



CAPT. CARSTAIRS      CAPT. PERRY

A HALT ON THE UROME-ULIA EXPEDITION—A NATIVE SERGEANT AND PRIVATE IN THE RIGHT FOREGROUND

Regt., Winnipeg Rifles, C.M.; Lieut. Knowles, Indian Staff Corps; Lieut. Carré, Warwickshire Regiment; Dr. Whitely, Medical Officer; Mr. Wedenham Fosbery, the Resident at Benin city as chief political officer; Lieut. Daniels was the only native officer that accompanied us.

For more than a hundred miles we marched under a tropical sun through dense jungle and forest. Around us were the stately cotton-wood and calinwood, the slender palm of many varieties, and the smaller ebony and rubber tree; on all sides we saw rubberlike vines wind and twist round the trees, droop to the earth, and again climb and droop, forming a tangled, impenetrable tropical growth. Through vines and shrubs with fierce prickly thorns that lacerate the flesh, we often had to cut our way. Behind the luxuriant screen of green relieved by the red, blue, and white of tropical flowers, we could hear the chattering and chirping of a myriad of parrots and cockatoos, and the flutter of their wings. The odours of the decaying vegetation,

however, were less agreeable; the air was stifling. Often in approaching a river we travelled in Indian file for miles through a cut that the water or wild animals had made, twenty-five feet deep, our elbows touching the clay bank on each side; often along a narrow path, worn out on the precipitous bank of a river, where a false step would send you one hundred or two hundred feet down to the alligators in the murky stream below.

Often the trail had been unused for a few years, and we cut our way step by step through the luxuriant growths of vine and shrub. For miles we would find ourselves in a tunnel of green foliage, where no ray of the sun could penetrate, broken now and then by a short space of open country. Again, through the tall elephant grass, which cut off all air, with the sun beating down, our carriers would stumble, fainting under their loads; and we ourselves could scarce carry our accoutrements.

Here and there were to be seen along the line of march the mounds of