

Brass River is the old Rio Bento of the Portuguese slavers, and on its banks may still be seen remains of the barracoons or enclosures, wherein the slaves were confined while awaiting shipment to the white man's land. I have been told by natives that quantities of Portuguese gold doubloons, received as pay from the slavers, are buried in the graves of some old chiefs.

While in Bonny, I took the opportunity of visiting the celebrated Ju Ju temple, built entirely of the bones and skulls of unfortunates who had been eaten at the religious cannibalistic feasts in the good old days of Jujuism. The base or foundation of this building was composed of elephant and hippopotamus skulls.

It consisted of two arcades about twenty feet long and ten feet wide, intersecting one another in the middle at right angles; the height was about twelve feet. It was, when I saw it, in a neglected state, and fast falling to decay, probably on account of the scarcity of the peculiar building material required for its repair.

Bonny is now the headquarters of one subdivision of the Niger Diocese, and is under the superintendence of Archdeacon Crowther, a son of Bishop Crowther. The Bishop himself superintends the Brass River district. The ruler of Bonny, at the time of my visit was King George Pepple, an enlightened and fairly educated African. He was a regular subscriber to, and reader of the *Illustrated London News*. There had been a little fighting in Bonny, just previous to my arrival. Two powerful chiefs agreed to settle their differences with Armstrong guns at short range. Consequently the city was in a rather dilapidated condition. King George appealed to Queen Victoria, for the loan of the British iron-clad fleet, and was much disappointed at her refusal. Shortly afterwards, one of the gun-boats, belonging to the West coast squadron, by shelling and burning what little was left of the city, restored order.

I did not stay long in Bonny, but with a companion, started for Brass, *via* New Calabar and the cross creeks. We had two boats, one for ourselves manned by four Krooboys, and another for our baggage, manned by six. Our only adventure was at Cassada lagoon and village. Here we were stopped by the King's men; my comrade and myself were taken ashore in small canoes to see his Majesty the King. We found him sitting in state in his royal robes, consisting of a dirty gingham shirt; he had on his head a most eccentric plug-hat.

His Majesty was of a hospitable turn of mind, and asked us to take a drink with him. We thought it best to assent; one of his men then produced a square black bottle of trade gin (this abominable stuff is made in Hamburg, from potato peelings, and costs, I believe, about seventy-five cents a dozen put up in green boxes,) another man with much pride, produced a most filthy tumbler. It was so dirty that even he was

struck by its utter want of cleanliness; accordingly, he carefully licked it all over, and wiped it dry upon a most abominable cloth he had about him.

His Majesty then poured out some of the abomination aforesaid, into this glass, took a meditative draught himself, filled up again, and passed it to me. I drank it, but had much trouble in keeping it down. My friend was served next; the face he made was a study; it even made his Majesty smile. We were then introduced to the numerous wives of the king, in number about twenty, each of whom, his Majesty said, expected a present. We told him we must go to our boats to see about it, and after much talk, we were taken on board, surrounded by about twenty canoes full of men armed with dollar guns.

We got on board our boats all right, and while pretending to look for the presents, gave our men orders to make way at once.

My friend produced a large revolver, while I, with a stick, rapped the knuckles of those who tried to hold our boats. On getting clear from the canoes, our men pulled with a will, and we soon distanced our pursuers, who continued the chase, firing all the while. On turning a corner we found a barricade of stakes across the lagoon. This was the critical moment; at first we could see no way through, and while looking for an opening, our pursuers nearly got up to us again; their bullets fell around us like a hail storm, some striking our boats. By good luck, we found an opening and got through all right, without any damage, and without having fired a shot ourselves. Our pursuers, after threatening us with all kind of tortures the next time we came that way, fired a few parting volleys after us, and then paddled disconsolately home.

We got to Brass River the morning after this adventure, and found it a repetition of Bonny and old Calabar, with, perhaps a finer growth of timber on its banks. I found my quarters on the hulk *Magna Charta* very comfortable. My staff consisted of a white doctor, mate and clerk, with a large retinue of native servants, chief among whom was my coxswain and interpreter, Mr. Bar, whose native name was Yannah-boofah, or every man's friend.

After a rest, I called on the other traders or agents, nine or ten in number. They were very hospitable, and glad to see a new-comer from England. I am sorry to say that the example they gave the natives was not calculated to further the efforts of the missionaries. Sunday was only observed as a day of rest. There was a service in the Mission house, but, of course the agents were too high and mighty to attend that, and preferred spending their time in the village, and visiting each other.

Most of us lived on hulks moored in the river; some few had houses on the shore built in a modified European plan. These ships