

VI.—*Despatch communicating the discovery of a Native Written Character at Bohmar, on the Western Coast of Africa, near Liberia, accompanied by a Vocabulary of the Vahie or Vei Tongue.* By Lieut. F. E. FORBES, R.N. Communicated by the Admiralty. Read April 23, 1849.

[Some difficulty has been experienced in printing the following paper on the Vei language in consequence of there being no typographical means of representing the peculiar alphabet in which the language is written; and as the number of characters is above 200, the expense of cutting a fount of types for the purpose would have been very great. This difficulty has been avoided by the adoption of a syllabarium in Roman types, in which every character of the native syllabarium is represented by a syllable corresponding, as nearly as our knowledge admits, with the sound of the character as given by the native Africans. In those cases where several native characters have apparently the same sound, they are here distinguished from each other by accents or other marks: it will thus be understood, for example, that bo, bó, bò, bǒ, bō represent five different characters. It must be remembered that the accents are solely used to distinguish the several characters, and that they do not influence the sound of the vowels, except the circumflex, which gives the *a* the sound of *a* in water. It is intended that the other vowels should be sounded as in Italian; that the *g* should be always hard, as in *go* and *get*; the *j* as in *joy*; *ñ* like *ng* in *singer*; *ng* as in *finger*; *gb* shows a sound common to several African languages, which Lieut. Forbes has generally represented by *p*; *ng*, *nh*, and *hn* represent three characters which are probably all sounded alike; the sound is stated to be a kind of hum made with the lips almost closed.

Reasons will be given in the notes appended to this paper for believing that the sounds of the Vei words thus represented will be as correct as those produced by pronouncing the words according to the systems given by Lieut. Forbes, or by the Rev. Mr. Koelle.

With the exception of this substitution and the omission of the separate alphabet of Lieut. Forbes, the paper is here given as written by that officer. The lithographed alphabet, which contains all the forms that have been met with in the different MSS., will include that of Lieut. Forbes.]

H.M.S. "Bonetta," Sierra Leone, Jan. 18, 1849.

Sir,—It has fallen to my lot to make a discovery of such importance to the civilization of Africa, that I am anxious my own profession should bear the honour that it may deserve.

The discovery consists of a written language of the Phonetic order.

On my arrival at Sierra Leone I did myself the honour to report the discovery to his Excellency the Acting Governor; and, at his request, furnished him with a copy of the characters, alphabetically arranged, which his Excellency purposed sending

to the Secretary of State for the Colonies. In a service letter upon the subject I made use of the following expression:—"To the Admiralty, the head of the profession to which I have the honour to belong, I deem it my duty to forward a vocabulary I have arranged."

By his Excellency I was strongly recommended to send the vocabulary to England as early as possible.

The curiosity of the discovery brought people of all classes in Sierra Leone to witness it; and among others the missionaries—to these men the more astonishing, one of their Society being a man of sound philological learning. The following is the copy of a letter I received from the senior Missionary of the Church of England, the Rev. Ed. Jones, M.A. :—

"I am unwilling that you should leave our shores without expressing to you how deeply I feel your kindness in favouring me with a sight of your African vocabulary. I trust your most praiseworthy exertions amid the arduous duties of your profession will lead to ulterior measures, and that steps will be immediately taken to pursue what you have so spiritedly begun, and thus satisfy all that the interests of philology and the cause of African improvement may demand. It does seem a strange thing (for truth is strange) that at a point of land within a few days' sail of us, and immediately bordering upon an American colony, it should be left to a naval officer, actively engaged in the suppression of the slave-trade, to bring to light the existence of a written language previously, so far as I have any means of judging, altogether unknown. This is your just merit, and I cheerfully acknowledge it."

I have had the pleasure of receiving from Mr. Roberts, the President of Liberia, an assurance that the language is a novelty to him, and he did me the honour to request I would furnish him with a copy of the characters.

Hoping this communication may meet your approbation, as well as the good opinion of their Lordships,

I have, &c.

(Signed) F. E. FORBES,

Lieut. R.N. Commanding H.M.S. "Bonetta."

To Commodore Sir Charles Hotham, K.C.B.,
Commander in Chief West Coast of Africa,
&c. &c.

At Cape Mount, on the house of one of the Liberian settlers, I chanced to meet the following characters—"kó i si a wa ké mu."* Never having heard of an African language of the kind, I inquired, and discovered them to be of a native language of late introduction or invention. For some time I failed in getting them explained, or in obtaining any further information on the subject.

A lucky chance took me to a town called "Bohmar," about 8 miles E. of Cape Mount, and there I met a man by the name

* See fac-simile on the second lithograph.

