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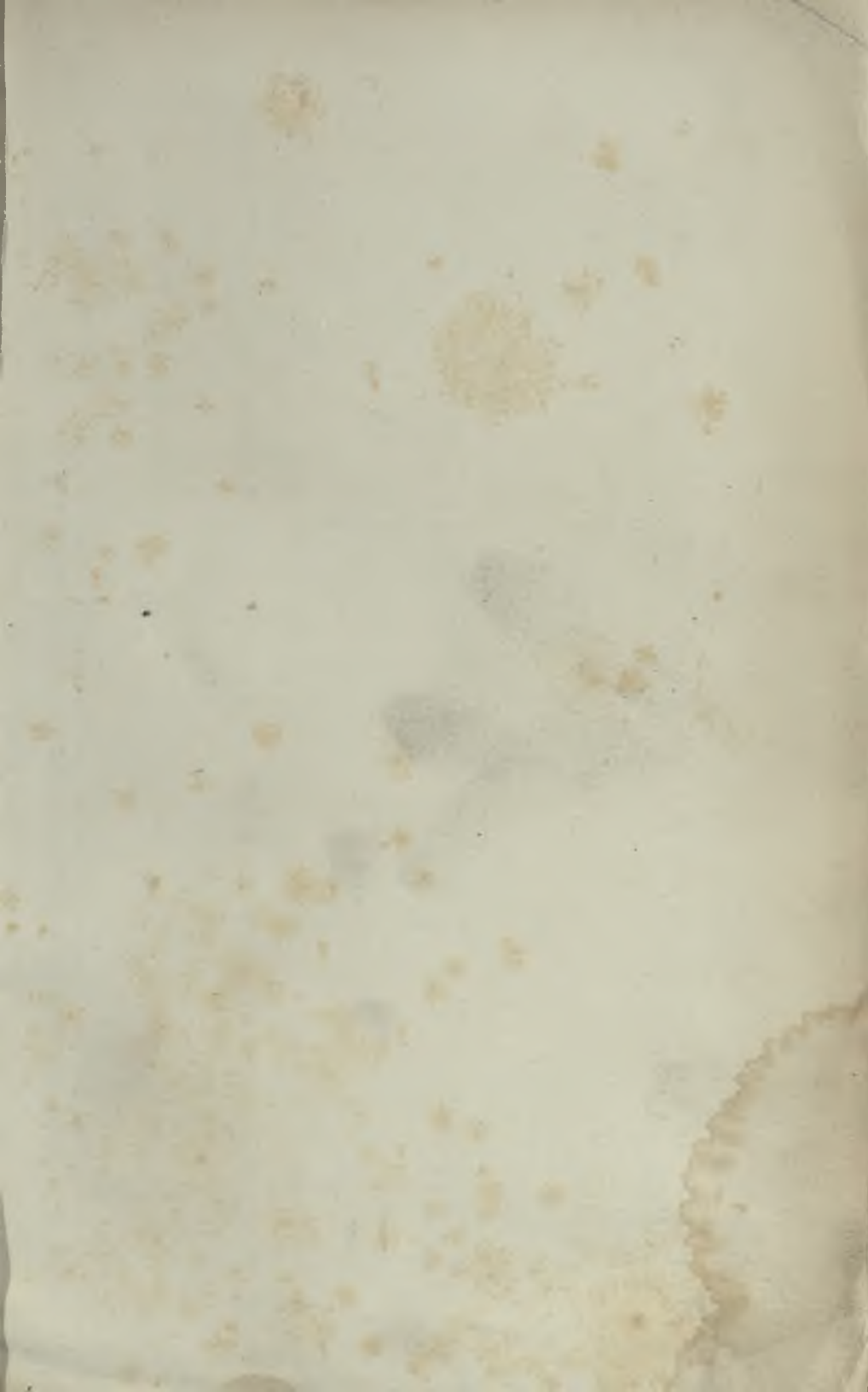
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"Come snakes, come, be our friends and charm our enemies."

THE EXPIRING CONTINENT:

A NARRATIVE OF TRAVEL IN SENEGAMBIA,

WITH

OBSERVATIONS ON NATIVE CHARACTER,
THE PRESENT CONDITION AND FUTURE
PROSPECTS OF AFRICA AND
COLONISATION.

WITH MAP AND SIXTEEN ILLUSTRATIONS.

BY

ALEX. WILL. MITCHINSON.



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P R E F A C E .

THE aim of the Author of the following pages has been to describe some of the more interesting passages of a journey in a part of the world too little known. When travelling and taking notes of the manners and customs of the people and the natural productions of Africa—to see which was the chief object of his journey—he had no intention of publishing his observations, and, therefore, took little heed of dates, hence their absence from the following pages.

A residence since childhood and education in Russia and other continental countries, followed by a lengthened sojourn among the native populations of Asia and the remoter parts of Africa, disqualify the Author from any pretensions to elegance in English literary composition, and should the reader, therefore, discover in the narrative any phrase not strictly idiomatic, this almost continuous absence from England must be the writer's excuse. At the same time it is hoped that the information here given may be not only of interest to the general public, but help to clear away the obscurity and misapprehension as to the negro race which have hitherto so greatly hindered the successful colonisation of Africa. The Author also hopes that this volume may be of some value to those engaged in establishing and developing African commerce, and who have the welfare of their mother country as well as that of the African people at heart.

A. W. MITCHINSON.

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CHAPTER I.

WESTWARD—IN THE LUSO—THE BLASE TRAVELLER—
A GLIMPSE AT MADEIRA—FUNCHAL—SENHORA DO
MONTE—CEPHALOPOD—CURRAL—LIFE IN MADEIRA—
WINE—EQUESTRIANISM—MADEIRA AS A SANATORIUM—
THE SICK LEVÉE.

ON leaving my home on the eastern borders of Europe, an inward voice directed me westward, where civilization and culture flourish.

My course across Europe was a curious series of zigzags, but it is not the purpose of this book to treat of matters European. Of Europe let it suffice to say that my journey was terminated at its southern extremity, the *ultima thule* of the ancients, which once was believed to be the western limit of the world.

Lisbon was my head-quarters for a short period, during which numerous vessels arrived and departed from the vast ocean. From this place the fearless Vasco di Gama and his band of hardy

Lusians sailed on those eastward voyages of discovery which have changed the face of history. From here he was followed by fleet after fleet of equally bold and enterprising mariners, who have left at last but little for modern explorers to discover. These waters and shores inspired the wish to be their humble follower.

One day, when a steamer with the significant name of *Luso* drew up alongside the quay, an uncontrollable impulse seized me to sail out in her from the port which had witnessed the departure and welcomed the return of so many triumphant Lusians. The sympathy begotten by congenial tastes made me a Lusian on a small scale. The steamer, to keep up the prestige of her name, was bound for those possessions, the discovery of which once added so much lustre to the crown of Portugal.

My thoughts were strongly turned in the direction in which more than a glimpse of the large continent of Africa could be obtained. The study of nature, reading from her open book in forests and on plains, would enlighten the long past with a more complete story of humanity, illustrated by the manners and laws of savage races.

The steamer was to sail next day to Madeira, and having packed up a little stock of worldly gear, I went aboard with some inexplicable fear. A trip of pleasure with a company of delicate, pampered passengers, going in search of health, formed the strongest contrast to an adventurous

journey with the hardy crew of mariners, setting forth in search of glory, with whom my fancy peopled the deck of the *Luso*.

The captain of the modern steamer was a navigator of a very different type from the Di Gama of old. His features were too handsome, and his amiable manners too tender, for a Lusian. Many of the passengers were fragile ladies with happy-looking and smiling faces, going to Madeira to join their friends and relations, suffering from lung and other diseases. There was also on board one of those typical English travellers, whose eccentricities of dress and manner furnish in every country a source of amusement. His legs, long and thin were manœuvred with an uncertainty that gave an air of mistrust to every movement, a red cravat contrasted with his yellow pantaloons, a pocket handkerchief with points like donkey's ears stuck out of his coat side pocket. Other pockets were crammed with guide and note books which would be in requisition whether there was anything or nothing to observe. His equipment was completed by a large binocular carried by a strap over the shoulder, and the inevitable eye-glass, managed with an extraordinary dexterity when thrown up and caught by the loose skin of the left eye. His conversational powers were somewhat deficient though assuming, and he was a sad bore. Such were the passengers of modern times on board of the modern *Luso*.

Madeira, when discovered by Gonzalves Zargo in

1419, according to tradition, was covered with thick forests. On the present site of Funchal the wood was set on fire, and continued burning, some say for seven, others for three years, the latter being more probable.

The humidity of the soil was thereby greatly diminished, and the Portuguese Government, in the interest of agriculture, strictly prohibited further destruction of timber. This tended to restore the natural moisture of the land, but the deep channels worn in the rocks by furious torrents of former ages seem now to be for ever dry.

The channel of the once mighty river Socorridos, running between high massive rocks, indicates its former depth and width, but the stream now presents only a thin snake-like thread, winding its way amongst loose stones and boulders washed down from the rocky slopes. The bed serves as a course for the heavy rains, occasionally causing furious destructive torrents to rush from the heights of the island.

Madeira, like many another fashionable place of resort, has been much overpraised. The island is somewhat picturesque, but of little grandeur. The hills from a distance present the appearance of a series of detached cones, not unlike a meadow where new mown grass has been raked into heaps. Crows and a few birds of prey were flitting about the coasts.

Off Funchal a boat with the national flag waving at the stern, carrying an officer in Portuguese uniform, came out to meet the steamer, near which,

meanwhile, a host of gaudily painted little boats had ranged themselves like a miniature fleet of men-of-war in line of battle. The completion of the inspection of the ship's papers by the government official was a signal for the little boats to board the *Luso*. The Lusians were as ready to be captured as the boatmen were to seize. The captives rushed towards the boats, almost jumping into the arms of their captors.

After all the boats, except two, had left, each with its burden toiling laboriously towards the beach, my turn came to follow. The impetuous passengers had to pay considerable sums for a small service, while a boat rapidly rowed me to shore at a fraction of the cost.

As no pier ever existed at Funchal to facilitate the landing, passengers took no precaution against getting their sensitive feet wet. When the keels of the boats scraped the gravelly beach most of the passengers stepped over the gunwale into the water and waded to dry land. Very few reached the beach dryshod, though some of the passengers made unsuccessful attempts to get on shore without an involuntary dip in the brine. The *blasé* traveller, like others, scrambled upon the back of a boatman to cross the strip of shallow water intervening between the boat and the dry beach. His bearer was either unusually short in his legs or the rogue lilted with unnecessary emphasis, for he dipped first one and then the other of the long yellow legs into the water.

The usual scenes with the hotel-touts, the sellers of flowers and of every kind of unnecessary object now began. Funchal has a full share of that loafing population which invariably crops up in any part of the world at a disembarkation. To avoid the persecutions of the touts, two boatmen agreed to carry the baggage, and we trudged off in search of a lodging, which was as quickly found under the influence of a small reward, as it could have been secured by a courier in advance.

Funchal is not attractive, there being scarcely a sign of mental or moral activity. All life is half dreamy or sleepy apathy—no noise, no quarrels, no amusements, nor anything to distract the mind. Until a late hour in the morning scarcely anyone is to be seen in the streets or on the beach; the shops are closed, industry and trade seem suspended. Far from the beach is anchored a two-masted, or occasionally a three-masted, vessel, not venturing to approach the land by reason of the heavy rollers which, in stormy weather, have caused vessels to drag their anchors and cast them helpless wrecks upon the shore. On the gravelly beach capsized boats are left for a long time until required for transit between the port and the steamers that arrive for a few hours. A large old rotten boiler is the chief ornament of the rough gravel beach, and occasionally one or two boatmen or fishermen enliven the scene by their appearance.

After nine o'clock the dreamy-looking tobacconist opens his shop, with a few half-empty boxes of

cigars and a small quantity of tobaccos artistically placed upon the shelves to disguise the emptiness of the place and make a show of business. A similar face appears at the door of an old furniture shop containing second and third-hand articles, sofas of a venerable age, several mended, and even three-legged chairs and equally antiquated tables, two or three looking-glasses possessing the amusing quality of grotesquely distorting the features of those who consult them, and, according to the light which falls upon the beholder and the place in which he stands, imparting to him a green or a yellow complexion. Amongst this *bric-à-brac* collection may be found a few new chairs of Madeira make.

Then the town wakes from its happy dream. The continual ringing of church bells and the disagreeable scratching of the sleighs against stones break the stillness. In the filthy foul-smelling market-streets fruit traders make their appearance. Outside the town the visitor, trying to escape the unpleasantness of the streets, has his olfactory nerves outraged by the noxious exhalations and effluvia from great quantities of putrifying animal and vegetable substances, there being a constant accumulation of refuse. If he ventures into the gardens he finds the water green and stagnant, full of infusorial life, and is soon chased out by furious and painful attacks of swarms of mosquitos. Seldom can the traveller pass through any street, either in town or village, without meeting a coughing consumptive-looking man or woman.

During the day a lady may occasionally be seen in the street in a sleigh, drawn by oxen, or in a palanquin, with the curtains usually closed. All the rest of the ladies, if not on their way to church, are seated at the windows of the houses gazing for hours at the by-passers, and by their general pale and sickly looks call to mind the ladies in a Turkish harem.

The going and coming of the little boats give animation to the outlook over the ocean, while on land the streets and squares are somewhat enlivened by sleighing and equestrian parties starting, returning, and crossing one another. Walks or climbs up the hill-sides lead to charming rural spots from which extended views, far into the Atlantic, are obtainable. Groups of convalescents seek the shade of the trees in the little public gardens, or in the cool avenues by which it is approached; others reposing on the rustic seats, remain it may be for hours, listening to the softened chimes ringing from an ancient belfry. In the moss-covered porch of a venerable church may often be seen some frail looking youth dreaming away a happy hour, and weaving, in a delicate web of dreamland tracery, thoughts of a far-off home, while the solemn strains of organ music issuing through the half-opened door, blend with the ripple of happy laughter close by, and the cry of a fresh-voiced fruit-seller calling her wares in a distant street.

The evenings are scarcely endurable in consequence of the excessive moisture in the oppressive

air inducing a profuse perspiration in a very short time, and causing a feeling of extreme languor. At latest by ten o'clock almost the whole of the town is snoring.

At sunrise it is pleasant to ascend the steep mountain, and half way up to stop at the wine shop for a refreshing draught. This gives vigour for completing the ascent to the church where the holy "Senhora do Monte" is enshrined, glittering with jewels from head to foot. At the church porch a motley group of ragged beggars pester the visitors for alms. From this altitude a bird's eye view of Funchal is obtainable, inviting the traveller to descend the hill, and proceed to the pleasantly situated village, "Cama dos Lobos," where fishermen are "reaping the harvest of the sea." This village is situated on the beach, and is only two hours' walk from Funchal, by a wide road through a cultivated district. The name of this place has been translated by some authors as the "bed of wolves," but it has no such signification. The real meaning is "bed of whales." At this spot whalers and fishermen from olden times have had a station, the bay abounding with fish of various descriptions.

Men in boats were engaged in the early morning, with a stranger among them, throwing ropes into the water, trying to catch something, at the distance of a mile and a half from the shore. A fisherman at hand offered his services to go out to the scene of activity, and with swelling sails and a gentle breeze the spot was reached in a few minutes. Curiosity

was amply gratified by the sight for the first time of an ocean monster, the giant "cephalopod" whose gelatine body, of a reddish colour, about thirteen feet long, was entangled by ropes three feet under water, preventing the further sinking of the huge horn-shaped body. While trying to clear itself from the mesh, with its long and powerful arms, harpoons were thrown, and the stranger treated it to a brace of bullets. The blood flowing from the wounds discoloured the water. The creature, although entangled by three arms, when hauled above the surface proved too heavy for the gelatinous substance of the body to withstand the pressure of the ropes; and before the fishermen had time to secure it, one arm after another was cut through, and the creature, not yet deprived of life, disappeared in the deep.

There is one spot which is most unaccountably neglected by visitors—the "Currel." It is difficult for any pen to describe the grand and picturesque view presented to the eye from a height of over 2000 feet. The fresh pure morning air eases the ascent up the road, through a gloomy and profound ravine, at the bottom of which a river winds its way to the sea, glittering like silver between the fresh vegetation luxuriantly scattered along its course, until "Currel" is reached.

The cool water gleaming between the emerald verdure refreshes the air and fatigue is not felt, as at every curve new and delightful scenery is presented. Suddenly a most beautiful spot, previously hidden

by massive stones, bursts upon the sight. In front is an enormous crater, the vent of one of the past eruptions which have so disfigured Madeira, and high precipitous walls of rock, with inter-mixed vegetation, bound the view of the dark, savagely grand beauty which nature only can display.

On the solid, massive rock at the edge of the precipice a poor, but very clean little village, with white huts, is perched; and fearless boys and girls sport upon the edge, and ever and anon lie down to gaze into the awful precipice, and delight their childish disposition by throwing down stones and laughing heartily each time a loud boom indicates that the bottom has been reached. They have no fear of vertigo from gazing into the frightful depth, a tumble into which would convert their tender bodies into shapeless, mangled, bleeding masses. Such is their practice from day to day. They leap and frisk like goats from stone to stone without fear of dislocating their limbs. After this exhilarating exercise in the pure fresh air, they return to their homes with sparkling eyes and merry laughter, to ask their poor parents for a piece of bread or a draught of milk; and sometimes, too, on receiving but a small dole, as much as the parents can afford, the children, with a sigh and their little heads bowed in disappointment, walk quietly away. In a few moments, however, hunger is forgotten, and off they go, jumping again from rock to rock, amid the soft vocal music of the birds.

Madeira contains nearly 121,000 inhabitants, whose home and out-door life might well be taken as an example by the dwellers in many other lands. Drunkenness and crime are very rare among them, and in any village a traveller is received with kindness and hospitality. The comparison made by some travellers that the Madeira women are as beautiful as those of Spain, is overdrawn. Their rough life and too early marriages are not calculated to preserve to them the beauty and health of the Spanish women. The Portuguese origin of the people again has implanted in them the peculiarities of that nation, which has never been celebrated for feminine beauty.

The cultivator of the soil is, amongst other disadvantages, exposed to the frequent danger of having his little cultivated ground carried away by the rain torrents, which rush down the rocky slopes and obliterate all the results of his toil.

Cattle, constituting in other countries the chief wealth of the farming and peasant classes, are few in number, and do not thrive well.

At first sight Madeira, from its green and well-wooded contour, leads to the belief that it is blessed with a fertile soil and good pasturage; but on penetrating into the interior the traveller finds, instead of cultivated gardens, fields and luxurious meadows, only hard basaltic rock, with here and there impenetrable thick woods. Amidst tremendous quantities of broken stones scattered about occasionally the eye rests upon a small patch of poor pasture land. In a

very short time this patch is cleared of its herbage by goats and sheep, and the poor animals then scale the rocks and pick up a scanty sustenance from moss, coarse grass, and weeds.

Between steep rocks are scattered small, poor villages, and single huts in the middle of neglected vineyards, which the natives now behold with hatred. The hard labour and the great expense necessary to cultivate the vine in this rocky island has generally left the unhappy cultivator in a state of starvation. Wherever the traveller goes he hears the same complaint. This is the reason why the delicate and highly-prized wine of Madeira has ceased to be exported to Europe. It is only a few happy possessors of an abundant income and knowledge how to procure it, who can now, to some extent, indulge their taste for this once splendid wine. Except these happy few, those who drink "Madeira" may take it to heart that it is not the genuine produce of the island, but an artfully compounded mixture of something else to imitate its flavour. As long as vessels run from port to port deceptions in goods will be carried on. Wines grown hundreds of miles away may easily be landed in Madeira, and under a new "Bill of Lading" be exported as the genuine wine. The quantity of wine consumed all over the world under the name of Madeira is so prodigious that it could not be produced if the greatest part of the island, including hills, dales, and rocks, were devoted to the cultivation of the vine. What quantity of wine could such an island produce where the cultivator can scarcely find sufficient fertile

land for his culinary vegetables, even in the neglected little vineyards, while the remainder of the fertile soil is devoted to the growth of the sugar cane? The highly-prized Malmsey, since the Duke of Clarence, by order of his loving brother King Edward IV., was sentenced to the sweet death of drowning in a butt of this wine, has been adulterated and diminished to such an extent that even a sample bottle of the same quality could scarcely at present be procured.

Wine is not the only speciality of Madeira, for good horses are plentiful and cheaply hired. An Englishman's love of horses is proverbial, and the shrewd horse-boys never fail to detect a visitor who shows any of the well-known English characteristics. A traveller has only to present himself with an opera-glass, a guide-book in his hand, or a disc of glass to his eye, and immediately, without a word being spoken, a horse ready saddled and bridled is set before him as if it had dropped from the clouds. The roguish drivers have found out that not every Englishman can ride well, and they afford each other many a piece of amusement by slyly applying a test to detect at once the unaccustomed horseman. The trick consists in placing the horse in the opposite direction to that which is usual, so as to beguile an inexperienced rider into getting the wrong foot in the stirrup, and attempting the ridiculous feat of throwing the free leg over the animal's head instead of over his hind quarters. This feat, if successfully performed, would, of course, bring the cavalier with his face towards the horse's tail. The horse being

duly placed facing the wrong way the unsuspecting cavalier mechanically places his left foot in the stirrup, and only when about to spring does it dawn upon him that something is wrong. One of the visitors to the island after a similar attempt, stepping back and carefully adjusting his eyeglass, took a deliberate survey of the whole situation, and then made a second attempt. This essay succeeded in the end, but for some seconds the result seemed doubtful, and our traveller's position in the interval was extremely undignified and ridiculous. Rosinante, entering perhaps into the spirit of the joke, or impatient at the want of address exhibited, swerved as the would be rider was in the act of springing, with the result that his stomach, instead of another part of his person, came across the saddle, and he was only able to place himself in the proper position therein by a series of natatory gyrations such as a fish might be expected to perform in a similar situation.

A day or two later a still more ludicrous equestrian performance sent the whole town into convulsions of laughter. A large Liverpool steamer bound for an African port brought up off the coast, and during her stay some of the crew had obtained a few hours' leave to visit Funchal. At the moment when the *cafés* of the principal square were most thronged with visitors, the Jack-tars rolled tumultuously into the plaza, every man carrying a seven foot length of sugar cane. Their rolling gait, rendered more than usually picturesque by their devotion to certain bottles carried by some of the party, their

loud calls to each other, and the vigorous flourishes they made with their canes of sugar when not engaged in chewing them, had attracted all the loafers and idlers from the beach, and they now reeled all together into the plaza to see the expected fun. Several saddled horses were placed in front of them. It was sufficient for their owners that *Inglese* had put in an appearance, and, sailors or not, they would wish to ride. The tars decided to mount, but it was necessary to decide upon the fate of the sugar sticks and the liquor. A motion to leave the canes behind was lost by a large majority, and another respecting the grog was settled by the instant consumption of the contents of the bottles. Finally, after many mutual encouragements to get up, every jolly Jack (thanks to the assistance of a score of laughing bystanders) got hoisted somehow into the saddle, but to make any of them sit upright was difficult. This startled the horses, and in less time than it takes to describe it, the tars were flying, like so many Gilpins, out at every avenue leading from the square.

To give a more complete idea of town life in Funchal it may be remarked that the first thing which attracts the attention is a building bearing on its front in large letters "Yate's Family Hotel," where are to be found stuck up, pampered and overbearing visitors, dressed out in all the finery of gorgeous dolls—all sham-- most of them Cyclops or Don Quixotes, apparently regarding all the rest of the world as utterly unworthy of their notice. At this hotel these vain visitors have their vanity and self-importance



"Off went the jolly jack-tars in all directions, like so many Gilpins."

flattered by being charged at a very high rate for the indulgence of their love of display and the gratification of their pampered appetites, and living a course of life, which, instead of curing, aggravates the catarrh and pulmonary disorders of these *blasé* travellers. Among these visitors to the wonderful climate of Madeira are some of the gentler sex, who resort here as others do to the German and French baths for the cure of heavy temporary diseases. These sick ladies generally find miraculous cures in these wonderful climates, being for a long time, perhaps for ever, relieved from their maladies.

In Funchal there is a predominating English element. The English language is as frequently heard in the conversation of the loungers or the passer-by as Portuguese. On the hill-side there is even an English cemetery; but why it received that distinctive name it is impossible to divine, for in its precincts are laid many generations of natives and visitors, distributed with an impartiality which proves to how small an extent death respects either condition, age, sex, or nationality. The pronounced aspect of Madeira is partly an evidence of the great extent to which the people of the British Isles are scourged by tubercular disease, and that many physicians recommend Madeira to the poor consumptive patient, whom to cure is beyond the power of the most cunningly-compounded medicaments.

The contrast between tranquillity in Madeira with its unhurrying daily incidents and the rushing activity in our busy cities, forms a great charm of residence

in the island, and is very beneficial to its invalid visitors. The mild distractions of an out-door life are probably much more effectual agents in restoring health than the climate, to which the improvement is usually attributed.

In Madeira vigorous exercise is compulsory. It is difficult to walk either up or down its slippery hills without an effort that soon induces a healthy perspiration. Locomotion in horse-drawn carriages is unknown. Sledges drawn by oxen traverse the steep streets, with the assistance of greased rags placed from time to time under the runners to make them glide the more easily.

The waggish inventor of the climatic fiction, who must have been a doctor of very advanced views, knew, if visitors could be got to Madeira under any pretence, the exertion necessitated by the peculiarities of island locomotion might effect almost miraculous cures.

One phase of life in Funchal is far from being either diverting or beneficial. At a certain hour of the day, what may perhaps be called an open-air levée of invalids takes place. The *élite* of the sick people of Funchal, arrayed in fashionable robes and accompanied by footmen or chairmen well dressed, promenade the most public places for the purpose of exhibiting their finery and the evidences of their wealth. It is like a levée in Rotten Row, but with a significant difference that must sadden the observer. Instead of the long lines of handsome equipages, each with its bevy of fair and blooming occupants,

the throng is here composed of sleighs, wheeled chairs, and hammocks, each with its burden of languid death-struck invalids. In place of the gallant men, mounted on noble horses, accompanying the carriages, or flitting in and out among them, the gentlemen in this levée are generally ghastly shadows flitting in and out among those other shadows not less ghastly. For the sprightly sally and the gay repartee exchanged between the happy groups passing and re-passing in the Row, a feeble salutation or a wan smile of recognition is all that usually marks a meeting of acquaintances. To see so many persons, to all appearance with a foot already in the grave, making a parade of their infirmities, shutting out all noble thoughts and giving themselves up in their rapidly-expiring remnant of existence to the most senseless of worldly pomps and vanities, is one of the saddest spectacles that can be witnessed. Most repulsive of all in this levée is the hideous fashion of affecting feebleness not really felt, for the sake of show, and the mimicry of symptoms of the most distressing disease with which the temperate regions of the earth have ever been afflicted.

Notwithstanding the charms of a life in Madeira, a prolonged stay is tiresome. It was desirable for the traveller to commence as early as practicable his projected journey in Africa, without incurring unnecessary exposure to the dangers of the swamps by landing at too early a period on the West Coast.

Some little time, therefore, was devoted to visiting the islands of the Archipelago of the Western Africa.

First among these is the volcanic Canary group, situated just outside the tropical region, and, secondly, the Cape Verde Islands, which are within it. This would inure the traveller's constitution to a high temperature, and enable him to escape those physical derangements that usually accompany a too sudden exposure to tropical heat.

A delay at Teneriffe or St. Vincent, would give an opportunity of picking up hints of value, not merely for the preservation of health, but also for laying down such rules of conduct in intercourse with the various races to be encountered as would contribute to the successful accomplishment of the task the traveller had in view, and avoid those elementary mistakes that have ruined many promising expeditions, and proved fatal to many predecessors.

CHAPTER II.

ON THE ATLANTIC — THE SOLITARY SENTINEL — CHARACTERISTICS OF TENERIFFE — LIFE OF THE NATIVES — SANTA CRUZ — A MERRY CREW — COCKROACHES — A NIGHT IN THE TROPICAL SEA — SHOOTING STARS — SCIENTIFIC DISCUSSION — A DELICATE MORSEL — CLIMATIC DOGMAS — WHALES SPOUTING — A RUSH FOR MEDUSÆ — NEARING ST. VINCENT — A CURIOUS NATURALIST.

TENERIFFE was easily reached from Madeira, being only one day's steaming. Before half the distance had been traversed the huge mass of rock, veiled with a light haze, appeared in sight resembling a gray cloud, swelling and inflating like a gigantic monster of the deep bursting itself with rage at the invasion of its solitude. The increasing contour of the mass of the island presented various fantastic illusions. There it stood, a solitary rugged island, as if forgotten by the rest of the world, in the midst of the deep blue waters of the Atlantic, whose long rolling waves beat with rage upon its rocks. It

appeared like a huge sentinel stationed in the wide expanse of water to watch vessels rolling like specks in the distance upon the waves. At times, apparently not wishing by its steep and craggy front to frighten mariners, it wraps its towering heights in clouds of mist, and disappears from sight. Then, as if ashamed of hiding its grandeur, it looms from among the clouds and mist, rearing its gigantic form to a height of over 12,000 feet above the sea, and threatening to wreck any daring vessel venturing to approach it. Again, the clouds in which it is generally wrapped play fantastic tricks by descending down the slopes from the heights, creating the optical illusion of pressing the island into the bed of the ocean.

The steamer rapidly approached, and with every knot nearer the aspect of the island became clearer until the steep white cliffs of Anaga were distinguishable, and contrasted with the deep and varying colours of the other headlands. Walled gardens rose in terraces along the cultivated slopes, and prostrate trees, whose roots and weight, aided by the torrents, had destroyed the labour of cultivation, now lay rotting on the ground, presenting a desolate and ruined aspect. Here and there a solitary Euphorbia bush clinging to the rocks by its tenacious roots as if in fear of being swept away by torrents from its last and firmest friend. Among the rocks descending to the sea is found the ice-plant (*Mesembryanthemum crystallinum*), and a few natives, like specks, were visible gathering this plant for the manufacture of

soda. Beyond the extensive views from terrace to terrace the scenery becomes tame. Strata of various lines, layer on layer, with long mounds of basalt cross the cultivated places, separate the lines of houses like fences, and mark the volcanic nature of the locality, the extent, the period, or the intensity of the various eruptions. The crust of soil is thin and arid, the air dry and hot. Among the hills the only indications of animal life are the goats nibbling the bits of moss interspersed among masses of rock, and a few birds of prey hovering round high above the rugged columnar piles of basaltic stone.

Within six miles from Santa Cruz the vegetation of every zone, from tropical to temperate, flourishes upon the inclined plane leading up to the precipitous bluff which fills up with its immense volume the centre of the island. Here and there peasants traverse the narrow paths from north to south, and *vice versa*. Those going south carry on their backs packages of the cactus plant, and those going northward boxes of grey cocoons of the cochineal insect. The reason for these opposite transits is that in the north the cactus plant flourishes, while it is only in the south that the insect thrives. Other poor peasants from the direction of Chasna (celebrated for its medicinal springs), or from the Prepadilla valley, come down the hills with plums and figs to Santa Cruz, where these fruits find a ready market. In this way they earn a poor and scanty livelihood for themselves and families in the towns and villages of the interior, where they generally live

in small, mean, moss-covered tenements, most of which are surmounted with wooden crosses. The same Christian symbol is common near the houses clustered in the lifeless grass-grown streets.

