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Excerpt

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THE
 NAUTICAL MAGAZINE

AND

Naval Chronicle.

JANUARY, 1857.

EXTRACTS FROM THE JOURNAL OF CAPT. M. S. NOLLOTH, H.M.S.
 "FROLIC."—*St. Augustine Bay, Quillimane, &c.*

While at anchor in St. Augustine Bay, Madagascar, we watered the ship from the river, and taking care to obtain it at the proper time of tide, found it good. Masters of ships should remember this, as it ought not to be taken until at least half ebb, and as it is necessary to wait for high water to recross the bar, you cannot obtain more than one turn in a tide, without rafting over the bar, or working by night, which, from the very marshy nature of the river's bank, and the continual presence of fever, is by no means advisable. We obtained well-fed bullocks, sweet potatoes, and barked firewood at reasonable prices; and we ascertained that steam-vessels stationed in the Mozambique might secure supplies of fuel with little difficulty at all times here, consisting of wood ready barked and cut to any required lengths, provided that the demand be frequent.

There is decidedly more space here for anchoring in moderate depths than appears in Owen's small plan, where soundings showing the depth are very few. The depth increases very gradually from 12 fathoms, where it is marked on the plan as the anchorage, to 21 fathoms at 0.6 mile from it. N. 40° E. (compass) and 1.1 mile from the Tent Rock, bearing S. 4° E. From thence to the rock the soundings shoaled gradually to 9 fathoms, which we found where it is marked. Perhaps in the N.E. monsoon, when the North-Westerly winds are sometimes heavy and send in a considerable sea, it would be prefer-

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able to anchor with the Tent Rock about S. 4° E. (compass). This berth is further from the reef which skirts the South shore, and is in other respects equally convenient.

So secure is the shelter in this bay that the only accident now remembered here for several years, was the parting of a vessel's chain in the N.E. monsoon during a strong wind after a heavy rain. when, especially in January and February, the freshes from the river are sometimes very violent and dangerous as being opposed by the wind, they produce a short chopping sea. The holding ground is excellent, being soft black mud, into which the lead sinks to a considerable depth.

Tent Rock is a white tent-shaped rock on the beach, about twenty feet high: it is not easily made out from a vessel entering the bay; but its exact position may at once be ascertained by remembering that it stands just where the South sandy beach joins the cliffs which continue Northward to the river's mouth, and of which cliffs the rock itself is a detached mass. Near the rock generally runs a small stream of water, which is good at proper times of tide.

Coasters generally take the passage inside Nos Vey Island, and run along the reef on the South side of the bay, especially with the land wind, as they thereby avoid having to haul or work up to the anchorage, with perhaps a current setting out of the river.

At this time (1855) there are two Europeans living in the neighbourhood of the bay, from whom supplies can be more conveniently obtained than from the natives. The chief native, known as the "Prince of Wales," whose authority is acknowledged to a considerable distance around generally receives a small present from the whalers who frequent the bay, and he and his *followers* pay a visit to men-of-war in expectation of a similar acknowledgment. It is customary among the natives to carry assegais, and a few of them trumpery muskets, thickly studded with large headed brass nails, (which should not be allowed to be brought on board of merchant ships,) but this may arise from the neighbourhood being awakened from its usual quiet condition by a difference of opinion between the King of the province of Fierreng and the Chief of Mahaffalla.

From all accounts it would appear that the warfare between the petty chiefs of this part of Madagascar is seldom destructive of life. The natives are scarcely ever arrayed against each other in battle, and their wars seem to consist chiefly in a temporary suspension of that good fellowship by which each chief usually restrains his own people from committing depredations on others. In war-time armed parties rove about, stealing men, cattle, &c., from the opposite party; but actual conflict of numbers seldom takes place.

A considerable area of the land on the river side of St. Augustine Bay, is below the usual high water level, and is occasionally flooded. Fever is said to be always present, and leprosy and smallpox are very common here, for which evils no other remedy is ever attempted by the natives than the charms of the native doctors.

Capt. Boteler gives an amusing account of a celebrated native, Tom

Bravah, which will convey an idea of the character of these people generally. He says

“As soon as daylight appeared, we observed several dark spots opening to the view through the thick fog that hung about the mouth of the River Oneghaloghe, and the lofty white cliffs that limit the South side of the bay. They quickly approached, and were soon made out to be canoes, striving which should first reach the brig.

