

With such advantages on either side, with no difficulty to contend with, excepting the either making a rail-road or cutting a canal of fourteen leagues, it surely seems worthy the attention of some speculative people, either in Europe, America, or Jamaica, to establish at least the steam-tug for the bungoes; and trust to the transit from San Juan del Sul to Nicaragua, by mules and arrieros, as at present used, until the more settled government of Guatemala shall be able to protect and assist in undertaking the proposed canal.

To arouse the attention of the public, and to bring before their eyes the benefits that might be obtained through this beautiful river, has been the intention of this short account, given by a man of the rudest manners, but of clear, intelligent capacity, having no view but that of telling the truth,—it may be almost said, indeed, that it was extracted from him during his passage in the *Ariadne*. And the collector of these few particulars, as the subject seems to him of much importance, will lose no opportunity of gaining every further particular he can, connected with the river of San Juan de Nicaragua and that part of central America. The sides of the San Juan are a continued forest, with labour exceedingly cheap, and consequently as much wood may be obtained as would serve the steam-boats for fuel, at a very trifling expense.

V.—*Short Account of Mombas and the neighbouring Coast of Africa.* By Lieutenant Emery, R.N.

FROM Tanga (a little south of Mombas) to the equator, the coast is inhabited principally by a quiet and intelligent race of men, called *Sohilies*: these, judging by their present mode of building houses, as compared with the numerous ruins of ancient towns all along the shore, must have been a great nation. Their complexion formerly was similar to that of the Arabs, which can plainly be inferred by the sallow appearance of many of the old men; but the present generation are nearly black, owing to inter-marriage with the inland tribes called *Whaneekas*. I have been informed that, several centuries ago, the northern powerful race called *Gaullas* caused the devastation I have mentioned, laying in ruins the towns and cities of the *Sohilies*, and obliging the latter to fly for refuge southward, and unite themselves in closest alliance with the *Whaneekas*; which measure stopped the progress of the invaders. Since that time, parts of their coast have been taken possession of by the Portuguese, and afterwards by the Arabs. All the *Sohilies* are very poor, having only the cultivation of their grounds for their support. Their principal traffic is in

grain, cassada, and timber, and not (like the present Arab occupiers of their country) in ivory, gums, &c. The customs and manners of the Sohilies are somewhat like those of the Arabs, but their habits are less indolent; they are also now of the same religion: the island of Mombas is wholly Mohammedan, having in the two principal towns eight mosques. About twelve miles to the northward is the hamlet of Mtuapa, situated at the entrance of a small river, which runs about sixteen miles into the country. The prospect is very beautiful, but the land little cultivated; columba-root grows wild in abundance. About a quarter of a mile from Mtuapa are the ruins of a large walled town, one of whose gateways is still standing, having a *pointed* archway; as have also the windows and doorway of the place of worship.

Massive walls of different buildings are seen here and there amongst the ruins. There are several wells, but only one in use, which supplies the village, the others being nearly filled up with the rubbish. The place of worship resembles a Christian cathedral, except that it is not built in the shape of a cross. At the eastern end, inside, touching the wall, is a cubical construction, either an altar or pedestal, about six feet every way. About half a mile farther, there are other ruins, but whether of the same town or not I could not learn: they cover a great space of ground, but time has almost levelled them, only here and there a detached wall being still upright. Three miles farther to the northward, are ruins of another town; and I have been informed by the natives, there are ruins all along the coast, within a day's journey of each other. I suppose them to have been inhabited by the Sohilies, but am not sure. Thirty miles from Mtuapa, there is a magnificent river, named Quilfee; at the entrance of which there is a very fine harbour, with depth of water for large ships. In the vicinity of the river's mouth are the ruins of three very extensive towns, within three or four miles of each other. The next large *inhabited* town (about ninety miles north of Mombas) is Ozee, situated twenty-five miles up a river, on an island formed by a branch of the same: the houses are very numerous, but scattered and irregular. It is a Sohilie town, governed by a sultan, named Fomalute-ben-Shakh, who informed me that the river ran a great distance inland, how far he could not tell, but he had been two months on his passage up, and was not near the source. The banks at the entrance, and about twenty miles up, are thickly wooded with mangroves; the land is very low and marshy. Hippopotami and alligators are very numerous, and the country abounds with all kinds of wild animals. Had I been superseded from the government of Mombas, it was my intention to have crossed Africa from this point; Sultan Fomalute's son was to have accompanied me, with three other persons, two of whom

