

to Bonny, and the Niger Coast Protectorate yacht "Evangeline," with Lieutenant Parks, of Her Majesty's ship "Phoebe," arrived at Bonny shortly after us.

4. We left Bonny directly telegrams had been sent, and arrived off the Forcados River at daylight on the 18th, and the tide being favourable proceeded into the river at once, and on through the Chamoni and Nanna Creeks which, though requiring careful attention to the tides, present no great difficulties for a ship of this size. Lieutenant (N.) Parks proved to be an excellent pilot, and by 1.30 P.M. we were in the Benin River.

5. I found the "Phoebe" and "Alecto" at anchor off the Brohemie Creek, occasionally firing a shell into the town. The direction was given from a crow's nest on a spar rigged above the "Phoebe's" fore-topmast, and from which a view of the roofs of a few houses could be obtained. I anchored near them, and arranged for a more vigorous shelling the next day, the 19th.

6. At 6 A.M. on the 27th the firing was stopped, and, at my request, the Consul-General sent messengers to Nanna to give him another opportunity of surrendering. I inclose a copy of the letter sent. A verbal reply was received which amounted to a distinct refusal. (See Memorandum attached.)

7. The shelling, though no doubt it must have made most of the town uninhabitable, could only be directed by the view that could be obtained by lashing the main-topmast half-way up the fore, and placing a crow's nest on the top. The houses (of which only the roofs could be seen) were scattered and surrounded by creeks and swamps, and though occasionally some thatched houses were set on fire, it had not the effect of driving the fighting-men any great distance from their guns, as they were invariably ready, after a short interval, to open fire if they discovered we had parties on-shore.

8. The stoppage of the food supply, supposing it had been possible to prevent any going in, which was doubtful (owing to the nature of the country intersected in every direction by creeks, the openings to which are very difficult to discern) did not commend itself to me, as it would have caused great misery to the slaves and poorer people, leaving the real instigators of the trouble untouched, as any food that did find its way in would immediately be appropriated by them.

9. Under these circumstances it appeared to me that we might go on wasting ammunition for days, and wearing the men out in an unhealthy climate, patrolling and blockading without bringing matters to a satisfactory conclusion, so I decided that a direct attack on the town by a landing party must be made, and the Acting-Consul General fully concurred.

10. The difficulties were considerable, owing to the vast stretch of mangrove swamp that surrounded the town, while a direct attack by boats up a creek commanded by a number of guns and blocked very effectually in many places would probably cost many valuable lives.

11. The only practicable way of getting at the place seemed to be by making some kind of track through the swamp and getting in the rear of the guns; accordingly on the afternoon of the 20th the ground on the right bank of the creek, of which nothing was known before, was reconnoitred by Mr. Roupell, of the Niger Coast Protectorate Forces, and a small detachment of native troops, and was reported impracticable.

12. I now determined to try and clear away the bush on the left bank of the creek until we could get into a position to enfilade the guns that

commanded it, but the position of which we could not very accurately determine; and accordingly on the 22nd a party of wood cutters, covered by Houssa skirmishers, and supported by a company of seamen from the "Philomel," commenced cutting from the upper end of the stockade which had been taken on the first attack.

13. I went away that morning with the Consul-General in the "Alecto" as far as Sapele (about 4 miles) to visit some villages which were suspected of assisting Nanna, and left orders with Captain Campbell, of the "Philomel," to push on with the cutting and to endeavour to obtain information about the trend of the creek, probable position of the guns, &c., but not to expose the men more than absolutely necessary, and to withdraw if they found they were working in the line of fire. After cutting for a couple of hours they were discovered and a heavy fire was opened; it was evident that any advance in that direction must be at the risk of considerable loss; the wood cutters would not work any longer, and the party were embarked and returned without loss.

14. Before the fire was opened Lieutenant (N.) Parks, of the "Phoebe," reconnoitred the creek in a canoe for some distance, and added to the scant information we possessed.

15. This day's experience proved the necessity of proceeding in a different direction, and, having fortunately obtained the services of a couple of intelligent deserters, we started to cut a track through the swamp that would take us well round clear of the guns, and on the 23rd we commenced cutting, with a strong party of labourers, 50 Houssa skirmishers in front of them, and a covering party of Seamen and Marines. I landed about 2 P.M., and at 3 P.M. the natives apparently discovered that something was going on, for they suddenly opened a very rapid fire from cannon, machine guns, and rifles. They fired from the former between 80 and 90 rounds in less than an hour; fortunately they were principally laid in the direction of the creek and did no damage. A track was cut about 400 yards long by the evening.

16. Next morning early the cutting was resumed. A heavy and rapid fire was again opened; but they evidently could not get the direction, and it proved ineffectual. After a few hours' work it was reported to me that the edge of the thick mangroves was nearly reached, that the country was more open beyond, and that it was, in all probability, possible to get into the town in a short time from the point they had reached, so the cutting was stopped, and I spent the afternoon in organizing an attack for next day.

17. A further report of the proceedings will be forwarded by the next opportunity.

I am, &c.,

FRED. G. D. BEDFORD,
Rear-Admiral.

Inclosure in Rear-Admiral Bedford's Letter of
27th September, 1894.

Her Majesty's Ship "Phoebe,"

September 19, 1894.

SIR,

THE Admiral of the African Squadron has, as you are probably aware, arrived in the river with another of Her Majesty's ships, and others are shortly expected.

It is deemed advisable, in the interests of yourself, chiefs and people, also on grounds of common humanity, to give you another and final opportunity of surrender. As you have already been informed no terms can be made with you further than if