* * * * *

“The headmost canoe, when they got tolerably near us, waited until the next came up before they would venture further. One then approached and questioned us through the medium of their interpreter, an old blind man, who, holding his head down, as if conning a written speech, delivered his harangue with stentorian power, wonderful volubility, and endless repetition:—What ship dat?—Me speak you Cappen for King Bahbah.—Greaty King, all de same King Zhorje (George).—Franshee ship? Englese ship?—You friende me, me friende you.—You tradee (trade with) me, me tradee you.—You presentee (make a present to) me, me presentee you.—Me no little boy, me grandee man, soulyer (soldier) for King Bahbah.—Having thus spoken, and pretty well exhausted his breath in his ten minutes vociferating repetition of it, Tom Bravah, who was in the canoe, broke in upon the blind man’s story, and thus introduced himself:—‘Me Tom Bravah:—you sabbee Tom Bravah:—Tom Bravah speakee you Cappen.—Tom Bravah no little boy, no fisherman; gobornor (chief) for King Bravah.’—In this way he ran on for some time, and at last concluded with—‘Speakum Tom Bravah—come he come.’ He was welcomed accordingly, and, accompanied by the blind man, soon made his appearance on deck.

“His costume, which was that of the country, principally consisted in a large white garment of native manufacture, ornamented with three black streaks near the edges, and one across the middle: it was secured round his waist, a small part hanging down before, and forming a sort of kilt, while the rest was negligently thrown across the shoulders. This garment had in all cases a pleasing effect, but on some it really appeared elegant from the careful and becoming way in which the folds were arranged; it tended to prove that dandyism is as common among the rudest tribes of savages as it is in the most polished circles of civilized life.

“But to return to Tom Bravah. Round his neck was suspended a string of beads and drops of cut glass of various sizes and colours. Some of the smaller of the former were used to decorate a piece of wood, shaped like the float of an angling line, about two inches and a half long. On his wrists he had bangles of silver; and his long black hair was plaited into small tails, three or four inches in length, with a knot at the end. These were trimmed so as not to hang below an imaginary line that might pass just above the eyebrows and across the ear. About half way from one in the centre of his forehead, a circular piece of ivory was suspended, an inch and a half in diameter and neatly turned.

“On ascending the deck he took his blind comrade by the hand, and pushed his way to Capt. Vidal, to whom the pair repeated all that they had before said, and with as loud a voice, especially when they perceived that they were not understood. But the clamour that they made was trifling compared with the turmoil that ensued when the rest of their countrymen got on board. They had too much assurance to pay attention to broad hints, or even to the plain declaration that their noise was disagreeable: nothing less than turning them out of the vessel had any effect, a measure to which we were driven in three or four instances.

“Our visitors had scarcely been five minutes on board before they became very troublesome for presents. King Bahbah, in whose name the greatest demand was always made, was to have one barrel of gun-powder and one of brandy, two muskets, two hundred flints, and the same number of ball cartridges. A tone of request was by no means adopted: on the contrary, the present was demanded as a right, not as a voluntary donation. Such domineering conduct in all probability owed its origin to the intercourse of the natives with merchant vessels, which some years ago were more in the habit of visiting the bay than at present. Being weakly manned, it was to their interest to conciliate the goodwill of the natives by presents, that they might obtain assistance in wooding and watering. This no doubt was previously considered, and cheap articles for the purpose were accordingly provided.

“The natives who were admitted on board amounted to thirty. They brought with them sheep of a small breed, goats, guinea fowls, and common ones, macaucoes, or, as they are sometimes termed, Madagascar cats, water melons, lemons, bananas, plantains, sugar-canes, honey, pumpions, milk, and various sorts of shells, all which they greedily bartered for dollars, beads, blue dungaree, (which they call clout,) looking-glasses, bottles, more especially case-bottles, brass, &c. They understood well how to drive a bargain, yet our goods were in such request that even allowing that the natives obtained their utmost demand, the purchaser had no reason to complain; for with a dozen small common earthenware beads he could procure sufficient refreshments to last him for the day, and his mess for a week by the proceeds of a small dog-bell, purchased in London for fourpence.” We saw nothing however of Tom Bravah or his friends, who have most probably passed away.