The impoverished condition of the rural population contrasts unfavourably with that formerly prevailing. A luscious grape abounded in Teneriffe for three centuries, but the vineyards have now disappeared through the soil being washed away by the rushing torrents from the peak, and through the ravages of destructive insects. For years the world-famed wines of Teneriffe have been little more than a name.

The cultivation of the cochineal cactus, introduced as a substitute for the vine in 1835, thrived until reduction in the commercial value of cochineal caused a serious diminution in the prosperity of the island. Tobacco of excellent quality thrives here, but the little trade in it is languishing.

Almost every kind of misfortune has befallen Teneriffe. The land-slips, which ruined the fertility of the soil, damaged the harbour of Santa Cruz by partly filling up the port, and a considerable portion of the mole formerly existing has been demolished by hurricanes and the fury of the waves.

Below the rocky heights Santa Cruz (the chief town of the island), with its white houses built on a sloping sandy beach, nestles low down under the shadow of the cloud-capped peak. A number of the Spanish inhabitants enliven the beach on the arrival of every steamer or vessel. The porters and the

boatmen, with bright red scarves tied round their waists, form picturesque groups among the arriving passengers and the inhabitants thronging the Puerto. Except at such times lifelessness prevails during the day, and the only living objects visible in the streets are wretched half-starved dogs and cats, and occasionally horses and donkeys, all tormented by voracious fleas and flies.

In the means of enjoyment or obtaining suitable food for man or beast the island is very deficient. For a short period every evening some active life similar to that in Madeira is observable in the principal square, the Puerto de Oratora, where, for a couple of hours the people enjoy their promenade after the oppressive heat of the day. No wonder in such a dull town the most exciting topic is—"When will the next steamer arrive?" As soon as the signal was made of her appearance in the far-off distance, almost the whole inhabitants of the town rushed towards the shore. How pleasant it was for me, a detained traveller, to see her come to anchor for a time just sufficient to take a ticket for the passage and escape from this lifeless place, even though it be to the dead rock of St. Vincent in the Cape Verde Islands, a stage yet nearer to my destination.

Amongst the passengers already on board was a French trader, a resident at Port St. Louis, on the West Coast of Africa, who was destined to become my future travelling companion. The passage was diversified by observing the various occupations of

the crew before the mast. The cook, while giving grass to his sheep would grumble at the unceasing round of his duties. A rollicking tar would cause roars of laughter by his merry antics with a pet dog, and another group convulsed themselves over the absurdities of a droll fellow who was making a fat pig delirious by alternately kissing and thumping its fat nose every time it ventured to put it forth. An industrious sailor was making a mat of rope ; another man sat repairing his shirt ; while one poor fellow was regarding with a most rueful countenance the ravages made by the cockroaches during his watch in the substance of his best jacket. These insects are a terrible pest on shipboard in tropical regions. It is not an uncommon thing for a sailor to jump up out of his berth with a cockroach in his mouth, the obnoxious insect having a bad habit of entering any open port-hole. It also occasionally happens that Jack's feet are attacked by cockroaches, and his toes severely bitten.

The sailors pursued their ordinary occupations, taking their watches and going below when relieved from duty, while the passengers led a sort of animal and apathetic life, from which they were only aroused by the beauty of the night ushering us into the tropical zone. A gentle breeze, pure and warm, fanned cheek and brow as the steamer ploughed her way swiftly through the waves. Hardly a ripple disturbed the smoothness of the glassy sea in advance of the ship. The long straight trail of white foam she left in her wake remained unbroken as far as the eye

could follow it. Nothing disturbed the stillness of the air except the regular pulsations of the labouring engine and the measured respiration of the steam-puffs. The captain paced to and fro upon the bridge, keeping a careful look out, and directing the course of the ship without in any way distracting our reverie.

A flight of shooting stars suddenly shot out, and broke the spell, upon which the captain shouted—"Look, look!" remarking that it was somewhat unusual to see the phenomenon at that hour of the evening, such flights generally taking place in the early morning and at dawn. In August and September they are more frequently seen than in the spring. "Look again," exclaimed the captain, as another shower shot forth, and after a short, but brilliant course, suddenly broke up and faded into gold and silver rain. At short intervals other similar flights of stars followed, some leaving behind them long, luminous trains of varied colours, which continued visible for several seconds. Others had the appearance of bursting grenades, emitting sparks like brilliant fireworks. Stars shot in all directions, some changing their course abruptly and speedily disappearing in another direction. In one part of the heavens they were scattered at considerable distances, and in others accumulated in clusters like the bursting bouquets of rockets.

The beauty of this aerial display loosened the tongues of the passengers, and conjectures were hazarded as to the cause and consequence of this

phenomenon. One propounded the theory that they were produced by atmospheric conditions ; while another contended that the atmosphere had little to do with their appearance. One relegated them to the higher regions of space above our atmosphere, and another regarded them as instances of spontaneous combustion of gaseous collections on entering a different composition of atmosphere to that in which they were generated. This theory the captain warmly supported, asking the passenger who favoured the other theory, where he supposed the magnetic pole was, in or above the earth, and whether he could give an explanation of the magnetic deflection of the needle. On the reply that the magnetic pole was in the atmosphere, another passenger maintained that the magnetic pole was in the earth, and exerted its influence upon the atmosphere, and thus caused the disturbance of the needle, because the air, if separated from the globe, could not produce any effect upon the needle. What, he asked, would the surrounding air be but for the existence of the globe ? The captain then expressed his firm belief that the magnetic pole was in the earth, for the nearer the magnetic needle was to the earth the greater the declination, and that all experiments to elucidate the declination of the needle would in all probability be unsuccessful.

No agreement as to these meteors was arrived at, and undoubtedly never will be until some superhuman being is enabled to determine accurately the height of the atmosphere and its com-

ponents. This impossibility, therefore, leaves a wide field for all hypotheses. To prove what a shooting star really is, can only be done when the substance of one star has been actually touched. If ever such a wonderful man should appear and adopt this test of touching a shooting star or stopping the lightning, he would inevitably be burned to ashes before he had time to propound his theory.

The estimations of theorists as to the elevation at which aerial bodies are visible are of no practical value. The lustre of such bodies increases or decreases in proportion as they approach or recede from the earth, disappearing from sight as they reach the region of air in which they first became visible. This leads to the belief that aerial bodies are not generated in the upper strata, but in a lower and more heavily charged atmosphere, in regions where two different atmospheres come into frictional contact. A luminous body generated in such a region pursuing its course through a stratum of air over-charged with certain proportions of gaseous elements, apparently increases in size by absorbing these atmospheric elements, until it reaches other elements where it may take another form, assume a different motion, increase in luminosity or colour, explode, decline, or return through elements similar to those through which it has passed, where it must diminish in size in proportion as it rises to the atmosphere in which the luminous elements are absent, and the phenomenon disappears.

There do not appear to be adequate reasons for

supposing that the atmosphere is homogeneous in its constitution up to twenty leagues (?) from the surface of the earth, still less that it moves with the globe. Is the man yet born who, by a trigonometrical survey, has determined the height of the atmosphere, which every moment may vary in height according to the change of temperature? What will be the height of the atmosphere in winter when cirrus clouds may appear to be not a quarter of their summer height? Electrical action gives similar indications, which show that the drier the atmosphere (dryness being a bad conductor) the nearer the "stable" atmosphere approaches to the earth. This proves the impossibility, practically, of measuring the height of the atmosphere, and still more of proving that it has a uniform composition.

Again, as the air is unequally heated throughout its height, especially near to the earth, this inequality of temperature may be attributed to the direct and double reflection of the heat derived only from the soil alone, and not to the sun or any such cause.

The hypothesis, that the air is dilated by the direct rays of the sun and by their reflection from the soil, will be held to be more correct, because the theory has existed for many years, and the human intellect from childhood has taken it for granted. Why should not the air, probably more correctly, be dilated by the direct rays of gases arising from the earth and by electricity, and the reflection of light, not from the soil, but from the strata of air where the rays of the earth's light are

reflected on the soil? All lighting and heating influences developing animal and vegetable life, are attributed to the sun, and the globe on which we thrive, seems to be entirely left out of calculation, probably because it is too close to us.

After some further discussion and opinions expressed by the passengers on the nature and causes of aerolites, bolides, dust showers, and sporadic shooting stars, the conversation turned to subjects of a more personal character, in which there was more agreement.

While the passengers were engaged in the scientific discussion as to shooting stars, several minor events of a more prosaic nature occurred on the fore deck. A forlorn duck, two unhappy fowls, and a fine "fat" sheep, had, as sailors say, "slipped their wind," or according to the Roman custom, required "TYMVL LACRIM PLEM" for the steward by reason of his loss. Live provisions on ship-board have an unhappy knack, if one dies, to engage in a game of "follow my leader," and very soon coops and pens may be emptied. It is not the custom to throw dead carcasses overboard. Every morning before the deck is scrubbed, a seaman, the sharp-eyed cook, butcher, and steward, make a survey of the coops and pens, and the first who observes a dead inmate, if no passengers are standing about, carries the carcass straight off to the pantry. If passengers are present, to prevent them seeing the dead animal, two or three seamen place themselves in front of the pen. Should the carcass be noticed by the passengers, the cook or butcher

suddenly appears with the steward, who gives his mate a sound scolding for not "doing his duty," and in a most artistic, theatrical manner, orders him to "chuck it overboard," meanwhile diverting the passenger's attention by "Nice morning, Sir!" who quietly walks off without any suspicion that before long he will be regaled with the flesh of the animal which was not murdered, but quietly departed this life some twelve hours previously. "What the eye don't see the stomach don't heave at," is perfectly true, and the ladies and gentlemen lounging on deck are in happy ignorance of the mysteries of the galley, where sauces and condiments are deftly used to hide the real quality of the delicate fare.

On all well-appointed steam or sailing vessels passengers have no great cause of complaint, being attentively and well treated. The diet is good, but considering the high rate of passage it might be supposed that such delicate food as dead or diseased and starved-to-death quadrupeds and feathered bipeds would not be served up.

As a sample of the impudent "tricks upon travellers" played on board ship, the following is one of many. A dead sheep had lain in the pen some eighteen hours, and had been snugly placed in a corner as if asleep behind the others; no passenger thought about a death having occurred on board, though many had looked in the pen.

At midday the steward appeared on the scene and cried out "Cook, mind your business."

“Yes, Sir,” was the response from the galley, and out came the cook whetting his knife on the steel, and artfully proceeding round by the first-class cabin, winking at the grinning steward, marched off to the pen.

The steward rubbing his hands before the passengers in front of the captain with a roguish smile, said, “Fine mutton chops, gentlemen, to-day!”

Some passengers followed the cook. The door of the pen was opened, the artist pushed away the living sheep and addressed the dead carcase, “Now, then, you fat fellow, your time’s come—come out!” and laying hold of it added “Oh! oh! how heavy you are. Fat mutton chops, gentlemen, fat!!”

“How very fat,” exclaimed the confiding passenger with admiration. In reality the carcase was like Dr. Tanner at the end of his useless forty days’ fast—“skin and bones,” having been literally starved to death.

“Jack! come on—help me to pull him out,” called the cook with anger, and a jolly Jack came forward, the two together going through a pantomimic scene of using their most strenuous efforts to drag the heavy mutton out. The cook holding fast the neck of the animal gave it a twist to make the head jerk round and strike his leg. “Oh! oh!” said he, “you kick, do you? I’ll soon manage you!”

The seamen being up to the trick, laughingly called out, “Cook, you don’t live well, you ain’t strong enough to lift a sheep. We’re sure you ain’t game to give us a chop!”

“Too good for common sailors like you—this is for first-class passengers,” was the cook’s reply.

The passengers, highly delighted with the repartee, smiled at the joke, while the cook and crew burst out laughing at the passengers’ expense.

The initiated seaman, who not for the first time had helped the cook to slaughter a dead animal, seized a leg, gave it a number of vigorous jerks, to make it appear that it kicked with might and main, and said, “Never mind! Though it’s warm work to hold him, the noble gentlemen will be sure to give us a bottle of brandy”; and this is frequently the result of this clever bye-play.

“Now I can manage alone,” said the cook, after the pantomime, placing the head of the *resisting* animal between his own herculean legs, got hold of its ears, and then the exciting struggle commenced between the merciless butcher and the departed sheep. The former dragged the latter towards the slaughtering-place. After taking a few paces forward, as if the already-deceased animal resisted violently, the cook started back a pace, and again giving the head a dexterous twist, to impart animation, dragged it at last to the pantry. Here the dead sheep was again made to play the part of resistance, and a mock struggle ensued, the end of which was that the carcass was thrown on its side, the cook’s knee placed on its ribs, and the knife was passed across the sheep’s throat.

Two pans of water were already there to wash away the imaginary blood from the deck. Without

waiting the flow of the blood, the cook's mate, standing with his back towards the passengers, threw water upon the place where the fluid of life should have fallen, and energetically scrubbed away at the deck. The steward and some of the crew judiciously planted themselves in such a position as to prevent the passengers witnessing the pantomimic slaughter too closely.

Revolting as is the idea of eating the flesh of animals that have died and not been slaughtered, the description here given applies to almost every passenger steamer carrying a stock of live provisions. The captain and officers are in such matters cleverly hoodwinked by the adroit stewards and cooks.

In the evening the voyageurs collected for conversation, and as the vessel was now within the tropics the talk turned naturally on the dangers Europeans encountered in hot countries. Some bewailed the necessity which compelled them to expose their lives to such risks; while others sympathised with them, and tendered all sorts of cautions. Those of the passengers who assumed to have had experience of tropical life confidently assured their companions that almost every imaginable disease would claim the traveller for its prey if he ventured to set his foot in Africa, especially on the West Coast. If Yellow Jack were escaped it was impossible, according to their prognostications, to avoid fevers or other diseases. Such advisers with their false sympathy and want of actual knowledge frequently so work

upon the apprehension of a sensitive or nervous man that he becomes, from the very force of imagination, more liable to suffer from predicted ailments than he would if he had not heard the croakings of these would-be travellers' friends.

Amongst this dangerous class of people are to be found even so-called medical men, to whom several years' further study would be of great advantage, too many of them undertaking such duties, more especially on ship-board, with scarcely greater knowledge than that of dosing patients with quinine.

Many erroneous notions and theories are formed as to climate and diseases. The mischiefs resulting from the spread of such opinions not only aggravate disease and increase mortality by the morbid influence produced upon the human imagination, but form most serious impediments to the development of colonisation. The seeds of unwillingness are sown among Europeans to settle within the tropics, even among the great British nation, which is so remarkable in other respects for determination and energy. This disinclination to colonise tropical countries arises in great part from mistrust at what is called the climate. "Give a dog a bad name and hang him."

As to many diseases, including epidemics, the origin of which is beyond the present reach of science, medical men find a ready explanation by attributing them to climate, which is firmly believed to be the principal cause of disease, and is usually spoken of as such, without any attempt to investi-

gate what climate is, and what constitutes its so-called good and bad qualities.

Is a "climate" to be called bad in which a black man can live the ordinary term of life, while a white man can count only upon a diminished term of existence, even when supported by medicines and comforts? Where is there so favourable a climate in which no medicine is required, and where the offices of medical men may generally be dispensed with? As there is no such wonderful climate in existence, and as medicine is an indispensable requisite at some time or other, and even life frequently depends upon its proper administration, it might be said with equal truth that medicine is climate.

A temperate "climate" is acknowledged to be good; but in it medical men thrive, and large stores of medicine are swallowed, yet men die just as they die in the tropics. If a native of Africa residing in Europe, or in a climate which under our definition would be called good, were to limit his food in quantity, nature, and quality to that which is sufficient to maintain life in his own country, his bodily and mental condition would rapidly deteriorate, and he might, with equal reason, allege that he was being poisoned by the climate of Europe.

If these views are true it will be understood that health in the tropics, as everywhere else, is much more dependent upon diet and habit of body and mind—and, in towns and villages, upon good sanitary

regulations—than upon what is known as the “ medical climate ” of a given place, or upon the barometrical, thermometrical, and hygrometrical variations peculiar to a given district. It will be admitted, in short, that acclimatisation is more of an educational than a physical process, and that when a European has learnt correctly to apply the principles of hygiene, he may live his life in the tropics with equal or greater certainty than in temperate countries.

It may be said, that though there are good and bad situations, there is, in the common sense of the term, no such thing as a bad climate. All countries are good for man to live in if he apply intelligently the principles of sanitary science to the regulation of his life ; of course, with the exception of such towns as are pitched on the worst possible sites, sites that could hardly have been deliberately selected on any intelligible principle, but which must have been pitched upon almost haphazard by the earliest European settlers.

Many existing towns in Africa are scarcely raised above the level of the sea, and some are even in part below it, so that drainage is practically impossible without enormous expense, and filth cannot be removed. In short, all the worst sanitary conditions of the worst periods of the most neglected spots in Europe are intensified and aggravated in the badly situated towns of Africa. Undoubtedly in swamps the death-rate must be higher than on elevated ground. That, again, has nothing to do with the “ climate ” *per se*, for human intellect and labour can,

to a great extent, counteract even these evil influences. Holland is not in the tropics, but is in a swamp below the level of the sea, yet thousands of people live there in good health. St. Petersburg and other places as well, in the temperate zones, are built in swamps, and people at the time of the foundation of these places were exposed to the same evil influences upon health as the inhabitants of the filthy towns on the West Coast of Africa. In consequence of the application of labour and science these places in Europe have been rendered habitable, and are now thickly populated. Would this be the case at present if their reputation was the same as that of the West Coast of Africa without a great application of energy to fit them for human habitation? Is the so-called climate of such places, including large towns like London, better than that of tropical countries, which are universally considered bad for the health of Europeans? The south of Europe, as well as Northern Africa, is considered out of the tropics; but are Egypt, Morocco, Algeria, and Spain, especially Madrid, as regards heat and many other "climatic" conditions, out of the tropics? No, they are out of the tropics on the map only. In all these places the heat is tropical, yet scarcely any one speaks of them as being within the tropics. It is the existing black line on the map that gives Europeans the idea whether places are tropical or not.

Drawing a comparison with tropical countries where millions of people are born, live, and die, if

the present theory on "climate" be correct, then the fact that man can exist at all under such horrible infractions of every sanitary law is itself a proof that the general "climate" is excellent and favourable to health. It is just as absurd to charge on "the climate" the high mortality of a pestilential African town site, as it would have been to call the climate of London bad when the Fleet Ditch was an open sewer. Climate, if it is capable of definition as a distinct conception, may be said to be the sum of the meteorological influences that affect a given region of the earth. In the term meteorological influences is included not only the influence of elevation and of latitude, but that of the internal heat of the globe, the geological structure of the earth's crust, the topographical condition of its surface, the quantity and quality of water, the currents of water and of the air, and the distribution of vegetable and animal life, including human population. Except in so far as it may affect a region generally, it is illogical to speak of the climate of swamps and malarious places, just as it would be absurd to say that the atmosphere of Barking Reach, at ebb tide in summer, represented the climate of Kent. The conditions in both cases are quite exceptional, and the risks are exceptional also. The distinction is important, because it constantly happens that whole regions are condemned as having a bad climate, simply because careless settlers have built upon a malarious swamp, and equally careless traders have followed upon their foundations, when a little search would have enabled both to find,

and generally within a short distance, a much more eligible situation.

After the different discussions on board about the danger of exposure in tropical countries the passengers returned to eating, drinking, and sleeping as the prime necessities and business of life, with little excitement, either moral or intellectual, until nearing St. Vincent.

In the distance were three large whales blowing high fountain-like columns of water into the air. The puffing of the steamer caused one of them to disappear. Another ceased spouting and swam swiftly away; while the third paid no attention, being too much engrossed in feasting on an immense shoal of medusæ. At a great distance two boats were sailing, most likely despatched from one of the whaling vessels which make the Canary islands a fishing station.

The medusæ, through which the steamer ploughed her way, soon attracted the attention of the passengers. Some amused themselves by admiring the beautiful gelatine masses of these creatures, tinged with all the hues of the rainbow, ever varying in shape, size, and colour; bright, well-defined blue, violet, and orange patches interspersed in artistic and harmonious contrast. Other passengers, provided with buckets, hurried pell mell, tumbling over each other or the ropes on deck, to secure some of these marvellous specimens of nature's lavishness, and admire them at leisure. The eagerness to capture the medusæ caused many collisions among the sailors, the passengers, ropes, cords, and buckets, to the amusement of the

captain, who cautioned the passengers against the risk of falling overboard after their buckets.

Leaving the medusæ behind, St. Vincent, in its rocky massiveness, stood out clearly in the bright sunlight. High above it were floating heavy clouds, both beautiful and remarkable in form and tint.

At the moment of casting anchor in the bay a curious object approached, which had for some time been making frantic efforts from a small sailing boat to gain attention. A heap under an umbrella was all that was at first visible in the blinding rays of the sun. Arrived alongside, the heap began to move, and, half suffocated under a great leather bag and a waterproof sheet, there appeared a man, from whose innumerable pockets peeped a number of wide-necked bottles and phials. This living bundle floundered on board and addressed the captain in an almost unintelligible jargon. He proved to be a German savant, who desired to scrape off a few of the barnacles sticking to the bottom of the ship. The captain eyed the new comer for a moment and granted his request. The naturalist commenced in an amusing manner his operations. Fixing a copper spoon to the end of his walking-stick, he descended to his boat, adjusted his spectacles, deliberately explored the sides of the steamer as far as possible below the water line, poking his spoon into the darkest and deepest brown collections of barnacles and other incrustations. These he put into bottles and returned on board, where the captain jokingly thanked him for scraping the bottom of the ship and possibly increas-

ing her speed by a knot an hour. This joke made the naturalist more communicative, and he indulged the captain with a peep into his bag and a look through his microscope. Heaven knows where his learned loquacity would have stopped if the moment for saying "Good-bye" to the captain had not arrived.

The captain directed his course across the vast Atlantic Ocean to Rio de Janeiro, while the naturalist, the French trader, and myself, had only to traverse several fathoms of water to reach the ugly and dusty beach of the beautiful bay of St. Vincent.

CHAPTER III.

DESCRIPTION OF ST. VINCENT—A SIMPLE CURE OF FEVER—
 FATE OF A TURTLE — THE TURTLE FLEET — THE
 ISLANDERS — A TERRIBLE STORY — A CONTENTED
 ENGLISHMAN—A NARROW ESCAPE—SAIL TO ST. ANTÃO
 —LIFE IN SANTA CRUZ—A MOUNTAIN DUET—DUST
 PHENOMENON—ANOTHER FEVER ATTACK—FISHERY IN
 THE SEA OF BLOOD—A LEARNED MAN'S END.

THE white hotel at which the naturalist stayed, and recommended us to stay with him, was regarded as the best in St. Vincent. The rooms allotted to the French trader and myself were dark, and nothing but calico curtains were at first visible ; in fact, calico seems to be the chief, if not the only decoration of the town. Chairs, sofas, or beds are considered of secondary importance ; and such as exist, when brought into use, too frequently treacherously give way.

The general aspect of the town is far from attractive. Along the beach a sort of viaduct carries the

rails upon which the coal waggons run to supply the needs of calling vessels. The houses abutting on the quay are for the most part small, one-storeyed, flat-roofed tenements. The background of the view is similar to that described at Teneriffe, a huge mass of basaltic rocks rising to a great height above the sea level. A little avenue of cactus with a few trees leading towards the mountain was the pleasantest feature of the place. A few boats that dotted the bay occupied the foreground of the scene.

A short distance from the shore is a nicely paved square, with wooden and stone benches, the latter in recesses of the walls, resembling the quay of Lisbon in miniature. Beyond this square, at the left corner of a short range of buildings facing the sea, is situated the principal refreshment house, noted for the bad quality of its wines and its high prices, not even a bottle of lemonade being sold under a shilling. At the right corner are the chief ornaments of the town:—a diminutive pond, swarming with vegetable and insect life, heaps of coal, and rugged masses of stone. This completes the picture of St. Vincent.

The few houses facing the pond are flat-roofed, with little windows at each side of the door, similar to those in Spain and Italy. Red calico curtains over the doors and windows, one or two beds with similar curtains, a few ricketty chairs, and an ancient invalid-table, with a torn mat on the floor, completed the equipment of these humble dwellings. The inhabitants of these domiciles are a low class of mulatto and black natives, chiefly women. Each house has a

bench in front, upon which the inhabitants pass their idle hours, and rest from—doing nothing. From some of the open doors the heads of women from seventeen to sixty years old were protruded, inviting bypassers to come in and rest. If a deaf ear is turned to their blandishments, they forcibly seize the eldest and chief of the party, who is the first dragged inside, notwithstanding all protests. No sooner is he inside than a bottle of sour wine is produced, and from the adjoining houses women rush in, loudly clamouring for tobacco, which must be complied with, even against the will, and the wine, though not tasted, must be paid for, such being the custom of this locality.

The day after arrival, the naturalist was prostrated with an attack of fever, the result of the prolonged exposure and excitement of the previous day. An unquenchable thirst, langour and lassitude, and an unnatural dryness of skin, were symptoms clearly observable.

To test the efficacy of certain simple means of cure, such as promoting perspiration to ensure a change in the electrical condition of his body, and the best means of throwing off the attack on the appearance of the earliest symptoms, it was determined to apply remedies which were far more of a moral than of a material nature. The electrical change would, if produced, correct his ailment, for a thunderstorm, by dispelling the oppressiveness of the atmosphere, would give him relief. A sea bath would be of service, and, after a thousand snarling protests,

the naturalist at length consented to take a dip in sea-water, to be followed by a vigorous friction and a sharp walk afterwards, as a promising means of at once obtaining that electrical change for which he might otherwise have long to wait. On reaching the hotel a second dose of friction was administered so as to remove effectually the deposit of extraneous matter and promote the free action of the cutaneous vessels.

The remedies resorted to had the desired effect, and the patient awoke next morning, after a sound sleep, strong and well, without the help of quinine or other medicaments. The matitudinal tub, which medical men approve and Europeans have accustomed themselves to, has destroyed the life of many a white man.

Injudicious bathing in the tropics, must be carefully avoided. Immediately after eating, a bath is always dangerous, and wetting only the head and neck or the feet is more safe and frequently of greater service than immersing the whole body. In swampy places a bath taken at a wrong time may prove fatal.

The study of meteoric causes of disease is engaging the attention of many scientific men; but those who have attempted to apply the data of meteorological science to the healing art have had, as yet, but a small modicum of success. Without denying the importance of the study of that science, or questioning the value of many of its facts, it is open to doubt whether a physician's reliance on

meteorology does not frequently blind him to the real causes of disease, and lead him far astray in prescribing remedies.

In St. Vincent the time was passed in interesting microscopic and other investigations, which displaced any feeling of *ennui*. Frequently the rays of the rising sun warned us to bring our researches to a temporary close and seek the needful rest. In our daily excursions we cautiously examined old mooring chains, logs of wood, or anchors on the shore, removing marine incrustations with as much care as if each bivalve had been a diamond. Moss-covered slimy stones and guano were prolific in *Aulacodiscous Petersii*, *A. Margaritaceus*, and other rare species. The naturalist capered on every occasion with delight when on a shell or other object he found some choice specimen of "wonderful things."

One day we came across a merry group of officers from an American man-of-war, which had anchored the day before in the bay, for whom three natives were roasting a turtle on a low fire. The naturalist looked very cross but said nothing for a considerable time. He turned round and round the empty shell, and at length testily enquired if the turtle had been caught in a particular spot to which he pointed. "Yes," was the reply. "The deuce fly away with you then," said the naturalist, who had been watching this turtle for many days, and followed her every movement from the time she came ashore to find a place in the sand to deposit her eggs. He wished her safely back to sea again when she had

completed her task, and now she was being roasted. The officers interceded on behalf of the natives, and expressed a wish to be shown the nest in which the turtle had laid her eggs. This spot was not far off the shore, where two boulders formed a refuge in the sand. The nest was soon found, and, to the number of 218, the round soft eggs were dug out, many of them being transferred to the handkerchiefs of the naval officers.

There was another nest not far from this place, but the turtles were already hatched, and a numerous fleet of tiny turtles were setting sail to seek their fortunes. The place had hundreds of tracks radiating from it in all directions, which the little things had formed in their first attempts at locomotion. Six of these were caught by the Americans, who carried them off in delight.

Catching turtles is a simple matter. A stake is driven in the earth, and a line fastened to it, or to a stone, and stretched across the turtle's path. The passing creature soon gets his head or legs entangled in the draw knot, and as he goes on he knots himself up and is trapped.

By the time we returned to the roasting turtle (the loss of which almost broke the naturalist's heart), the meal was prepared, and all enjoyed the excellent fare of which the fat was the most delicious portion.

Next day a meeting was arranged at the principal restaurant, the French trader forming one of the party. The politeness of the host and all his sweet

words were needed to make his wines bearable. The unaffected hilarity of the naval officers, the amusing contradictiveness of the German naturalist, and the vivacity of the French trader, made the party very convivial.

By a natural exchange of ideas the feast led the party to talk of the sufferings of the natives at certain periods, when the failure of the rain brings wide-spread famine throughout the group of islands. The soil, where there is any, (for the barren basaltic rocks occupy the greatest part of the surface of St. Vincent,) is fertile, but the natives are easy-going, thriftless, and improvident, like all their neighbours of the African continent. The mulattos and the Portuguese half-breeds are more energetic; but the facility and inexpensiveness of supporting existence has its effect even upon them. They are satisfied with what they can get by the smallest modicum of personal exertion.

During the conversation a remarkable, robust-looking Portuguese, and an uncommonly tall Englishman presented themselves. The latter, however, added but little to the general enjoyment, being taciturn, and his conversation limited to monosyllabic replies to the questions of his friend the Portuguese. They were both old settlers, and engaged in the fishery trade. The Portuguese claimed to be one of the first Europeans who settled upon Salt island. He arrived in 1839, and at first engaged in the salt trade, but was now a fisherman dealing in whale and cod-liver oil. He narrated the



misfortune which drove him from his native land into exile.

His father was a gentleman of high position in Lisbon, who had married a second wife. The narrator, whilst at the university preparing himself for a professional career, had become the object of his step-mother's hatred and his father's distrust through her evil influence. She had trumped up against him a charge of stealing her diamonds, to which he was too indignant to give a simple denial.

During the narrative he became excited, although more than forty years had passed, and was almost beside himself at the recollection of it. He struck the table a tremendous blow, that sent the bottles and glasses flying. His eyes glared as if he had really lost his reason over the remembrance of his wrongs.

The naturalist kindly endeavoured to soothe him, but he screamed with excitement "Let me speak! If you are a father listen, lest like my father, once the best and most honourable of men, you become the murderer of your offspring."