were Sohilies, the other an Arab. I have little doubt but we should have succeeded, he (the sultan) having great influence over the Gaullas and other tribes inland of them, through whose countries we should have had to pass. Having resided two years at Mombas, I was well known to the Whaneekas and the Merremengows, two numerous tribes inland of Mombas, and also to some of the Gaullas. The Whaneekas inhabit the surrounding country for many miles; they are very treacherous to strangers, but when acquainted, every reliance may be placed on them. Some of their villages are large, forming an open square, but with little regularity; in this square they have a house tastefully fitted up, and which I have always seen used for drinking in, but whether it was also used for religious ceremonies, I never inquired. Circumcision is a general thing with them. Their beverage is the sap of the cocoa-nut tree, and another palm, which is extracted into calabashes, and kept in the sun to ferment; they partake most freely of it, which causes drunkenness, a vice the Whaneekas are much addicted to. Their lands are little cultivated; cassada is the chief produce of their grounds, although the country is capable of producing any thing: it resembles a park, with clusters of trees here and there, as if planted by art. Small pieces of water are also seen, to which the natives drive their cattle always before sunset, previous to taking them to the pens—the country being so very much infested with all kinds of wild animals, that they would be destroyed if left out; even the natives retire to their huts before dark. They never bury their dead, but place them outside the huts, and in the night the hyenas take them away. They have another peculiarity,—whenever they kill their cattle for food, they either stone or beat the animal to death, so as not to shed the blood. Their dress is a blue cotton wrapper round the waist, hanging down as far as the knees, with another thrown over the shoulder: their implements of war are straight swords (of their own manufacturing) and bows and poisoned arrows, with which they are very expert. Their traffic is in ivory, gum copal, honey, bees-wax, and cattle: in exchange for which they get cloths, beads, and wire—the two latter articles they carry to the tribes inland, named Merremengows. These last are of small stature, well made, and active, perfectly black, but have not in the least the negro appearance; their hair is rather short and curly; they are very friendly and good humoured. Their implements of war are the same as those of the Whaneekas, and are very expertly used by them. Their dress consists of the skins of wild animals, carelessly thrown over the left shoulder. The chief ornament of the men is brass wire twisted round their arms when young, above the elbow. The women have bead ornaments round their waist and in front; also beads strung on the hair, all over their heads. The

traffic of the Merremengows is in ivory, skins, rhinoceros' horn, &c.; which they exchange for wire and beads. Their religion I am not acquainted with; but they are not circumcised.

A CATALOGUE OF WOODS.

Sobitie Name.	Diameter. <i>in.</i>	Height, <i>feet.</i>	Use.
Mungorule . . .	18 . . .	19 . . .	Bedsteads, boxes, &c.
Mupingo (crooked)	10 . . .	13 . . .	Bedsteads, &c.
Monyonvouro . . .	18 . . .	19 . . .	Ship-building.
Mechano . . .	19 . . .	14 . . .	Doors, &c.
Mowoula . . .	36 . . .	60 . . .	Ship-building.
Mosendee . . .	22 . . .	50 . . .	Masts for dows.
Monamage . . .	40 . . .	26 . . .	Ship-building.
Mananingya . . .	26 . . .	30 . . .	Ship-building, &c.
Mucongarcharlee	28 . . .	22 . . .	Doors, &c.
Mocungue . . .	24 . . .	25 . . .	Ship-building.
Mulelana . . .	7 . . .	12 . . .	Rafters, &c.

VI.—*Memorandum respecting the Pearl Fisheries in the Persian Gulf.* Communicated by Colonel D. Wilson, late Resident in the Persian Gulf, &c.

As the pearls fished in this gulf are known and esteemed all over the world, it may be interesting to say something respecting the manner in which they are procured, and the wonderful extent and value of this single article of commerce, which produces the means of subsistence for nearly the whole population of the Arabian shore of this sea. The land produces little else besides dates, but they even are not in sufficient quantities to support the whole of the population; supplies therefore must be imported. A handful or two of dates and a little salt fish, with occasionally a little rice or wheat, washed down with brackish or bitter water, forms the general food of the Arabs of the coast.

The most extensive pearl-fisheries are those on the several banks not far distant from the island of Bharein; but pearl-oysters are found, more or less, along the whole of the Arabian coast, and round almost all the islands of this gulf. Such as are fished in the sea near the islands Kharrack and Borgo, contain pearls which are said to be of a superior colour and description, from being formed of eight layers or folds, whilst others have only five: but the water is too deep to make fishing for them either very profitable or easy there; besides, the entire monopoly of the fishery is in the hands of the Shaik of Bushire, who seems to consider these islands as his immediate property.