Tullia Bay, about twelve miles Northward of St. Augustine, is occasionally visited by coasting vessels to be laid on the mud opposite the village for slight repairs, the water inside the reef being very smooth. The usual anchorage is abreast of this village, in about 6 fathoms. Near a small nook at the South extreme of the bay, a spring of fresh water is found, issuing from rocks, which is said to be highly esteemed along the coast,—this spot is called “Saoudranou,” or “good water.”

Having completed watering the ship, we left St. Augustine Bay on the 29th of September, and made sail for Quillimane. We experienced little or no current during our passage of four days until we approached the African coast, when we found a westerly set of about

one mile an hour: we anchored in the latitude of the river's mouth, in $9\frac{1}{2}$ fathoms, without being able to distinguish anything but a rugged outline of trees above the horizon. On the following morning we tripped our anchor, stood into 5 fathoms, and made out the flag-staff on Tangalone Point, and to the Westward a break in the line of trees indicating the river's mouth. At 8h. a.m. I left the ship, and passing over the bar in tolerably smooth water, arrived at Quillimane at noon.*

The Governor was absent in the interior, at Tette, and had been there since June, and the object of my visit was explained to the Commandant, being simply the case of Dr. Livingston. I took care, on presenting him with my letters, to impress on him the feeling of anxiety that prevailed in Europe for the safety of this enterprising gentleman, and our desire to see him at Quillimane. The Commandant was of opinion that he must pass through Tette on his way to Quillimane, and assured me that no pains would be spared by the Governor, or by any Government officer, to promote the health and comfort of so distinguished a traveller, should he happily make his appearance in their

* [The visit of the *Frolic* to Quillimane was made in October, when nothing being known of Dr. Livingston (who has now reached England and been received with becoming honour by the Geographical Society), the *Dart* went there in April following on the same mission. In consequence of the sad misfortune which occurred to her, she was obliged to leave without effecting the object of her visit, and on her return to the Cape the Commodore sent the *Frolic* there, which ship was then under another commander, Capt. Nolloth having left her in consequence of being promoted. The misfortune, which was related as follows in a Cape paper, seems to have been one reason of the delay which occurred to Dr. Livingston at Quillimane.—Ed.]

HER MAJESTY'S BRIGANTINE "DART."—FATAL ACCIDENT.—*Cape of Good Hope, May 30th.*—On the morning of Tuesday, April 29th, H.M. brigantine *Dart*, being at anchor off the Quillimane River, about eight miles from the shore, the cutter, with Mr. M'Clune, second master, commanding, Lieut. Woodroff, R.M., nine men, and a black boy belonging to Quillimane, left the ship to proceed up the river. On Saturday morning, as the cutter had not returned, the gig was sent in search of her; shortly after which a Portuguese boat arrived alongside the *Dart*, with one of the cutter's crew, from whom were obtained the following particulars:—On Tuesday morning the cutter, on nearing the bar of the river, was nearly swamped by a heavy sea, and the next one turned her over. One of the men, named M'Nabb, immediately disappeared; two others swam ashore, and the rest clung to the boat till all but the narrator and two others gradually lost their hold and were drowned. These three drifted with the boat about twenty miles to the N.E., and on Wednesday morning found themselves so near the land that he himself swam ashore; the two others held on by the boat until she grounded. As soon as the information reached the *Dart*, the gig, which had returned, was again sent, under the charge of the gunner, to Quillimane, and on Saturday evening she came back with four of the survivors, who stated that, after the upsetting of the boat, Mr. M'Clune, who wore heavy blanket clothing, was one of the first who sank; Lieut. Woodroff held on longer, but at length, overcome by exhaustion, he also disappeared. The three men who had remained by the boat stated that they had reached Quillimane about an hour before the boat from the *Dart* arrived.—*Hants Adv.* 2nd Aug. 1856.

territory But he gave me little hope of his passing safely through so hazardous an enterprise, taking into consideration merely one inhospitable portion of Eastern Africa adjoining the Quillimane district, which he would have to traverse. On referring to a statement regarding the arrival at Benguela of a small band of Arabs in 1852, from Zanzibar, he observed, that these men had reached Mozambique safely, where their journey had excited much sensation; and before we parted he placed in my hands the *Mozambique Government Gazette*, of which the following is a translation.

