markets to

of abating, the storm seems to be gathering force; but the edicts that have been issued this year have made the prospect more gloomy than ever. At first, the unrelenting persecutors were satisfied with merely imposing fines, or imprisonment, or both; but finding that these punishments have failed of their intended effect, they threatened *death* to any convert that is seen going to Church. Spies are put in different places to see who would dare to break the law. But the poor converts often evade them successfully, for they will leave home long before service time and hide themselves in the bush. As the first bell rings the spy comes and takes his position where he can see all the church-goers. The second bell being rung, and the service having proceeded awhile, on seeing no convert, the spy returns home; then all those who have been hiding themselves will come forth and enter the church, perhaps while the hymn before the sermon is being sung.

Quite recently, as Mr. CROWTHER told me, a converted slave was tied and sent to the plantations. The master

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bring down oil. The convert was asked to partake of the sacrifices cooked and shared among those who were to be the pullers in the canoes. He took it, but would not eat, on the ground that he was a Christian. They persisted on his eating his portion, and refusing, was brought before his master the chief. On being asked why he would not partake of the portion of sacrifice given him, the simple answer was given thus:—'My master, I am on God's side; therefore I cannot eat things offered to idols.' This was enough. He was instantly ordered to be bound, and taken to the plantations called Minima, four miles from Bonny, out of sight and hearing, and the keepers received strict orders not to give him *a morsel of food or a drop of water*. This cruel act was kept so secretly, that our first intimation of it was when the death was heard of and reported to us, which took place six days after the imprisonment. Thus another martyr at Bonny has been enrolled among the band of the noble army who are now praising God, in the person of Asenibiega Hart."

gave strict orders that not a morsel should be given him to eat. The order was but too faithfully obeyed, and the man was starved to death, but so constant was his faith that up to the very last he refused to eat the sacrifice offered to Juju, and astonished all who went near him by his calmness and willingness to die.

Sometimes when their slaves are found to have imbibed the principles of the new religion, the Chiefs would send them right away into the interior of the oil markets, and keep them there for several months together; but after a time report would come down that these slaves have been holding meetings among themselves, and even getting the natives to attend them. On Sunday, 25th November, I saw, after the evening service, a young man who had been kept in the plantations for twenty-one months—in chains for the best part of that time. He was only permitted to come down a day or two before, but on Sunday he braved all chances of detection and came to church. Illustrative anecdotes of unflinching courage under the severest trials for the sake of the religion of the Lord Jesus are numerous, but I leave them to be related by the Agents who have witnessed them.

For a long time now St. Stephen's Church has been empty of the usual congregation, though last Christmas over 300 members and adherents were present there. But in spite of their being defeated in every point but that of might, the Chiefs persist in their obstinate refusal to allow liberty of conscience. They would not rescind their cruel edicts, and proclaim universal toleration—leaving it to "Baal" to hold his own against Christianity, if he can. In the case of the one Chief especially—the severest of all—more converts have been made from his house, and more baptized, than from any other; but he would not be con-



vinced of the futility of all his efforts against our religion. I trust that the prayers of good Christians will be more earnest than ever on behalf of the suffering converts of Bonny, that God would grant them relief from the oppression under which they are groaning, and that they may be permitted to serve their Heavenly Master without any let or hindrance.

One good thing the Chiefs have done,—unintentionally, I am inclined to think, for they scarcely know the full consequence of the act,—they have willingly sent their children to school, and about forty of them are now under instruction. The Boarding School here is being carried on on the same principles as that of New Calabar, but with this striking difference, however—whereas at New Calabar the majority of the scholars are slaves, at Bonny they are all free-born.

Mr. CROWTHER officiates every Sunday morning at St. Clement's, a pretty little Chapel built by and at the entire expense of the Supercargoes. Both the Bishop and myself preached there on two successive Sundays to attentive congregations.

On Tuesday, the 27th, a platform Meeting was held there, the first of the kind at Bonny, when the Bishop gave a hasty sketch of the growth and progress of the Niger Mission; and I followed with a lecture on Jerusalem. About £3 was collected after the Meeting, and all appeared perfectly delighted with its success. Nine Europeans were present, the rest being natives of Bonny, Sierra Leone, Lagos, &c. A School-room is being built adjoining the Chapel, and a house for the accommodation of a Minister. The European gentlemen on the river would have their Kroo boys, and pantry boys, and others connected with them educated. The influence which these gentlemen are exercising here has been of a most salutary kind. They

have done much, directly and indirectly, to strengthen the hands of the Agents of the Mission, and their intercourse with them has been characterised by unvarying courtesy and kindness.

In striking contrast to them are the native Chiefs, who have been throwing all sorts of obstacles in our way. Pampered and spoiled by being made too much of, they have entirely forgotten themselves, and are behaving in a most swaggering manner. The Bishop went the round of all of them, in a complimentary visit, and then requested that a day might be fixed when he could come and tell them some news which he had brought from England, and converse with them on matters affecting the welfare of themselves and their country. Two of them promised that such a Meeting should be arranged for either the next day or the day after. Well, I am sorry to say that the Meeting never took place. The Chiefs, with one solitary exception, betook themselves to their respective plantations, and avoided every opportunity of an interview with the Bishop. We were at Bonny for a fortnight, but not one of them came near the Mission, or sent a message of welcome. It is certainly a disappointment that people who have enjoyed so many exceptional advantages should have made such a base return. In no other place did I notice so much shocking incivility on the part of native rulers. I would charitably believe that, being conscious of the wrongs which they have done, they were ashamed of themselves, and therefore tried to avoid a Conference, where they would surely have heard words of reproof most faithfully given.