Character Variety

K F N

Character Variety

K F N

Character Variety

K F N

Character Variety

Alphabet.

Character Variety

K F N

Character Variety

K F N

Character Variety

K F N

Cha

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|-------|-------|--|----------------|-------|-------|------|--|-------|-----------|-----|
| | go | go | | | jō | jō | | | ni | gnce | ni |
| | gā | gā | | | jo | enjoh | jó | | ni | | ni |
| | gu | gu | | ɸ ^x | ju | joo | ju | | no | | no |
| | gba | gba | | | jon | | jon | | nā | | nā |
| | pah | gbā | | | lea | | lea | | nu | noo | na |
| | pang | gbā | | | ka | kan | ka | | nū | | na |
| | bih | gbä | | | kä | ke | kä | | nde | | nde |
| | pik | gbě | | | kē | kein | ké | | nyā | nā | nya |
| | peh | gbè | | | ke | kie | ke | | nyē | nāe | nye |
| | | gbē | | | ko | kech | ko | | nyi | gnca | nyi |
| | beih | gbi | | | kā | ko | kó | | nyo | nō gnō | nyo |
| | bhi | gbl | | | kā | | kā. | | nga | ngnee | na |
| | poo | gbo | | | ku | kung | ku | | ngē | dih? | ne |
| | bo | gbó | | | kai | | kai | | ngo | | no |
| | | gbâ | | | keng | | keng | | nggā | manja | nga |
| | | gbu | | | kong | | kong | | gā | gan | nge |
| | gbong | gbong | | | kung | kung | kung | | ngge | gan | nge |
| | ha | ha | | | da.ta | la | la | | nggo | | ngo |
| | ndo | hā | | | ra | le | le | | n. hn | hhum | ng |
| | hā | hā | | | le | lee | le | | hn | | nh |
| | ha | hà | | | lo.ro | loh | lo | | hn | | hn |
| | hā | hā | | | lu | lu | lu | | o | | o |
| | he | he | | | ru | lan | lan | | pā | paugh | pa |
| | hi | hing | | | lan | lan | lan | | | pah | pā |
| | hoh | ho | | | ma | mar | ma | | pā | | pe |
| | ee | i | | | mā | me | mā | | pē | | pé |
| | ja | ja | | | mā | me | mi | | pi | | pi |
| | jaj | jā | | | mi | mee | mi | | po | poh | po |
| | jaj | jā | | | mo | meeh | mī | | po | | pó |
| | jaj | jā | | | mo | moh | mo | | | | pó |
| | enjae | jē | | | mo | moh | mo | | | | pó |
| | jee | jī | | | mu | mun | mu | | | | pó |
| | jee | jī | | | nā | nah | na | | | | pó |
| | jee | jī | | | nā | nah | na | | | | pó |
| | jee | jī | | | nā | nah | na | | | | pó |
| | jee | jī | | | nā | nah | na | | | | pó |
| | jee | jī | | | nā | nah | na | | | | pó |
| | jee | jī | | | nā | nah | na | | | | pó |
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| | jee | jī | | | nā | nah | na | | | | pó |
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| | jee | jī | | | nā | nah | na | | | | pó |
| | jee | jī | | | nā | nah | na | | | | pó |
| | jee | jī | | | nā | nah | na | | | | pó |
| | jee | jī | | | nā | nah | na | | | | pó |
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| | jee | jī | | | nā | nah | na | | | | pó |
| | jee | jī | | | nā | nah | na | | | | pó |
| | jee | jī | | | nā | nah | na | | | | pó |
| | jee | jī | | | nā | nah | na | | | | pó |
| | jee | jī | | | nā | nah | na | | | | pó |
| | jee | jī | | | nā | nah | na | | | | pó |
| | jee | jī | | | nā | nah | na | | | | pó |
| | jee | jī | | | nā | nah | na | | | | pó |
| | jee | jī | | | nā | nah | na | | | | pó |
| | jee | jī | | | nā | nah | na | | | | pó |
| | jee | jī | | | nā | nah | na | | | | pó |
| | jee | jī | | | nā | nah | na | | | | pó |
| | jee | jī | | | nā | nah | na | | | | pó |
| | jee | jī | | | nā | nah | na | | | | pó |
| | jee | jī | | | nā | nah | na | | | | pó |
| | jee | jī | | | nā | nah | na | | | | pó |
| | jee | jī | | | nā | nah | na | | | | pó |
| | jee | jī | | | nā | nah | na | | | | pó |
| | jee | jī | | | nā | nah | na | | | | pó |
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| | jee | jī | | | nā | nah | na | | | | pó |
| | jee | jī | | | nā | nah | na | | | | pó |
| | jee | jī | | | nā | nah | na | | | | pó |
| | jee | jī | | | nā | nah | na | | | | pó |
| | jee | jī | | | nā | nah | na | | | | pó |
| | jee | jī | | | nā | nah | na | | | | pó |
| | jee | jī | | | nā | nah | na | | | | pó |
| | jee | jī | | | nā | nah | na | | | | pó |
| | jee | jī | | | nā | nah | na | | | | pó |
| | jee | jī | | | nā | nah | na | | | | pó |
| | jee | jī | | | nā | nah | na | | | | pó |
| | jee | jī | | | nā | nah | na | | | | pó |
| | jee | jī | | | nā | nah | na | | | | pó |
| | jee | jī | | | nā | nah | na | | | | pó |
| | jee | jī | | | nā | nah | na | | | | pó |
| | jee | jī | | | nā | nah | na | | | | pó |
| | jee | jī | | | nā | nah | na | | | | pó |
| | jee | jī | | | nā | nah | na | | | | pó |
| | jee | jī | | | nā | nah | na | | | | pó |
| | jee | jī | | | nā | nah | na | | | | pó |
| | jee | jī | | | nā | nah | na | | | | pó |
| | jee | jī | | | nā | nah | na | | | | pó |
| | jee | jī | | | nā | nah | na | | | | pó |
| | jee | jī | | | nā | nah | na | | | | pó |
| | jee | jī | | | nā | nah | na | | | | pó |
| | jee | jī | | | nā | nah | na | | | | pó |
| | jee | jī | | | nā | nah | na | | | | pó |
| | jee | jī | | | nā | nah | na | | | | |