Translation of the Mozambique Government Gazette of March 17th 1855.—Commercial.

The difficulties which for a long time have been held to be insuperable with reference to a passage across the Deserts which separate the Eastern and Western parts of Africa, have just now been a second time overcome by some Moors, who, leaving the coast of Zanzibar, to trade in the interior, found themselves, after some month's journey, near the western part of Cazembe; and in the expectation of a more favourable commerce, still advanced, until, having no more goods to trade with, they directed their course to Catambe, where they were informed they would be able to get some in exchange for gold and ivory, which they still possessed. At Catambe they fell in with a merchant of Benguela, and advised by him to accompany him, they arrived together at that city, after a journey of some months, without having to give any information unfavourable to commerce, but the contrary.

They journeyed through Balamoio, Terras de Girvasa, do Cuto, Legoxa, Coyo, Toagana, Morungo, Cazembe, Calanga, Cahava, Macacomna, Cobito, Banda, Quanza, Bille, and Benguela. Some of these countries are thickly populated, and they have abundance of provisions and of ivory. Between Cahava and Cavica runs the River Leambeje, which one may suppose to be Zambege, and disembogues at Quillimane.

Returning for this coast they diverged from their former route; and the principal countries and peoples of which they gave notice, are the following:—Chamopa, Mastangora, Camimbe, Macurgo, Passatubalumba, Pachahoca, Caiomba, Panamba, Utumbuca, Bamba-Culima, Nhaca-pumunabambi, Nhaca-pacofumera, Jana-pamudicula, Jana-pamugambo. In all these there is abundance of food, good water, and plenty of cattle. They crossed some rivers, the principal one being the Wumcarque, which is more than a hundred fathoms broad and of great depth, and to cross which they had to make a raft.

They left Benguela the 7th of June, 1853, and arrived in this city the 12th of November, 1854.

On my inquiring into the effect of relaxing the law relative to the admission of foreign traders to the Portuguese colonial ports, I was informed by the Commandant that for more than thirty years scarcely any English, American, or French vessels have been seen at Quilli-

mane; but that foreigners would be well received when they came. However this might be, there would seem to be little inducement for them to do so, for it would be difficult to imagine a more wretched looking place or a more miserable population. They were slowly recovering at the time of my visit from the loss of their crops from the heavy rains of the previous January, that had swollen the river and flooded a large portion of country. So great was the flood, that many persons only saved themselves by taking refuge in the trees, numbers of whom had since died of starvation.

A lighthouse had been nearly completed on Tangelone Point, and the light was scarcely in operation, when the foundation, which was of sand, without piles, gave way to the flood. This of course was fatal to the structure; and at present there seems to be no intention of rebuilding it. A flag-staff marks the ruin, which, being but a heap of rubbish, is scarcely to be distinguished from the surrounding trees, and is, therefore, of very little service as a seamark for vessels entering the river.

We saw nothing here indicating commercial activity of any kind. A considerable number of large canoes and some boats were lying about idly by the river side, all apparently in a more or less neglected condition and out of use; and only one small coasting vessel lay at anchor in the river, about to sail for Mozambique with ivory. From the fact of the vicinity of an English vessel of war being unknown at the town until we had landed, may perhaps be inferred the great decay of Quillimane, as the chief slave mart of the Portuguese. A signal staff was erected some years ago on the North extreme of Pequena Island, as an intermediate station between the town and Tangelone Point Flag-staff; but no one is now stationed there: the staff on the point exchanged colours with the brig, but we did not observe any signals.