After prolonged suffering under unmerited suspicion he passionately denounced to his father the base intrigues of his step-mother, whom he had watched closely, but this led to his falling still lower in his father's estimation. A few days later, under pretence of shopping, his step-mother went out late one afternoon to meet one of her lovers, with a carriage at a certain spot to carry her off. Being determined to avenge the disgrace, he ordered his horse to be

saddled, and in a few minutes was on her track, pistol in hand. A sharp gallop brought him within sight of the carriage containing the guilty pair, driven furiously in the direction of the royal palace. He stopped the horses by seizing a bridle, presenting his pistol at the coachman, and threatening to blow out his brains on the first attempt to move. The gallant looked out of the window to enquire the cause of delay, but instantly withdrew his head on seeing the weapon. "Fear nothing from me," continued the speaker. "Tell that guilty woman to step out." But as she did not move he rode close up to the door and found her crouched down in the corner of the carriage, endeavouring in vain to hide herself. "Too late to hide," he cried with rage; "come out or I will shoot you where you lay." A moment of silence, a look of guilty terror, but no sign of repentance. The next moment a bullet had pierced her wicked brain, and he felt himself a murderer.

The punishment of his crime, in consideration of extenuating circumstances, was not death, but perpetual banishment. He was deported to Africa, and after a time found his way here, a free but broken man, in 1839. "I have seen some vicissitudes, but have always been fed and well treated here," said he with a trembling voice.

An interval of silence followed this sad recital, but it was of short duration, and the Portuguese was the first to break it. He had completely mastered his emotion, and now desired to propose a toast in

which he hoped none would refuse to join—
“Prosperity to the island of my adoption.”

This led to a discussion on the commercial attractions of the Cape Verde Islands and their suitability as colonies for the relief of the over-populated countries of Europe. A question on this subject elicited from the taciturn Englishman a few words. “Yes,” said he, “life is tolerable. We get all we want. A trifle made by the turtles, a little by their oil and flesh; a few shillings by fish and other matters make a roundish sum in a year. I could never gain so much at home, and I am only astonished that more of my countrymen don’t try their luck as I did, instead of starving at home.”

At a late hour the party broke up, a meeting with the American officers being fixed for the following day to visit the neighbouring island of St. Antão, nine miles distant.

On approaching the man-of-war next morning, as one of the officers was descending the ladder to welcome us, his foot slipped, and he was out of sight in a twinkling. A sailor dived after him; but the officer, as soon as he got his head above water, called out to be let alone, and making for the steps, pulled himself up. He had scarcely got the salt water out of his eyes before he exclaimed—“Bah! Look at that lazy simpleton (a shark who was slowly prowling within a few yards of the spot), he has lost his breakfast, and by Jove he shall never have another chance of tasting American ‘long pig.’” The captain, watching the scene from the bridge, called for a rifle. “Stop!”

said the dripping officer, "let us give him a volley." Meantime a sailor had thrown a piece of flesh overboard, and as the shark rose to snatch it and showed his ugly head, two bullets crashed into it, but as if undisturbed the brute still made for and seized the meat. A volley of five bullets from the rifles discharged at the moment of snapping the bait affected its movements but little, though its lungs were protruding, for it deliberately swam off with the meat in its maw.

A few minutes later the officer had effaced all traces of his mishap by a complete change of clothing, and the boat started off with a good breeze to St. Antão. A dense fog came on rapidly, and for a time the sea was veiled in vapour. The sun rose red on the horizon like a great ball of fire. The mountain masses of the islands were still shrouded with a thick mantle of grey fog, which every minute took some different shape. A great cloud, in form like the head of a gigantic hippopotamus, rose up, and opening its monstrous jaws, seemed to devour hills, trees, and everything. Then from behind a rock-like mass a human head appeared, with a huge hat, inclining down to one side, and battered in the most approved Ally Sloper fashion. As he rose above the ridge of rock, a bundle on his back was clearly visible; and, bringing his left hand round, he seemed to flourish a long alpen-stock. He rose till the remainder of his body and two clearly-defined legs successively appeared above the peak. His head approached the open mouth of the hippopotamus,

down whose throat he disappeared with incredible rapidity. "*Wunderbar*," exclaimed the naturalist, and "Wonderful" was re-echoed by all the party, including the sailors, who eagerly watched the remarkable metamorphoses of the banks of fog. The last morsel was too much for the monster's stomach, for he suddenly burst, and a shapeless mass of steam extended down once more nearly to the surface of the ocean.

This picturesque view was so astonishing and sublime that for a short time a profound silence reigned. The rolling of the waves was regular, and the little bark rocked from side to side with the measured action of a cradle. The ruddy sea was alive with thousands of creatures; flying fish, porpoises, sharks, and smaller fish seen in the intervals when the fog lifted.

In the inconvenient Puerto del Sol, where the boat was launched, two other boats were preparing for a trip to St. Vincent with provisions. They had on board for sale good fowls at 3*d.* a piece, a few fat sheep, estimated at 4*s.* each, two goats at half-a-crown a head, and a fine ox at £3 10*s.*, the hides being included; and a quantity of fruit, at a merely nominal price.

The principal town of the island is Santa Cruz, surrounded by a charming green pelouse on three sides. Crazy, tumble-down houses, supported by crooked, treacherous shoring, were the rule, and a building that seemed able to stand a puff of wind was a rare exception. In the lop-sided doorway of

one wretched hut stood a man gazing with an absent stare into vacancy, and after the usual salute he was asked if he were not afraid of one day being buried under the ruins of his house? He replied—"It has stood so for many years, why should it not continue to stand?" In another shanty an inconceivably fat woman was feeding her poultry, and surrounded by a group of four-legged presentments of herself. She had a head large enough in all conscience, but no vestige of a neck; legs and feet of elephantine form and proportions; eyes so small and smothered in fat as to look like pin-holes made in an unbaked dumpling. The politeness with which she offered her hospitality and rest in her poor hut contrasted with the grossness of her person. Her soft voice dispelled the idea that the grunting porkers peeping out from between her fat feet were of her own kindred. The whimsicality of her appearance and surroundings excited much amusement.

On turning a corner a vigorous *Allons enfants de la patrie* was shouted by a dandified mulatto, carrying a clouded cane, and singing *La Marseillaise*. The mulatto looked deeply offended at our hilarity, but on learning that it was caused by the fat woman, in a few minutes friendly conversation commenced, and he proved a fortunate acquisition to the company. His residence was in a decent house, to which he gave a hospitable invitation, offering his service as a guide to the places of interest in the island.

The whole party, including the sailors, were regaled, and we started for the mountain on half a



“He sang ‘La Marseillaise’ with much effect.”

dozen donkeys, with three native attendants to drive them.

Fat fowls and fat people were the most characteristic of the living objects on the road, the streets of every hamlet abounding with the former and the latter filling up the doorways of the dwellings. At the foot of the steep ascent picturesque valleys, mostly threaded by a blue stream, radiated from the road right and left, and sometimes as the water fell over a steep rock it scattered itself in a cloud of spray, creating a delightful coolness. A pleasant perfume of rosemary was wafted from the rocks where the earth was thick enough to support vegetation. A few herds of cattle were browsing on the slopes of the valley; goats were jumping from crag to crag, and sheep peeping sleepily forth from behind their rugged angles. A venerable shepherd playing on a flute of European make, ceased respectfully at our approach. The party halted in the shade of a rock to enjoy the pretty scene and a pic-nic of the most delightful kind.

The hospitable guide owned some of the herds and was a purveyor of provisions for vessels calling at St. Vincent. The shepherd, being in his employ, had been taught to accompany his master in the favourite *Marseillaise* which he was never tired of singing in good style. The only recreation of the mulatto was to come to this lovely spot to see his herds and to have a little concert with his musical nigger. *The Marseillaise* had over him such power that he could never sing it without feeling the desire to fight for liberty, and at such moments felt almost a French-

man's love of *la belle patrie*, and could wish himself one of her sons.

He ordered the old shepherd to accompany him but could not refrain from threatening the flutist with a good thrashing if he played his part badly. "*Allons enfants de*"—but the succeeding high note refused to come out and the *duetto* came to an abrupt termination. Then followed an example of the dexterity of the vocalist in handling his cane. The castigation was, however, not severe, and soon the concert recommenced and at length finished with satisfactory results.

Lovely as this spot is, the general character of the island is not picturesque, but the land is very fertile in places, and suffices for the simple wants of the inhabitants of St. Vincent. As in all countries where the necessaries of life are obtainable almost without exertion, the natives are lazy in the extreme. They erect hovels of loose stones, make beds of straw or leaves, and with a log or his fist for his pillow, the indolent native will dream and sleep his days away; the most careless, if not the most happy of human creatures, contented with a bunch of grapes or a few bananas.

Next day at St. Vincent a curious phenomenon was observed at sunset. As the sun declined to within a few degrees of the horizon it increased enormously, changing colour,—red, yellow, and grey by turns prevailing. There was evidently an immense dust cloud refracting between the island and the sun. The yellow and red colours imparted to the sun were

caused by the sandy particles that had been blown over from the arid plains of the West Coast of Africa. The grey tints were derived from the particles of basaltic detritus blown from the neighbouring rocky islands. While the sun remained above the horizon the dust cloud was nearly stationary, until at sunset a stiff breeze sprang up and cleared away the refracting medium.

The naturalist again complained of symptoms similar to those which preceded the former attack of illness, and it became evident that he had contracted fever. It was the full of the moon, and he thought it possible that there was some connection between the causes of disease and the phases of the moon, there being a large difference in the rates of death among persons attacked during the period of the full and that of the new moon, and a no less remarkable difference in the numbers attacked in both periods. He had observed that in his own case fever attacks nearly always occurred when the moon was at the full. In obedience to some law, not yet explained, fever cases are more numerous but less fatal at the time of full moon and the reverse at new moon.

The attack probably would have been as easily overcome as before, but his stoutness had caused excessive perspiration on ascending the mountain of St. Antão. His too great eagerness to sit down in the shade on the cold stones, his frequent draughts of water, often most dangerous on account of impurities of source, and the inordinate quantity of milk drunk by him, were all circumstances having an injurious effect.

Most diseases are, in fact, caused by wrong dietetic usages. Every country has its own appropriate dietary laws, but rules appropriate to Europe may be quite inapplicable in Africa. Forgetful of this, Europeans in the tropics, instead of reducing the quantity and varying the nature of their food on intelligent principles, insist on taking, in even increased quantity, the food they have been accustomed to in Europe. The burden of a task which the stomach is unable to perform is cast upon it, and it fails to digest what it has been forced to receive, and evinces its distress by causing the usual symptoms of such disorders as are commonly charged against "climate." The circulation of the blood becomes abnormally quick or slow, and the subject either becomes restless and irritable, or listless and sleepy, with an overpowering sense of fatigue and desire for rest.

During the sickness of the naturalist, the French trader left the island to proceed for a short time to Teneriffe on business, giving me a letter of introduction to one of his friends at St. Louis, to entertain me until his return.

The naturalist having become convalescent, the Portuguese and Englishman proposed a fishing excursion in their boat. Early on a fresh, pleasant, cool morning these skilful, hardy whalers hoisted the canvas of their boat, with a good crew of three native sailors, and under full sail speedily left the bay, and soon entered into what appeared to be a sea of blood. Myriads of *entomostraca* covered the surface of the water. The boat was cutting her way through the

thick living mass, and we were all absorbed in admiring the grandeur of the exciting picture.

Numbers of herrings, cetacea, grunters (a fish uttering deep sounds, like a hog), and croakers (a fish uttering rough frog-like sounds), and other fish, revelled in the plentiful repast provided for them by the bounteous hand of nature. At intervals all the fish at once disappeared out of sight under the enormous amount of *entomostraca*. From time to time here and there a rorqual (a species of whale) raised his enormous back above the water, feeding on these interesting marine fleas, which attach themselves to the sides of fishes and suck their juices for food as if out of revenge. Their steady but rapid swimming in all directions gave the red mass the appearance of boiling.

The variety of aquatic life was so great that the eye could scarcely rest a second upon one interesting object without being distracted by a dozen others of still greater interest. There appear dozens of flying fish, winging their course far above the surface and then disappearing in the water. Then schools of porpoises are engaged in a mad and playful morning rapid chase, suddenly leaping from the water to an astonishing height, and again plunging down to continue their sport. A shoal of dolphins, quietly feeding on these cyprides, suddenly rush in all directions to escape the merciless jaws and sharp teeth of the shark.

Fish were to be seen fighting furiously for their superabundant breakfasts, and many other wonderful

scenes were presented on which a thick volume might be written. All were so busy at their food that none appeared to pay attention to the boat. Even cod-fishes carelessly presented their backs as targets for the harpoon, well-aimed by a keen eye and launched deep into the flesh by a strong and dexterous arm. Here comes a pair of cod-fish near the boat ; swiftly flies the ready harpoon into the back, and two strong arms haul it alongside. The defenceless fish makes frantic efforts to extricate itself from the sharp and firmly-planted fangs of the weapon, but a few heavy blows of a hammer upon its head terminates its existence, and there it lies lifeless in the bottom of the boat, covered with sea-fleas.

A voracious angler swims lazily, with its baits displayed to attract the attention of other fish ; and he is himself followed by a shark. Here, amid this swarming living mass, the angler had no necessity to practise its usual patience by lying hidden in mud and moving its line and bait to entice its prey. The angler rolled its sharp eyes in all directions, and made its course to the boat, being attracted by the splashing of a herring attached to a shark-hook, but the more eager shark suddenly rushed at the fish-bait, and seized it. The angler then got hold of the shark's tail, not being content with small fry, and seemed inclined to stretch wide its elastic jaws and try to swallow the shark, although it was much larger than itself. This wonderful creature has the capacity of gobbling a fish nearly its equal in bulkiness, and comfortably stowing inside an

astonishing quantity of provisions, having no ribs, and a loose, extremely elastic skin. This most foolish, almost brainless, fish, however, failed in the attempt to draw in the shark, and had to stop half-way. It being the habit of the angler never to relinquish its prey, the two were dragged towards the boat, both struggling furiously; but the shark, having partly bitten through the rope, it snapped asunder with their combined weight, and they disappeared in the depth.

The boat was soon filled with fish and fleas, and occasionally when it lurched, or when a fish flapped its tail in the water, fresh masses of fleas were added to those already on board, and stuck to our skins and clothing.

An astounding noise resembling drums, caused probably by corvinas, enlivened the sea by a strange concert, as if for the enjoyment of the feeding fish. Sounds fell upon the ear like those of a suffering creature, "ouù oòuu," intermingled with a sort of loud whispering, and the noise of water boiling violently. From the depths come sounds apparently from a submarine church, where an organ played a deep bass mingled with the soft tones of a bell. Then dead silence reigned for a moment,—a sort of deep cry followed, a whistle, then as if hundreds of frogs were gutturally croaking; and, again, suddenly all the tones mingled together, making ocean and air tremble.

However grand the scene, the danger impressed upon the fishermen the necessity of getting quickly out of it, for there were large fishes and octopa which

attach themselves by their suckers, and could easily sink the boat.

While sailing back with a boat-load of finny spoil, all hands worked with pleasure in throwing overboard the myriads of water-fleas. The living floating mass was so dense that it impeded the progress of sailing. The increasing wind raised a high swell, through which the strongly-built craft was skilfully steered by the mariners, and though wetted through and through, we safely reached St. Vincent in the light of the silvery moon, rewarded by the first and it might be the last opportunity of witnessing so grand a sight.

An American vessel, laden with timber and other goods, had called at St. Vincent on its way to Gorée and St. Louis. It was time to think of proceeding thither. A regretful leave was taken of the naturalist, in the hope of again meeting him at Lagos. Unfortunately for him, so great was his zeal in the cause of science, that he habitually neglected the observance of the usual precautions for preserving health in the tropics. Shortly afterwards he went to Lagos, where he continually exposed himself to the unhealthy influence of the swamps on the West Coast. Notwithstanding the warnings of natives and Europeans, he persisted in his naturalistic researches; was the subject of several severe attacks of fever, to which he eventually succumbed on his way home—a worthy and earnest man cut off in the prime of life. He was not the first, and certainly will not be the last, of those

whose days are shortened by the disregard of obvious precautions.

An Indian aphorism says that "knowledge without practice is worthless," thus however many scientific acquirements a man may possess, he cannot with impunity violate any natural law. If he does, Nature, although a benevolent foster-mother, is an inexorable creditor, and will insist upon being paid in full, or in default sign judgment and issue execution.

The human organism combines within itself the same physical forces which permeate all outward nature, and their action manifests a corresponding influence upon both. Each affects the other, and the animal, being weaker than outer nature, must submit to superior power, although the effects of chemical forces in relation to outer nature and individual animal existence are the same.

Europeans complain, on insufficient foundation, of the impossibility of living on the west coast of Africa, on account of their liability to frequent febrile attacks, and many other diseases. It has been plainly shown that the high death-rate in that region is more imaginary than real, and is mainly owing to the mistakes of the settlers themselves. The atmosphere is not nearly so bad as represented, and the mortality, in reality, does not much exceed that of European countries under good sanitary conditions, if equal numbers of population are taken.

If a system of registration in the tropics could be established, and reliable statistics furnished

as to the variations of the death-rate from month to month and from season to season, statistics would prove that the vitality of both white and black men are nearly equal in the same locality. By these means a greater advance would be made towards a knowledge of the true causes of disease in the course of a decade than by meteorological studies alone during a century.

CHAPTER IV.

EN ROUTE FOR AFRICA—SICKLY PASSENGERS—DIETETICS OF LIFE—GOREE—MENTAL APATHY—HISTORICAL REMARKS—DESCRIPTION OF ST. LOUIS—HOSPITABLE RECEPTION—AFRICAN IN-DOOR LIFE—A SANGUINARY BATTLE—FRANCO-AFRICAN CIVILISATION—A NATIVE MARRIAGE—BOP N'DAR—WANDERING STORY-TELLERS.

THE American vessel bounded from wave to wave and was soon out of sight of land, leaving St. Vincent wrapped in a dense, low, heated mist, with not a breath of air stirring.

On board were several passengers on their way to Europe, with pale, exhausted, yellow faces, and bodies like shadows, they paced to and fro on the deck, dragging through their last days of life. Most of them were Portuguese from the sickly Brazil, suffering through long exposure to the noxious, health-destroying moisture there prevailing. Three among them displayed no symptoms of sickness, although

they had resided for a long period in those regions. This difference in appearance was due principally to their dietetics. Their moderation in feeding contrasted with the rest of the passengers, who applied themselves to the gratification of their appetites without stint, and every time the bell rang they rushed to the tables and indulged in almost indiscriminate feeding. Salt fish was succeeded by salt pork, half putrified, with partly-decomposed and sprouting potatoes, ending with a general attack upon sweets and indigestible fruits. After dinner, some lazily retired to their cabins to snore most sonorously. Others, more active, resorted to the deck, and quietly smoked their pipes, seeking for nothing to occupy the mind, for hours gazing at vacancy, with their thoughts swimming in clouds or jumping from one subject to another, undirected and unrestrained.

Settlers in the tropics often suffer from the contrary instructions given by medical men. The want of intelligence which such persons show in their interpretation of these directions, affords the strongest proofs, both of ignorance of the true causes of tropical mortality, and of the great importance of not remaining longer in that ignorance. Many physicians recommend a generous diet, intended to fortify the constitution of travellers bound for a tropical country; and this advice, though good in principle, being wrongly interpreted, encourages inordinate feeding on board the vessel which takes the individual out. The first error is a serious one,

and often leads to the worst consequences at the outset. Some doctors, again, give cautions never to start on a journey without eating. Too much food is taken, and the stomach, having a greater task to perform than it is capable of, often breaks down. Others advise an adherence to regular meals at fixed hours, and, under this system, the human organism is converted into a machine, depending for its efficiency upon strict regularity; but the conditions of out-door life are necessarily varying and irregular, and the mechanically-fed body, like the machine it has come to resemble, is, therefore, constantly getting out of order.

The evil moral effects of over-feeding are strongly accentuated in the tropics. The mind and the memory, as well as the animal passions, are more powerfully affected by the adoption of a too rich or a too poor diet. The physiognomy registers, in a remarkably faithful manner, the nature of the disorganisation taking place in the nervous system, not only in consequence of a departure from dietetic laws, but every abuse of the nervous system inevitably adds a mark on the face of the offender. Each mark is intensified by subsequent indulgence, and the nerves, as faithful indicators of physical mischief, reveal the effects of vicious propensities.

The daily routine on ship-board was broken by the melancholy death of a young passenger, who was longing to see his home once more, but long neglect of his health prevented this, and he died, exclaiming, "Oh, my poor mother!" Over his

emaciated remains the usual funeral service at sea was read, and they were committed to the deep.

After this sad event the usual monotony reigned until the island of Gorée, a little, barren rock, about eighty feet high, was in sight. It had the appearance of being as lifeless as its sister islands, presenting no striking features but the native houses built on the slopes of the bay in the form of an amphitheatre.

Formerly the communication between Gorée and St. Louis was chiefly overland. For the comfort of travellers during the journey of seven or eight days, several caravansarais were established, but as this means of transit was gradually superseded by steamboats, the caravansarais became deserted. Even the village of Campêche, situated in a most beautiful valley a short distance from Gorée, instead of being the busy scene of halting caravans, appears to have sunk into a deserted condition, and it is now chiefly a place of pleasant resort for the European and native residents at Gorée.

In 1617 the island was ceded by the native king to Holland, by whom the name of Gorée was given to it. It had long before been known by the Normans, but the Hollanders were the first to take possession of the island, and established two forts. This, like many other places on the west coast of Africa, passed from hand to hand, and successively came under the dominion of various European powers. No sooner was the island transferred by conquest from one nation to another than the vanquished

power did all that malice could possibly suggest to incite the natives to revolt against the conquerors. This generally provoked the natives to robbery, plunder, and even to kill the Europeans, who in retaliation burned their villages and killed the inhabitants. These measures, however, did not prevent fresh outbreaks by the natives, and the Europeans occasionally were compelled to abandon the island. Intrigue and robbery had no limit, either on the part of Europeans or natives, for the latter had proved themselves apt scholars in adopting the tactics of their white conquerors. All these blood-thirsty disorders had their origin in what was known as the "chase for black ivory." Unfortunately, even up to the present day it is not the law of honour that always constitutes power, but it is power that makes both law and honour.

In this port of bitter recollection two fresh passengers came on board to augment the number of the sick. They were unmarried, and both had resided for some time in the French settlement, and were now returning to the land of their nativity. One of them seemed to be forgetful even of recent events and gazed in an absent-minded and listless way at any object meeting his view. The other avoided companionship, having been accustomed to continual solitude: and only occasionally could a few words be elicited from either of them.

Solitude and monotony of life, coupled with the obstacles to matrimony, have a strong tendency to lead a man of apathetic mind to immoral indulgence,

and this, in its turn, leads to nervous prostration and debility. The most remarkable effects of such a life is loss of memory and of mental capacity, which generally result in gloomy forebodings and complaints of unhappiness and misery. Too much solitude, insufficient variety of incident, and, above all, want of mental exercise, are in a far greater degree responsible for any disease than the enervating effect of tropical heat. Even in Europe, with all the incentives to mental activity that surround us, we often find persons more ignorant at an advanced period of life than during their school days. With the currents of thought caused by contact with more active neighbours, it is impossible for the most sluggish mind in Europe, except in very isolated places, to fall into that dreamy, absent-minded state to which the monotony of life in Africa disposes. From want of judicious exercise, the mind must gradually sink and perish, and the man become either a hopeless imbecile or a violent madman. When a man has allowed himself to lapse into this state of mental apathy, he is far more liable to an attack of fever than one who preserves his mind in a state of healthy vigour, by forcing it, if need be, to think, reflect, compare, and remember.

The connection between mental and physical weakness is strongly marked in the tropics. Imaginary sicknesses developing into real ones is common in all countries; but, in tropical Africa, no less than seventy-five per cent. of the prevailing disease is of that character which, without the application of

medicinal remedies, may be cast off, simply by the exercise of a strong will, and of intellectual and moral power. The power of mental capacity is supposed to be weakened by "climatic" heat, and this is taken as a matter of course, without any questions being raised as to how the mind has been exercised, the mode of life, previous sickness and diet, or whether there was a tendency to brain disease. The blame, however, must be laid upon something, and "climate," thanks to its dumbness, is made the stalking horse. No doubt, long-continued mental effort is exhausting, but mental effort in Africa is scarcely known. The exhaustion is not the result of any direct action of heat on the brain, for the intellect is as vigorous, clear, and enduring in a hot as in any temperate country. The action of tropical heat on the blood requires to be counteracted by reducing the quantity and quality of the food; but, under the impression that the exhaustion of the "climate" must be met by more and richer food, Europeans often increase the quantity, and eat in fact nearly twice as much as nature requires. No wonder they experience frequent headaches, and the tired feeling in the brain which readily follows mental exertion. These are the results of the direct action of heat, not on the brain, but on the blood, which, if not maintained in a normal state by judicious diet and bodily exercise, reacts on the brain to produce the feeling of fatigue. The power of the brain would, in any zone, be prejudicially affected by overcharging the stomach.

If Europeans especially could live more consis-

tently with nature, disease and mortality would greatly diminish, and the brain would be as capable of continued exertion in the tropics as anywhere else.

The distance between Gorée and St. Louis being only about ninety miles, but little time was occupied in the passage.

It may be of some historical interest to mention that the French claim for the Norman sea-rovers the honour of having first discovered the coasts of Africa long before the Portuguese, who most confidently claim that credit. Dieppe is supposed to have contained documentary evidence showing occupation, as far back as 1374, of all the west coast of Africa far beyond Sierra Leone. In the fire which burned down a great part of Dieppe in 1694 numerous documents were destroyed, and the light of the early history of European discovery in Africa was lost.

Senegal was discovered, or according to some, re-discovered, by the Portuguese in 1447, by Lancerote in the reign of Henry III. of Portugal. The earliest date of which there is any record of a French occupation is 1579, when merchants of Dieppe and Rouen landed in Senegal. A large coasting trade was carried on until it fell off in 1678. The French company, however, still maintained a strong fleet to protect the trade of the Bay of Portandic, which was threatened by the attempts of English and Dutch merchantmen to gain a share of the trade.

The time came when it was necessary to make a desperate effort to maintain the monopoly enjoyed by the French company. To compel the consent of the

native chiefs the dominant French resorted to a policy of terrorism. They burned and wrecked the factories of all European rivals and destroyed their vessels. The rivalry of the French and the Indian companies subsequently established led to the infliction of great hardships on the natives of Senegal, who were in turn bullied by each party and at intervals by the Dutch and Portuguese. As each in turn happened to have the strongest force on the spot or the most cunning leaders, the unfortunate natives were passed from Portuguese to Dutch, and from them to the French and then to the English, and so on.

Company after company was organised, and one of them, the "Compagnie Occidentale," was the first which claimed to have obtained exclusive trading privileges along the whole African coast down to the Cape of Good Hope, and it retained its supremacy for a longer period than any of the others. The rapacity of the managers and agents, whose object was to accumulate riches as rapidly as possible, together with the prevailing ignorance and neglect in matters of health, invariably led to a rapid declension of the companies which they had formed. In a period of less than forty years three successive companies were formed to conduct the trade in the interior, each following in the same unsuccessful steps as its predecessors.

The cruelties of the Europeans excited the utmost animosity on the part of the natives. Continual disagreements not only did much harm to both sides,

but injured trade. The results of European folly and malice caused the natives to regard all Europeans as thieves and rogues. The native potentates resolved to employ the whole force at their command to rid the country of the whites altogether, and endeavoured to form a league with all their neighbours for the purpose. They did not entirely succeed in this design, but inflicted so much injury upon the Europeans and made their position in the country so precarious that they sued for peace, and more than once had to pay a fine far exceeding in amount the value of the goods so often unjustly appropriated.

Without going into historical details it is sufficient to say that it is only within the last twenty years that a better promise for the peaceful development of Senegambia under the two races has manifested itself. The construction of a line of telegraph from St. Louis to Gorée impressed the natives not only with the superior power of the whites, but with the conviction that at last they were disposed to render some real service to the country in return for the immense treasure they had for centuries been drawing out of it. The recently projected French railway to Cape Verde would undoubtedly have a still more beneficial effect upon the native mind, and greatly advance the interests of the French colony. The hatred aroused in the hearts of the natives by centuries of spoliation is happily being effaced by the more enlightened policy with which the country is now administered. At the

present time the aspect of St. Louis is that of a cosmopolitan city, whose inhabitants are accustomed to take life easy.

On reaching the island of St. Louis, near the hour of sunset, the short tropical twilight and the thick mist rising from the sandy channel prevented the vessel from approaching the port without an experienced pilot, and the vessel was anchored in the open sea until daylight.

The morning broke clear, the thick haze having disappeared, and after a signal was given, the vessel proceeded up the river towards the town, which lay at a distance of several miles from the anchoring ground. The river scenery, after so long a time spent on the ocean, was cheerful.

The appearance of things when one first arrives in a strange community, strongly impresses the senses, and this is the reason why first impressions are so frequently erroneous, and are generally exaggerated.

The shores of the river were deserted except by flocks of birds uttering shrill cries and seeking their prey ; but the river itself was a scene of animation. Stalwart naked negroes were occupied in various ways in boats, some paddling, others managing their sails or fishing-nets, and skimming over the surface of the water, or starting out from behind a curve in the banks. The black hulls of the boats and equally black bodies of the occupants, flecked the placid surface of the river like so many ants or bees. The prettily-situated village of Gangiola was soon left behind, and in an hour the vessel was at anchor in

front of St. Louis. The quay soon became crowded with a mixed assemblage. Idle gossips, natives ready for trade and Europeans jostled each other. Laughing, shouting, chattering, and quarrelling was kept up, and enlivened the place through which one of the inhabitants directed me to the house the French trader had recommended.

In the yard two women were washing linen, while the landlord, with a pipe in his mouth, was engaged in other domestic duties. The letter of introduction having been presented to him, he led me up the staircase into a room somewhat pretentiously furnished. There was a sofa with but three legs, a fourth being a block of wood, and the frame partially concealed by a torn mattress covered with striped calico. Through the rents of the covering its home-made character could be seen. Another sofa had been formed out of two old doors. A large old square table, a dirty looking-glass, and a few chairs completed the furniture of the salon. The chief ornaments were a miscellaneous assortment of bottles, a long chibouk, a double-barrelled gun, sundry saddles,—all having a thick coating of dust.

On the best sofa, like a pumpkin wrapped in calico, sat a mulatto lady, whose personal attractions were not of a high class, and whom the host ceremoniously introduced as his wife. She rose with deliberation and some difficulty to prepare supper, and appeared like a barge leaving her mooring as she waddled over the floor. Her *pas de quoi*, expressed in gulps and gushes, in answer to excuses for

troubling her, came in two efforts, like two clucks of a duck calling her ducklings.

While the meal was preparing, it proved difficult to induce the host to talk from a hoarseness with which he was afflicted, and the dialogue was more a smoking than a talking duet. His thoughts seemed to be entirely devoted to animal enjoyment, and absorbed in the forthcoming supper.