of Mormorro Dualoo Wohgnae, a nephew of the King of Sugury, who possessed a manuscript and understood the language.

On this man consenting to live on board her Majesty's ship, I undertook to arrange the inclosed vocabulary, having collected and classed all the characters his book contained.

It will be observed that the language is of the Phonetic order; that the characters are not symbolical; and, according to my teacher, it was invented ten or twenty years ago by the following eight men:—

| | |
|------------------------|-------------------|
| | Native Character. |
| 1. Duaroo-Kehloe-Kaie. | Dua du ke ra gai. |
| 2. Fargan-Zapoh. | Fa nge sa gbo. |
| 3. Duaroo-Boh-Kehlae. | Dua du bù ke ra.* |
| 4. Hhumdongloh-Wooloh. | Ng ro lo ulo. |
| 5. Duaroo Tamee. | Dua du tá mi. |
| 6. Bahee Behseh. | Bá i bì sé. |
| 7. Karnahmar. | Ga na ma. |
| 8. Kanlee fohloh. | Ká i fó lo. |

“Mormorro Dualoo Wohgnae” thus writes his name:—Mo mo du dua du wó yé.

He informs me that at first the language was studied by many, and that schools were established; but that such extraordinary signs of civilization aroused the jealousy of their Spanish neighbours at Gallinas, who, by intrigue and presents, soon laid the whole country into such a state of anarchy as overthrew the progress of learning.

If the language be one of such recent origin, or even an introduction, how far we must have mistaken the African's constitution!

The present vocabulary has been a work of upwards of three months' constant study, and has been revised four times.

I cannot think I am possessed of all the characters. However, my teacher assures me there are no more.

A VOCABULARY.

PHENOMENA.

| English. | Native Character. | Pronunciation. |
|----------|-------------------|--------------------|
| World | du nya | doo ñah |
| Sea | kó i | qua ie |
| Sun | te le | tai lee |
| Moon | ga lo | kar loh |
| Star | to ma la | to ro mar la |
| Light | du ma ga | doo mar ka |
| Dark | du ma fi | doo mar fee ng |
| Sunrise | te ga du ma | tai lee ka doo mao |

* This is obviously the Doalu Bukara of the Rev. Mr. Koelle.

PHENOMENA—*continued.*

| English. | Native Character. | Pronunciation. |
|----------|-------------------|----------------|
| Sunset | te bì la | tai lee bìh la |
| Heat | gbá ni | pann dee |
| Cold | ki ma | kee mar |
| Night | su dong | su loh |
| Day | te dong | tai lee loh |

ELEMENTS.

| | | |
|-------|-----------------|---------------------|
| Fire | tá | tah |
| Air | a i fi la gbó a | ah ee fee lah bo ah |
| Earth | du ma | doo mar |
| Smoke | ji | gee |
| Water | si si | se se |
| Wind | fi la | fee lah |
| Calm | fi la bé le | fee lah bìh lee |

SENSES.