As regards the material buildings, this seemed by far the best and most complete Station. The houses rest on iron and solid brick pillars, and are covered with galvanized iron sheets. I fervently trust that the time is not distant

when, the ghost of persecution being laid, the Church will flourish vigorously, and give us more than double comfort and encouragement for all the present sorrow and distress caused by the great enemy of souls.

With the addition of a few general remarks, I shall bring my account to a close.

The short visit of three months which I have paid to the Niger has been very instructive and edifying to me, and has left on my mind a most favourable impression in regard to the future. There may be, as I doubt not that there are, a few things requiring to be amended or improved upon. It would have been a most singular Mission—one of a kind that has never been known since the Apostles first went out to convert the world—if some drawbacks did not exist, to prove the imperfection of the best of all human endeavours. Cavillers who are disposed to exercise their ingenuity that way, can find ample scope to direct the shafts of adverse criticism against the character of both the Missionaries and their work; but I am firmly persuaded that every unbiassed mind will acknowledge that it is a matter no less of justice than of charity to admit that the good which has been effected in the Niger Mission, these twenty years, has by far counterbalanced any drawbacks that may be found still adhering to the work. Whether at Brass, or at Onitsha, or at Lokoja, there are substantial evidences of real, solid work having been done. Slowly, but surely, the few handfuls of Missionaries are influencing the tribes among whom they labour, and in many places the heathens themselves admit, without a question, the change that has taken place since the entrance into their midst of the teachers of religion.

I feel particularly grateful and encouraged when I remember that those who have been instrumental in effecting this change are my own countrymen. Some



of them are almost without education; but God, who "is no respecter of persons," accepts faithful service by whomsoever it is performed.

Not the least interesting feature of the work which I have had the privilege to see and examine, is the tendency to expansion observable everywhere in the upper and lower Stations. From no less than seven different places (perhaps more) came pressing invitations for Christian teachers. I am sure that Bishop CROWTHER could find room to-day for any number of good men and true that may be had. It is much to be regretted that, from a variety of causes, the services of many have been dispensed with. Men are wanted indeed, but certainly not of the stamp of some of those who have gone, or been sent, about their business.

While we are lamenting the paucity of the existing staff, death has been thinning the ranks still more by the removal of the oldest labourer. When we left Onitsha, on the 27th of October, the Rev. W. ROMAINE was suffering from diarrhœa, contracted from a patient whom he had been attending. The disease had refused to yield to treatment, and as it was thought that a change might prove beneficial to him, he was removed to his brother's house near the river. Though much weakened by the wasting effects of the diarrhœa, yet there was nothing to indicate that the patient was rapidly approaching dissolution. Just a fortnight after we had left, news came to say that his spirit had taken its flight. It was a great blow, and the more keenly felt in that it was unexpected. We pray the Lord, to whom belongs the work, to thrust forth qualified labourers to the field already white unto harvest.

The time has no doubt come when, on account of its important and increasing developments, the work should have constant and continuous supervision. From sheer

necessity the Agents in some places in the Upper Niger had often to be left to themselves for something more than eleven out of the twelve months in the year. Many a time Evangelistic work was interrupted, and almost brought to a standstill, because there was no resident controlling authority to guide, and direct, and remove obstacles. So long as the Bishop was dependent upon the trading steamers for his movements, it was impossible for him to have ordered his visits otherwise than he has hitherto done. The new Mission Steamer, which is being so anxiously expected, by affording facilities for rapid locomotion, and being at the service of the Leader of the Mission, will be of the greatest service. It will enable the Bishop to regulate his stay at the different Stations with due regard to the wants and importance of each.

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NOTE.

The steamer to which Mr. Johnson refers is the *Henry Venn*, which has lately been built by Messrs. Löbnitz and Co., of Renfrew, for the Niger Mission. Such a vessel is urgently needed, as Bishop Crowther has been much hampered in his movements on the river, and his plans for extension have been greatly hindered, by his having to depend upon the trading steamers, notwithstanding the personal courtesy of several of the owners and captains. The *Henry Venn* is a paddle steamer, schooner-rigged; measures 120 feet in length and 16 feet beam; draws about 3 feet 9 inches when full, and will make ten knots an hour. She will be under the general direction of Mr. J. H. Ashcroft, the Society's experienced industrial Agent in West Africa.

It is hoped that the *Henry Venn* will bear a part, not only in direct Missionary work, but also in the exploration of the little known eastern branch of the Niger, the Binue. In 1854, Dr. Baikie and Mr. Crowther (now the Bishop), ascended nearly 300 miles above the Confluence. But beyond that point no traveller has yet penetrated, and almost the last blank in the map of Africa has yet to be filled up.

“Let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us ;  
and establish Thou the work of our hands upon us ;  
yea, the work of our hands establish Thou it.”—  
PSALM XC. 17.

“We shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and  
from the river unto the ends of the earth.”—PSALM  
LXXII. 8.



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