At intervals of constrained silence my attention was directed to various objects in the room, as a means of gaining an insight into the owner's daily life. The torn calico, covering the back of the deeply dented sofas and arm-chairs, in its greasy and dirty condition proved the love of rest, apathy, indifference, and want of cleanliness on the part of the inmates, but that they were admirers of European habits, and wished to be regarded as far above their fellows in the matter of household amenities. New boots in one corner, and two pairs of large, worn-out, canoe-like slippers in another, showed that the latter were in constant use. The boots being cut in several directions indicated that their owner's feet were liable to swell. Epsom salts, quinine, calomel, and other medicaments, especially specifics for curing stomachic derangements, were ready for every emergency. The wrinkled, dry, and sickly-looking skin of the host proved that his digestive organs were out of order.

All this, with many other examples, led to the conclusion that the deficiency of brain-power which is supposed to mark the African race may be

the result of indirect, rather than as supposed by some, the direct influence of heat on the brain. If the advantages of training and culture possessed by Europeans were taken into consideration, the superiority of the settlers over the natives in brain-power will not be so apparent. Those who have studied the higher races of Africa most closely will admit that the inherent superiority in quantity and quality of brain which the white man commonly assumes to have is not founded on fact. If the same amount of exercise be given to the reasoning faculties in the tropics as in Europe, the state of forgetfulness will not be reached, and the mind will retain its vigour unimpaired.

The study of indoor life and the smoking duet were at length terminated by the landlady's voice announcing supper, which appeared in bountiful supply. Dish followed dish in succession, imitating European style. The couscous seasoned with pepper set the throat on fire. The ham, cheese, nuts, fruits, condiments, and even narcotics were swallowed in due course. The meal finished with tea, which brought on as profuse a perspiration as a Turkish bath. The hospitable host and hostess took good care to load their stomachs well, as a preparation for a prolonged sleep of ten hours, and after both smoking a pipe, and a short conversation, the happy pair rolled up their eyes with a pleased expression heavenwards. The hearty supper had upon them a satisfactory effect, and undoubtedly they would have retired to bed earlier had it not been for the pre-

sence of a stranger. When the clock struck ten the happy pair retired to their chamber.

In the streets dead silence reigned, with only here and there a light visible, and occasionally a belated passenger could be seen hurrying home. The oppressive dampness soon induced me to return to the house to seek repose on the ricketty sofa. Alas! for the instability of human hopes. The first night in Africa was one of terror. To commence with, something in the dilapidated old sofa came at once to blows with my ribs on laying down. Notwithstanding the fatigue of the day, sleep was prevented by an active enemy. It was an army of assailing bugs, who had smelt the blood of an Englishman, and applied themselves with voracity to the enjoyment of the fresh morsel. At first, sleepily, a remonstrance with the intruders was made by a warning scratch. At length, roused by the exigencies of the situation, a sentence was passed to exterminate the whole blood-thirsty race and to turn them out "bag and baggage." Procuring a light, a basin of water, and a broad leather strap, an energetic extermination commenced. A considerable number of these criminals left their loathsome remains on the field of battle, and before daybreak many found a watery grave. After this fatiguing struggle, betaking myself to the uncarpeted floor to sleep, a fresh charge of the enemy prevented all rest. It was perfectly useless to attempt a renewal of the combat against such superior numbers, and refuge was sought on the topmost rail of a high-backed chair, where, in

a state of nudity, with a book in hand for a companion, the dawn was anxiously waited for, when the luxury of a bath would have been a precious boon after so miserable a night, but in its absence the minor blessing of a basin of water had to suffice.

On meeting the host and hostess at breakfast next morning we seemed to have been friends for a very long time. No doubt the mutual insective wars imparted a strong fellow-feeling, and a morning promenade in the town was made in trinity.

St. Louis is one of the most favourable specimens of West African towns, the streets being regular and clean. The centre is chiefly occupied by Europeans, and the verandahs, which adorn the fronts of most of the houses, give an Italian aspect to the quarter. The flowers growing in pots and grouped in fantastic ranges have the appearance of pleasant gardens. The residence of the Governor is by far the handsomest building. The barracks are of considerable extent, very clean, but not in the best of repair. The hospital, in cleanliness and attention to sanitation, would not discredit any European community. The district is deficient in good building-materials,—stone being found only at a great distance from St. Louis, and transit making it very expensive,—sun-baked mud is used for bricks and glued with moist mud. Timber, cement, and lime are all imported.

There are several marked types among the people who frequent the sandy streets. The Moors, with proud mien and sober gait, flowing robes, long hair,

and strange wild expression, mingled together with the foulahs and common natives of different tribes of Senegal. The conceited and pampered mulattoes hold themselves conspicuously aloof from them. The servant or *bonne* of some French trader struts through the broader thoroughfares or bounces into the shops, as if the place should have considered itself under a debt of gratitude for her condescension in consenting to live there and to adorn the town by her presence. As for the few European ladies met with, they seem out of their proper sphere. They have but few opportunities for the exchange of courtesies or visits with others of their own sex and rank. With the white men the case is different. The Frenchman has an extraordinary capacity for enjoying himself under all circumstances. Provided the ladies of his acquaintance are handsome, sprightly, and well dressed, he is not very particular about the colour of their skin.

Among the most striking characteristics of life in St. Louis is the prevailing French polish. There is an absence of the café element which forms so prominent a feature in the daily life of Paris, and more of domesticity than in any of the great towns of France. There is a freedom of intercourse, or libertinism as a purist might term it, between both sexes. This is a common phase of French society where many young people are thrown upon their own resources, or left to follow their inclinations uncontrolled by parents. At St. Louis, constancy in

the affections, simplicity and economy in mode of living, are cardinal virtues.

The native frankness and open-heartedness of African ladies lends itself readily to the free and easy reciprocity of sentiment which distinguishes the warm-hearted Frenchman, and one phase of social life is the result. The mulatto women, who regard themselves as infinitely superior to the darker-coloured and purer native race, are frequently endowed with pretty features, and their amiability and good nature find the readiest expression in their conversation and manners. They are flattered by the attention of white men, and friendships are very readily formed.

The Europeans who arrive in St. Louis are generally young men showing no greater disinclination to take advantage of the domesticity and amiability of the dark-skinned ladies than their fellows the students of the Quartier Latin. In these settlements it takes even less time than in Europe to form the most serious engagements. A discerning man, of unprejudiced mind, may in a short time find a life-long friend. Such engagements commence by a polite message with a little present to the lady, after which the hospitality prevailing in Africa will probably result in an invitation to spend an evening in her company. Visits to the jewellers and milliners, that form so important a portion of the earlier intercourse of this nature in Europe, are dispensed with. The first present, however simple, will be highly prized and fondly cherished for

the sake, not of its value, but of its donor. The noble feelings, the powerful imagination of the natives of these hot countries, and the superstitions which prevail inspire dreams of the most remarkable character. No religious, no civil or other ceremonious sanction or force is sought in the contraction of such unions, and the reciprocal duties of husband and wife are observed with confidence and fidelity. The instances of unfaithfulness are exceedingly rare.

Pleasant as these relations may be while they last, and while their well understood though unwritten canons are observed, there is a very dark side to the picture. After a sojourn of a few years the European returns to his own country, to his old associations, and almost invariably the native wife and her children are left behind with little or no provision for the future. The only hope of most of these poor creatures is to find another friend apparently steadfast and faithful as the lost one was during the period of his residence. The docile, loving and faithful creatures are thus not unfrequently reduced to a species of slavery, for they pass from hand to hand, just as the slaves sold in the market pass from master to master. An accidental glance at a sweet face, whose sad eyes belie the smile on the lip, will often reveal in a moment the sorrows of a life-time. In the salon a turn of the conversation often suddenly reveals the same dark spot in Franco-African civilisation; a passionate expression of chagrin may be heard at the most unexpected moment from,

perhaps, the gayest and most attractive of the ladies present, "White men have no heart, and they think African women have no feelings."

There are, in Africa, cases in which the analogies of this custom approach very close indeed to that of slave-dealing. It is a fact that Europeans leaving the settlement have sold their native wives for considerable sums to their successors in business—£100, £65, £42 and two bottles of champagne, a seven months' bill for £27; such are a few of the considerations that have been accepted by departing, and paid by arriving traders for the possession of the poor trusting spouse compelled to accept these hard conditions as her only refuge from starvation.

As a contrast to the connubial arrangements of white men, a sketch of the peculiar ceremonies of a native wedding may be given. One night when the mosquitos had been more than usually unpleasant, and prevented sleep, a loud noise outside roused the town. A wedding party was parading the streets announcing the fact of the union of two blackamoors. The young couple with their interesting companions marched, making night hideous with the beating of their tom-toms, their shouts, wild music, and mad antics. To them it appeared indifferent whether the houses they passed contained sick or weary. Is it not important for the world to know that two niggers have been joined together in holy matrimony, and must not every other consideration bow to that important fact?

After a while the din grew fainter as the courtilla

moved on, and entered a house in a neighbouring street, but the barbarous music and the remorseless noise continued through the night to disturb the dwellers in the vicinity. A huge drum hammered furiously, a clarionet playing an *olla-podrida* of discordant notes as a provocation to the dance, and a double bass droning bull-like notes, formed a terrible trio. These combined efforts produced effects that gave the most supreme satisfaction to the natives engaged in the orgie, but excited feelings of a very opposite character in European unsympathetic souls. The ladies of the party stood closely ranged, and, striking vigorously backwards their sandalled feet against the walls, supplemented the music with sundry loud cracks. The dresses of the company presented mixtures of a most random character. Every colour and style of clothing, from the beads of the Hottentot to the chimney-pot hat and the European kerchief, were displayed. The bride was more profusely decked than her fellows. A coarse amber brooch of rude work, old-fashioned ornaments with imitation or real diamonds intermixed, were the adornments of the extravagant star of the festival.

Everybody desired to felicitate the happy pair, and each endeavoured to drown his neighbour's voice. As soon as one had exhausted his congratulations, another took his place. The reeking, slippery, perspiring bodies of the excited native company made the room like a fetid Turkish bath. The great nervous excitement needed artificial stimulus, which was plentifully supplied in the form of doubtful

three-star brandy, consumed in liberal quantities by the women as well as the men. As the small hours approached, every guest became intoxicated, either with his own mirth or the bad spirits imbibed, and the perturbation became worse every moment by more stimulant. No wonder that the orgie terminated in the wildest confusion.

At Bop N'Dar, in the neighbourhood of St. Louis, as in any inhabited place, there is always something to be observed. The houses here, though of limited dimensions, have a certain uniformity and regularity that give them an architectural air, being ranged in groups in a long line, with spaces between, dividing the property of one family from that of another. Shrubs surround the groups of dwellings, the principal front rooms being occupied by the family, the wings by the domestics; and the enclosed space, open to the sky, forms a courtyard for domestic occupations.

In one of these yards, a thin-looking young female mulatto, a half skeleton, was washing linen in a basin, having near her a child about eight years old, very poorly dressed. She eyed us with an inquisitive air, and continued her work without further notice, simply acknowledging a salutation with a nod. On calling the child, it rose from the ground, but the mother, with a sorrowful smile and an expression of distrust, caught it by the arm to prevent its coming towards white men.

From a house close by, two men sallied forth on a hunting excursion, each armed with a double-barrelled

fowling-piece. In the street a group of boys were playing a romping game around a stake to which a rope had been attached, and in another yard a sickly-looking white girl had under her charge a bevy of children.

A visit to the great mosque, situated in one of the suburbs of St. Louis, Guet N'Dar, afforded some interesting glimpses of its street life and the religious observances of the wandering Moors of the great desert.

Near the mosque a crowd of people was listening attentively to two marabouts in the centre. In Oriental countries story-tellers replace newspapers, and, where the latter are to be met with, only very few can read them. Human nature, however, is inquisitive in these regions; coffee-houses and streets are the places where intelligence of current events is to be gained, either from the lips of the eye-witnesses, or as it is passed from mouth to mouth. Erroneously, the Orient is generally considered a country of lies. It is only justice to say that the information imparted by these narrators is as a rule very exact, trustworthy, and reliable—especially so in market-places. Story-tellers are highly respected, their reputation for truthfulness being their pride and boast. The hatred of falsehood in a narrator is so strong, that once detected in untruth, he is never listened to again; consequently, not only is his reputation gone, but his emolument in the shape of presents ceases.

As regards diplomatic matters or trade with

Europeans, Orientals are not to be implicitly relied upon. A great reason for this is their maxim that the natives are sheep dealing with wolves. Their chief consideration is, who shall get the best of the bargain by lying—whether Europeans or Orientals?

The two marabouts addressing the group were travellers, and narrated what they had seen and heard during their journey through the Bambouk country. The story ran: "Many days' journey, a moon, before we reached the great water, we passed through a land where the people were idle, but the great mountains with gold made their eyes blink. In the dark woods of Kaniebar runs a river between high walls of stone, and the bed is covered with sand of gold, but the people do not gather it, for they have already too much."

"Bah," said the other marabout, "Allah will reward the Bamboukees for their good deeds. At the distance from sunrise to sunset from these people dwell the miserable Samba-Ya-Ya, who mocked us with a gift of meal so bad that the very worms refused it. If the Prophet had not protected us from their cruelties, you would never have heard the story. Between the white rocks of the Sansandings there are veins of blood, the blood of lost men whom Allah has punished for greediness. They joined the people of Kaniebar to dig the great pits of Dambagnagney, but they quarrelled for water, and fought until the work was stopped. Many deep pits were dug into which men were lowered by

rods, that often broke, and many perished. Sometimes the earth fell in upon and buried them for ever out of sight of their brethren. Heaps of gold filled their hearts with greediness, and they tried to turn each other's eyes away from the glittering rocks. They debased their minds with sins and crimes through the temptation of the devil. These wicked men, having turned away from the holy Koran, live in darkness from which there is no path to Paradise, and their souls wander about like hungry beasts in the desert searching for prey they can never find. Out of all who made haste to get rich there are now only a few willing to dig gold after the rains cease, for the danger is great. The women alone wash the black sand and find gold, but the men stand outside with their guns to watch for the robbers. Do you know what became of them? Hear; when a great horn full of gold had been collected and was taken to the chief to divide, he kept it himself and gave them nothing. Others were attacked and slain by the robbers. You see, good people, how wicked it is to be greedy for gold!"

The story was told with all the vivacity and imagery of Oriental eloquence, prolonged and partly repeated until both marabouts were tired, and finished with the following exhortation, "Now, good people, we have spoken long and have told you all we know, and you have listened to us. We will go again and will bring you some fresh stories. We cannot speak longer, for our mouths are dry, our feet tired, and we must rest. Give us what you

can, if you want to hear other stories. We must eat and drink as you do." A few of the crowd praised and encouraged them with kind words and small gifts. The greater part, as usual among even civilised crowds, after having gratified themselves and exhausted the strength and capacity of those who amuse them or are useful, rapidly dispersed without responding to the appeal.

As the hour approached for service in the mosque, the people, being all religious, commenced their ceremonial preparations for evening prayer. Beggars and foot-travellers, intermixed with richer people, were wending from all quarters towards the mosque.

CHAPTER V.

MAHOMETISM AND CHRISTIANITY—SAVAGERY AND CIVILISATION—SLOW PROGRESS OF CHRISTIANITY—FAILURE IN SUPPRESSING MAHOMETISM—POLICY OF MARABOUTS—OUMAR, THE PILGRIM—MISSIONARY RIVALRY—MISTRUST OF NATIVES—NATIVE CHRISTIANS—BRANDY PERSUASIVES—CATHOLIC AND BLACK MISSIONARIES—ANTAGONISTIC CHURCHES.

IN the mosque, under the dim religious light of many subdued lamps, believers were reverently engaged in devotion to the Almighty and His Prophet. The rich and poor, the strong and weak, mixed together, solemnly repeated in musical Arabic the sacred words of the Koran. Inhabitants of the place were side by side with travelling Mauris who, by long, hazardous and expensive journeys across the vast deserts, are the principal media of commercial intercourse between the interior and the coast.

There is much to be admired in the formularies of

the religion of Mahomet, its simplicity and suitability to the conditions of healthy moral life in these regions. In the moral and intellectual perfection of which Mahometism is susceptible, it compares favourably with Christianity, both being derived from the same philosophic source, but the ceremonials and forms of the latter are little in sympathy with the idiosyncrasies of the native races of Africa. The doctrines of both faiths are unfortunately overlaid extensively with superstitious practices that form by no means a necessary part of religion. Fanaticism has existed and will exist until civilisation is developed to the extent of abolishing all fanaticism from the face of the earth, and when a cultivated intellect will create the worship of reason alone.

European civilisation for many centuries exerted an impression upon native character. Commerce, habits, customs, difference of religion, and many other minor causes, have more or less influenced the minds of savages. Among them our civilisation, dry science excepted, will be found represented in some form or other, while savagery can to a great extent be traced in our civilisation. The days when all Europeans lived in nearly the same condition as the present savages of Africa are not long past, and the interval between the two stages has been too short to root out the innate savagery so deeply planted in human nature. Superstition and other prevalent practices are clear evidences of the existence of savagery in civilisation. Clergy and fetishes, churches, temples, images and idols in various

forms, religious accessories including gris-gris or hedjabs, crescents, crosses, oils, cottons, candles, and holy water, ghosts, spirits, devils and saints, powerfully influence humanity either for good or evil. The wearing of portions of the Koran or other objects, whatever they may be, for prevention, cure, or other like purposes, prevails throughout all the world.

The effect of religious superstition in all ages has been to influence the imagination and fears of mankind, to keep the human intellect in a state of pupilage and darkness, by imposing ceremonies, pageants, gorgeous vestments, incense, and mystic rites. Unfortunately, in too many instances, the greater the profession of religion the less is the morality of the man. As long as any professor claims the palm for his religion, so long will he be half-savage, no matter how intelligent he may consider himself to be; but the fact remains that his intellectual powers are as little developed in comparison to real intellect as a child in a cradle can in muscular development be compared with a full-grown man.

Without going into complicated details, let the reader, in order to gain a clear idea on this subject, after due reflection, answer for himself the following questions:—How old are Christianity and Mahometism? From what source was each derived, and in what manner were and are both religions introduced into the world? What are the causes and hidden principles which lead to the spread of any religion, and what good or evil influences have led to their

professors acting in a spirit of antagonism with each other? To what spiritual and intellectual conditions have rival frenzies brought and must bring mankind?

Islamism was accepted in regions where its ceremonies, precepts, and principles were in harmony with the moral, social life and habits of the people, and any attempt to supplant Mahometism by Christianity in such countries has failed hitherto and must fail. The mere handful of converts to Christianity amongst the millions of Mahometans can exert little effect upon the mass. Many proselytes finding, after very short experience, that Christianity is not congenial to their habits, speedily return to their former belief. What is the reason of this? The answer will be, Christians have failed to convert people through want of knowledge of their own religion or that which they wished to supplant, or even both. This deficiency of clear perception disabled the preachers from making the logical comparison for their own understanding, so necessary to be able to point out conclusively the errors of another religion, in such a way as to enable the proselyte to demonstrate any defect in the converter himself, his doctrines, and the religion he tries to impart. The least doubt generated in the mind of the former with regard to the teaching of the latter soon leads to the discovery of a whole chain of mistakes, and the convert then returns, with a stronger conviction of its truth, to his former faith.

No matter what the intellectual development

be, whether that of a cultured man or of a savage, the only difference is the logic of the first will be more concrete, while that of the latter will be less so. As both think, compare, distinguish, and reflect, they possess reason. There existing only one intellect, more or less developed, it is a great mistake to suppose that a savage cannot arrive at correct conclusions, which may seem wrong from our standpoint, but from his point of view and his mode of thought, if criticised in his way, even with cultured intellect, the strictest logic would be found. This has always been kept in the background.

A successful preacher should have stronger reasoning power than that of the large majority of Christians who try to convert. If it be contended that one of these proselytizers has had a so-called high-class collegiate education, this proves nothing; for no college, nor the wisest professor, can give intellect to a man not naturally endowed with it. Such a student may become a professional man, of polished demeanour, and that is all the benefit that any school can supply. Should there be found among these would-be converters a man of intellect not depressed and deteriorated by the atmosphere of prejudice in which he lives, then he will find out mistakes on mistakes, darkness on darkness, and will refuse preaching altogether, or preach in an opposite way to that in which he has been trained. On the other hand a man preaching against his convictions and principles can have no strong moral or intellectual foundation,

without which, any great work undertaken must sooner or later fail.

Good preachers, if correctly described, might be spoken of as sick or nervous, who strain their imagination by the sacrifice of mental development and nobility of heart. Imagination alone cannot exert great influence on converts, even if preaching were solely for the sake of principle. Most of the preachers, however, keep their posts as a profession to earn a livelihood, just as a bootmaker follows his trade. Other reasons of failure in converting are want of knowledge of the language, or the customs and social life of the people to whom the preachers are sent.

It will be a great day when it is understood that Christianity does not in reality stand higher than many other religions, and when illogical assertions, which were held sound centuries ago, are not forced upon the human intellect. Doubts upon doubts now arise which result in many men becoming practical atheists without understanding why they are such. Take away from scriptural instruction in schools narrow sectarian principles and illogical assertions, replacing them by logic, philosophy, and natural science, then only pure morality with real religion will arise. If Christianity really occupied the high position claimed for it, then why are there fewer Christians than Mahometans?

What are the intentions of those who seek to extend Christianity among the natives of Africa in order to displace Islamism? If the intention be

to ameliorate and improve the condition of natives, then something far beyond mere doctrinal propagandism is requisite. It is only a narrow spirit of fanaticism that can entertain the thought that Christianity alone is benevolent in its teachings and principles, and that Mahometism has not that spirit and is not compatible with the well being and happiness of the natives of Africa. Efforts have been made to expel Mahometism. Is this likely to be followed by good results? What matters which religion prevails, so long as civilisation, intellect, with morality progress? It is very much to be questioned whether the philosophy of Christianity requires every moral man to be a Christian; but it undoubtedly does require that every man should be moral, no matter what religion he professes.

Christianity was evolved step by step from paganism, and is based upon pagan principles and observances. Now, then, is it to be expected that paganism will suddenly leap over to Christianity and stand firm? Mahometism in the present age is a step between the two, and the intellect of a pagan more easily adopts Islamism. The heathen is then one step nearer to civilisation, in which he will remain, under the influence and guidance of the same moral principles as those inculcated by Christianity, or possibly become a Christian. If his intellectual powers are superior to superstition, he will, in all probability, be neither the one nor the other, but simply a man actuated and guided by high moral principles. Is not this the result which Christianity seeks for?

Can any reasonable and honest man deny that among Mahometans many moral and frequently very intelligent men are to be met with? Are there not, amongst Christians, atheists who are more moral on principles resulting from the cultivation of intellect than those whose morality and lives are based upon religious observances?

If it is so desirable to introduce Christianity, the progress of Mahometism must also be allowed, however bitter and senseless it may appear to fanatics. Instead of resisting Mahometism it should rather be the aim to increase the numbers of Hadjis and Marabouts.

Catholicism surmounted great difficulties, but its rapidly increasing clergy was feared. When there was a priest for every man amongst the Catholics, then respect for them gradually vanished. In consequence of the inordinate number of clergy as compared with the people, the former quarrelled amongst themselves, pointing out their mutual mistakes, which led to bitter hatred. The eyes of converts were not slow to see through the maliciousness of the priesthood. This led to the suppression and destruction of monasteries, the expulsion of the clergy, and the sanction by a very slight thread of toleration of those who remained. Those who formerly regarded the priest with feelings of reverence and respect, now review him with but slightly concealed expressions of contempt. Such is the character of mankind. When anything new and apparently good is presented in



place of worn-out systems, it is at first received and adopted with the utmost warmth, if not enthusiasm. As most commonly happens, when a new object on closer acquaintance proves faulty and not equal to what was expected, a strong revulsion of feeling follows, and men, instead of revering it, do all they can to pull it to pieces, cast it to the ground, and trample it in the dust.

Marabouts are generally feared and obeyed by Mahometans, because their numbers as compared with the population are few. The natives regard every man who has distinguished himself by a pilgrimage to Mecca as gifted with peculiar sanctity. If these pilgrims were to be met with every day and in every place, they would soon be looked upon simply as ordinary men, and obedience and respect would cease. They then, like other religionists or common men, would have to fight and contend with each other for their livelihood, and natives would without hesitation lend a helping hand to thrash them. When matters come to this pass, then will be the opportunity for Christian propagandists to push Christianity into the vacancy; to be followed in their turn by a similar summary treatment if they fail to maintain its boasted supremacy, and give way to the power of intellect.

The frequent lessons which Europeans have had with reference to the spread of Christianity in Africa have up to this time not been appreciated. They seem as much inclined as ever to repeat those attempts which in the past have resulted in failure.

Nevertheless, Europeans with only a microscopic force of propagandism seek to force their faith where Mahometism has for so many ages exerted a powerful influence over its believers.

It is well here to contrast the modes in which both forms of faith are promulgated in Africa. The social life of the Marabouts is regulated under the authority of the Great Marabout, who is invested with supreme spiritual and temporal power with regard to their conduct, and the political questions in which they engage. His judgment is implicitly accepted and carried out. Marabouts never openly manifest their power over the people; but by acting through the medium of others the exercise of their influence is almost all-powerful. They will often meet those for whom they have strong hatred, and against whom they have excited others, with the good greeting, "Allah, la illah illallah," condoling with them for the beating or the robbery suffered. By their outward ascetic lives, and their pious and kindly expressions, they frequently gain new friendships and win over former enemies. They invariably listen patiently to complaints, and often give advice with an air of tenderness and in gentle tones, which is always received with great attention and respect. Whatever inward principles may actuate the Marabout, or whatever his private or secret life may be, these are known only to himself; but the outward appearance of sanctity and morality which he is obliged to maintain cannot fail to have the effect of, at least, causing the natives to observe outwardly a

decent and moral decorum. In these respects, however, Europeans too often miserably fail in the eyes of the natives.

The Mahometan clergy, through their system of government, have increased to the extent of having their own tributaries, are settled in distinct villages and towns, and form a separate class. In their patriarchal lives they are reputed as strong fanatics, not so much from religious feeling as the desire of gain. The Marabouts have no fear of Islam being superseded by Christianity, trusting to their constant contact with and influence over the natives, but their opposition to the civilisation of the natives is prompted by the dread of losing their influence as Marabouts, through which their own material interests must inevitably suffer. To avoid this the powerful weapons of the Koran and religious observances are used to preserve their influence, and excite all natives against white men.

The present quietude of the natives must not be depended upon. The more they find Europeans increasing in numbers and endeavouring to force Christianity upon them, the more cautious they will become and the more bitter will be their opposition to it. If the Mahometan clergy could place sufficient confidence in fetishes, and believed that by invoking their supposed supernatural powers all Europeans could be driven out of the country, the natives would not long hesitate to make the attempt. The Europeans, however, consider themselves so far superior to the natives

that they affect to regard the latter with indifference and apathy.

The constant increase of native power will necessitate a corresponding increase in the strength of Europeans. The longer this is neglected the greater will be the difficulty to establish it. This delay allowed the pilgrim Oumar to proselytise the pagan natives, in which enterprise he had great success. Mahometans more cordially co-operate in the spread of their tenets than Christians do in promulgating Christianity. For example : Oumar was a poor and unknown man who aspired to celebrity. He came to St. Louis, addressed his co-religionists, expressed his wish to make a pilgrimage to Mecca, and he was furnished with the means of carrying out his project.

In 1842 Oumar appeared at Segou as a remarkable man with large caravans, preaching Islam and selling gris-gris. He soon became rich and reaped the reward of his enterprise, carrying out his ideas with all the firmness and ability of a man of large intellect and indomitable energy. Large numbers of natives willingly flocked to him, and begged to be received into the faith of Mahomet. If the people were not voluntary converts, Oumar by sheer force seized them, and gave them their choice between slavery and Mahometism. Hundreds of men were induced to dress ; and, though still poor, now lead more comfortable lives, and have been put in the path of civilisation.

It must be admitted that all the missionaries in

Africa put together have failed to convert to Christianity, during the past fifty years, anything like the number that Oumar converted to his faith in about seven years. How many of the Christian converts have relapsed again into paganism is a question to be answered. Some Europeans, instead of attributing to him his proper value, exposed only their own inability to comprehend the work of Oumar by vilifying him and calling him rogue, liar, and robber. It is doubtful whether his critics could have manifested as much intellectual power. Pretenders to work for the benefit of humanity are plentiful enough, but men of the calibre of Oumar, who had not the benefit of a university education, very rarely appear upon the scene of the world's history.

Pagans or Mahometans of Africa do not adopt Christianity, in consequence of the manner in which it has hitherto been introduced among them. A native with undeveloped intellect desiring to accept Christianity, may place himself under the guidance, say, of a Protestant missionary. At first all goes on well, and under such teaching his morality may be, to some extent, improved. Then suddenly appears a Catholic or other missionary, who is anxious to bring into the bosom of his church the as yet, perhaps, undecided native. The Catholic immediately does all he can to poison the mind of the native against the tenets and doctrines of Protestantism. This inevitably raises the most serious doubt. The native naturally thinks the first tried to deceive him, and then asks himself how it is that if both these mis-

sionaries who present to him the Christian religion as immeasurably purer and better than Mahometism can, if they were both truthful, vilify the doctrines and principles professed by the other? The consequence is that the native arrives at the conclusion that both of them are equally good, but that they have, for their own purposes, sinister designs upon either his liberty of thought or upon his person and property. He communicates his ideas to his fellows, who adopt the same conclusion and reject Christianity as utterly unsuited to the conditions of their country and social life.

The difficulties of converting natives are very great when the missionary, as he generally does, combines within his own person the too often opposite characters of promulgator of so-called divine truth, and those of a mercenary and unscrupulous trader. Under these circumstances it happens that when a missionary is exerting his deficient eloquence to convert natives with the view of advancing trade interests, they will listen to him with patience and apparent interest for some time, and then suddenly burst out laughing. When asked why they do so, their reply is generally, "We like to see how white men try to cheat us." If missionaries still insist upon preaching, and, prayer-book in hand, gather the natives under a tree, the latter having heard that in other parts of the country the advent of a missionary has been followed by the attack and murder of natives by white men, think the same consequences will again follow

from the same apparent causes, and often resort to summary means for preventing such an occurrence. This is partly the reason why many missionaries have come to an untimely end in Africa; some having been even tied to trees and burned alive.

In the case of some missionaries, who have been unable to reply to the astute and perplexing questions put to them by their hearers, the natives have said, "We don't wish to learn your religion, and we do not believe in it, but we are glad to have you with us, and you shall have all you want." Those missionaries who gave up preaching were, and are, kindly and hospitably treated, their only converts being a couple of boys and two or three girls for personal service. The natives often chop wood for the missionary-trader's use, and visit him for a friendly palaver.

Missionaries hitherto cannot succeed in converting the natives of Africa, for the additional reason that even if they can persuade a chief with his followers to listen to their teachings, the natives, after listening once or twice to please the chief, get tired of it; but should the chief again try to persuade his subjects to hear the white man, the people do not hesitate to say, "If you insist upon our hearing this white man, we will kill you." This the chief well knows is meant seriously, and he goes to the missionary and tells him to clear out and get away.