| | | |
|-------|------------|--------------|
| See | ja, já | eah jay |
| Hear | ja la | eah lah |
| Smell | ku e | ko ña |
| Feel | bu sâ dong | boh sor dong |

SYMMETRY.

| | | |
|--------|---------------|------------------|
| Body | mo fi ma | moh fee mar |
| Head | ku | kung |
| Hair | ku ri | kung de |
| Eye | ja | ja |
| Ear | to ro | to roh |
| Face | ja dong | tar roh |
| Mouth | jó (?) | la |
| Nose | sung | sung |
| Chin | gbá kó ro | pah ko loh |
| Arm | bó | boo |
| Hand | bó lu va lo | boo loo far loh |
| Finger | bó lu dóng le | boo loo dong lee |
| Leg | ké ñe | kai ñee |
| Foot | ké ñe ja lo | kai ñee jar loh |
| Toes | ké dóng le | kain dong lee |
| Back | ké | koh |
| Belly | bú | boo |

MALADIES.

| | | |
|-------|---------------------|--------------------------|
| Deaf | ja we le ko lo la | ah wee ly ko loh da |
| Dumb | { a to lo gbo ti mu | ah to loh poo tee le moo |
| Blind | mu mu | moo moo |
| Idiot | a bì le mo já | ah bìl lee mo jay |
| Mad | a ku ra nya | ah ku lae ña |
| Mad | a bu lo wa | ah bo loh oar |
| Lame | a ma gbá | ah man pah |
| Wound | gbá a | pa ah |
| Fever | a ma ni gbá di a | ah ma nee pan dee ar |
| Sick | a ki la | a hi kee lah |

RELATIONS.

| English. | Native Character. | Pronunciation. |
|----------|---------------------|--------------------|
| Father | fa | fa |
| Mother | ng ba | hhum bah |
| Husband | na ga | nah kar |
| Wife | na mus ¹ | nah moo su |
| Man | ga i | kai ee |
| Woman | mu su ma | niu su mar |
| Brother | nyo mo | gno moh |
| Sister | nyo mo mu su ma | gno moh mu su mar |
| Son | na deng | nah ding |
| Daughter | na deng mu su ma | nah ding mu su mar |
| Boy | deng ga i ma | ding kai ee mar |
| Girl | deng mu su ma | ding mu su mar |

HOUSE, &c.

| | | |
|---------|-------------|------------------|
| House | kó | kain |
| Door | ké la lo | kain dar roh |
| Window | já le la lo | jayn dee lah loh |
| Thatch | ja la | jan dah |
| Wood | sâ | so ro |
| Room | só ri lo | zoh de loh |
| Table | ma sa | mar sar |
| Bed | gbé gbé | ping pih |
| Seat | gbe ye | bih ngae |
| Mat | wa la | oar lah |
| Pipe | tá wa la | ta oar lah |
| Tobacco | tá wa | ta oar |

FOREST.

| | | |
|---------|----------------|-------------------|
| Forest | fi la bá wo la | fee la bah woh la |
| Tree | kó ng | koang |
| Bush | wâ gbó | jaum boh |
| Bough | a bó dóng | ah boo loon |
| Trunk | kó ng té | koang tih |
| Leaf | ja ng bá | ja hhum bah |
| Flowers | kó fu | kon foo |
| Fruit | kó póng | kon pong |
| Shade | si le kó lo | su elee a kor loh |
| Bark | kó fó lu | koang fo loo |
| Thorn | wa le | wah lee |
| Roots | kóng su lu | koang soo doo |
| Creeper | ju du | juh doo |

ARMS, &c.

| | | |
|---------------|----------|--------------|
| Spear | tá bá | tam bah |
| Sword | mí yé | mee ñae |
| Musket | bù | boh |
| Powder | bù ng | boh founq |
| Cannon | do bá | doo bah |
| Fowling-piece | se dóng | seh doong |
| Powder-flask | fu u | vou loo |
| Musket-ball | bù kó je | boh ko enjae |

ANIMALS.

| English. | Native Character. | Pronunciation. |
|----------|-------------------|----------------|
| Bull | ni ga i ma | gnee kaie mar |
| Bullock | ni | gnee |
| Cow | ni mu su ma | gnee mu su mar |
| Goat | bá | bah |
| Sheep | bá wa la | bah oar la |
| Pig | kó nya | ko ñah |
| Leopard | ko ri | ko de |
| Deer | ké la | kain la |
| Elephant | ga ma | kar mar |
| Dog | u du | woo doo |
| Cat | ma nya le | mar gnah elee |
| Rat | to la | to la |
| Mouse | ding ri | ding de |
| Musk-rat | do du | doo loo |
| Bush-cat | ko le gbé le | ko lee pih lee |
| Lion | ja la | ja la |
| Tiger | su du gbo | su loo poo |

