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Borneo.

JOURNAL OF MR. THOMSON ON A TOUR
AMONG THE DYAKS.

[Continued from p. 128.]

*Katapang and Padang—Bad Paths—
Superstitious Notion.*

On the 7th the travellers entered the mouth of the Pawan river, and proceeding up it a short distance, they stopped for the Sabbath at Katapang, a Malay village of about 1,000 inhabitants.

8. Spent the Sabbath at the house of the *penggawa*, and were treated with the greatest hospitality. He would not allow us to eat of our own food, but set his table for us three times a day, and that in the neatest and most tasteful manner. He seems to have had not a little to do with Europeans, and is somewhat acquainted with their manners and customs. What is more strange he professes far more respect for the white than for the dark races of mankind. Gave him a Bible and a number of tracts. He showed uncommon interest in the contents of these books, wishing us to read for him and also to show him how to read them. His wife, too, and many of their attendants were called to hear what was read, with our remarks upon it. He really appeared to admire the contents of that holy book, and read for himself again and again till I was actually quite exhausted by listening to him, helping him out of his difficulties, and occasionally explaining the sense of some word or passage which he did not at once understand. But at last came out the old question, which always seems so deeply to concern the faithful

Mohammedan, "Is the *Forkan*" (the name here commonly given to the Koran) "among these writings of the prophets?" But the answer, No, ended the issue, no farther questions being asked on that subject.

Passing a number of villages on the banks of the river on the 9th and 10th, the boat reached Padang on the 11th. The *penambahan*, apprised of their coming, invited Messrs. Youngblood and Thomson to an immediate interview. He was a Malay chief, and of course a Mohammedan. Of their conference with him they write—

He was surrounded, as is usual, with a swarm of courtiers of all ages, ranks, and conditions. Among the rest was a haughty son of Islam, who had been to the fairy land of pilgrims, if there was not his birth-place, or at least the birth-place of his fathers. Hence he was not a little wise in his own conceit and seemingly tortured his low thoughts to ask us a multitude of captious questions. Thus our ingenuity was severely put to the test, in order to avoid, as far as possible, the strife of words, and at the same time maintain our character as witnesses for the truth as it is in Jesus. But there is one thing in our favor in all such assaults,—the questions are pretty generally stereotype. The following may serve as a sample: "How many books has God sent down to man? How many things are enjoined upon us by God in the matter of religion? How often are we required to pray? Must we wash before prayer? Do you receive the Koran? Is your support derived from the governor-general at Batavia? Do those who send you contribute to your support for the sake of merit in the sight of God?"

The field which we occupy comprises these two distinct communities. It is an interesting fact that the great majority of the people, composing what is called the Zulu nation, are the remnants of several different tribes. This fact, and the probability of continued emigration to this region, should doubtless be considered by the Committee and by the mission, in laying plans for future operations in this field. As it regards the Zulu country, there will doubtless remain a considerable population after all the emigration, and we should keep in view the populous tribes in advance, who speak the Zulu language, and who are now, as we have reason to believe, entirely accessible.

If the emigration continues, this community will soon equal the Zulu country in population, and I believe that the facilities for prosecuting missionary operations will be greater here than there, and that there will be fewer obstacles to encounter here than there, taking it for granted that this country will be secured to the natives, and that they will be under the government of just and equal laws.

The missionary here will not be dependent upon the will of a jealous and fickle despot, nor will he be embarrassed by the obstacles which are always to be encountered under despotic governments. Here we shall not be liable to interruption from war, and we may carry on our operations with less expense here than in the Zulu country, as the distance and transport will be less, and all kinds of mechanical labor may be more easily procured here than there. So far as I can see, labor expended here will tell as much upon the whole field, as that expended in the Zulu country.

You will perceive that I do not regard the emigration from the Zulu country to this region as a discouraging circumstance, but the contrary. It is my sincere belief that the evils of contact with white people will be as much felt in the Zulu country as here, while the benefits of such contact will be greater here. If this community is properly supplied with missionaries, I do not think that we shall have much to fear from the near proximity of white settlers.

In view of the foregoing statements it may be hoped that this mission, after so many embarrassments and interruptions, may now have an open field where the missionaries may, under the providence of God, prosecute their labors without molestation.

Western Africa.

LETTER FROM MR. WILSON, GABOON RIVER, 26TH JULY, 1842.

At page 498 of the December number was mentioned the arrival of Messrs. Wilson and Griswold at the Gaboon river, and the selection of a new station at that place. From that place Mr. Wilson writes—

It is now nearly six weeks since I commenced a residence at this place, and my increased acquaintance with the country, character and habits of the people, etc., enables me to speak more confidently about this as a missionary field, than I could when I wrote last. The limits of this letter will not, however, allow me to enter into details.