There are many other circumstances in reference to the personal behaviour of rival missionaries, which raise in the native mind insuperable obstacles to the

spread of Christianity. For instance, the unseemly spectacle of two missionaries of the opposing Christian churches engaging in a bout of fisticuffs, in their ardour to spread their own peculiar religious views, cannot possibly have any other effect upon the mind of a sensible Mahometan or pagan than to excite the exclamation, "Behold! these Christians who profess to wish to spread a spirit of brotherly love amongst us, engage in spiteful conflicts between themselves."

Of course it will be understood that a little exception must be made with regard to settled African towns where Europeans have long been resident. The influence thereby produced upon the few natives who have been brought up in the Christian faith, has, in the course of many years, resulted in the formation of a few small native Christian communities, whose number and quality compare unfavourably with that of the Mahometans living side by side with them. Such Christians may be divided into several classes. Probably quite half of them simply laugh behind the missionaries' backs, mimic their style of preaching, and speak very doubtingly about Christianity itself. These are a class who might be described by some as practical Christians because they are regular in their attendance at church, and listen with apparent attention to the sermons. Their Sundays are restricted to prayers and sacred music, and, as loyal subjects, they intersperse these exercises and always conclude with "God save the Queen," especially if they see a new white face

or the missionary passing their dwellings. They seldom fail, after once or twice seeing a foreigner of apparent influence, whom they think may be useful to them in any way, to take care, when he passes, to sally forth on Sundays with bible or prayer-book prominently displayed so as to create a favourable impression. Usually, after saluting him, they break out with—"Thanks be to God for giving us Sunday." If this expression is reciprocated the native volubility knows no bounds, and a fervid harangue follows on the blessings which Christianity confers. All these nominal Christians have in their houses harmoniums and are well dressed. If, however, you can get into conversation with them, and break through the thin crust of their religiousness, it will be soon manifest that they are neither Mahometans nor Christians. They deny paganism and have no idea about atheism.

The other portion of the so-called native Christians requires the constant supervision and persuasion of the missionaries to go to church, otherwise the building would be three parts empty. This class, as a rule, as far as possible evade their religious persuader, and when they see him approaching take good care to get as far away as possible. To this class also belong those natives who, like soldiers in a barrack, are compelled by official superiors to attend church.

Others, who admire white men for their superior wisdom, indulge themselves by imbibing poisonous alcoholic drink forced by Europeans into the African market. If asked why they are not Christians, and why

they do not go to church, they generally respond, "Yes, mastaire—me Christian—me good man—me good, like white man. White man very wise man—he make very good brandee—very, very strong; me like white man; me like brandee." If he is told that it is bad for a Christian to drink, he answers, "Mastaire, Christian no tell lie. You tell lie. You no good man, mastaire. If brandee bad, why white man bring brandee and take mooney for brandee? White man Christian drink mouch, mouch. Me, mastaire, drink mouch, mouch—me good Christian." If he is told, "You must go to church, and pray to God," he replies, "No, mastaire—me no fool—me no go church—me no pray God, me no get brandee, no get drunk, no get good Cogniac. Me like good glass, me no like mish'ree balla—balla—balla." Some are lazy, ragged people, but behave civilly and do no harm; others are simply rogues, thieves, and inveterate liars.

The pagan natives are almost entirely naked, hungry, half-starved, and endure great privations. Amongst them comes a missionary. What is he going to do? To feed with words the poor people who require food to assuage the gnawings of hunger. These are almost the very words of natives. Missionaries cannot supply that want, while Mahometans can and do relieve their necessities in order to induce the natives to embrace Mahometism. When converted they are immediately dressed, and there is at once a market opened for European textile fabrics; but in the case of the Christian mis-

sionaries, neither a convert nor the opening up of a market for European goods follows.

In some cases missionaries have supplied the natives with food and even with whiskey or brandy to attract them to listen to their preaching. This has succeeded, perhaps, for two or three times, but the native in this respect is as wise as a white man. If, however, he has not sufficient wisdom to profit by this, his neighbours, for the sake it may be of mere amusement, advise him to go to the missionary and ask him for the food or brandy which has been promised as a reward for listening to him. If the brandy is to the native taste, the missionary is asked again and again for it during the service, failing the supply of which the natives speedily drop off and leave the preacher to finish his sermon alone. The pagan will never dare to attempt such tactics with a Mahometan. In the first place a Mahometan never offers intoxicating drinks to a pagan; and secondly, he understands the native character and knows well how to take him in hand; but it is only very exceptionally that a genuine Christian is to be met with among the so-called native African Christians.

All that the native Christians have learned from Europeans is to imitate them, more in their bad than in their good qualities. This is a natural consequence, because the object of white men in Africa is not to instruct but to make money out of the people. Here, again, is one of the reasons why centuries of intercourse between white men and the



natives has produced so little good effect, and this has been chiefly caused by brute force, fire, and blood. Such means cannot effect any real or permanent benefit.

Those missionaries who from pure principles risked, and have even lost their lives, with a view of Christianising the natives, were too poor, and had not sufficient power or influence to carry out their noble ideas. They had but few converts or adherents during their short lives; and when their labours should have commenced to bear fruit, then, in consequence of their untimely end, all the results of their efforts in the cause of humanity were dissipated, and their converts relapsed into their former pagan or Mahometan state. Long intervals usually elapsed after the deaths of these Christian pioneers before another missionary appeared upon the field of his predecessor's labours, and then, every spark and vestige of Christianity having vanished, the successor had to engage in the almost hopeless task of resuscitating Christianity among the people.

When the Catholic Church was in a flourishing condition it was the great pioneer of Christianity, and spread its principles far into the interior of Africa. With the subsidence of Catholic influence, Christianity sank, and that Church is now too poor and weak to regain its former position. The few Christians now in Africa are the result of the labours of previous Catholic missionaries, and Christianity there may now be said to be at a stand-still. However much Catholics may be execrated for the immorality of their

lives and the cruelty they too often inflicted, sometimes even resorting to torture; still they did introduce Christianity. It is to them we should be grateful for opening the eyes of myriads who but for such labours might at the present day be still steeped in barbarism and savagery.

At the present time, if any sect of the Protestant Church can take any credit for exercising any influence upon the native Africans, that credit belongs to the Wesleyan body; but even they are deficient in energy. As a contrast to the caution and delay manifested by them and other churches in establishing stations, Mahometism makes firm and steady progress.

Christianity has hitherto failed to successfully contend with Mahometism, especially when the former is promulgated by white men. Black missionaries have met with more success; being natives, they are better acquainted with the character of their fellow-countrymen, their mode of life and customs. They understand the best way of influencing savages and attracting their attention to, and interest in, the principles of Christianity. From their natural constitution, their mode of living and conduct, they are more capable of undergoing the fatigue and heat of tropical regions than any white man. The great hindrance which even sincere native missionaries meet with in spreading Christianity, is the differences and sectarian distinction between the respective churches to which they are attached. As long as there are antagonistic

Christian churches, the differences between which natives never can comprehend, so long will the sun of Christianity fail to shed its beams over pagan, and still less upon Mahometan Africa. Undoubtedly, the spirit of savagery will still predominate, not only among savages, but even among so-called civilized races.

If Christianity could not prevent the spread of Mahometism in past ages, it is too late to stop it now, with the present policy; for that would be adding oil to fire. Considering the present condition of the natives, the preaching of Christianity to them is, as they say, "speaking against the wind." If Christianity is so good and pure as is asserted, why should its professors manifest such determined and bitter opposition and hostility to Mahometism, instead of allowing the latter, as they say, to die out, and by their purer lives and conduct attract the natives to embrace Christianity? The natives are not devoid of sense and reason, and if they are satisfied that by embracing Christianity they can gain future happiness, they would be quite as ready to enter paradise by the door of Christianity as through the portal of Mahometism. The natives, however, do not embrace Christianity, because they cannot comprehend the promises held out by its professors, and probably regard their dogmas as disgraceful and degrading to the intellect of man. The natives of Africa being constantly engaged in warfare, have brought their political and social life to an abnormal state. In addition to this the different

religious feeling which prevails, the pernicious effect produced upon them by the lately-abolished slave trade, with the admixture and connection of different distinct races, all having different interests, have made that region like a vast lunatic asylum.

It may be said that Africa is a very Babel—some are not willing to understand, and the rest cannot comprehend. This confusion prevents anything even approaching to unity of purpose, or the foundation of law, order, and political economy. When once the social life of the inhabitants is disorganised, then the disorganisation of the whole country they inhabit must of necessity follow. A spark of hatred in the human breast, if unchecked or unquenched, may increase and go on increasing until at last it bursts out in flaming vengeance.

To deal with African matters requires personal observation and long study. It is needful for the student to mingle, eat, and drink with the rich and poor alike, hear from their lips their complaints, and not rashly act upon equally rash reports. While such a policy prevails, is it at all surprising that Africa should not make the progress of which it is capable, and the poor people be left to linger on in an apathetic undeveloped condition, exposed to much evil and wrong?

CHAPTER VI.

THE SHIFTING BAR—A FIERCE GALE—AN INFESTED SHARK
 —UP THE RIVER—CATTLE IN SWAMPS—THE WATER
 KING—MAKA—MIRACULOUS GRIS-GRIS—NATIVE EDU-
 CATION—A WEIRD NIGHT—JACKALS' MORNING GAMBOLS
 —A LOST CHANNEL—A NIGHT ENCAMPMENT—A CRUEL
 MARABOUT—HYENAS WITCHES—TERRIBLE RESULTS—
 PSYCHOLOGICAL WONDERS.

IT may not be without interest to the reader, who perhaps is but little acquainted with African waters, to give a short description of some of the peculiarities of the river Senegal.

The bed of the channel leading to St. Louis is subject to continual and rapid changes. In the course of a century the position of the bar at the mouth of the river has shifted no less than six miles. One result of the constant accumulation of sand near the mouth has been the extinction of the swamps that formerly condemned the site of St. Louis as much as they now do those of Bathurst and other West Coast stations. Beneficial as this is in one respect,

the same phenomenon threatens to extinguish the prosperity of the river, for the channel is gradually narrowing, and it will, if the process continue, eventually be silted up.

Large vessels drawing more than twelve feet cannot now enter the port, there being seldom more than that depth of water on the bar at its deepest part. Besides its gradual advance out to sea, there is a constant shifting forward and backward of the sand according to the winds prevailing at particular seasons. From April to July, when the winds are variable and less powerful, the entrance of the river is less uncertain and dangerous than from September to December, at which time the current is strong, the breakers heavy, and the prevailing winds blow from the land. The deposit of sand on the entire coast is enormous, and the difficulties of navigation at times become very serious and call for the utmost local knowledge and skill on the part of the pilots.

One pleasant evening at Guet N'Dar, when the whole suburb had turned out for enjoyment on the sandy beach, a fierce gale arose, which at its height attained almost the force of a hurricane. The beach presented a scene of life and animation; not the children only, but their elders, joining in their mirth, were dancing to some very monotonous but pleasant music, without a care in the world. Among the happy, careless black faces of the merry natives were a few Europeans more grave and sad, bearing marks of recent fever-sickness. The crabs were crawling among pebbles at the water's edge, and the sea-birds,

uttering piercing cries, darted down at intervals to peck them out of their shells. Now and then a sportsman took aim at one of the wild sea-fowl and brought him down with a crash on the beach. Boys were frightening the birds, who, however, only flew away a few yards and then quietly settled again. The dreamy ocean, as if tired after its fury, was taking rest preparatory to a new outburst.

The slow and lazy ocean rose with a heavy respiration, with a kind of breathing like a man waking from sleep but still feeling drowsy. The waves, advancing and retiring, carried pebbles and shells backward and forward, retreating with a mechanical s—sh, as if Neptune, rocking the billows to sleep, strove to prevail on them to remain still for the next few moments. Then followed a gentle rush of wind. But this change in the aspect of matters did not disturb the happy groups on shore. Every one was amusing himself according to his fancy.

Suddenly, as if by signal, all the birds rose, and, like a well-trained orchestra, broke forth in a burst of cries. In the rising sea they appeared to observe the fish from a great distance jumping and showing their heads above the water. Bird after bird swooped down to the surface of the sea, bringing out a fish in its beak. The boats which a few minutes before were upon the beach were now rising gently on the undulating sea, a lazy motion that was soon to be turned to a violent one. The fishermen braved the wind and waves without any sign of fear at the rising might of nature, knowing well the character of their

enemy, keeping a watchful eye upon the signs which inform them when to stop and when to go.

The waves rose till they formed perpendicular walls, and like white-headed men shook their heads with fury until their strength was spent, and then dropped down. One wave broke another in half and fell with a heavy swirl on the beach, startling every creature in the neighbourhood. The crabs found their holes, and the laughing joyous faces changed to an expression of fright at the power of nature.

All the fishermen had taken great care to be on shore by this time, wisely resolving no longer to brave the fury of the elements. The women were anxiously helping their husbands and brothers to pull the boats up the beach to prevent their being carried away by the waves.

When the fury of the ocean appeared to have spent itself, it had not in reality reached its climax. The hoary walls were still increasing in height, their white heads becoming more threatening, and the long parallel water-hills extended in length. The waves roaring and the pebbles rubbing against each other, added to the dreadful discord. A moment more, and it seemed the trembling beach would be crushed under the mad fury of the heavy surf, and not only the water itself but the very ocean bed were involved in the commotion, and its internal life had reached its last agonies.

Every living creature had taken the alarm and sought shelter in their homes, leaving nature alone to work out in solitude the difficult problem she

appeared to have set herself to solve. What a picture of helplessness the most enlightened of mankind presents in presence of such manifestations of the great forces of nature! What a pigmy is man! A few moments ago he was treading the beach, thinking, perhaps with pride, of his own power, wealth, or cunning when he saw no danger, but now he cowardly retires before this outburst of nature, knowing that, if he did not, he might in a moment be snatched up and carried off by the foaming billows.

Long after leaving the beach and sitting at the hospitable table of the mulatto, the long rolling thunder of the waves and the furious roars and shrieks of the gale made the old house rock and vibrate to its foundation. It was not until a late hour that the wind abated, and the waves of the ebbing tide gradually resumed their former gentle heaving, as if resting once more after the angry conflict in which they had been engaged.

Next day a captured shark afforded an opportunity of observing the indignities to which the monster is subjected by the natives. Every man, woman, and child, who chooses to do so, makes a vindictive blow at the helpless carcase. The shark has earned for himself the same ferocious reputation as the tiger, hence his name "sea-tiger." The native women grimly chuckle in anticipation of their share of the body of the monster that has, perhaps, devoured their relations, and no doubt the delight they experience in beating the shark springs from the sentiment of gratified revenge.

It was curious to watch the process of slaughtering and cutting up the brute. Long after it was landed it continued to lash its tail and make violent spasmodic movements, and even the removal of the viscera and the whole interior organisation did not immediately terminate its vitality. For the purpose of observation the head, the heart, and the stomach of the shark were separated by the fishermen, in the clumsiest manner, from the quivering mass. The pulsation of the heart while in the hand continued with force and surprising regularity. The dissection took place in the open yard before described, and the investigation was assisted by a hunter of kindred tastes, a naturalist who had stuffed and sent to Paris many rare specimens of birds.

The smallest observation of the shark's flesh is sufficient to excite the most intense disgust as an article of food. When examined through the microscope the body was seen to be infested with a number of parasites of various forms. In the stomach several *Velipora* were lodged, some being $3\frac{1}{4}$ inches long, and numerous small germs in groups of three and five. Eighteen of the larger specimens were picked out. An immense *Distoma gigas*, of $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches, was embedded in the back, having bored itself a passage from the rear about three inches below the dorsal fin. The part of the flesh that would have shown the mode of entrance of the *Distoma* was then, probably, in the stomach of some greedy native or European; and if he fell sick and eventually died, no one would suspect the parasite as the cause of the

Entozootic disease. Sailors eat half-raw fish, and the shark is by no means unknown to them. The parasites present in and indistinguishable from the flesh, except under the eye of an expert, if eaten without having been exposed to a sufficient degree of heat to destroy the germs, are taken alive into the human stomach, and there they develop. Who can say how much mortality is due to the carelessness shown in this and other respects?

The expected French trader having returned to St. Louis, there was just sufficient time to reach Galam, where a great market or annual fair was to have been held in October, which would be attended by European and native traders from every quarter for hundreds of miles round.

The journey up the river was not devoid of hardships, although in August, which is the best time for travelling, because it is near the close of the cool season in this part of Africa. The rains in Senegambia commence from about the end of May and last to the first half of September, the dry season lasting the rest of the year and till May. The periodical inundations had already commenced, and the marginal swamps, which at other seasons exhale dangerous mephitic odours, were covered with water, and rendered comparatively harmless. It was near the end of the febrigenous season, and had not yet arrived at the period when other diseases, like dysentery and diarrhœa, become rife. There were neither the heats of April nor the dangers of the cold nights of January to be encountered.

The interval for preparation was only two days, which rapidly passed. Two boys and an intelligent negro as guide formed the little crew to work the boat up the river.

The guide was the son of one of the government slaves bought for the purpose of gradual emancipation, who, like many others, gained his complete liberty after *only* 14 years' further service. This guide, by name Malic, was lively, well informed, and had a fund of stories to tell about former European traders and the slave-dealers, both white and black, whose cunning and adventurous persistence made up much of the current history of the time.

Though the craft was too small to offer anything like comfortable quarters, nevertheless, all acted upon the native axiom "Be comfortable as you are," and all sail set with a favourable early morning breeze, the craft was buffeting the strong current of the Senegal past the green pasture lands bordering it. The luxuriant cocoa-nut trees in rows and clumps, rising out of the long grass, gave a pleasant relief to the eyes.

A short distance from St. Louis is a succession of beautifully wooded islands, where at an earlier period prolific plantations of cotton, rice, tobacco, millet, and vegetables flourished; but the soil, having been gradually exhausted, has now sunk to mere pasturage, but is still of great value for that purpose. Game and different wild animals were formerly plentiful, but are becoming yearly more rare. There is still an abundance of wild fowl and other birds, but they

are very shy, and it requires a good shot to kill them.

Cattle and sheep, the latter especially, suffer like man at the approach of the rainy season. The flesh of the former at that period is flabby and tasteless, though in the dry season considered good and palatable. Cattle do not thrive here so well as in drier districts, and, although of healthy appearance, are subject to liver disease, and infested with Entozoa, which grow to an astonishing size, some attain even seven-eighths of an inch in length. They are not unfrequently found in the gall-bladder of cattle, which is the part of the human body these Entozoa most delight in.

Epidemic diseases carry off much cattle, including horses, in Africa, but there are other potent and frequently fatal results arising from swampy districts. The formation of abscesses in the lungs is a common disorder amongst both pack-oxen and horses, causing great disturbance of the respiratory organs, and consequent inflammation. The climate is blamed for this, but the disorder is more frequently the result of hard work and the long and forced journeys which African cattle undergo, suffering at the same time great privations of food and water. Roaring or broken wind is common among them. The reason, no doubt, is the sudden change from dry food, to which they are accustomed for three parts of the year, to fresh grass during the rains. The animals must eat a much larger quantity of grass to satisfy their hunger, and the too great quantity of moisture and gas thereby

produced extend the stomach, press on the abdominal muscles, prevent free breathing, and frequently cause fatal disease.

The Arabs, who are reputed to be the wisest and kindest horse-masters in the world, are fully aware of the danger of too much moist food, and, consequently, never let their valuable horses feed at will upon fresh grass, but make it into hay for the animals.

The cows, during the rainy season, give bad milk, little in quantity, and the butter when prepared has a bitter taste and soon spoils. Nevertheless, it is far more wholesome than the chemically-prepared compound sold in English markets—a composition of very doubtful origin and material, often containing scarcely two per cent. of genuine butter. Happily these unsophisticated people are unacquainted with this roguish development of civilisation. If they practised all the swindling European tricks of adulteration, the natives of the swamp districts on the West Coast of Africa would, in all probability, soon die out. It is to be hoped no enterprising white will initiate the black in such nefarious practices.

Beyond these islands, the river overspreads the neighbouring plains, and only water is visible, with here and there a dark spot where a flamingo or a pelican is dreaming, and the trees whose tops rise above the inundation.

Morning coffee was served out to everybody on board, with a warning on no account to drink any water that had not been boiled. The water which

is purest in appearance contains, especially at certain times of the year, innumerable germs of organic matter, and there is no more fruitful cause of diarrhœa and dysentery than this. It would have been a serious hindrance had any of the crew fallen sick. The warning was not unnecessary, for the careless negro is scarcely more able than a baby to protect himself by precautionary measures.

Near a poor village, consisting only of a few huts occupied by fishermen, a group of natives stood on the bank in conversation with a well-dressed man sitting in a boat. Everyone listened attentively to him, while he was gesticulating and pointing to the river. The man in the boat was a Guieultabé (a name given to important chiefs who have the control of the fishermen of the district), and several villages were subject to his authority. These chiefs make their own laws for the regulation of the fisheries; they are held in high respect and are obeyed. The time not occupied in legislative administration, they fill up with the lucrative sale of home-made gris-gris.

The favourable S.W. by W. wind blew steadily, keeping the sails well filled, without a single flap, the whole day. The craft swiftly cut its way through the brown muddy water, leaving mile after mile behind, and though the thermometer stood at 103° Fahrenheit, the air was cool and pleasant. The yet fresh vigour of the crew, the ever-changing panorama, and the good rate of sailing, prevented the slightest feeling of fatigue or ennui. With agreeable chat and merry laughter Maka was reached long before dark, leaving

St. Louis about 24 miles behind. Having become cramped in the boat, it was decided to take a walk towards the village.

In Maka, a short distance from the shore, a travelling Marabout, surrounded by a little group, was descanting upon the powers and virtues of the gris-gris he had for sale. In his right hand he held something wrapped in a little dirty rag. He warned the would-be purchasers to consider well before buying this talisman, declaring its virtues to be of the most marvellous kind, against all diseases and enemies, and if it were buried with its owner it would ensure to him a happy future life. A bad wife or bad children would become good and dutiful.

One poor man, probably not happy in his domestic relations, came out of the group and asked the Marabout for a sight of the wonderful gris-gris. "Don't touch it—don't touch it, man," was his response, "it may lose its power. I must hang it with my own hands round your neck," holding out his other hand at the same time for payment. Not a smile was visible on the faces of the bystanders, who all preserved great gravity, and evidently regarded the object as entitled to every mark of respect. The poor believer stretched out his neck, and the Marabout hung the gris-gris round it. The happy buyer retired with evident satisfaction at having secured this potent charm.

Deplorable as the puerility of the superstitious belief of the natives may be, these gris-gris play an important part in promoting morality. By their sale

from village to village the travelling Marabouts gain a scanty living, and when not so engaged they devote their time to teaching the young natives to chant passages from the Koran. Many Marabouts resident in villages or towns pass all their lives in instructing the young and instilling into them all the good principles of Mahometism. To these Marabouts must be attributed the existence of so many believers who may be described as really good Mahometans, living strictly sober, moral lives. Abstinence from all intoxicants is one of the principal tenets inculcated in the pages of the Koran, which Mahometans religiously adhere to.

It is a pleasant and instructive scene to watch a grey, reverend-looking Marabout surrounded by boys, listening attentively to his teaching, or all joining in and chanting a repetition of the lessons he gives them from the Koran, or busily engaged under his supervision in practising their writing-lessons on boards. The discipline maintained by the Marabouts in their schools presents an example of order and attention not to be excelled in the schools of more civilised countries. Their schooling is not confined simply to reading, writing, and rude arithmetic; but the boys go with the Marabout to his field, if he has one, and there he teaches them by word and example the native mode of cultivation. As a remuneration for his teaching, after a boy's education is finished, the father buys for the Marabout a slave or pays him an equivalent sum.

Contented with the little we had heard and seen

in Maka, and not to lose the valuable time which flies never to return, the strong sail was again hoisted to the steady-blowing wind, before which the obedient boat scudded over the rippled surface of the water, passing in rapid succession the webbed roots of the *Rhizophora* plant bordering the banks of the river. The occasional uplifting of a knotted tail indicated the resting-place of crocodiles; and at intervals a snake, frightened by the splash of the boat, made its way through the regular undulations of the tangled plants. Beyond, the unbroken rampart of the *Rhizophora* was succeeded by groups of rich tropical verdure, mingled with beautiful flowers of a dazzling orange colour.

The weather gradually varied with the quick approach of night, and in the darkness progress was only possible at short intervals. The strong flood-tide somewhat counteracted the fall of the wind. With the rapidly increasing humidity, the electricity became negative, and through want of change of position in the boat great languor and lassitude ensued. The atmosphere pressing upon the body rendered respiration laborious. The great elasticity of the moist air forcibly affected the lungs, and all external atmospheric pressure seemed to have ceased, giving the sensation of the frame expanding and falling to pieces. The blood as it was forced through the veins produced a sensation like that of a mouse rapidly running over the limbs, directly followed by the peculiar feeling popularly described as "pins and needles." The lungs appeared to be engaged in a contest with the

blood-vessels, which, whilst expanding, were violently contracted by the pressure of the former, almost to the extent of preventing speech.

Strange and rapid changes occurred at short intervals. Suddenly the air rushed as if from a heated stove, followed by a cool stream of air below the mean temperature. In some places, where thick vapour was visible, the pressure of the air seemed to have no effect upon the body. When suddenly passing through a place where the vapour appeared to be absent, the air pressed upon the frame with an almost crushing sensation.

Shortly before midnight the wind became variable, at one time blowing from E. by S.E., and the barometer fell, then rose again with a change to S.W. or W., before which the boat speeded on in the desired direction. At short intervals a gentle southerly wind succeeded the fall of the barometer. It seemed as though the directions of the winds and the pressure of the air were engaged in a playful contest throughout the night. These atmospheric conditions render the animal frame peculiarly susceptible to the attack of dangerous diseases, unless proper precautions are taken to avert them.

An observant person continually exposed to the outer air, and watching the various changes of constitution and habit of body, may become a human barometer. Not only can he predict approaching changes of the atmosphere, but even if travelling over high mountains, if equally observant, can very approximately determine the elevation of the spot he stands upon.

A steady fire was kept aboard the boat in a basin of sand all night. The crackling of the wood, the sudden blaze of a dry branch, and the descending column of smoke, tinged with various hues, reflected a lurid glare upon the surface of the river and the vegetation on the banks. The friendly group sitting round the fire, with the opposite colours of different races, black and white, formed a most picturesque scene. A face obscured by the smoky haze suddenly re-appeared, black and shining, with the large whites of the expressive black eyes, and the ivory white teeth for which the Africans are famous, glittering through the gloom after an agreeable draught of strong and refreshing coffee, an indispensable comforter during restless nights. The Frenchman, wrapped in a blanket, from time to time, with changing expression of countenance by the reflection of the fire-light, appeared to be red, green, yellow, or pale as death. All the surroundings seemed to be dead, when the wind ceased to blow, followed by a murmur in the woods as the winds again rose. Thus passed the first of many nights on the river.

With the early dawn a dozen of artful-looking jackals came to the river's edge to indulge in various gambles, like so many happy puppies. Their loud howls had been heard at a great distance. They trotted in open order in zigzag courses, separated from each other by distances of from 100 to 150 yards, describing circles, running backwards and forwards, intercepting each other's paths. These animals only run straight when scampering off

with booty, and, being social, they live in packs, manifesting no alarm at the sight of man. They constantly came together to exchange ideas as to whether it was safe to drink such muddy water or not. After several consultations of this kind they set up a dismal howling. One howled as though a heavy foot were suddenly crushing his tail; another made a choking sound as if being strangled; another, more eager to quench its thirst, apparently disliking the water, emitted moaning and complaining cries, probably having a bad stomach-ache. Amongst the rest of the pack one suddenly stopped, pricked up his ears, and at full speed trotted straight on to a spot not far off. His keen scent had detected a rat, mouse, or a lizard on the sand. His companions, fancying a good jackal had gone wrong, stopped for a moment, looked at each other inquisitively, and one set up a howl which was responded to in full chorus by the entire pack. Their fears, however, were groundless; the active jackal had found something to reward him for his pains, as on rejoining his fellows his jaws were in active operation masticating a delicacy. One after another the pack quenched their thirst. On leaving the beach they made short stoppages to look back, and finally trotted off to continue their morning gambols.

At sunrise the air was chilly, and heavy clouds appeared on the grey sky. The north-east wind rose and blew almost all the day, producing an intense degree of heat, and the barometer rose very high, indicating that strong atmospheric changes were impending.

The lifeless aspect of the district became intensified by the entire absence of vegetation when the salines of Maringuinos were reached. At this point, a remarkable alteration in the course of the river is observable. Some centuries ago, the lower course of the Senegal ran almost due east and west in a direct line through Maringuinos to the ocean. The river at present suddenly changes its course at this place, and runs due south for about seventy-five or eighty miles, until it finds its way, several miles beyond St. Louis, into the ocean from which the river (from Maringuinos) is separated only by the narrow and sterile bank called the Barbary coast.

Through the now filled up channel of Maringuinos the Spanish trading ships once passed out of the Senegal into the sea. The dreary and desolate appearance of this region is occasioned by the loss of the former channel. Now only swarms of mosquitos enliven it. The recollections of its former prosperity, when it was the halting-place of numerous caravans laden with ivory, gum, and other goods, produced a depressing effect upon the mind, and although many hours had been passed in the boat, the journey was continued.

Beyond Maringuinos the water varies in colour according to the depth of the stream and frequent changes in the soil, which tinges it. The clayey soil of this locality being impregnated with salt, cools the atmosphere; but once heated, it long remains so, and renders the air almost unbearable.

A few leagues beyond Maringuinos the boat was

steered to shore. The tired crew had to wade through a swampy marsh to reach elevated dry ground for encamping. On the way, numerous trails of wild pigs were seen. Shortly before night set in, a pair of hyenas passed towards the river for a drink. After favouring the crew with a long stare and a grin, they trotted off again to the rising ground beyond.

The great heat of the day was succeeded by a deliciously cool evening. The usual African fire was kindled to drive away wild beasts, keep off the noxious vapours of the night, cook the necessary meal, prevent chills, and enable the party to pass the time agreeably. All sat quietly round the camp-fire, chatting about different subjects.

One of the natives gave a sad account of the cruelty of a marabout to whom he was entrusted by his father for instruction. At about fourteen years of age, in order that he might be declared a Moukaleff, and thereby acquire the rights of a full-grown man, it was necessary he should kill an enemy in battle. From his intercourse with many warriors, he returned to the marabout with different feelings to those formerly entertained, and abandoned his previous intention of becoming a marabout. He superintended the slaves who gathered gum in the woods for their master, rich in camels, cattle, and half-starved slaves who worked very hard and were compelled to live chiefly on gum. One of these exhausted slaves was barbarously beaten. With a satanic leer, the marabout accused the slave of laziness through having too much blood which required

to be thinned, and furiously struck the poor wretch with branches of thorn-bush until the blood flowed freely. Another slave, unable from sickness to keep up with the working party, was left behind. On returning home the poor fellow was seized and hung by one of his legs to a tree, to make it grow and enable him to walk quicker. Even during the millet harvest, when slaves are treated with more consideration and kindness than usual, this hard taskmaster made no difference in his behaviour. Very seldom did any of the slaves have the chance of tasting a morsel of flesh, unless it were the castaway entrails or the remnants of a rotten carcase.