BIRDS.

| | | |
|-----------|-------------------|--------------------|
| Fowl | ti ea | tee ea |
| Duck | bù dong ko ri | boh loh kon dee |
| Eagle | kó ng ja | quan ja |
| Snipe | gbo lo ma se be | po lo mar seh mbeh |
| Palm bird | kó si a | ko se ah |
| Dove | pong u | poh woo |
| Turkey | do gbá ke ko deng | doo pah ke kon de |
| Toucan | gbé a gbé a | pih ah piah |

FRUIT.

| | | |
|------------|-------------|--------------|
| Orange | du bú lo | doom boo loh |
| Pine-apple | ké fé | kain fae |
| Plantain | bá na | bah nah |
| Banana | po ng bá na | poro ba nah |
| Cocoa-nut | po ng kó ea | poro kon jae |
| Guava | kó ri wa | ko le oar |
| Paupau | pa ga i | pah kaie |

VEGETABLES.

| | | |
|--------------|-------------|----------------|
| Pumpkin | gbo du | po loo |
| Yams | si na bé le | ce nah beh lee |
| Cassada | tu sa | bah sar |
| Sweet potato | jo u | joh woo |
| Rice | kó ro | ko loh |
| Onions | si bá la | se bah lah |
| Chillies | ki la fé | kee lah fae |
| Beans | sâ | sor |

METALS.

| English. | Native Character. | Pronunciation. |
|----------|-------------------|------------------|
| Gold | ga ni ja le | kar nee jar lee |
| Silver | ga ni gbè ma | kar nee peh mar |
| Copper | tá ni | ta gnee |
| Brass | bang bang té ra | bang ban teh lae |
| Iron | ku du | kung doo |
| Tin | gâ gâ | gon gong |
| Charcoal | ké bú | kain boo |

MINERALS, &c.

| | | |
|---------|-------------|--------------|
| Diamond | ni na si ng | nee nah seng |
| Glass | me sé ra | meh neh lae |

SPICES.

| | | |
|--------|----------|-------------|
| Salt | kó | koh |
| Pepper | ki le fe | kee lee fae |
| Oil | do du | too doo |

MEATS, &c. &c.

| | | |
|---------------|-----------|--------------|
| Meat | su yé | soo yea |
| Bullock flesh | ni su yé | gnee soo yea |
| Goat flesh | bá ne yé | bah soo yea |
| Bread | gbó ng | boh foo |
| Flour | gbó ng mu | boh foo mun |
| Fish | nyi | gnea |

DRINKS.

| | | |
|-----------|-----------|----------|
| Palm wine | bá gbè | bang peh |
| Spirits | po ng gbè | poro peh |
| Rum | gbè | peh |

COLOURS.

| | | |
|--------|----------|------------|
| White | a gbè ma | ah peh mar |
| Black | fi ma | fee mar |
| Yellow | nye le | ñae lee |
| Red | ja le | ja lee |
| Green | ji ro | gee dong |

CLOTHES.

| | | |
|----------------|--------------|----------------|
| Clothes | dóng fing | doung fing |
| Cap | gbo lo | boh loh |
| Shirt | dóng ma | doung mar |
| Trowsers | ké ko la | kain kon lah |
| Shoes | kó wa | ko oar |
| Black handkef. | bi tá gbá sa | fee ta pah sar |
| Cloth | mu lu fu | moo luh fuh |
| Piece cloth | ko la | koh lah |
| Country cloth | ga ro ko la | kan doh ko lah |

TIMES, &c.

| English. | Native Character. | Pronunciation. |
|--------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| Year | sang | sang |
| Month | ga lo | kar loh |
| Morning | sa ma | sar mar |
| Evening | te le lo | teh lee loh |
| Noon | te le ku té | teh lee kun teh |
| Midnight | su té | su tih |
| To-day | sâ ro ro | sor don do |
| To-morrow | si na | se nah |
| End | a bá he | ah bang he |
| Beginning | a ku du mi | ah ko ro mee |
| Rainy season | sa ma lo | sar mar ro |
| Dry season | ko ri ma | ko le mar |
| Land wind | u la lo fi la | woo la loh fee lah |
| Sea wind | kó i lo fi la | qua ee loh fee loh |

PRONOUNS, &c.