I have visited most of the chiefs in this vicinity, and found them already interested in our mission, or with a little explanation have made them so; and there are none of them, whom I have visited, who have not either promised to send their sons to our schools, when organized, or requested that schools might be established in their own towns. The people in the immediate vicinity of our mission station manifest, I think, a growing interest in our undertaking. They continue to be civil and friendly, and have, of their own accord, rendered some important aid in our preparations for building.

One school was organized about ten days ago for boys; and though it was not our intention to have more than eight or ten pupils, the number has, without any effort on our part, increased to fifteen. The adult young men of the neighboring towns are impatient to have a school organized for them. But this I am compelled to decline until the brethren from Cape Palmas arrive. Last Sabbath I had the largest audience I have had since I arrived here; and the people listened with unutterable astonishment, as they heard of the second coming of Christ, the judgment, and the resurrection. An aged old man inquired when that great event would take place. Another remarked that he thought the number of those who would be found on the left hand of the Judge would greatly exceed those on his right.

All the experience I have acquired and the observations I have made induce the belief that we have entered upon an interesting and promising field,

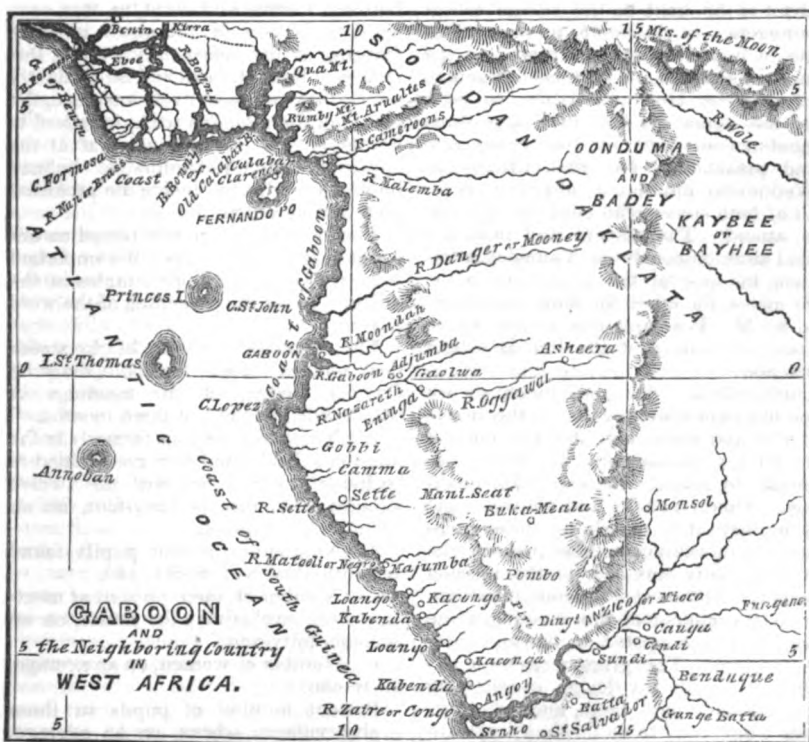
and that we were conducted to it by the unerring hand of our Heavenly Father. My health has been uninterruptedly good; we have excellent water; the situation of the mission premises will be open and airy; and I see no reason why this place will not prove as healthy as any other situation on the coast of Africa.

My time has been spent chiefly in visiting the surrounding country, attending to the erection of houses for the mission family, and in studying the language. The chief part of the materials for all the buildings we shall want for the present have already been collected; and if nothing unforeseen prevents, they will be ready to be occupied in the course of two months. They are to be constructed throughout of bamboo, and if we can procure a sufficiency of boards to lay the floors, they will not only be commodious, but quite airy and comfortable.

The language is radically different from all the dialects I have known any thing about in Upper Guinea; it is har-

monious and pleasant to the ear, and is easy to be acquired. I have collected something more than five hundred words, and shall continue to labor at it as my time and other engagements will allow. The same will no doubt be done by the other brethren, when they arrive; so that the press, I think, may be advantageously introduced here before a great many months.

The trade in this river is considerable. It is visited by a few French vessels and a few from Liverpool; but the chief part are from Bristol. Most of the time since I have been here, there have not been less than two vessels at anchor in the vicinity of our settlement. A few of these traders look upon our establishment with some degree of jealousy, and are afraid that we are about to commence a commercial rivalry, or are laying the foundation of an American colony. Others, however, and I may say the chief part of them, understand our motives and have not only wished us success, but some of them have rendered us important service.



The map above presents five degrees of the African coast each way from the Gaboon river, including the mouths of the Nun or Niger on the north, and the Congo on the south.