On one occasion, the narrator of this story reproached the marabout for starving his people. The marabout beat him, but soon ceased, fearing the revolt of the slaves, to whom the young man had always shown great kindness. After this outrage, he waited an opportunity for revenge, but when this offered, his heart recoiled at the bare idea of murder, and he left the marabout to whatever fate might befall him. One slave loaded a camel so awkwardly that its back was chafed. He was discovered anointing the wound with butter, upon which the furious marabout ordered a fire to be kindled, and the unhappy slave placed close to the scorching flames, which extorted cries of pain and a request to be killed. The wicked marabout only mocked him with religious cant, until the suffering but powerful captive with a desperate effort freed his arms, sprang up, and seized the hand of his tormentor, who was

helpless in the grasp of the slave now mad with rage and pain. He lifted his master clean up from the ground, and seemed about to dash out his brains against the earth, when he suddenly stopped, and placing him down unhurt, said, "No! I will not kill you. I would feel ashamed even to hurt such a poor wretch—you are not worth killing. Rather let me die." He fell to the earth exhausted by pain and passion, and the Marabout put an end to his sufferings.

However horrible may appear the cruelties perpetrated in countries where there is no law for the protection of the poor and wretched, it must not be forgotten that in civilised nations, not only in former ages, but in the year of grace 1880, there are many instances equally brutal, and even more refined and diabolical terrorism, which even the half-savage denizens of Africa would execrate. It is but seldom that pure nobility of nature, deep and sympathetic feeling for others, can be developed without going through a course of suffering, actual contact with and study of human nature.

Towards the end of the terrible Marabout story two hyenas approached the camp. One of the boatmen uttered an exclamation of horror, on seeing them, and directed the attention of the party to these beasts. The French trader, who never hit anything, fired and missed, although the animals were scarcely a hundred yards from the spot. The creatures bolted, and the two boatmen with Malic set up a most dismal howling, as if their dearest relatives had been killed. "Ah, master! why did

you shoot and not kill? What shall we do now?" "Drink your coffee," said the French trader imperturbably. "Coffee will choke us," continued the narrator, "these animals are now vexed. If they were killed and their heads buried in the earth, all would end well. Now they will return with their evil eyes, and your heart will stop, the blood will curdle, your brain grow dead, and then you must dry up and wither day by day until you fall down like a dead branch from a tree. They have gone away to speak together in the bush, and all they say will become true, for they are witches. At night they prowl about the woods as animals, but with the rise of the sun they turn into men, like cruel Marabouts. If a good man meets a hyena, he spits and passes without looking at the fatal eyes of the animal who feeds upon dead men. It was a bad spirit that made me tell the story. Touch this gris-gris," continued he, addressing the Frenchman; "touch it, and you may yet be safe, but nothing else can save you."

The Frenchman refused, but the men insisted upon the gris-gris being touched, and sincerely declared they would never again be able to sleep if it were not. This was very serious, as in that case the men would be useless, and the journey would come to a standstill. To satisfy their superstition the packet was accordingly grasped, and at their request a handful of sand was taken, and directing it towards the spot where the animals were seen, every grain was blown away. "Now we can sleep," said the man,

relieved ; “ the bad spirits can have no power, and the hyenas will not come again.”

These superstitions appear extremely foolish, but where such a belief is held so universally and devotedly as this of the evil eye, there must be some reason for it. The truth can readily be traced. The hyena is a disgusting creature, and invariably makes a bad impression upon those who see it. If it does not inspire a feeling of fear, it produces disgust. One way or the other the nervous sensitiveness is influenced. The native from his infancy has heard many wonderful stories about animals, and amongst them of course the hyena.

Africa is a land of death, sameness of character, desert from horizon to horizon, with here and there patches of impenetrable forests and swamps. Frequently neither bird nor animal is to be met with on the scorched-up land, where a tired pilgrim, scarcely able to move his weary legs from hunger and thirst, with but little development of intellectual power, easily falls into delusions. His knowledge commences with and ends in superstition. All the acts of his life are based on the supposed influence of good and bad spirits. The wanderer, step by step, gets more tired, and thereby becomes the more susceptible to outward impressions. The thought of approaching death fills his mind, through which the sense of fatigue rapidly increases. The blood then rushes to the head, the external heat being intense ; the inward heat increases or diminishes, and sickness is already present. Be it evening or day that he meets a hyena when

subject to these depressing influences, all the traditions he has ever heard rush to his memory, and out of them all he dwells upon the most striking—hyenas. With a look of horrible fear at the animal, he trembles, being already in a fever. He sees before him something similar to a dog, with two rows of strong, cruel teeth, and prominent cheek-bones, reminding him of a cat with eyes sparkling and swivelling like those of a snake. Yet it is neither cat nor dog nor snake, and his disordered brain becomes dazed. He diverts his gaze from the animal, but fear again impels him to look unwillingly at the hideous creature, with its short, bowed front legs, an ugly curved back surmounted by hog-bristles, yet it is not a pig. Through the strong flow of blood to the head one hyena is multiplied to a whole regiment ready to attack him, and then all suddenly disappear. In succession rapidly follow dog, pig, snake, cat, and again the hyena, or some animal with wings, claws, or other incongruous appendages, which can only be imagined by a man in delirium. The animal, either from surprise or other impression, gives out a harsh and grating cry, mingled with demoniacal laughter, which would not only affect a weak and prostrated wanderer, but might produce a most disagreeable and even painful effect upon the strongest and most healthy man. The animal at length disappears, but the impression made is too strong to be easily forgotten, and the only thing he can speak or think about is the hyena. He becomes timid and shy. His eyes wander from spot to spot, either to seek or avoid phantom

hyenas. His delirium increases, and his ears are filled with their imaginary hateful cries. This is the moment when the wretched sufferer requires the most potent means to dispel the illusions and relieve his tortured brain.

A wise native doctor will recommend the patient to look for a hyena, kill, and bury it. If he succeeds in doing this, and buries the head, the former train of thought is broken, and the cure commences; but if the animal is not killed, former impressions become intensified, and the sick man falls into melancholy, quiet madness, his digestion is disordered, he takes no food, withers from day to day, and dies as "dry as a dead branch," as the natives express it.

This is the foundation of the native superstition of the evil eye. How much truth and wisdom, therefore, have the natives transmitted in this apparently senseless tradition? With what exactness was the sickness described in a few words? The cause of the man's death was in reality the hyena he met with. Undoubtedly, had he not seen the animal he would have arrived at his destination exhausted by hunger and fatigue; but after resting and satisfying the cravings of hunger, he would in all probability soon have recovered and regained health and vigour.

CHAPTER VII.

AFTER RAIN-STORM—EXERCISE CHIEF MEDICINE—THE SEA-DEVILS—A FISHING ADVENTURE—A TERRIBLE DEATH—MOSQUITOS—UP THE TAWEY CHANNEL—NATIVE LIFE—ON FOULE LAKE—A CARAVAN AT N'DAR—NATIVE CHEAP JACKS AND MARKET—SMITHS AND CARPENTERS—SYMPATHETIC CURE—LIFE OF GRIOTS—RICHARD'S TOLL—NAVAL ARCHITECT.

AT day-break the party, refreshed by sleep, hurried to continue the journey, as there were signs of an impending change in the weather. Heavy clouds darkened the sky, and before the shelter of the craft could be reached a sudden torrent of rain fell, and the camping-place in a few minutes became a pool of water.

Up the stream, on the elevated banks gigantic ant-hills were clustered. Large flocks of birds enlivened the country, in contrast to the deadly aspect of Maringuinos. Partridges and guinea-fowls were busily engaged in picking up grass or seeds from

the ground. Their cheerful calls were too attractive to resist going ashore to secure a good bag of feathered game without any difficulty. Many of them were so fat and lethargic from the influence of the moisture that they could scarcely rise from the grass. While foraging among the thick verdure saturated by the recent rain-storm our clothing got soaked through, and it was advisable to return to the boat, which advanced slowly past dense bush, matted roots, and banks covered with deep mud or grass on impassable swamps. The frequent splashes of crocodiles into the water became tiresome, and even the gaudy yellow flowers barred with black like a jockey's cap, and the acacias, had ceased to be interesting. Birds flew lazily across the stream, and some even rested for a moment on the mast of the boat, but the crew had scarcely enough energy left to look up at them.

The vaporous heat had a depressing influence on all animal life. An overpowering longing for sleep followed with a sensation as of heavy weights attached to the legs. Every movement required a strong muscular effort and indomitable will. The heavy atmosphere was highly charged with electricity, and unless a proportionate amount of counter-acting electricity were developed in the body, a violent effect would be exerted upon the nervous system.

The French trader, yielding to his lassitude, laid down in the boat to rest, instead of keeping in motion, exposing himself to some extent to the

heat, and taking exercise as the best means of preventing a too rapid evaporation of the aqueous portions of the blood. At the first practicable landing-place he was induced to rise, and we went on shore with umbrellas to shelter our heads, and, tightly belting-in our waists to protect the abdomen, followed the sailing boat along the bank. Before a mile was covered a profuse perspiration ensued, and the languid muscles and nerves gradually regained their energy. To avoid a determination of blood to the head and a severe headache, a handful of fresh grass was placed in the hats. If grass cannot be procured straw should be used in its place. Our necks and throats were freely exposed, in order to avoid all interference with respiration, as well as for their gradually cooling or warming. These are most effectual preventives against many dangers to which Europeans are exposed and suffer by neglecting these precautions, especially in a moist temperature. Moist heat is generally reputed to be dangerous, but there is every reason to believe that it is not the heat accompanying the moisture that does the mischief, but the moisture alone, which not only in the tropics, but generally, is hurtful. The most dangerous moment of exposure to moisture is in the coolest part of the night.

In spite of every device the heat cannot be altogether avoided, and evaporation cannot and must not be prevented, for, without it, the skin becomes parched, and, refusing to perform its functions, the blood then thickens by the accumulation of internal

heat. Too profuse perspiration is undoubtedly exhausting, but the long absence of perspiration causes a rapid increase in the temperature of the blood, and a condition of still greater danger is thus speedily created. Though moderate exercise provokes perspiration and promotes the evaporation of the watery particles, an equivalent quantity of moisture is returned to the blood by the quickening of the respiration and the electrical energy which the exercise effects.

It is well known that the less exercise is taken the greater is the fatigue consequent on exertion. In the tropics those who take the least exercise feel most the oppression of the heat, and exhibit the least energy under it. Animals in a wild state will, after a certain rest, suddenly break forth into violent exercise. If this is prevented, they become sickly, have a dull eye, irregular pulsation of the heart, with respiration abnormally slow or quick, according to the nature of the sickness. This is exactly the case with the human animal. Deprived of energy or electricity by want of exercise, his system is predisposed to fever or any other disease. Travellers in a country like Africa, where no medical help can be obtained in case of serious illness, should adopt the good old proverb, "Prevention is better than cure."

White men in Africa are, as a rule, afraid to expose themselves to the changes of temperature, but by judicious exercise the body becomes accustomed to the changes that take place suddenly in

the open air, and the exterior nerves so comport themselves as to prevent the internal organism from feeling the changes too suddenly. The rapid swelling of the *papilla* and the strong local *hyperæmia* experienced by sensitive persons on entering the tropics, or on changing from a hot to a cold temperature, may be set down to this cause. The quick drying, cracking, and yellowing of the skin experienced by such persons are the other results of it. When the nerves have been hardened by judicious exposure to different temperatures, they act admirably as regulators of the evaporation. This prevents exhaustion after slight effort, promotes a healthy degree of perspiration, and maintains a just balance among the various functions which the different organs of healthy bodies are every moment performing. Men, whose circumstances permit them to abstain from bodily and mental exercise, are never so healthy as those whose occupations compel them to exercise both body and mind to a moderate extent.

The rule of life I would lay down, for a resident of the tropics especially, is based upon the words "diet, exercise, and energy." These are the man's climate—his life—the power of the intellect nourished by the normal blood.

Our pedestrian exercise was prevented by the impenetrable tangle, but motion being necessary, the canoe attached to the boat steered by Malic was paddled up the stream until the guide announced that dinner was being cooked. The craft was boarded to enjoy a strong soup from the flesh of two fat guinea-

fowls, a most healthy, palatable, and cheap food, easily to be obtained in this region of game. The talkative Malic, ever ready with a tale, while masticating the boiled remnant of flesh with the rest of the party, narrated the following story :—

“ One day a fisherman catching fish in the sea saw a horrible monster swimming towards the shore. He immediately returned home, and communicated to his tribe the appearance of such a wonder. As quick as the news could travel it was spread throughout the country, and the whole tribe came together to look at this wonder. It had many large wings, thin hands, and long claws with which it grasped the earth, stretching out very long and thin arms, until the monster dropped its wings. All who saw this fearsome sight were terrified, and fled to the bush. For a long time the monster was motionless. People thought as it was asleep it would not see them approach. When they came nearer, a red devil with two long noses in front and one very long nose behind, with wings and flat tail, came out of the monster’s stomach. All ran away, and none dared to return, except one man who saw this devil swallowed by the monster, and at night saw several devils walking upon the back of this animal, imitating human voices. Then wise fetishes and chiefs came to look at these devils, and as the latter did neither bite nor do harm, the former came closer, when suddenly a red devil, placing himself in front of one of the great chiefs, opened his chest, in which the chief saw a black devil sitting. The chief fell with

his face to the ground in a fright, and the others did the same, not daring to rise until the devil lifted them up, ready to eat them. They pleaded loudly for their lives, and in return promised to give as many men as the devil liked to eat until his belly was filled. To this the devil readily agreed; but great was the surprise of the chiefs and fetishes when they found that the more men they gave the greedier the monster became.

“As the chiefs had no more men to give, they attacked villages, took men away, and brought them before the monster, which suddenly, from its belly, sent many red devils to catch the men, who were thrown one after another into the greedy stomach of the monster, until no more men were left. The red devils appeared pleased, and said the monster was satisfied; but it would come again for the same purpose. The devils then gave many wonderful things to the chiefs, who grew very rich. When night came, and the monster got strong, it spread its large wings and disappeared in the water.

“The chiefs and fetishes then met together, and consulted for a long time as to what they should do in future with the monster, which had already eaten so many men. If it returned there would be no other men to give, and then the chiefs and fetishes would be swallowed up by the monster. Seeing no way of escape, sorrow filled their hearts. They put sand on their heads, and made up their minds to die. A wise fetish, seeing them so dispirited, said they could only die once, and they should try to kill the

monster if it came again. This advice was well received ; their hearts were happy, and they all made a great feast, which continued until the hungry monster again appeared.

“In the bush many men were then hidden to watch the movements of the monster. When it grasped the ground with its long arms, the red devils came out of the monster’s belly and made their way to land. All the men in the bush then rushed at these devils, and killed them ; but no one dared to touch the big monster for a long time. When they saw it did not move, and had nothing to eat, they thought it was dead. One great warrior then made up his mind to go and see if the monster would swallow him. He armed himself, and swam on calabashes to it, but it was so big that he could not get on its back. He gave it many blows on the sides, but it did not wake. He then shook the long arm, but it did not grasp him, and he clambered up the monster’s arm on to its back. All the chiefs, fetishes, and men anxiously watched from the shore what would become of the great warrior. When they saw the monster did not swallow him, others determined to join the warrior, and all went into the stomach, which had many large ribs and long bowels, such as they had never seen before. The great warrior then gave orders to take all the bowels on shore that the monster might not recover. Since then the tribe resolved that when another monster appeared they would serve it the same ; but the more monsters were killed, more they increased in number. Great

was the horror of the tribe to see red devils walking in the bush, catching men, women, and children. Wise fetishes then advised the people to kill and eat the red devils, as this would effectually get rid of them ; but their numbers were so great that the people could not kill and eat many of them, but many good warriors were eaten by the devils."

At the end of this interesting narrative two fishermen in a canoe, from Rkann, came to the craft offering fish for sale. The owners of the canoe were a father and son, who, by their long mutual labour and savings, had accumulated enough to buy new shirts and native fishing appliances. Some years previously the son, while on a fishing expedition, had had the misfortune to lose the sight of one eye by the sting of a bee, which did not improve his personal appearance. As the calm continued they were induced to accompany us to the pools where the fish abounded. The dull-looking faces of the fishermen gleamed with pleasure when they received a present of cloth and fish-hooks to complete their scanty stock of riches. The young man eyed the presents longingly, for he was about to commit matrimony, and, of course, desired a good outfit.

The boat was paddled along the black steep banks, overhung with thick foliage. Creeping plants, struggling for life, twined over each other to gain the light, and with their rope-like, strong off-shoots spirally pressed into the trunks and branches, hung down from the extremities of the trees like snakes to the ground.

Curving round a small island, formed by the inundation, the fishermen showed the spot where a poor woman was cruelly drowned. Her son having been stolen by a slave gang, she followed, entreating for his restoration, but her sad appeals were disregarded by the ruffians. To silence her maternal importunity, they bound her hands together with withes, doubled her up, passed a stick between the joints of the arms and legs, so as to effectually prevent any movement, and then plunged her into the water. When the tide fell the poor creature was found dead in her constrained sitting posture.

The fishermen spread their nets, cast lines with the new bait given to them, and quietly paddled over the deepest pools. A plentiful catch of the finny tribe rewarded their labours till a fine fish, two feet long, was pulled into the canoe. The fish, not liking the change, by a vigorous effort, sprang overboard. The excited Frenchman, in making a dash for the prey, upset the canoe, and sent all the party sprawling, with the cargo of new cloth, ground-nuts, and the fish previously taken, into the water. The irrepressible good humour of the lively Frenchman was unaffected by the sudden ducking. His laughing countenance strongly contrasted to the woe-begone visages of the rest of the party, especially the would-be bridegroom, whose bran new wedding shirt was irretrievably ruined by the fetid, greasy mud.

All the pleasure of fishing was dissipated, and the righted canoe directed to the craft, where the fishermen were amply compensated for their loss.

They then proceeded home to Rkann, four or five miles off, inviting the party to taste fresh palm wine there. Meanwhile, proper means were adopted without delay to avert cold, so easily caught in swamps. A good fire was made on the boat, and gum sprinkled upon the flames to counteract the noxious fumes of the sickly air and water.

The village of Rkann, inhabited by fishermen and celebrated for its beautiful oasis with *Elais*, was reached within the first tide. The luxuriant oasis, with the few huts of the now island-like village, with all its wealth exposed in the shape of a few nets and drying fish, the wide expanse of water caused by the overflow of the Garonk river, the surface studded with fishing canoes, and large flocks of water-fowl, made up a picturesque scene.

The old fisherman stood on the bank waiting the arrival of the craft. His face was sorrowful when he invited the party to his hut, where his son was lying dead on a mat. They both, father and son, in addition to fishing, also traded in palm wine. The son was very agile and dexterous in climbing and tapping the trees. The ingenious contrivance made by the natives for assisting them in ascending trees consists in cutting a long thin fresh twig, which they twist until its fibres become as supple as a rope, and making a knot at each end they pass it in a loose ring round the slender trunk, so as to form a sort of seat for the tapper within it. In climbing this sort of rope has sufficient stiffness in the band to move up the tree following the motion of the body. When-

ever the climber wishes to rest he is enabled to do so by sitting on this rope, being pressed between the tree and the band.

Some six hours before our arrival he commenced his operations, not at that time realising the terrible risk of life he incurred. The tree selected for incision was about eighty feet high and stood on the bank of the river beyond the village. The incision was to be cut near the top of the tree. The rope made by this unlucky young climber appeared to other natives of insufficient strength to bear his weight, and it was suggested that for safety a double withe should be used, but the advice was rejected, as the operation was for him an ordinary one. When he had reached the requisite height, made an incision, and fixed the calabash, he prepared to descend and await the flow of the sap, when, to his old father's horror, a snap was heard, and in a moment his son was falling head foremost through the air. His body crashed down at the foot of the tree, and the poor fellow lay motionless, a corpse.

The scene in the hut was painful to witness, and, having made some provision for the poor climber's family, the journey was resumed without waiting to witness the ceremony of burial.

Some eighty or ninety miles inland, in the sandy and desolate region of the Mauris of Braknas, the mosquitos are the greatest plague. On the coast the freshness of the sea-breezes gives some alleviation and respite from this intolerable pest. Further inland in many parts the prevailing dryness is un-

favourable for them, but at such moderate distance inland the atmospheric conditions at the height of the rainy season appear most conducive to their increase. Night and day they are a continual torment, and to lie down without taking the precaution to adjust a mosquito-curtain would be the height of imprudence. This safeguard is frequently neglected, though so often enforced by many eminent medical men and approved by old settlers in hot countries, as a considerable amount of the moisture in the air settles upon the net and prevents noxious vapour being inhaled by the sleeper.

At Richard's Toll the only striking object is the old fort, built of mud and whitewashed stones. The fort is protected on two sides by a moat fed by the Senegal river and the Tawey channel, connecting the Senegal with the Panier-Foulé lake. At the outflow of this channel into the Senegal is a large bar which blocks the passage during the dry season ; but between August and November, at high-water, vessels of twelve or thirteen feet draught easily pass. The bar remains covered until the month of January. The water then, from the natural fall and evaporation, gradually subsides, leaving the bar high above the surface. The lake undergoes the same process of draining and evaporation until its basin is exposed with a covering of dry mud baked by the scorching heat to a brick hardness, and only a few deep pools retain water connected by a ditch-like channel flowing towards the Senegal.

On this lake is the village N'Dar, where the

Frenchman had commercial matters to settle with the natives.

On the left shore of the channel, within a short distance of Richard's Toll, were the remains of a village surrounded by large millet and grazing fields subject to inundation, which was about to set in. The inhabitants had consequently quitted the place and taken up their quarters on higher ground some distance off. This was an example of which many others may be found on the African rivers.

The swampy flat shores are lined with trees, bushes, and the aponogeton plant, which so rapidly blocks the channel that places only a few years ago open for navigation are now impassable even by small canoes. This weed is the haunt of great numbers of fish, numerous crocodiles, and myriads of leeches.

Among these plants two natives were busy catching leeches, which were put in different calabashes for the purpose of separating the green leeches from the black. The latter are disposed of to native doctors, while the green are reserved for food, being regarded as a great delicacy when roasted on a hot iron. In former years leeches were exported in great quantities from this place to Europe—chiefly France; but such commercial use of them has now ceased, and they are at present caught for Europeans only on special orders. The fishermen have to keep a look out to avoid being themselves snapped up by crocodiles, which without any fear are known to leave the river and go miles inland in search of

sheep, dogs, and children, or anything which comes in their way, not fearing to enter villages in the early morning while the natives are asleep.

Some distance off, natives were fishing with hooks on lines attached to a rope stretched across the whole width of the stream, about 160 yards. The rope was kept floating on the surface by calabashes placed at equal distances. Whenever there was an indication of fish having been caught, the watchful owners of the lines came up in their canoes to pull in the fish. This ingenious fishing apparatus is frequently left in the water for the night.

On the banks of the channel were a few small villages of conical, dirty, and smoky huts covered with straw, and built on piles to escape the blowing sands and prevent the rising water from flowing into the dwellings. The natives are thereby saved from fever and many other diseases incidental to the region. Europeans, on the contrary, erect their houses on the European system, neglecting the sensible precautions of the natives, and consequently suffer in health, blaming the climate. These huts are furnished only with little square holes for doors, just large enough to crawl through on the hands and knees. The interior arrangements present a scene of the greatest disorder. The mats covering the floor are generally old and rotten. The holes in the mats frequently hitch native feet, causing many tumbles, but it never enters their heads that "a stitch in time saves nine." New or mended mats are only seen among the native aristocrats, but calabashes

for water, grain, or other provisions are invariably allowed to remain in a filthy and unwholesome condition, temporarily repaired until they are quite putrid and give out offensive effluvia. Usually from the straw ceiling hangs a half-putrid fish, forming almost the only means of native hospitality to any stranger, except rice and occasionally an ordinary fowl.

The uncomfortable beds, with which the people content themselves, are improvised by sticking in the ground branches forked at the upper ends supporting other branches laid horizontally, at a height of about eighteen inches from the floor. Over these are spread other smaller branches with most awkward curves and the hardest knots and knobs, covered with mats on which all the family sleep as soundly as the uneasy couch will allow, regardless of the torturing of their joints and limbs. These beds are so narrow that the slumberers must lie one on top of another. So indifferent are they to personal comfort that a tuft of straw suffices for a pillow, and although too well tenanted it is never renewed until decayed as the other furniture. This mode of living and sleeping together would in civilised countries be denounced as provocative of immorality. There is no separation of the sexes, and the offices of nature and domestic life take place without the slightest notion of indecency or shame. The natives, who have been inured to these customs from infancy, are not in any way corrupted, but preserve the strictest morality. With all these disadvantages the people enjoy good health.

The occupations of the men consist of fishing, sleeping, and much dancing, the latter being their only amusement, to which a large portion of their time is devoted. The women are occupied with household duties, and not subject to that ennui from which the fragile ladies of Europe suffer, and waste their time in far more frivolous pursuits than their black-skinned sisters.

With regard to the rearing of children, the native mothers expose them freely to all the varying changes of temperature. Though unclothed, this exposure adds to their natural vigour of constitution. Only during the rainy season are the children allowed to wear cotton shirts. From the age of about seven years they accompany their fathers in fishing, to the woods for fuel, or help in the cultivation of the ground. The natural exercise of the physical powers in these employments develops the muscles, and contributes to the formation of that broad chest which is usually seen in the black.

A similar mode of life to that of the natives by the lake also prevails among the inhabitants of the village N'Dar. N'Dar, being the chief trading place in this district for rice and millet, is frequently enlivened by caravans passing in various directions, and by European and native traders from St. Louis and the interior. In 1855 this village was completely burned by the French, but in a few years it was re-built, and the population doubled, reaching the number of about 500.

The arrival of a caravan from the interior of

Senegal to exchange goods with the lake natives, buy grain, and then proceed to Foss, a few miles south on the same lake, caused some excitement in the village. The caravan consisted of fifteen camels, with attendants, and a small flock of sheep, belonging to one of the Mauris, the remnant of those which had been sold at Richard's Toll on the way to this place. Some of these camels were of a valuable breed, worth £15 each and more (the price of three ordinary camels). Among them was a camel which had broken down on the long and fatiguing journey, and exhausted, it had now dropped on the ground. Efforts were made to resuscitate the worn-out animal by administering water through the nostrils, a practice generally adopted in frequently occurring cases of exhaustion ; but as all means resorted to were of no avail, the animal was mercifully killed, and the carcass cut up for food. The greedy attendants upon the camels forthwith commenced a violent quarrel amongst themselves as to the shares they each claimed. Fists were clenched, knives flourished, loud and angry words threatened a free fight ; but, having given vent to their feelings, angry passions soon subsided, and the division of the meat was mutually agreed upon. The animal which came to this comparatively merciful end of its toil, after long-continued suffering, had borne so far some of the best and highly-esteemed cotton-work, known as " Malam," in pieces 12 feet long by 6 inches broad, manufactured by the women of the tribe of the Toucouleurs, for dresses called " M'Peudel " and for belts.

Numerous articles were unloaded and unpacked while the carcase was being divided. Teeth for fetishes, leopard-skins, leathern bags, purses, pieces of amber, beads, perfumery, looking-glasses, needles, thread, and other commodities were, without delay, spread on mats under the trees, and offered for sale with all the vociferation and gestures of the native "cheap Jacks." Articles of attire were tried on by women and men before offering a price. A curious habit of purchasers is, that if any one selects an article, others desire to have it, taste, smell, or try it on before a final purchase is made, even though plenty of other articles, almost identical, are offered by the vendors. The competition for scented soap and other cosmetics is very keen, and the time occupied in placing scent-bottles to the nasal organs, especially by the women, consumes a large part of the day. This leads to no little confusion, and an immense amount of chattering and delay; but ultimately all goes right, and such a thing as theft is unknown.

The fishermen from the lake came to buy European fish-hooks, and one of them, as a trial, throwing a line with a hook, caught an unexpected fish—a native by the arm. The hook pierced the flesh deeply, and a great commotion ensued among the crowd. The hooked man took the accident very coolly, and, with great composure, declined to have it removed until the compensation for the damage had been agreed upon. His object was to retain the hook for himself, and the matter ended by the damages being settled for five fishes.

During the trading the camel-attendants were besieged by travelling smiths, offering to repair swords, guns, bridles, and saddles. These capable artizans also make and repair native gold ornaments, such as bracelets, ear-rings, and trinkets. Smiths seek work in couples, and while one solicits, the other executes the work under a convenient tree. Their tools are few and simple; a couple of ordinary hammers, two or three files, and a pair of pincers complete the stock. On this occasion the operative smith sat under a tree mending a hoe on a little anvil. By his side was a fire on the ground, with bellows formed of a simple leather bag, blown by one of his sons by compression with the hands. When the bag has served this purpose it is used as the receptacle for tools on the journey.

Travelling carpenters tendered their services to repair any damage to woodwork; but not getting orders from the caravan, they plied their avocation in the huts of the village. Some were engaged to cut down trees from the neighbouring wood, to make drinking-cups and other domestic utensils. The carpenters usually travel with their donkeys to carry tools and materials from place to place, and thus gain a scanty but honest living.

In the midst of the busy scene, a young woman came up with a little child, suffering from cough and loss of appetite, and reduced to the condition of a mere skeleton. She begged medicine and the exercise of the power imputed to white men for cure, presenting as a reward a large basket of millet. A marabout

had treated the child's illness with native medicine and sympathetic appliances by binding a red silk thread around its neck. One end of this thread was cut off, and passed with a needle through a live mouse, which was then allowed to run away and carry off the disease. As the child did actually begin to recover after this treatment, it only confirmed the loving mother in her superstitious belief. Before long the marabout found that the thread, being dirty, had lost the virtue of cure. A new thread was therefore requisite; and the mother begged for no other medicine than this. The belief in the efficacy of "secret prayers" and soothsaying in connection with their healing-art is derived from the custom of the ancient priests in the Egyptian temples, and has found its way through all Africa as well as Europe.

When the importunities of this poor mother ceased, a griot came upon the scene to extol himself in high-flown language; and he informed the woman that if she gave him the basket of millet he could himself cure the child by secret means. A hint given to him that he was trying to swindle the woman, elicited the remark, "Don't put a branch across the road for another man to fall over," after which the crafty griot departed much chagrined, notwithstanding his pretended holiness.

The griots boast that they alone go to heaven after death. If this were so, what a place heaven would be when filled with griots and marabouts (priests)! Having influence over ignorant men, they live upon the credulity of their countrymen, and though

they exercise much power, it is the sentiment of fear which helps them to keep their position, for they are seldom esteemed or respected by men of intellect. The caste of griots has peculiar rules with regard to sepulture. They are not buried like other men ; but, with the view to keep up their *prestige*, the corpse of a griot is suspended by members of his caste in the trunks of hollow trees, to which ladders are placed for the purpose of facilitating the ascent of the souls of the griots to heaven. Their guitars are suspended in the branches above, to mark the resting-place of a holy man. These memorials of the dead are always respected, as is every grave in Africa.