In respect of trade, Tette, in the neighbourhood of which place a war has been going on for more than three years between the Portuguese and two native tribes, is the channel through which the produce of the interior passes to Quillimane, and this war seems to have greatly cooperated, with the extinction of the slave trade, towards the decline of Quillimane. Trade with the natives is almost at an end: indeed an occasional freight of ivory and tortoiseshell is all that can be obtained for one or two small coasters from Mozambique, and the gold dust, which was formerly washed from the sands and taken by the natives to Tette, is no longer to be had. This war, it appears, had detained the Governor at Tette since June last. The Portuguese troops amount to between 1200 and 1400, of whom about 80 are stated to be the remnant of 180 Europeans who a short time since were conveyed from Lisbon to Mozambique in the *Don Fernando* frigate, which vessel brought out for the service of the settlements 200 regular troops and 150 convicts to serve as soldiers. Such are the materials of which so small a portion of the Portuguese troops are formed, the remainder being mostly slaves. It would appear to be a

war carried on with great acrimony, for it is stated that the natives have impaled or cut the throats of many of their prisoners.

It would be difficult to obtain a good estimate of the whole population of the Quillimane district, for no regular census seems ever to have been taken; but the population of it is estimated at 8,000, of whom 17 only are Portuguese, and of these but five reside in the town. The town itself wears the aspect of desolation, for the few stone and brick buildings in it are in a sadly dilapidated condition, and the huts of the negroes are small mat coverings, indiscriminately scattered in the jungle. The church appeared to be the only edifice in repair: a half-caste Padre of Goa performs mass on Sundays to the Portuguese, who alone attend.

The only employment that seemed to be going on, was that of brick-making by some heavily chained convicts, who were runaway slaves and others, including men, women, and children. Fever is reported to be ever present at Quillimane, and smallpox appears to be very common. A Government medical man occasionally inoculates European children with its virus on favourable opportunities; I much regretted that the medical resources of H.M. ship did not enable me to supply him with vaccine matter; vaccination never having been adopted.

Notes on Quillimane River.

The bar of Quillimane River is very frequently dangerous and treacherous, many accidents having occurred when little expected, including several to the boats of our own ships, and the loss some time ago of a pilot and his crew.*

The most convenient anchorage off the mouth, is generally in 11 or 12 fathoms, with the Flag-staff on Tangalone Point bearing N.N.W. (compass), distant about eleven miles. With Southerly and South-Westerly winds it is sometimes preferable to anchor in about 8 fathoms between the Indian and Quillimane rivers, with the Flag-staff about North, this being more to windward for the boat, and a smoother berth for the ship, as these winds meeting the ebb out of the river frequently cause a heavy swell, to which a vessel anchored off the mouth then rides broadside on rolling heavily.

The best time of tide for boats entering, is the last quarter flood; the best for quitting, the first quarter ebb, as the nearer high water the fewer the breakers, and the general idea among some naval visitors that half tide is the most favourable, as the breaks on each side then mark out the channel, is, in my humble opinion, most fallacious.* When other circumstances permit, the early morning is the best time for entering and quitting the river, as calms or light winds off the land, with a smooth bar, are then the most frequent. The boat-bar is almost always the safest, and, whenever it is prudent for a stranger to

* Since this was written the officer commanding H.M.S. *Dart* and most of his boat's crew perished on the ship-passage of this bar at *near low water*, see p. 5.—ED.

enter the river should be taken. With a strong South-Westerly wind this passage is sometimes impracticable, when the ship passage can be taken, by those acquainted with it.

At our first visit in the whaler and cutter, we took the ship passage, and had tolerably smooth water. When returning in the morning, also in fine weather, a slight sea-breeze had already set in, and toppling waves which (as far as we could see) threatened to break into the boat, suggested the greater safety, in one respect, of the western or boat channel, which, running for the greater distance near the shore, would afford some chance of escape in the event of accident. At our second visit, in the pinnace and cutter, (the ordinary brig's whale boat having been considered unsafe,) we took the boat passage in going in and returning. In going in it was nearly high water, with a light southerly wind, and the channel was distinctly visible and sufficiently smooth. On returning in the same weather near low water, the breakers were very heavy, and the pinnace having missed the channel, had to return and anchor within Tangalone Point until the following morning, when at near high water she left by the boat channel, which was then quite smooth.

When an early start from the river to the ship is intended, it is advisable to sleep in the boat at Hippopotamus or else at Tangalone Point the night before, taking care, if at the latter, to anchor well inside, Northward of a flat sandy spit, which runs out from abreast the flag-staff, as it dries to a considerable distance out at low water, and frequently, even in fine weather, has a surf on it when the tide rises.