| | | |
|---------|----------------|---------------------|
| I | ng nya | hhum gar |
| Thou | i wa | ee oar |
| He | ga i me | ka ie meh |
| We | mu gbe | mun bih |
| You | i wa | ee oar |
| They | mo me nu | moh meh noo |
| Who | wâ mu | jauh mun |
| Which | a me na | ah me nah |
| My | tá mu | tah mun |
| His | a tá mu | ah tah mun |
| Ours | mu tá mu he | mun tali mun he |
| Yours | i wa tá mu | ee oar ta mun |
| Theirs | a nu tá mu | ah noo ta mun |
| Each | ke ke | keh o keh |
| All | a gbè ra | ah peh lae |
| Neither | ro ro gbè ra | don do peh lae |
| This | ke | ke |
| That | ke me nu | keh me noo |
| Some | ng kó deng | hhum ko ding |
| Other | a ma deng | ah mar ding |
| Such | ke tá lo | keh ta roh |
| More | ng u gbó lo la | hhum worro bo riola |
| None | a gbè deng | ah peh ding |

NUMERALS.

| | | |
|---|-------------|-------------|
| 1 | ro ro | don do |
| 2 | fi la | fee lah |
| 3 | sa gbá | sarc pah |
| 4 | na ni | nah nee |
| 5 | sâ du | sor doo |
| 6 | sâ du ro ro | sor don do |
| 7 | sâ du fi la | sorn fee la |

NUMERALS—*continued.*

| Native Character. | Pronunciation. |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 8 sâ du sa gbá | sorn sarc pah |
| 9 sa du na ni | sorn na nee |
| 10 tá ng | tang |
| 11 tá ng ro ro | tang don do |
| 20 mo bá le | mo ban dee |
| 21 mo bá le a kó ro ro | mo ban dee akè don do |
| 30 mo bá le a kó táng | mo ban dee ako tang |
| 31 mo bá le a kó táng ro ro | mo ban dee ako tang don do |
| 40 mo fi la bá le | moh fee lah ban dee |
| 41 mo fi la bá le akó ro ro | moh fee lah ban dee ako don do |
| 50 mo fi la bá le akó táng | moh fee lah ban dee ako tang |
| 51 mo fi la bá le akó táng ro ro | moh fee lah ban dee ako tang don do |
| 60 mo sa gbá bá le | moh sack pah ban dee |
| 61 mo sa gbá bá le a kó ro ro | moh sack pah ban dee ako don do |
| 70 mo sa gbá bá le a kó táng | moh sarc pah ban dee ako tang |
| 71 mo sa gbá bá le a kó táng ro ro | moh sarc pah ban dee ako tang don do |
| 80 mo nani bá le | moh nar nee ban dee |
| 81 mo na ni bá le akó ro ro | moh nar nee ban dee ako dondo |
| 90 mo na ni bá le a kó táng | moh nar nee ban dee ako tang |
| 91 mo na ni bá le a kó táng ro ro | moh nar nee ban dee ako tang dondo |
| 100 hoh ro ro | hun de ro don do |
| 1000 tá su ro ro | taow su don do |

ADJECTIVES.

| English. | Native Character. | Pronunciation. |
|-----------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|
| Able | ku la | koun dah |
| Acid | a dóng la | ah don lah |
| Aged | ka ki la | karn kee lah |
| Agreeable | kó ni | koh ñee |
| Alike | nyo gbi | neagh beih |
| Alive | a ke ra | ah ken dae |
| Bad | a ma ña | ar mar gne |
| Barren | a gbé ma le mu | ah peh mar lee moo |
| Bend | i du | ee doo |
| Boiling | a u ri | ah woo dee |
| Broken | i ga ri | ee kar dee |
| Careful | i ku ma fé ra gbà gbà | ee ko mar feh lae pang pang |
| Cheap | a sâ woh ma gbè ra | ah song woh mar peh lae |
| Clean | a ko le | ah ko elee |
| Clever | i ko sa | ee koh sar |
| Cloudy | bá la gbi la | ban da beih lah |
| Complete | a ku be le mu | ah kung ben dee mun |
| Drunk | gbè bi la | peh bi lah |
| Dry | a gbá la | ah pah la |
| Empty | a fó lu mu | ah fo loo mun |
| Enough | a ku la | ah kung dah |
| Equal | ng kó tá | hhum kon tah |