On returning to Richard's Toll it was necessary to repair a leak in the boat. A carpenter, who was supposed to be experienced in naval architecture, was engaged to do this work. He was an uncommon person, working with European tools, and the only one employed by Europeans. After waiting his convenience for an hour or so, he appeared with some pomposity to examine the boat. Though the leak was a small one, he expressed his fear that the boat would have certainly sunk if his assistance had not been sought just in the nick of time. A gift of tobacco did not conduce to speedy workmanship, for he coolly sat in the boat smoking and talking about his great experience and capacity. When urged to work he only promised to make an end of it soon. Finally, he discovered that he had forgotten his tools, and another delay was caused in fetching them. The smoking and talking were repeated, but at length he

set to work, but the work progressed very slowly. Every now and then he rested to relate a fresh story. After much persuasion, the naval architect finished his work, but not before a favourable wind was lost. His work was so bad that, after sailing six miles, at the island of Todd the boat had again to be made water-tight.

Formerly, on this island good cultivation was carried on, and there was also a farm of about thirty ostriches, kept by a Frenchman for the feather trade. On the flooded lands, natives, up to their waists in water, were pulling up bushes and grass out of the softened earth, to get the fields clear for agriculture when the waters had subsided. The current of the river carries away the floated vegetation so pulled up. Natives working in flood save time, inasmuch as "sorghum" requires about six months for ripening, and it is, therefore, necessary to sow it as soon as the floods cease.

CHAPTER VIII.

NATIVE CULTIVATION—RUINED FRENCH SETTLEMENTS—
 FITFUL AGRICULTURE — COTTON — INDIGO — GUM —
 SENEGAL POLICY—GROUND-NUTS.

THE plantations surrounding N'Dar are considered the most favourable in all Senegal district for the growth of the best millets, the *P. Spicata* and the *Sorghum vulgare*. The country does not produce all that its natural advantages are capable of, from the cultivation being mainly restricted to the chiefs and a few richer natives, who alone, by employing slave or other labour, can accumulate stores of grain for disposal to passing caravans and European traders.

The grain is usually kept in special huts, which, although large, are seldom well filled. The more provident natives, in order to preserve their small stores of millet, either hide it in the caverns of rocks, closing the entrance with stones and earth, or bury it in the ground. The object of thus storing corn is

to hide it from their frequent enemies the Mauris, as well as to preserve it from predatory ants who would carry it to their ant-hills, in which famished natives often find a supply to save them from starvation. In periods of devastation of crops by different insects the natives eke out their miserable existence by fishing. The soil is capable of producing several good yields in succession with scarcely any labour in digging, beyond scratching the surface, for five or even more years; yet it is allowed to be grass-covered, and remain unproductive.

Throughout the world misfortunes happen to crops of all kinds, but in civilised countries necessity forces the cultivator not to abandon hope, and try again to recover his losses. In Western Africa a different spirit actuates the natives as well as Europeans. The former only awake from their dreamy apathetic life to work in the fields for a short time, when they again slumber till the following harvest. They then gather in the crops and sell them to European and native traders, who carry on the corn traffic chiefly by boats from the Upper Senegal down the river to St. Louis. In this trade natives of both the Upper and Lower Senegal engage only for a brief period, and again fall into a dreamy state of hand-to-mouth existence until the working season recurs.

The natives do not follow the European custom of sowing grain deep, but simply cast it on the ground, over which they have first walked in order to make a slight depression, and then lightly cover it. The little millet is sown in small holes in which a

few grains are placed. The blade soon springs up, and in a few days the field is covered with a beautiful green, and an early harvest is obtained. If the millet be sown deeply it is almost sure either to be eaten by worms, become rotten, or when grown up the harvest is delayed and the crop runs the risk of being scorched up by the heat before maturity. In any case the corn is exposed to the ravages of numerous birds, and the natives must be watchful to save it.

Frequent changes of locality, enforced by inundations of the rivers, compelling the natives to lead nomad lives, hinder the development of the natural resources of their land, and prevent the building of houses of a lasting character. On the elevated ground the people plant the small millet, and live in temporary straw huts until the inundations cease; then they return, about December, to the abandoned villages to recommence the cultivation of large millet. These simple villagers near Richard's Toll, though periodically obliged to remove their homes, are better off than those living on more elevated but salted ground destitute of water.

The sluggish negroes have but little incentive to work when in a state of liberty. The freedmen of Senegambia, who have adopted Christianity, are, for the most part, if possible, more lazy, independent, and impracticable than the rest of the natives. Their perverseness fully accounts for the regrets of some of the traders for the old days when niggers, more or less, did what they were required to do, and when business, in consequence, went merrily forward

by roads and rivers. From the want of impelling power upon the contented mind of the native to induce him to seize opportunities for his own material advantage, Senegambia remains, in all respects, in a stagnant and semi-dreamy condition. There is an absence, indeed, in all this part of the world of those compelling forces without which no nation has progressed either politically, commercially, socially, or intellectually. It seems as though Africa would initiate a course of improvement only when Europe has become densely over-populated and the miseries of life outweigh happiness.

It is a misfortune for Africa that the prosperity of colonisation depends to a great extent on successful cultivation of soil, outlay of capital, energy, and emigration. If these were not requisite Senegambia might even now have flourishing settlements. Endeavours hitherto made in the interests of colonisation have failed, in spite of all the money spent for years past. The only reason known for non-success, is the alleged "climate," while in reality settlements, such as at Richard's Toll, established about thirty years previously by the noble Mr. Richard, did not succeed through a long series of mistakes and want of well-directed industry. The spirit which actuated most of the colonists was the greed of gain, monopoly, political and private intrigues, corrupt local official administration, internal disorders, and unscrupulous desire to take advantage of the natives as well as of their compatriots. This led to the downfall of Richard's Toll and other places. Instead

of developed trade, with busy navigation up and down the river, the latter is now the haunt of almost innumerable crocodiles.

The settlers instead of attending to agriculture, on the plea of climatic insalubrity, indulged in the sport of hunting and in debauchery. Their irregular living caused many deaths: some were drowned, snapped up by crocodiles, or overtaken by fatal illness, while others turned their thoughts to what they called "trading" with the natives, creating amongst the latter a spirit of discredit and distrust. The remaining settlers, finding no prospect of successful development for their holdings, returned to Europe. The want of perseverance and experience on their part has shown itself everywhere. They were even more indolent than the natives, whose labour was secured with great difficulty, who knew nothing of the proper modes of cultivation, and required constant supervision to keep them to their work, in much the same way as children require to be kept to their tasks.

In disorganised Senegal no precaution was taken by the weak colonists to save their plantations from avoidable damages. The crops unprotected were eaten and trodden down by cattle. Fires kindled by the natives in the close vicinity of plantations, to clear the ground of rank, coarse herbage, and induce the growth of rich succulent pasture for their flocks and herds, frequently, by spreading, destroyed crops which the careless white settlers had cultivated. Frequent change in the mode of culture, and substi-

tuting one kind of product for another, could result only in ruin. The locality might have been a flourishing colony, with fertile valleys surmounted by thick woodlands, but was left a comparative desert, with the sad mementoes of ruined habitations, neglected and weed-overgrown gardens, with a few orange trees, cotton, and other plants. These failures resulted not from the climate nor from the quality of the soil.

The silkworm was introduced at great expense, the region being well suited for the production of silk ; but, unfortunately, a season of dryness followed, the worms perished, and the settlers made no further attempt. Tobacco was grown on the banks of the river. Cayenne pepper and the cochineal cactus also succeeded. The sugar-cane was planted in swamps and localities subject to constant inundation, and although the plant grew luxuriantly, it yielded no sugar.

Cotton was sown haphazard, either in ground encumbered with underwood or creeping plants, where it became choked ; or where the driving sand buried the crop. In many cases the plant had a sickly appearance, owing to the swampy soil, which was too rich in one place and too poor in another. The plants were destroyed by blight or insects, and the planters lost heart. Cotton was tried in low districts shortly before inundation, and the seeds were washed away. In high localities, where it should be dibbled previously in, this was done after inundation ; the soil became too dry, and the plants perished

for want of irrigation. In some instances, where cotton was grown on ground too poor, the necessary pruning was neglected, or done too late in the season. Under favourable circumstances, with good knowledge of the treatment required, most excellent cotton may be produced in considerable abundance, command a good price in the European markets, and lead to a further exchange of different commodities.

As a proof that cotton may be grown plentifully, "Labat" states that in 1824 in Senegal existed flourishing plantations of medical herbs, cochineal cactus, and cotton; and of the latter there were then growing over 3,000,000 plants. So rapidly was the cultivation of cotton extended, that in the same year nineteen fresh establishments were added to the nine previously existing. The prospect of success at this time was great. Philanthropical companies were organized, offering large plots of ground and advances of capital to those who would till them. At the period when hope was brightest, came one of the occasional failures which occur in all branches of cultivation. The cotton-planters lost heart, and the gradual withdrawal both of capital and labour contributed to produce the very result which the projectors were so desirous to avoid. The acreage under cultivation became much diminished, European labourers disappeared, and cotton-growing was reduced to a minimum in the course of five years, while attention was paid to indigo-planting on a small scale.

In 1827 native marauders recommenced their brigandage all over the Wollof country, even attack-

ing French vessels on the Senegal river. These disorders lasted a whole year, until they led to a brief war with the French at Dogana, a station beyond Richard's Toll; but no beneficial results to trade followed this punishment of the Mauris, as the war was waged with little energy.

In 1828, after these disturbances, cotton became productive, showing the natural aptitude of the soil; but the cultivators were unable to continue its growth, having already expended the means at their disposal on indigo in the hope of competing with that grown in India. The planters diverting themselves first with cotton and then with indigo, paid insufficient attention to both. The anticipated competition of their indigo in the European markets failed; and in its turn, like cotton, indigo-cultivation fell to the lowest ebb. Another effort was made to grow indigo by French companies in the Wollof country, near Richard's Toll, in 1830-31; after the failure of which, all European plantations in Senegal were given up, but the managers and agents returned to France with considerable wealth.

A final effort at cotton-planting was made in 1861 by the Wollofs (or Oualós), encouraged by the French. An unusual inundation destroyed the new plantation, and put an end to any further trial. The enterprising French from time to time, with their buoyant spirit, tried to overcome the constant difficulties, which appear too great ever to be surmounted unless the cultivation of the soil be carried on without interruption.

In 1834, seven years after the war at Dogana, the Mauris renewed their brigandage, joined by the Wollofs, who were nominally under French protection. The French, disregarding previous native attacks, then found they had to fight not only with the Mauris, but with the Wollofs as well. The natives, having mistaken European philanthropy for weakness or even cowardice, frequently revolted and ravaged the country, thereby destroying social life and the progress of the Senegambia colonies. The constant knaveries practised on both sides often brought the parties to blows, though no serious fighting has taken place in the region since the defeat of Oumar at Medina in 1854. Philanthropy towards semi-savages is beneficent only if properly applied and at proper time.

The Trarzas Mauries, like the Braknas, for generations resisted the direct interference of the French in the gum trade, and repeated treaties on paper have been made for the regulation of the traffic. By successively reducing prices and increasing the measures in which gum was bought, the Europeans no longer gave for the single natural crop of December a sufficient remuneration. The ingenuity of the Moors was taxed to find a means of continuing the business in the face of the falling value of natural gum. The forcing of a second crop in March was the Moors' ready but eventually ruinous reply. To meet the process of increased extortion by the continual enlargement of the measures, the natives resorted to a device to cover their losses by swelling

the December crop and mixing it with the moist gum of March, the heat of the later season not being sufficient to make it crisp. The incisions made in the trees cause a swelling of the fibres, followed by an exudation of gum through a species of inflammation thereby set up. Such operations injure the trees, which soon dry up; and as the practice continued almost from the commencement of the trade, the forests have from year to year diminished.

Since the days when the coast trade was given up by Europeans, the Mandingos gradually monopolised all trade, successfully competing with the former by buying the native goods first hand, thereby deriving the profit which Europeans previously gained through direct intercourse with the people. In consequence of this monopoly the trades in many other articles, such as ivory, ostrich feathers, raw hides, wax, millet, and other goods are now practically given up by white men. The trade having fallen into native hands the general traffic has much decreased, especially since the abolition of the slave trade.

Europeans attracted to Africa for commercial purposes appear to be more ready at ruining the trade than at increasing it, through the absence of a reasonable system. They act for their own supposed interests, and try to reap a harvest without first sowing the seed. This fallacious process has been carried on for centuries, and if the same policy be continued it may go on *ad infinitum*, until such a crisis arises that Gambia will fall to pieces.

In Senegambia both French and English, as close

neighbours, ought to go hand-in-hand, develop their colonies and trade without any national hate, jealousy, or enmity, and with combined efforts push on, first, the progress of Africa, and then think about their own interests. Unfortunately such a system is not adopted and never has been, for both work in antagonism to each other. Neither colony is actuated by a large, liberal, and intelligent policy so necessary for the success of any great enterprise.

The French have prohibited all foreign vessels navigating the Senegal beyond St. Louis at which port all competition with them ceases. Practically, therefore, there is an entire monopoly in Senegal, which tends to prevent the further development of both colonies. Competition is needed to produce a healthy system of trade, as well as cheapness of goods.

The frequent severe lessons taught to France have at last cleared her way to see things in a more proper light. During the progressive increase of her population the means of providing for it by new colonies were neglected; stagnation set in, and revolution followed stagnation, and only through mighty but bitter convulsions has she reached her present point of civilisation. She has realised the necessity of colonisation, and is now making efforts to settle Senegal, knowing that capital invested is not lost, although no immediate return can be expected.

France ensures her progress through the gradual civilisation of the natives, whose taste for future agriculture must thereby develop. This leads the

former to look hopefully for the day when Senegal will rise and acquire an important trade, opening up a valuable outflow of cheap native produce, and by giving the natives more profit, stimulating them to greater energy.

The French, being in contact with the natives, secure the trade of Gambia, in the same way that all small streams are absorbed by large rivers. The French now energetically ascend the Senegal river to the Govina rock, in order to still further divert the Gambia trade from the British. They proceed down the river Falémé to cut off the trade of the interior, and thus intercept the caravans passing to the Gambia. Their attention also is directed to tapping the trade of Gambia by caravans going to Sierra Leone, in which they will in all probability succeed. Their efforts are keenly directed to the gold mines of the Bambouk country, which the English think scarcely worth their attention. All negotiations the latter at present make with the King of Bondou are watched by the French. They being in equally friendly relations with that native potentate, and with a far-sighted policy supply the people of that district with goods of a superior quality to those sent from England. Although the French cannot be credited with a too great amount of energy, still their enterprise contrasts very strongly with the phlegmatic spirit characterising Gambia.

The French showed more wisdom with regard to ground nuts. They took that trade in hand, and have so arranged that only their subjects could

export with profit this produce to Marseilles, imposing on all foreign vessels almost prohibitive duties. In addition to this, French settlers manage to import from Europe certain goods free of custom charges, and thus obtain higher profit in exchanging their own imported goods for native produce than it is possible for the English to do.

The rate of duty imposed upon British goods exported to the Gambia is so high, that the English trader cannot compete with the French in buying ground-nuts or selling them in Europe. This gave a monopoly to France of the principal article of English export from the Gambia possessions. The first export of ground-nuts from Senegambia was in 1837 by the French, who knew how to put a right value on this produce, having exported in one year no less a quantity than 15,705 tons. Since then they have encouraged this cultivation not only in their own colony, but also upon the Upper Senegal, where by means of capital and influence large tracts are devoted to ground-nuts. The French have turned these nuts to profitable account, extracting from them valuable illuminating and lubricating oils, and the so-called olive oil extensively used for preserving the delicate sardines. It enters into the manufacture of soap, and, by design or accident, the nut is mixed into the composition of chocolate. The nut after subserving all these processes is not exhausted, as the residuum compressed into cakes forms food for cattle.

The English neglect this valuable product, al-

though many migratory natives have settled on the banks and creeks of the Gambia for the cultivation of ground-nuts for which the soil is well suited on both banks of the river, and affords a large field for general agriculture. In Senegal all the productive alluvial soil, chiefly composed of argillaceous sands intermixed with shells, is only on the left bank; while on the other bank, and farther on, there is nothing but naked rock and sand. The French, to overcome these disadvantages and to clear the way for future success, sent scientific men to explore the country. To form lasting friendly relations with the various chiefs, the French have established a school at St. Louis, in which the children of chiefs are educated. In addition to this the French, by their attention to ground-nuts, are recouping themselves for all losses sustained by their former mistakes and injudicious dealings with the natives.

CHAPTER IX.

GAMBIA TRIBES—ENGLISH POLICY—NATIVE WARS AND
THEIR RESULTS—CHIEF MABA—KING MACADOU—
COLONISATION—CHIMERICAL PROJECTS.

IN the preceding chapter a series of well-known but avoidable mistakes made by the French settlers in Senegal have been sufficiently described, and prove that the non-progress of the colony arose from neither climate nor soil. The energy now manifested by the French will confirm this conclusion. The day may not be far distant when Senegal will attain a flourishing condition.

A different spirit, however, was manifested in the British settlements on the Gambia, where scarcely any trial of the capabilities of the locality has been made. The attempt to introduce cultivation has been ludicrously small.

Imitation is one of the strongest habits of mankind, be it of good or bad. In the case of the Gambia

settlements the latter was preferred to the former. It was not thought worth while to ascertain the character and habits of those with whom the settlers had to deal. These people were Sonninkées (nomad pagans), great enemies of Mahometism and of the Mandingos. Both live on the Gambia river, and are engaged in almost constant conflict on religious grounds alone. The Sonninkées, from 1861, being disturbed by the Mahometan tribes, have gradually emigrated from the Gambia shores and abandoned their peaceful cultivation. The marabouts, not content with persecuting the Sonninkées by burning their villages, killing the inhabitants, and taking away their children as slaves, quarrelled among themselves. At Bardabou, fifteen miles inland from the river shore, the marabouts still continue fighting, seizing children and selling them into slavery to different tribes at the price of £10 each. In the meantime the Gambia authorities appeared disinclined to stop such practices, and quietly allowed them to be continued, to the infinite damage of English *prestige* and interests.

The Sonninkées, before and since they were known to Europeans, spent their lives in cultivating ground-nuts. At the end of June they settle on the creeks of the Gambia river in small hired plantations, and in December return to their families in their own country with whatever small gains they have made. The Mandingos, who own most of the land on the Gambia river, are bad agriculturists, and what little soil they cultivate is tilled by their slaves only for

their own use. The great cultivators of ground-nuts are the Tilliebunkas and Serawallies (Serahoolis), with whom the French always kept on good terms. All other nomad cultivators on lands bordering creeks chiefly depend upon the assistance of these two tribes, which have developed their agricultural ability to the extent that an acre of land often yields crops to the value of £33 sterling. Through their want of means the tillage is restricted to a small quantity of land.

The English, in imitation of the French, tried to establish cotton plantations, but in such localities where ground-nuts had been successfully cultivated, instead of encouraging that cultivation to which the natives have been all their lives accustomed. The latter, in their simplicity trusting to the superior wisdom of white men, substituted for nuts the growing of cotton, without having the slightest idea as to utilising it. Notwithstanding all these circumstances, in 1864 the English exported about twenty tons of fair average quality cotton as a trial. This was so satisfactory a result for the English that they gave no further encouragement to the natives to grow either cotton or ground-nuts. The small intellect of the semi-savage was utterly unable to comprehend such an enlightened policy, especially when they found cotton-growing a losing game. The plant yielded only one crop in the year, and required continuous labour and attention for several months, being exposed all the year round to the ravages of enemies and insects; while the ground-

nuts only run that risk for one-third of the year, and once planted hardly require any further attention. The nomad is unoccupied till reaping time, when he pays a small custom to the landowners. The Soninkées for these reasons gave up growing cotton, which the English attributed to the laziness of the people and bad land.

The experiment of growing cotton on the Gambia was a palpable mistake, there being no influx of capital to promote the trade, nor increase of colonisation as in Senegal. The settlers made their best efforts to revive the falling colony, but unfortunately the result was a leap out of the frying-pan into the fire. This greatly discouraged them, although Gambia presents better facilities for cultivation in general than Senegal. In the former place the people, being Mahometans, drink but little brandy, and consequently display a higher morality; while in Senegal the native will do nothing without bribes of spirits, which is a great hindrance to progress.

The present position of Gambia is that of a mouse in a trap. On both sides, north and south, French influence is in operation, and consequently every inconsiderate act in trade or with the natives on the part of the English can only result to the advantage of the French.

The English policy on the Gambia appears to be to look from under the sheltering wing of the French; that is, if the French trade progresses and the natives are civilised by French influence and energy, then the Gambia natives will also become civilised. This

to some extent is true; only under such circumstances the French will be regarded by the natives with respect, while the English will be held up to ridicule, as even at present seems to be the case. The actual colonial policy, both English and French, raises a strong spirit of mistrust in the minds of the natives, who find it impossible to decide which is the better. This causes the natives invariably not only to lose their respect for white men, but, seeing in their actions mutual hatred and their forces disconnected, native fears vanish. The effect of Franco-English counter-policy is like two horses pulling in opposite directions. The natives are encouraged in wars against themselves, as well as against Europeans, by the indifference of the latter.

A short *resumé* of one of the many African wars, showing their injurious effect upon trade, may be here given. In 1861 the right shore of the Gambia was in a state of revolution, and great disturbance amongst the natives. Indiscriminate slaughter of men, women, and children, and depredations of all kinds were committed between the rival native tribes, until the elements of their social life were disorganised, and the natives were compelled to "tighten their hunger-belts." The English comforted themselves with the delusion that when the native conflict had arrived at such a pitch as to damage the English interest, the latter would then have plenty of time to stop the struggle.

After the disturbances of 1861 had continued for some time the English, assisted by the intelligent

chief Maba (Mussalman), sent an expedition against Rip, and destroyed its capital Badilou. The marabouts at that time observed a spirit of neutrality. The king of Rip ordered his son to assassinate Maba, who, on learning of this, killed the king's son, declared a holy war, and in revenge killed the king himself. From that time Maba appeared in the character of a second Oumar, also converting pagan natives to Mahometism. The religious war declared by Maba, the deposition by the French of Macadou, the drunkard king of Cayor, and other occurrences, caused extreme excitement among the people on the right shore of the Gambia. Many towns, lives, and much property were sacrificed, and the trade of the district fell. This state of things continued for a whole year, when a fresh and more serious war broke out.

During this period the confidence of the Mahometans in Maba grew, whereby his influence and power increased. The clever Maba, with a view to ensure success in his design, promised the dethroned king Macadou (who by this time had collected a native force) to make him king of Saloum, on condition that he abandoned his intemperate habits and became a marabout. The latter, intoxicated with the prospect of becoming king of Saloum, readily acceded to this, and joined his own forces to those of Maba. Acting in concert, they vigorously attacked Tiket, where Samba Laoubé, the son of Macadou, with his forces were routed.

After this success the conquerors went to Kahone,

and came to a factory called Kaolakh, containing a plentiful store of intoxicants. Maba, knowing the weakness of Macadou, felt sure he would make a beast of himself, and thus give him (Maba) a good reason for not fulfilling the promise of making Macadou king of Saloum. The latter found the temptation of strong liquor too great to resist, and in celebration of the victory he, and some of his adherents, drank to such an extent that they all fell helpless to the ground.

While Macadou was enjoying himself after his fashion, Maba, leaving him behind, without delay marched to Rip. The former with great difficulty succeeded in again joining Maba, when the latter learned at Coogni that the Tiedos of Samba-Laoubé had attacked Signy, whereupon both marched to the place and completely destroyed the forces of Samba-Laoubé. This still further increased the forces of Maba on the right bank of the Gambia. Shortly afterwards Macadou returned to his family at Malem, but was driven out of his country by the marabouts, and died suddenly at Sine in 1863, in all probability having been poisoned by the king of that place.

In the first half of the same year Maba was continuing his ravages on the left shore of the Saloum. This war completely destroyed the prosperity of the whole of this country, which has never since been regained. The population on the left migrated to the right shore of the Gambia, and this proved, although not at first perceptible, a severe blow to all trade in the colony.

It is evident that the progress of Africa is encompassed by great difficulties, there having been no substantial improvement made up to the present time. All that has been done for centuries past is gradually going backwards, and colonisation and other African matters have not been put on a proper footing. Not a gleam of desire to look beyond the dark curtains veiling the future has been shown. The fact that, with the rapid increase of nations, the increase of forced agriculture can only save Europe from those frightful crises in mundane history which are the lock and key of progress and civilisation, is not yet realised. Is it really wise, when the happiness of mankind is at stake, still to wait for the heavy lash of misfortune and distress to impel progress in the right direction? All is well at its proper moment, as the skill of the physician may be the means of saving his patient's life if invoked in due time.

England, with a population overcrowded and many suffering from unavoidable starvation and misery, strange to say, makes less efforts than France for its African colonies, especially that of the Gambia, and allows even the French almost to monopolize the trade of that part of the world.

Town or country life, as existing in England, concurrently with an increasing population, generates idleness, degrades the intellectual power, and diminishes the energy of the lower orders who cannot find work, producing ultimately in them a state not unlike savage barbarism. Yet, the mode in which this class

is treated by the noble and universally known philanthropy of England does more harm to it and the whole population than good, by increasing the evil instead of providing an effectual remedy. England's philanthropic treatment of this class only encourages them in idleness. They will not move whilst the system affords them sustenance. Why should not such people be made useful as colonists? They are, as a rule, strong and able-bodied men. Their labour in the settlements might be advantageous to themselves and both their adopted and mother countries if directed to the planting of cotton, indigo, ground-nuts, corn, and other produce.

It should not be forgotten that every man emigrating from England makes his fatherland so much the richer in capital and fertility of soil. Under present circumstances, land cannot be allowed to lie fallow, because from year to year its products increase in value. It may become necessary some day to cultivate soil on the roofs of houses, or cattle as well as men will have to die or live on the air. It is all very well to speak about importing corn, American or Australian beef, and that money can buy all things. It can only do so when there is something to buy; but money itself cannot be eaten. The actual richness of a country like England depends on well-organised colonies, and, therefore, none of them should be left to perish.

Gambia may be said to be a perishing colony, and the longer it is neglected the more difficult it will be to place it in its proper position. Is there

not sufficient capital available to establish in Gambia a colony of men numerous and strong enough to really make progress in colonisation? The expense would undoubtedly not ruin England, and a judicious outlay for that purpose would be rewarded by a tenfold return. The "climate" need not be pleaded as an excuse for neglecting to undertake this duty. English energy, when thus directed, would succeed where the efforts of others so frequently have failed. Settlers with willing hearts to cultivate the soil, still capable of production, would set an example proving contagious, and incite the indolent natives to work, and do their best to reinvigorate the continent of Africa.

Has the great energy and enterprise of former ages which characterised Greece, Rome, and other nations really departed, leaving in their place only the capacity to project chimerical undertakings? Has the enterprising spirit of the great British nation really fallen into a lethargic dream? This cannot and must not be believed. However, there is nothing now before Gambia but famine and death. All European effort seems directed to luxury instead of reasonably improving waste land. Emigration and circulation of money made Great Britain rich and strong, and this affords a strong reason why the condemned Gambia ought not to be neglected. Should it be alleged that England having too many colonies, is so rich as to require nothing more, and simply retains Gambia as a plaything?

Colonisation, rightly directed, would give a better

result to Africa than many of the projects put forward—such projects as sinking Artesian wells, with the philanthropic idea of affording a welcome draught of water to a few camels while they are transporting “large quantities of goods laden on thirty thousand camels (!!)” and singing, with the camel-drivers, the German verse:—

“There I would like to go with you in the lovely land where the pomegranates flourish!”

Projects have also been set on foot for the construction of a railway in Sahara to transport “thousands of tons of precious commodity.” Florid lectures have been delivered on the duty and beauty of doing this, with most convincing calculations, showing clear dividends of at least a hundred per cent. The probability that there may be a necessity for keeping so many hundreds of labourers, with shovels ready to load the goods-trucks with the shifting sand of the desert, is carefully ignored. Will the winds keep the line clear for the transit of the “enormous” traffic that the construction of the Trans-Sahara Railway cannot possibly fail to develop? Such golden prospects could only be held out under the inspiration of a careful study of Aladdin’s dream. When the locomotive is stopped by impenetrable sand-drifts, Aladdin’s carpet will not be spread upon which the priceless merchandize could be wafted across the desert, and, without the vulgar use of porters and cranes, snugly stowed in the holds of swift steamers anxiously awaiting its

arrival in the ports, where these goods are to realise profits only fancied in dreams.

Other projectors, to contradict the illusions about railways in the desert, or to induce the investment of capital for objects of vital importance, gravely propose, instead of making railways across the desert, a more sensible thing would be to drown Africa by cutting a small canal of only ----- miles long. Through this canal the blue and sparkling waters of the briny ocean would ripple over the dead sands, and on the glassy waves steamers laden with rich cargoes could run to and fro between most commodious ports, fitted with all modern labour-saving appliances for the transport of the priceless products of the beautiful sandy wastes. Deep is to be the sea with no sand-banks allowed, unless accidental, unexpected, or by special desire. The last days of Pompeii never come, so it is hoped that never will the sands of Africa block the canal, or fill the amateur sea with sand. The climate must of necessity immediately change, and along the shores over which the sea is to break its silvery waves, rich vegetation is to grow, beautiful plantations are to flourish for several centuries, and trees will spring up (Jack-in-the-box fashion) yielding bountiful crops of dates and other luscious fruits.

This effected, the European capitalists might then crown themselves with laurel wreaths, sit on the shores of their beautiful manufactured sea, listen to the musical murmurs of the waves, smoke the calian, and thank God for having been the means of

doing so much good, and so easily solving the vexed problem of African colonisation.

Africa, throughout its sandy length and breadth, is intermixed with deep ravines and dried-up river beds. The enormous sea formerly existing has left only long patches of plains running from west to east, but this is no proof that another sea may be formed. Nature herself is always advancing, and leaves her eternal stamp on our globe. Humanity, with all its reason, and unlimited capital, cannot effect some of the results which Nature alone can produce after the lapse of vast periods of time. For one drop of the sea let into the deserts by any human agency, all-powerful Nature will take out two somewhere else. She will find an outlet to make things go her own way, and amuse herself by setting at nought the puny efforts of man. In revenge, or in sport, if Nature allows the water to be let into the desert, she may speedily convert the beautiful sparkling sea, with its foaming waves, into such deadly pestilential swamps that neither the lagoons of Lagos, nor all the swamps of the West Coast of Africa combined, can give even a faint idea of. Then the climate will, indeed, be wonderfully changed, but in such a manner that the inventors of these great ideas will not even dare to stay long in proximity with the deadly monster of their own creation. Who is to pay for it, if this happens, but the sanguine European settlers and the unoffending natives of Africa?

The calculation of the quantities of rock and

sand to be excavated to form the canal, estimated at about three hundred millions of francs, may prove in fact very inadequate. It is not the difficulty and expense which would hinder the carrying out of the mighty enterprise, but there is a perplexing point for the consideration of philanthropists. It is not the failure of the project, or the possible vast pestilential swamp, that troubles the heads of the projectors, but the great puzzle is *dates*, because Arabs eat them and find shade under date-trees which no doubt will be drowned if the sea be made. Whether the natives will not also be drowned there is no necessity for even conjecturing.