In ascending the river there is no difficulty whatever if the western shore be kept the whole way. To the Southward of Pequena Island we passed a low islet, which does not appear in the chart; and still further Southward, a since-raised bank, which, though not visible on our way up, was, on our return at low water, dry to a considerable extent. At times, when the stream is rapid, it is dangerous to run aground on the soft bottom. We passed the wreck of a small vessel which had grounded in smooth water and had failed to get off.

The winds favourable for small vessels entering the bar of Quillimane River by Tangalone Point, are N.E. round by South to S.W. With a S.W. wind you cannot pass from Tangalone Point to Olind, as is usual at other times, when going up to the town; but you may anchor on the Tangalone side within the two points of the entrance.

The winds for leaving the river from the well, are S.W. round by North to N.E.; the S.W. channel is often taken by coasters well acquainted with the river, and may sometimes be safely taken by others, but only with the winds N.W. round by North to East.

For vessels entering the river the Tangalone Passage is the only practicable one, the channel mark being the Tangalone Flag-staff N.N.W. If when on the bank a vessel shoals her water, she should keep more to starboard, viz., to the Northward; and as soon as it begins to deepen, steer N.N.W. for the flag-staff as before. When the water deepens, steer for Tangalone Point, borrowing on the Cavalho. Marinho Bank. As soon as you are inside the flag-staff you should

borrow a little on the North shore, and then anchor for a pilot, as the river has undergone great alterations since Owen's survey.

Vessels of war wishing to communicate with Quillimane, usually anchor in 10 or 12 fathoms, about ten or twelve miles from the river's mouth. It is not perhaps prudent for them, when approaching the shore to drop a boat, to stand in to much less than 7 fathoms, even in fine weather, owing to mounds or ridges of sand which are said to exist off the entrance, and which in moderate weather sometimes cause heavy breaks. The soundings, between 12 and 6 or 7 fathoms, appear very gradual.

The following information may be interesting—especially with reference to Dr. Livingston.

Times occupied by the Voyages between Quillimane and Tette—180 miles up the river.

I.—From Quillimane to Tette in the rainy season.

From Quillimane to Mogurrumba, in both rainy and dry seasons, takes three flood tides. From Mogurrumba to Mazoro, embarked in *almadias*, two days. From Mazoro to Senna, embarked in *lanchas*, *escaleres*, *coches*, or *almadias*, eight days. From Senna to Tette, embarked in any of the above-mentioned boats, thirty days.

II.—From Quillimane to Tette in the dry season.

From Quillimane to Mogurrumba, as in the rainy season, three flood tides. From Mogurrumba to Mazoro, conveyed in *machillas* by two Negroes, carrying also a load of baggage of two or three *mudas* weight, two days by land. From Mazoro to Senna, in any of the before-mentioned boats, four days. From Senna to Tette, in the same boats, ten days.

If great haste be required, or when less weight is carried, this voyage—in the dry season—may be made in about two-thirds of the time stated.

III.—From Tette to Quillimane.*

From Tette to Senna, in any of the before-mentioned boats, one day and a half. From Senna to Quillimane, in the same boats, two days and a half.

In the times given for the voyage down the river the nights are not reckoned, as neither with a full nor low river is it customary to travel by night, on account of the dangers in the way.

IV.—From Tette to Quillimane when the river is not very full.

From Tette to Senna, in any of the before-mentioned boats, four days. From Senna to Mazoro, in the same boats, two days. From Mazoro to Mogurrumba (carried, as before, in *machillas*) two days *by land*. From Mogurrumba to Quillimane, in boats, as before-mentioned, three ebb tides.

In the winter months (January, February, and March) Negro messengers go from Quillimane to Tette by land, crossing the river occasionally, in about twelve days.

According to circumstances, the state of the river at the time, &c., a greater or fewer number of days is required for the above voyages than specified.

The latitude and longitude of Tette were not procurable at Quillimane.

The Rev. Dr. Livingston, alluded to as being expected at Quillimane (*Quelamaen* perhaps we must now spell it), was conveyed to the

* When the rains are sufficient to open a communication between the rivers Ambeze and Quillimane, which circumstance is of very uncertain occurrence, not taking place sometimes for several years.