ADJECTIVES—*continued.*

| English. | Native Character. | Pronunciation. |
|------------|---------------------|--------------------------|
| Female | su | su |
| Few | a ma fing fá | ah mar fing far |
| First | a se je se je | ah sen gee sen gee |
| Fit | a ku la gbé | ah kung dal ping |
| Future (?) | ja lo | jar loh |
| Free | ma ja deng | man ja ding |
| Glad | a ng va la sa | ah hum far la sar |
| Great | a sá wó be le | ah song woh bil lee |
| Hard | a gbè ra | arc peh lae |
| Heavy | a va nya | ah fàr ña |
| High | a ga ro ja ng | ah can doh jang |
| Hot | a gbá ri a | ah pan deah |
| Hungry | kó ng wó | kong woh |
| Jealous | a mu su va la | ah mu su fa la |
| Ignorant | a ma ko sa | ah mar ko sar |
| Improper | a ma ma | ah mar mar |
| Laborious | a gbo ro wi ra tu | ah poh loh wee lae too |
| Large | a ko lu | ah koo loo |
| Last | a gbè me | ah peh ne meh |
| Late | i a fé ja ja | ee ah feh jan ja |
| Less | a ku ma ko lu | ah kung mar ko loh |
| Long | a ja ng | ah jang |
| Loose | i fò le | ee foo lee |
| Lost | a sa ma | ah sar mar |
| Male | ka i | ka ie |
| Middle | a té ma | ah teh mar |
| More | a gbó lo | ah bo roh |
| Near | nu be fo | noo beh for |
| New | a na ma | ah nah mar |
| Next | a ro ma le | ah roh man dee |
| Numerous | a ku du bá | ah koor um bah |
| Old | a kó lo kó lo bá mu | ah ko loh ko loh bah moo |
| Open | i da ga | ee dar ka |
| Past | a be le a | ah beh lee ah |
| Poor | ja mo mu | jar moh moo |
| Pretty | a nyi gbá | ah gneae pah |
| Quick | i na ri a ri a | ee nah dee ah dee agh |
| Rapid | a lo gbá ri a | ah loh pan dee ah |
| Same | a tá ro | ah tar roh |
| Short | a i ku du | ah ee kung doo |
| Sick | a ki la wa | ee kee la oar |
| Slow | i ma tá ri a | ee mar tar de ah |
| Soft | a ma gbè la | ah mar peh lae |
| Strong | a nge na | ah gar nah |
| Sweet | a hi nya gbá | ah kee ña pah |
| Thirsty | ng kó ji ni a mi | hhung ko gee nee ah mee |
| Timid | a mi ni nya | ah mee nee ña |
| True | tân nya mu | tau ña moo |

ADJECTIVES—*continued.*

| English. | Native Character. | Pronunciation. |
|-----------|-------------------|------------------|
| Unequal | a ma ga ng | ah mar kang |
| Unwilling | ma da lu | mar da roo |
| Useful | na i ri a | nah ee dee ah |
| Useless | ma lu lu a la | mar oo loo a lah |

VERBS.

| | | |
|---------|--------------------|--------------------------|
| Abuse | a gbó ra ja u | ah peh lae ja oo |
| Accept | i gbi la je | ee beh la enjae |
| Accuse | a tá ko sé ri na | ah ta ko seh di nah |
| Answer | i wi kó le | ee vee qua lee |
| Arrive | a ké | ah kay |
| Ask | i to sa | ee to sar |
| Assist | i bá sa la | ee bar sar la |
| Bargain | a sâ wó na | ah sor woh gnee |
| Beat | ng be bú a | hhum beh boo ah |
| Beg | fu ra ke | foo lae kae |
| Begin | i ku du bi | ee koo roo bee |
| Believe | i sa la | ee sar la |
| Bind | i ki ri a kó | ee kee lee ah ko |
| Boil | i ki ng | ee kee ng |
| Bring | i na la | ee nah lah |
| Buy | i a sa | ee ah sang |
| Call | i kó le | ee kain lee |
| Carry | i tá la | ee ta la |
| Catch | i bi la | ee bee la |
| Chew | i ro | ee dong |
| Collect | i la só | ee dar song |
| Come | i na | ee nah |
| Count | i la ng | ee dang |
| Cut | i tehi | ee tehea |
| Dance | mu tá ro ke | mun ta dong ke |
| Deliver | i tá kó | ee ta ko |
| Destroy | a ro ja lu | ah ro ja oo |
| Die | a fá la | ah far la |
| Double | a si na ma | ee se nah mar |
| Divide | u i té du | oo ee teh doo |
| Dress | i ma ki ri | ee mar kee dee |
| Drink | i mi | ee mee |
| Eat | feng ro | fing dong |
| End | a bá ng | ah bang |
| Explain | i ro ji la ng la | ee roh gee lang dah |
| Enter | i dóng | ee doung |
| Invite | i kó bá la he | ee kain bah la he |
| Go | i tá | ee tah |
| Kick | i ma ng té | ee marn teh |
| Kiss | i la dóng ng la lo | ee da doung hhum dah loh |
| Kill | i fá | ee far |
| Know | na sâ | nah sor |

