

The chief danger arises from the loaded, smoky moisture, that hovers over the marshes and rivers; and which sometimes settles down like a cloud of death on those higher regions of the Niger, where it cannot be reached by the sea breeze. Through a mass of this poisonous vapour, produced by the constant beating of the sun, in the hottest weather, on vast tracts of marsh, the steamers of the Liverpool expedition had to move, in attempting to ascend the Niger.

On the 11th November 1832, the men began to be attacked with symptoms of the fever—"throbbing headaches, burning pains on the feet and hands, and a deadly sickness at the stomach." On the 12th, in one of the two steamers, three of the officers and nine of the crew were ill. On the 13th, Mr Laird found himself "much better," "though the fever had left him as weak as a child;" but he found only one white man and a mulatto, of all the crew, able to do their duty." He, however, relapsed, and but for the aid of the journal of another officer, who afterwards died, could not have recorded some of the facts that follow. On the 14th, the only European able to do duty took ill with the same symptoms. On the 18th, a young gentleman who had joined the expedition as a volunteer, and also one of the firemen, died. On the 19th six more died, including the chief mate, and the supercargo. On the 21st three more of the party died; and on the 22d, two. On the 5th of Dec., Mr Laird's journal has the following entry:—"I have living, Alexander Hector, purser, John, the second steward, Harvey, Kirby, Belfrage, and Davies, seamen, all as weak as myself, and crawling about the decks more like spectres than men." On the 27th, Mr Laird was lying on deck "in a state of almost total unconsciousness;" but was painfully roused from his stupor by the death of Dr Briggs, the medical officer. He and Laird had lain side by side for some hours; and says the latter, "he pressed me much to go down into the cabin, but I was incapable of moving myself, and afraid of being carried, my

bones being very prominent, and excessively painful when touched. At sunset he was carried down, being then in severe pain, and I bade him farewell, little thinking it was for the last time." He died next day. Thus, many graves were opened and closed in a few days; and the remains of these unfortunate adventurers still repose on the banks of that magnificent but deadly river. The grave of the medical officer named above, is "in a lovely spot on the eastern bank of the river," where his body was laid by the hands of the only two white men who had strength enough to bury their dead out of their sight.

Mr Laird passed through not a few difficulties ere he reached his native land. He visited Fundah, a city on the banks of the Tchadda, the largest tributary of Niger, never before known to have been visited by any European, and supposed to contain a population of about 30,000. Most of these are Pagans, but the leading people are Mohammedans. About one half of the people are slaves, "who would scramble in a disgusting manner for any morsels of food thrown to them." There Mr Laird was detained as a kind of prisoner about the king's palace, which consisted of an immense number of circular huts, like those represented in the accompanying cut, and surrounded by an immense mud wall, about 15 feet high. The three huts here represented, were given to Mr Laird for his accommodation. You may see how his hammock was hung between the posts that supported the conical coverings of these huts. There he was kept in a kind of captivity for seven weeks, and plundered of his property. He effected his escape by working on the superstition of the king,—firing large rockets and blue lights in the darkness of night. "Up flew four beautiful two pound rockets, immediately followed by the blaze of six blue lights." The natives fled in all directions, and the king filled with terror, laid his head on the ground, and placed one of Mr Laird's feet on his head, entreating him to preserve him from harm: