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GRAMMAR

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OF THE

FULAH LANGUAGE.

FROM A MS. BY

THE REV. R. MAXWELL MACBRAIR,

IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM.

EDITED, WITH ADDITIONS,

BY E. NORRIS.

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БИБЛ. ТЕНА СОРР
ИМ. В. И. ЛЕНИНА

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INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

THE following short Grammar of the Fulah Language is taken almost wholly from a manuscript presented to the British Museum, about ten years ago, by the Rev. R. MAXWELL MACBRAIR, of Rochester, the author of a good Mandingo Grammar, of a Mandingo version of the Gospels, and of some other works chiefly relative to African missions. The Editor, to whom the existence of the manuscript was made known by Dr. Bleek, the learned ethnographer attached to the party about to explore a part of Africa where the Fulah language is spoken, has, at the request of Captain Washington, R. N., and at the cost of the Admiralty, somewhat hastily prepared it for the press, in the hope of its overtaking the expedition; he has merely arranged and developed the materials supplied by the Reverend author, adding here and there to the illustrative examples furnished by him some few others, picked out of the scanty list of phrases appended to the grammar, the only specimens of the language yet brought to Europe, so far as is known to the Editor, beyond mere lists of words. The orthography of the author is now and then variable, and the same word will be found written in

different ways; but the Editor, not having any data which could guide him to make a selection, has not ventured to correct this irregularity, but has given each word as he found it, occasionally suggesting the most usual spelling, between brackets, where it might not have been readily known. The author's manuscript reaches to the end of the classed vocabulary, in p. 40. While this was going through the press, and the Editor was arranging all the Fulah words of the Grammar in alphabetical order to be added at the end, he became aware of the existence of a French vocabulary of seven negro languages, apparently a hundred years old at least, which was printed in the year 1845, in the second volume of the *Mémoires de la Société Ethnologique*. This vocabulary contains above a thousand words in each language, and one of these languages is the Fulah. When he had satisfied himself of the genuineness and value of this new contribution, he determined to incorporate it in the one he was preparing, together with any words he could get from all other sources, omitting, of course, those already given by the author; but as there remained some uncertainty in regard to these additions, he thought it best to distinguish them typographically. The especial reason for making this distinction of Mr. Macbrair's contributions is, that they were all taken down by one skilled man, practised in African tongues, and all in one dialect; whereas those furnished by other travellers were not so sure as to dialect, and were certainly often imperfectly heard, and irregularly rendered. It is true

that the French vocabulary was written by a skilful man, who knew the language he was writing: but he wrote without any orthographical system, spelling the same word in a variety of ways, writing, for instance, by *guiou*, *cquiou*, and *kiou* the sound we represent by *kiu*; and there is a dialectical change in the sounds, Mr. Macbrair pronouncing the same words with *j* and *ch*, which the French writer makes *g* hard, and *k*. Moreover, to judge by the printed book, he did not write a very legible hand; the copyist, at all events, often could not distinguish between *i* and *j*, *u*, *n*, and *v*, *k* and *r*, *f* and *s*. An example of this is furnished by the French word *ivre*, drunk, which is printed *jure*, swear; and although Mr. Macbrair's vocabulary in this case enables us to find out the mistake, it is obvious that otherwise it would have remained unnoticed; *rowandu*, a dog, is printed *kahouandou*; *kossengal*, the leg, *coffingual*; *hudo*, grass, *hudan*; and this mistake of *an* for *au* (pronounced *o*) has been often made, and may be suspected where we have no means of rectification. The initial *gua* is a puzzle; it should sometimes be *gna*, our *nya*, and sometimes *ga* or *gwa*. As a general rule, the French spelling is altered by the Editor to suit that of the rest of the vocabulary, and obvious errors are corrected; but the very brief time allowed, barely a month from finding the grammar at the Museum to dispatching the printed book to Africa, has necessarily compelled him to intrust the task of copying to others, and to employ his own limited leisure in the arrangement, additional notes,