VERBS—*continued.*

| English. | Native Character. | Pronunciation. |
|------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|
| Laugh | i já ra ke | ee jay lae ke |
| Lend | ng si na | hhum see nah |
| Lie | i fá ni | ee far gnee |
| Live | i fé la gbó | ee fe la boh |
| Love | na i ri a | nah ee de ah |
| Look | ng fé ra | hhum feh lae |
| Make | i na a | ee gnee ah |
| Move | i bi | ee bee |
| Occupy | a be nu | ah bih noo |
| Open | i la ga | ee dar kar |
| Owe | a gbà gbí la ng bó lo | ah pang beh la hhum boo loh |
| Paddle | da la | dar lah |
| Part | i té ga | ee teh kar |
| Pay | pa wa ke | paugh oar ke |
| Please | kó nya | ko gnee |
| Prepare | i ma di a | ee mar dee ah |
| Promise | ku ra gbí la | ku lae bih la |
| Protect | ku ma fé ra | kung mar feh lae |
| Quarrel | kó ri | qua dee |
| Receive | a gbà bú lo | ah bong boo loh |
| Recollect | a sà ku ro | ah song kung dong |
| Rob | a ga (?) | ah kar gar |
| Run | bú le ka | boo lee keh |
| Sail | wu fi la se ra | woo fee lah seh lae |
| Say | fi ng ro | fi ng dong |
| Sell | i ga | ee kar |
| See | a je | ah enjae |
| Sing | ro ng gbá | dong hhum boh |
| Speak | i fo | ee for |
| Stab | a ng sà me a | ah ung sor me ah |
| Stop | i sà | ee sor |
| Swear | a bú lo ke | ah boo loh keh |
| Take | i gbí | ee bee |
| Talk | dí a bú | dhe am boo |
| Tell | i fo | ee for |
| Tear | i te | ee teh |
| Think | i ku ro ki le ma | ee kung dong kee lee mar |
| Touch | i ma | ee mar |
| Tremble | a ma ni sa ng bá | ah mar gnee sam bah |
| Trust | i sa la | ee sar rah |
| Understand | na sà | nah sor |
| Wake | ea ku yé | ea kung nay |
| Walk | i tá ea | ee ta eah |
| Watch | i ma ki ke | ee mar kee keh |
| Want | ng lu lo a la | hhum woo loh a lah |
| Weigh | i mu su ma | ee mu su mar |
| Wish | i wó lo | ee woh loh |
| Work | sà ke | sor keh |

The foregoing vocabulary is of the "Vahie" or Vei language, which extends over the following countries:—Cape Mount, Soungrie, Marma, and Gallinas, on the sea coast, and several interior countries. The variety of African languages is so frequently met with, that they may be more properly termed dialects, as the following may prove:—

| Vahie. | Courroo. | Kroo. | Fish. |
|--------------|------------|-----------------|-----------|
| 1 Dondo | goonoo | doo | doo |
| 2 Feelah | tierla | song | song |
| 3 Sacpah | tarlee | tah | tah |
| 4 Narnee | teenar | neah | eh |
| 5 Sooloh | noono | moo | d'moo |
| 6 Soo dondo | dia goonoo | moomadoo | neeroo |
| 7 Soo feelah | dia tierla | moomasong | mesoong |
| 8 Soo sacpah | dia tarlee | mumatah | biah biah |
| 9 Soo narnee | dia teenar | munia sussahdoo | chieeroo |
| 10 Tang | zehiar | pouah | poh |

Thus the above characters might be arranged into a general African written character.

In concluding, I hope the missionaries or others may follow up what has been thus commenced, as, from the opposite nature of the duties of a naval officer, I could neither spare time, nor hope for the opportunity, of faithfully arranging a grammar or making translations.

Notes on the Vei Language and Alphabet.

By E. NORRIS, Esq.

THOSE who have occupied themselves with investigating the languages of Africa may have heard that an account reached England last year of the discovery, by Lieut. Forbes, of a written character in use by the Vei nation in the interior of Africa, and of the consequent expedition undertaken by the Rev. S. W. Koelle, a German gentleman attached to the Church Missionary Society, and especially connected with the language department, to investigate the matter in the country where the language was spoken and written, some 300 or 400 miles E. of Sierra Leone. Not long after this, the foregoing memoir of Lieut. Forbes reached England, and was read at an evening meeting of the Royal Geographical Society. In the month of September the Church Missionary Society published an interesting narrative of the journey of Mr. Koelle, and of the complete success of his enterprise, together with translations of three manuscripts which he had brought with him from the Vei country. The narrative is probably in the hands of all who are interested in the subject, and it is consequently unnecessary to allude to it any further than to express admiration of the courage and intelligence with which the expedition was carried