

To the Right Honourable the Earl of Scarborough,
Deputy Governor, Royal Niger Company,
London.

Asaba, Niger Territories,

MY LORD,

March 6, 1897.

THE Niger Sudan Campaign being now concluded, I hasten to put before our Council the following observations on its progress and results.

The Council will remember that after my return from the Niger Territories last April, we finally decided to put an end to slave-raiding in the territories lying to the south-west of the Niger, and to satisfy the Government of Lagos by obtaining adequate guarantees from the Emir of Ilorin against renewed frontier troubles. The more serious question of the reduction of Bida—raised last July by the Markum Mohammed's army crossing to Kabba, to the south-west of the Niger, thus offering us an unexpected opportunity of striking separately at the halves of the Nupe army—was left to my discretion on the spot, as was also the order in which the several operations should be undertaken.

On reaching the West Coast last December, I found that our carefully concealed intention of attacking Nupe was known at Lagos, owing to the wide publicity given by a press agency to an interview in England with an officer in the service of the Government of Lagos; and we learned later that news of this and of our extensive preparations had been carried overland from Lagos to Bida. This premature disclosure had such important results that no report of the Nupe war could be intelligible without reference to it.

In the first place, it gave time to the late Emir Abu Bekri, who became suddenly alarmed for his capital, to gradually withdraw half the force under the Markum at Kabba, before our flotilla moved from Lokoja to command the Middle Niger. It is now easy to understand three matters which must have surprised you at the time, in view of the fact that the Markum's force was undoubtedly intended to attack us, while unprepared at Lokoja, from the west, while the Emir should attack us from the north. But with the reduced force of the Markum and the knowledge at Bida of our preparations: (1) we were not harassed during our nine days' march to the Markum's camp near Kabba; (2) his letters were marked by an apologetic tone; and (3) he fled from his war camp on our approach.

In the second place, the Bida army was strengthened not only by half the Markum's army, but also by 9,000 to 10,000 fighting men from neighbouring Fulah states with whom Abu Bekri had time to form an alliance. As our Hausa troops did not—intimidated by the great disparity of numbers—allow their square to be broken and as the enemy did not—encouraged by numbers—prolong the fight until our ammunition was exhausted, the premature disclosure of our plans proved of advantage; for the battle of Bida has had an effect throughout the Central Sudan, which would not have been produced by successive defeats of smaller bodies.

The campaign consisted of two distinct parts, the military operations inland under Major Arnold, and the flotilla operations on the waterways and adjacent country under Mr. Wallace, C.M.G. Of the former I need furnish no account, as reports written by Major Arnold are appended hereto. I cannot too highly commend the qualities displayed by this officer during all three expeditions to Kabba, Bida, and Ilorin. I trust that the Council will make representations to Her Majesty's Government with the view of obtaining due recognition of Major Arnold's services. When

the proper time arrives I will, if requisite, write in fuller detail the grounds of my very high opinion of this officer, with whom I was necessarily in constant contact throughout the campaign. I trust also that immediate steps may be taken to place before Her Majesty's Government the claims to the West African Medal of the officers in Her Majesty's service who took part in the campaign. My own opinion of these officers will be found in the letter of thanks to them dated the 1st March, 1897, at Lokoja. I desire to endorse also Major Arnold's report on the officers engaged, to call special attention to the services rendered by Major Cunningham, D.S.O. (Sherwood Foresters), and Lieutenant Festing (Royal Irish Rifles), and to lay stress on the excellent astronomical and topographical work done by Lieutenant Vandeleur, D.S.O. (Scots Guards), in addition to his heavy duties as a company officer in charge of a Maxim gun.

Out of the Company's numerous officials, both European and coloured, whose services throughout the operations proved indispensable, I must specially mention Mr. W. Watts, senior executive officer, who displayed the greatest energy and management both in collecting carriers and in controlling them during all three expeditions.

As Mr. Wallace, C.M.G., has furnished no report, I will give here a summary of his valuable work. The flotilla under his orders consisted of the "Empire," "Liberty," "Muri," "Soudan," "Florence," "Borgu," "Zaria," "Bornu," "Argus," and "Ribago," with two despatch launches, the "Frances" and "Busybody," and the hulk "Nigretia" anchored off Egga, partly for defence and partly as a storehouse for fuel, provisions, and military stores. It was impossible to give Mr. Wallace more ships, as Agent-General Flint urgently needed the rest of the fleet in other parts of the waterways, and especially in the delta, to meet the possibility of disturbances in case of rumours of a defeat of the troops being spread down country. Mr. Wallace's steamers were armed with Nordenfolt quick-firing shell guns and Gardner machine guns, and were manned by riflemen. The river from Lokoja to Jebba, the limit of steam navigation in the dry season, was divided into six sections, patrolled by six vessels with orders to overlap each other somewhat at the five main crossings of Kosoji, Muriagi, Egbon, Egga, and Budon, three other fast vessels passing constantly up and down the whole length of river. Mr. Wallace at once succeeded in rousing to revolt the waterside "Ganagas," or former rebels of 1882. This placed at his disposal all the canoes on the river, and, landing with his native levies and steamer contingents, he reduced a number of Fulah strongholds within striking distance of the river. So effective was his blockade of the Middle Niger that not even a messenger could pass. The news of the battle of Bida did not reach the Markum, only a few miles to the south of the Niger, until we informed him of it seven days after the event. Later on Mr. Wallace, in accordance with the terms of the Treaty of Kosoji referred to below, performed the difficult task of crossing the Markum and 12,148 of his people from the south to the north bank without any collision whatever between them and the thousands of Ganagas and Northern Nupes, who were crossing in the inverse direction to settle in Southern Nupe. Mr. Wallace also took part in the second military expedition, that to Bida; while a hundred of his Ganaga allies assisted in dragging the twelve-pounder and nine-pounder through the bush, and over two swamps, from Egbon to Bida. They dragged, moreover,