The principal thing is *dates*, and the main question is, what will become of them? In any case they must perish, either by drowning or by draught, and are now dying out through the great heat and want of moisture. The poetical name given by the Arabs to the date trees, "King and father of Oases," only hides painful sorrow under this name. It shows how few and small are the oases and numbers of date trees in the vast wastes of drifting sand. Who knows how many of these kingly trees have been already buried since the time when the vast sands of the deserts drove out of Africa the Romans, who left there only a few stones as memorials of their departed greatness. Egypt has also left its pyramids to indicate to the present generation the death of a vast space of land.

Regardless of all these warnings, illusions exist that Africa may be at once resuscitated by "desert

railways, sinking Artesian wells, the formation of artificial seas," and other projects. Meanwhile the coast regions, where colonies could flourish, and with their progress gradually ameliorate the interior by planting trees and establishing a well-organised system of irrigation, are totally lost sight of. The longer the delay, the sooner the death of Africa will be hastened and the end must come. Every hour so many cubic feet of water dry and evaporate, and a greater space of land is buried under sand. The population of Europe becomes denser every day, and must result at no distant time in untold miseries not at present realised, but of which we are the only cause and are willingly preparing for our starving successors.

CHAPTER X.

ABOLITION OF SLAVERY AND ITS EFFECTS — MISUSED RIGHTS — AFRICAN SLAVES AND MASTERS — RUSSIAN LANDLORDS AND SERFS — EXAGGERATED CRUELTY — FREEDMEN AND FREEDOM — LOOK AT HOME.

THE suppression of slavery is considered by Africans to be the ruin of their general trade. From an utilitarian point of view alone, the traders' arguments are difficult to combat. The slave trade once abolished, it would be a step backwards to revert to the principle that the strongest was ever in the right. The "race for wealth" in the 16th century would present to the mind of a Frith a series of tragedies of the most terrible character. What dangers would the Spanish, the Portuguese, and the English navigators of that age not have dared, in the west and the east, or in Africa, to gratify mad avarice? Chivalry was dead, and brutality had taken its place. Superstition gilded murder with piety, and Catholicism, professed by most of the

adventurers of Europe, was a cloak for the committal of deeds of incredible horror against all who were not Catholics.

The traffic in slaves was carried on centuries before the uprising of the spirit of geographical discovery and commercial enterprise, which characterised the 15th and 16th centuries so strongly. In the times of the Pharoahs, the Phœnicians, and the Romans the lot of the slave was not one of such unmitigated cruelty and misery as it became under the avaricious adventurers to whom we owe the beginning of colonisation. Up to the time when the French proclaimed the principle of liberty to the negro, the traffic existed in all its hideousness in the colonies occupied by the English, as well as by the French. In the former the slave trade continued much longer to flourish.

The effects of the abolition of slavery soon made themselves felt. One of the most remarkable results was the diminution of those deadly conflicts between the different races of Europeans, which had so long prevailed among the slave-dealers. The humanitarian impulse initiated by the French at length extended to the English. When these two nations united in recognising by law the right of the negro to personal freedom, their internecine warfare came quickly to an end, without improving Africa. Before the abolition of the slave trade the natives tacitly accepted the slave condition; since then the latter have adopted the principle of having equal rights with the Mauris. Hence there has been a growing

spirit of opposition, if not of hatred, on both sides. Only a few years elapsed after the abolition of slavery before the natives began to feel the weight of the granted liberty pressing heavily upon their shoulders.

Since the abolition of the slave trade the Mauris find great difficulty in procuring a sufficient supply of labour for the cultivation of the land and for tending flocks and herds. The want of labour diminishes the production of the land, causing famine. Consequently, instead of peacefully cultivating the soil, they are driven to wage war in order to acquire captives for the supply of labour, leading to inevitable bloodshed and devastation between the agriculturists on one side of rivers, and the nomads and warriors on the other. The regions occupied by agriculturists are comparatively fertile, while those of the nomads are poor and sterile, causing frequent migration in search of food and pasture. With every change of locality previous advance in settled life is lost, and necessitates a fresh beginning for the nomads. The agriculturists usually suffer more from such changes than the nomads. The former are acquainted with the capabilities and the proper mode of cultivation of the soil, from which they are either deported by the nomads to inferior land, or cultivate their own under the oppression of forced task-masters in a manner different to that to which they are accustomed, and lose all heart in the work. In either case, with or without slavery, both parties suffer; but in the latter the sufferings are greater, there

being no power of enforcing either good or bad labour.

This naturally strengthens the Mauris' desire of obtaining the labour of captives taken in war, and also urges them to fortify their present positions. They fear the latter may at any moment be taken from them by Europeans who, in their frequent wars, manifestly desire to obtain more territory under the pretext of promoting trade. The natives narrowly watch the tactics of paroxysmal wars of Europeans, who after gaining some successes, instead of pushing on and striking a decisive blow, stop and rest awhile. This inevitably creates on both sides a feeling of the impossibility of effecting conclusive arrangements, and frequent conflicts are the result. The continual native troubles and internecine wars among themselves and with Europeans only ruin the thinly populated country. The more natives are killed and poor villages and property are destroyed, the less progress and increase of trade can be expected.

Whether the slave trade or slavery can ever be abolished entirely is a very doubtful question. Slavery in some form or other, be it for domestic purposes, trade or agriculture, is a necessity, without which Africa would sink to a lower state than it now occupies or has previously done.

The natural indolence of any savage, or semi-savage, induces him, as far as possible, to avoid any exertion provided his hunger is satisfied. Land requires hands to make it productive, but natives will not work even for wages, therefore the African

cultivator has no alternative but to employ enforced labour on the part of captured or purchased slaves. Both master and slave are thus provided with food, whereas, in the absence of such means, the natives very frequently have to face starvation, and to escape death many of them willingly submit to bondage.

Many slaves in Africa lead happier lives than vast numbers of white men in civilised countries. Good African slaves are kindly treated, and never sold unless of bad character. Amongst Mahometans especially they are not only frequently liberated after seven years' service; allowed freely to express their opinions, which, if reasonable, are acted upon; but often form part of their master's family, and even marry into it. Many of those who regain their liberty have no wish to leave their masters. Slaves are generally of the lowest class of the pagan people, for Mahometans are seldom subject to bondage or sold. This induces the pagan, in order to preserve liberty, to adopt Mahometism, if even only nominally. By putting too early an end to slavery, Europeans being unable to introduce Christianity so readily as the Mahometans introduce Islam, the former will hinder the progress of Mahometism and deteriorate the social happiness of the pagans.

Europeans, knowing their own requirements, and judging by the wants of civilised society, draw the conclusion that slavery is inimical to the progress of civilisation. They are but little acquainted with the life and wants of Africans. Before pronouncing

a sweeping denunciation of slavery everywhere, sufficient allowance ought to be made for the views of intelligent natives, better able to form an opinion on this important subject, as regards the existing social and moral life of Africans. Slavery in Africa proves only the want of labour and the poverty of the soil in different localities.

A simple question may be put to philanthropists in the words of the natives, "Have white men nothing to do at home, and therefore they come here to interfere with us without knowing what they are about? If they deprive us of slaves, will they come and work themselves in the cultivation and harvesting of our corn?"

Agricultural machinery will not be readily adopted in Africa, at least during the present age, although the cultivation of land is difficult, and grain is required every day for food. *Sorghum vulgare* occupies much time and labour to separate the husks from the grain. The stamping upon and throwing up of the corn to winnow it take a whole day's labour of a slave, who is only employed for this purpose, to prepare a sufficient quantity for a day's food to the family, and give a mouthful or two to the workman. The winnowing requires great attention, for if not thoroughly separated from the husks, the grain is very injurious to health. If slavery be abolished, it would be impossible to get such work performed by free labour. As the benevolent preachers of liberty would be the first to refuse to do such work, would it not be better to leave well alone, to restrict their efforts in

that direction to preventing the export of slaves, and devote their superabundant philanthropy to alleviating misery among white men in their own countries.

Russia may be cited as an example of the ill effect of abolishing, too rashly, serfdom. The freedom of the serfs has proved very far from a real blessing to that nation. In many parts of the empire the noblemen's estates which were cultivated by serf labour, affording ample means of subsistence to large populations, have since the abolition of serfdom fallen out of cultivation, impoverishing those who are now free—to starve! They feel in their liberty the pangs of hunger, are wretchedly clothed, and eke out a miserable subsistence, some as porters in the markets or selling small quantities of herrings, apples, sbitin (honey-tea), and other commodities. There is rarely anyone to whom they can apply for a cow, corn, or other assistance which a peasant may require. In the village he formerly inhabited, horses, cows, and sheep were plentiful, and in case of necessity a “pomeschik” (landlord) always supplied his wants. Now in the same village there are to be found only two or three miserable cows, tumble-down huts, and a few fowls. Villages in which the miserable inhabitants have hardly a crust of bread to offer are frequent, and starvation is not uncommon. Such is the actual state of the free Russian peasantry.

Among the pomeschiks, who were formerly rich, many have not at present five pounds a month to live upon. Such is the effect of modern emancipa-

tion. Many a peasant regrets his liberty and would be happy to resume his former position. Not unfrequently is the proverb heard among them "Near is the elbow, but you cannot bite it." Instead of being in good cultivation the fields are neglected for want of labourers, yet masses of drunken peasants are to be seen everywhere.

The key-note of the abolition of the slave trade having been struck in Europe by one man as a novelty, the subject was immediately taken up by many others, not from their own consideration, but because it was the fashion to cry out for its abolition, which soon developed into an extreme clamour for the suppression of slavery everywhere. It would be well for philanthropists with good intentions to visit Africa, and, by personal investigation, satisfy themselves that slavery is an unmitigated evil, before joining in the demand for its total abolition.

There is a great distinction between the slave trade and the state of slavery existing in Africa. Up to the present time the majority of cruel slave-traders are white men, and there are scarcely any effectual means adopted to prevent the cruelties inseparable from such trade in any part of the earth. The fact is the black traders are held up to public scorn, while the more guilty whites, like cowards, conceal themselves. The alleged cruelty of slavery in Africa, of which so much has been written by some authors, is the result of lending a too willing ear to exaggerated tales rather than of actual personal investigation. It has probably been forgotten by

these writers that acts of cruelty, as well as acts of high nobility and kindness, are exceptional deeds of individuals, and by no means universal instances of general humanity. Shocking scenes of infernal barbarity and injustice constantly occur on the part of civilised Europeans, without raising any great indignation. The records of such acts are too often heard, read, and searched for with a certain amount of interest and even amusement, but should intelligence be received of a slave being killed in Africa, the result is an expression of "deep sympathy," and it becomes the subject of long and eloquent speeches on the inhumanity of man to man.

Descriptions of unfortunately too frequent sales of children by their parents in Africa, and their rearing of children for sale, are greatly exaggerated. To prove whether these assertions are correct or not, it would be a useful experiment for any truthful traveller to take a child away from a savage to see how far he would be allowed to proceed alive. Cases have happened where parents have sold or even given away their offspring, but undoubtedly not without taking every care to ascertain that the child would be placed in a better position than by remaining at home. It is not uncommon in Africa to see grey-headed fathers or mothers taking a six or seven days' tedious journey to visit their children in slavery. In all cases, except an occasional monstrosity, the sale of children is resorted to with a view of averting the impending starvation of the whole family. The shameful libels upon the natives circulated in Europe

are readily adopted among civilised people as true. It appears seldom to enter their heads that no animal ever willingly parts with its young, still less would a native—a man frequently possessed of sound reasoning powers and sense, and not devoid of natural and parental affection.

Philanthropists should put questions to their own consciences, whether liberated natives could possibly be supplied with the same means of comfort and happiness they at present enjoy with their masters, and be saved from that inevitable starvation which would follow any change in the existing system. Other questions are: how to save the slave-owners from the ruin which would stare them in the face for want of labour to cultivate the land? Are there sufficient means to provide native parents with a life-long supply of sustenance for their families if prevented from selling some of their children to save the family from destitution? If not, the parents may be driven to the horrible extremity of killing their children rather than witness their sufferings from privations, some instances of which have happened even in Europe. Is it not necessary to consider these points most seriously before interfering with the social and family life of far-distant people?

It may be asked why the cry for the abolition of slavery is so general, and what can be proposed as its substitute? Slavery, from the very earliest ages, has been one of the most powerful whips in the advancement of human progress. African slavery horrifies us because it is only of comparatively recent

date that the question has been prominently raised ; while we pass over with complacency a very similar condition in civilised Europe. We are contented with our imaginary liberty, because we are born into it, and do not feel the chains which bind us. In the same way the African, accustomed from childhood to his slave state, feels in his position just as happy as the many so-called freemen of Europe.

Let us look to Europe and ask what is hidden under the pretext of liberty, where people are bought, sold, and re-sold, passing from one master to another. Actual slavery is enforced, not by the lash of the task-master, but by the equally powerful goads of discipline and the fear of fine or imprisonment. These are the means employed in Europe. What would be the progress of the world if these virtual slave-drivers did not exist? Rich employers of labour, who express their horror of slavery, act very much in the same way as the owners of purchased African slaves. They extort from those in their employ the greatest amount of labour at the smallest possible cost to themselves, in order to amass hoards of wealth. The difference between white slave-masters and the darker variety in Africa is more imaginary than real.

If all employers relaxed discipline and gave their *employes* liberty, in the fullest sense of the word, to work or not, as they pleased, what would be the result? Paralysis of trade generally, and a demoralised and famishing crowd of improvidents. With few exceptions they would be unable to earn their

daily bread. Those who undertook to work as free-men would be horrified at the amount of labour they would have to undergo, and speedily, if they could, return to their former conditions of employment as African slaves do. Do away with discipline in the army and navy, abolish the articles of war, thereby doing away with punishment for desertion or cowardice, leaving soldiers and sailors to do as they like, either stand to their colours and fight or run away—how would that work? The result would be a worthless horde, not even fit food for powder. If men are compelled to fight and risk their lives in a cause to which, in their consciences, they are opposed, is not that quite as much slavery as African servitude?

Those who are loudest in the demands should first try the experiment themselves, and become free workers. There are but very few able to comprehend the spirit of freedom in its true sense, and equally few who can or will really work as free men. The free labourer willingly and without complaint undergoes the severest toil and often great privations. Only a man with a well-developed intellect can become truly a free labourer and be happy. Full liberty granted to a man of limited intellect or improvident habits will not improve his moral life, and will rather result in a curse than a blessing. The only aim of humanity is the enjoyment of life, and it is happiness alone which can render life pleasant. As happiness can only be attained in normal health and by the development of intellect, all efforts to ameliorate the moral state of humanity by prodigality and freedom alone will

be but with little effect. Nature has not liberally endowed the generality of mankind with well-balanced reasoning powers, and, therefore, the mass of humanity may be compared to sheep which require the protection and guardianship of shepherds. To preserve order and ensure the progress of mankind slavery in some form or other, but still slavery, is inevitable.

Let each man, therefore, remain, if he choose, in the enjoyment of his conditions, and leave the world to make the best progress it can gradually, from step to step, without taking a leap in the dark. Should it not be a condition precedent, that before civilising Africa, Europeans should first civilise themselves? "Look at home, you'll find enough to do"—and probably a great deal more than enough.

CHAPTER XI.

DOGANA—AN EXACTING CHIEF—A QUACK CURE—A WEDDING PARTY—OILING THE BODY—PAST LAMNAJO—TOWN OF NESTS—MONKEYS OUT-WITTED—HONEY COLLECTORS—FIRST WAX CANDLE—PODOR—SAIL TO ALEIEBE—SORROWING FOR THE DEAD—OBSTACLES ON THE WAY—ON A SAND-BANK—SALDE—BAKAL—INDUSTRY OF GALAM—AMONG THE ANTS—AN OLD SLAVE-DEALER—CHARACTERISTICS OF TRIBES—A FRIENDLY PARTING.

AT Dogana the old square fort built of mud, bricks, and stones, faces the river. Half-ruined bastions with a few rusty old guns displayed to inspire terror into the natives, form the laughing-stock of the latter. This place was formerly guarded by white soldiers, who being unable to withstand the restricted conditions of military life in this region, are now replaced by a native guard.

A little irregular village, consisting of several huts, is built on the sand behind the fort. This village was in a flourishing state some thirty-five years ago,

when a good trading station ; but now it has fallen into decay and the inhabitants are impoverished. The chief's "palace" is a poor and dirty hut, and the "hall of audience" is a shady tree where palavers are held. The chief, in order to keep up his position, exercises authority over his surrounding guard and subjects with an assumed dignity, and poses himself in a military fashion in imitation of French officers. Travellers, whether white or black, traders or not, visiting this village, are requested by the chief himself, or his ministers, to pay a custom or a present according to the old practice. If the chief manages to obtain something from his visitor, he grins from ear to ear, is polite, and offers the thickest shade under the palaver tree. When his request is not complied with, he suddenly changes his appearance and attitude, and, leaning his head on the trunk with his back to the stranger, puts on an air of perfect indifference. In the manner of a disappointed child he seeks solace in a pot of "couscous" (a favourite native food) which he always carries with him for consolation.

Under this favourite native palaver tree a group of inhabitants surrounded an aged marabout trader, who had arrived from the Upper Senegal in a boat loaded with *toulou*,* bows, arrows, and strings made of *Sansevieria zeylanica*.† While the trader was ex-

* A thick butter like oil extracted from the nuts of the bambouc tree. This oil is superior in taste and quality to palm oil, and is kept in calabashes weighing from ten to fifteen pounds.

† A tree abounding in Africa. The fibre of its leaves is of a white

changing his oil for native produce, and trying to get rid of the chief, who endeavoured to extort a custom in the shape of toulou oil, one of the natives in the group appealed to the trader to cure him of spasms. The marabout examined the patient, and sent him across the river, to rub his stomach against a certain tree, upon which the disease would leave him. The confiding native raised his eyes to the sky, and pointing to a particular cloud, said to the marabout, "You see that cloud, there is a narrow gate in it through which you will go to heaven, where a happy life awaits you. Good-bye, good man!" Although doubled up with pain, the man forthwith proceeded to carry out the instructions of the marabout, who no doubt had more faith in exercise than in the virtue of the tree.

Several miles beyond Dogana, at daybreak, a procession of five rowing-boats manned by natives, joyfully singing to the accompaniment of guitar, flute, and drum-beating, was making its way down the river. The boats being black and having high ornamented prows resembled, at first sight, Venetian gondolas on festive occasions. The noise created by the singers awoke from slumber many dreaming aquatic birds, which fluttered by, adding their shrill sharp notes to the discordant music. This was a wedding party on an excursion. The first boat, occupied by the bride, was covered with a bower of

colour and of great tensile strength. These strings are sold separately from the bows, being used for a variety of purposes where strength and durability are required.

green branches, and decked with flags of different colours at the stem and stern. The young bride, enveloped in heavy folds of cloth, probably dreaming of her future married life, was scarcely visible, being partly hidden by the canopy of branches and the smiling black bridegroom. The loud sonorous voice and majestic bearing of the man were evidence of his heart being filled with happiness and satisfaction with the wife of his choice. Under the influence of these sentiments, at a time when every man should be at his best, he courteously salaamed to everyone he met on the river.

The moist morning air of the rainy season penetrated the pores of the skin, and to guard against its ill effects the crew took the wise precaution of oiling the body all over. It is to be regretted that this beneficial practice, though at first unpleasant, is not adopted by white men during their journeys. Travellers regard this custom as one of the useless and dirty habits of a savage. The latter has learned, by long experience and suffering, that oil is a preservative against fever, rheumatism, and other diseases, by preventing a too rapid absorption of humidity through the pores of the skin into the body. Oil is a most important article of a traveller's equipment, and is equally beneficial in a dry district, as it hinders a too rapid passage of fluidity from the body, and saves the pilgrim from frequent longing for a most weakening and dangerous draught of water. The application of oil to the limbs gives quick relief to the man exhausted by long and tiring

pedestrianism. Had this custom been followed—using oil, fat, or glycerine for the purpose—many a traveller and thousands of British and other troops might probably have been saved from falling victims to fever, fatigue, or rheumatism in tropical regions. This will equally apply to European countries where variations of temperature occur, leading as frequently to disease as when the frame is exposed to tropical atmospheric influences.

Within a few miles of Lamnajo high and thick forest trees line the widening banks of the river. The long overhanging branches are thronged with playful pretty monkeys, and thousands of birds of varied size and plumage. In the early morning especially the voyager is saluted by a grand chorus of disturbed cries, making harmony out of discord. The scenery is exciting and picturesque to a traveller, to whom all the surroundings are a novelty in this so little-known land. The stranger, while enjoying these beauties and curiosities of nature, may unexpectedly be startled by the heavy snorting of a hippopotamus at a distance. In the middle of the stream the huge head of the river-horse will occasionally appear, and attract the traveller's attention on his first acquaintance with this brute, while watching its clumsy gambols with interest from the boat. Every now and then the monster will dive, and rise again beneath the handsome water-lilies to titilate its hide by the long roots and large leaves. Then the broad massive head, crowned with the beautiful flowers, will rise high above the water,

presenting a most comical appearance. This performance is continued until the animal expresses its satisfaction with the morning toilet by expelling from its powerful chest a puff resembling that of a starting locomotive. The creature is then ready to land for its breakfast. The brute swims, quietly puffing from time to time, towards the place on the bank where the trodden path lays through the thicket to the grazing ground inland. A sharp cracking of branches, caused by the hippopotamus on its way, is then heard amongst the glad notes of birds.

Before this impression on the mind had faded, a large flock of wild ducks, resting under the numerous shaded branches overhanging close to the surface of the river, incited the desire to send some shot among the fat game. A brace of these birds floated down the stream till they were intercepted by the drooping boughs. By the time a canoe was despatched to pick up the game, the sharp head of a crocodile glided above the water and swallowed one of the ducks like a pill. The voracious amphibian, having tasted one duck, and espying the other, was certain to return for the second morsel. The brute was anxiously waited for, and every ripple on the water not made by the monster only increased impatience. At last it appeared in the middle of the stream, making its way to the shallow place where the second duck floated. The brute dragged its ugly body out of the slime, and endeavoured to push through the branches

for the coveted bird. At the very moment it snapped at its prey a couple of well-aimed bullets took effect, and the creature, in agony lashed the mud with its tail, and fell lifeless on its side.

On the oblong island of Lamnajo, covered with sombre and almost impenetrable vegetation on its swampy soil, two large native boats were beached in an open spot, free from bushes. One was from St. Louis, proceeding to Bakal, loaded with cloth, to be dyed indigo, and the other with balls of indigo for sale down the river. The crews, seated round a fire, were cooking fish, and the sounds of the shots had reached their ears. On the approach of the craft they salaamed to the party, and politely offered a share of the repast. The anxiety for proceeding forward did not admit of stopping to enjoy their hospitality. One of them, being an old resident of St. Louis, with a view of showing off his superiority over his fellow townsmen, asked in French, "Couleur?" intending to ask, "What is the hour?" On getting an irrelevant answer, also in French, which he pretended to understand, he assumed an air of wisdom, saying, "Oh! there is plenty of time yet," and quietly returned to the boiling fish.

A few miles beyond Lamnajo is Loungal, a ford or ferry used by the Mauris on their road from Braknas to the Fouta country. A little, humble village is situated on the right bank, and a few canoes on the shore serve to provide the ferry-boats when the water is too deep to cross on foot.

Beyond this ford, at Morphil island, the river

greatly widens over the flat and open country. There the winds have full play upon the large expanse of water, and raise high and furious waves like the sea, especially when the destructive tornado howls over the country. Large flocks of water-fowl flutter around the oblong island, covered with green foliage. Hundreds of pretty little birds waver over trees with offshoots overhanging the river. From these branches innumerable curious, pear-shaped, gray nests, suspended by tenacious straw, most skilfully twisted by the birds, shake about, twist and untwist with the wind, and strike against each other, without being broken. The skill with which the gluey mud is worked in with down, fine grass, and straw, proves the wonderful instinct and great patience of these diligent birds. No force of wind is able to produce even a crack in these buildings, where young and tender lives are expected by the affectionate parents. All precautions are taken by the cautious birds, the entrances of the nests being of a porch-like shape, which tends to exclude the rain. The openings to the depending nests are turned towards the warm east winds, in order that the newly hatched, unfledged, and sensitive bodies should not be chilled.

The reason these nests overhang the water is to guard against the thievish propensities of the innumerable little monkeys with which the island abounds. These playful creatures take great delight in exercising their inquisitiveness as to the contents of the nests, and make great efforts to reach them. Amidst this town of nests, the monkeys displayed

their skill by traversing the boughs and reaching out their arms to the nests, but failed in their experiments. By-and-bye, a monkey more daring than the rest, leaped off a tree, endeavouring to catch hold of a nest, but, the distance being too great, the acrobat fell ignominiously on the bank. Not in the least discouraged by his failure, he returned to the tree for a second and more determined trial. This was more successful; but while the little animal secured his prey, the nest broke away, and both fell into the water. The monkey set up a hideous howling, which brought all his relatives either to the bank, or to "coigns of vantage" on the boughs, to ascertain what disaster had befallen him. A universal chattering followed when it was discovered that one of the darlings of the monkey family had had a dangerous dip. The half-drowned monkey, not relishing his unexpected cold bath, made strenuous efforts to save his life and get ashore. This he finally succeeded in doing by the aid of some branches which dipped into the water, but the detached nest meanwhile floated down the stream.

Morphil Island is about forty miles long, and well populated. Like a great many other places, it suffers from plagues of insects which attack the growing crops, and the grain when placed in the most flimsy kind of stores constructed only of straw. The island is also the resort of innumerable bees, which build their nests in every hollow they find in trees, and even in the roofs of the huts. The natives have no market for wax and honey, nor a systematic way of

collecting these valuable products. A century ago, some trade was carried on here in them; but at present the attention of traders is not directed to it. The natives occasionally make rude hives out of the bark of trees, cover them with a straw roof of a conical or flat shape, and suspend the hives on trees to gather honey, chiefly for their own use. The honey is brown in colour, and the mixture of wax, dirt, straw, and dead bees, forms a nasty kind of sweet paste, which is regarded by the natives as of good quality. Occasionally the wax is collected separately and sold in balls. There is scarcely anyone to instruct the ignorant people in any remunerative industry, but there is no lack of amateurs to plunder them. With all the abundance of wax, the natives have not the slightest idea of making a candle for sale or home use, though they are generally willing to learn anything that tends to make their home life more comfortable.

In a little village a short distance from Podor, a honey-collector regaled the crew with honey and sour milk, mixed in a calabash. In a corner of his hut there were four balls of wax intended for sale in the market. While gossiping with the crew on his training and other matters, he was asked whether he desired to learn candle-making. The signification of this was difficult for his ignorant brain to comprehend. However, he brought one of the balls in front of the fire. A wick was procured from the boat, a kettle containing some wax placed on the flame, and the process commenced. Every dip of the wick into

the wax making the candle thicker, greatly excited the inquisitiveness of the native. His pleasure was great when a light was applied to the candle, and he saw it burn steadily. Holding the candle in his hand, he called to the villagers, and in a moment a small crowd, with loud cries, surrounded the fire. Their exclamations of astonishment, congratulation, and pleasure were endless. The chief expressed his desire to use the first specimen of this European industry introduced into his village, for the evening assembly at his hut, and at once ordered two large jugs of beer to make the company merry, and then with his own hand made a candle. The grateful honey-collector, as a recompense for the instruction, brought a large calabash of sour milk, and made up his mind to exchange the wax for wicks at St. Louis, and follow the lucrative trade of a wax-candle maker. It is to be hoped that this industry, at least, will some day be developed to a useful extent, and act as an incentive to further native efforts in so desirable a direction.

Podor, the next point of interest reached, is a small place on the island, with a fort built by the French Government, in 1743, for the protection of vessels and trade. The low-lying grounds around Podor are subject to inundation at high tides. Formerly a forest was there, but the Frenchmen cleared the ground for a considerable distance around the village, for the purpose of building the fort, and to get rid of the covert it afforded for wild beasts. Hard acacia, gum, and other trees, still abound in

the woods beyond, affording lairs for leopards and other wild beasts, and walking about is dangerous and difficult in consequence of the extremely thick underwood. Elephants thrive in large herds in the district, but hunters have exterminated them. In the whole of the island mosquitoes are extremely prevalent, and the natives take special precautions against them by erecting their beds in the open air on high poles. Matting is stretched from pole to pole, below which a fire is kept burning at night, to keep off the insects by the smoke.

A short distance from Podor are extensive plains intermixed with small streams. The land is a rich alluvial soil, where millet, indigo, cotton, rice and other produce are raised without much labour. Amidst the crops numerous ant-hills rise up to twelve feet and more in height. These plains were formerly cultivated by the French, but are now neglected as in other places.

The navigation beyond Podor is difficult owing to a series of curves, numerous sand-banks, and other hidden obstacles which threaten ere long to block the river. The drift brought down with the water is constantly changing the shape of the sand-banks. This prevents vessels of five or six feet draught ascending beyond Podor without discharging their cargoes, where native labour is almost unobtainable, or can only be secured at an exorbitant price. Towing, which can be resorted to in the lower part of the Senegal, then frequently becomes impracticable, as the character of the banks continually changes. The

country beyond Podor, instead of being flat, becomes rocky, further on covered with thick foliage and high trees, with branches drooping into the water. Here and there villages are dotted, which are temporarily abandoned in consequence of inundations.

Some distance further, at the bank of D'Ouwardo, light vessels are unloaded during the grain season, and a temporary millet market is carried on. The traders then camp with their goods in the open air, there being no huts. Beyond this place a ledge of rock called the Sarpoly extends across the river, and in the dry season boats have to be lifted by main force over it. This obstacle is bad enough, but before reaching the village of Aleiebé another large sand-bank prevents further navigation.

Sailing between these gloomy banks covered with rich foliage, at dusk, or in a moonlight night, is singularly impressive. The nocturnal notes of birds, the chirping of myriads of crickets, the occasional roars of hungry wild beasts, or the splash of a crocodile, and loud cries and wailings from the Aleiebé village, interrupted the placid hours of the journey until this village, situated a short distance from the bank on high ground, was reached.

Two natives at the landing-place explained these unusual sounds. The Braknas had been stealing cattle, and other property of the natives. The chief sent his brother to the marauders with a message, that unless the stolen property was restored he would fight them. The Braknas took no notice of the message, beyond threatening to return and destroy

the village and carry the natives into captivity, as they desired that none but themselves should occupy the right shore. The chief's brother, bearing this reply home, was attacked on the road by a Brakna, and died the previous day from a fatal wound inflicted upon him by the latter. In the village the chief bewailed the fate of his brother and the condition of the people, who were equally ready to make war and ravages on the Braknas, as the latter were upon them.

The "sorrowing for the dead" was performed in an open space, where two fires were casting up high columns of flame and smoke. Between the fires were seated musicians in dignified attitudes. The women on one side wept loudly, and made pretences of tearing their hair and scratching their faces, while the men on the other side were preparing for the dance, making agile movements and gestures. The chief, attended by the elders of the village, took up a position where he could command the whole scene, pots of millet and beer being placed before him for the occasional refreshment of himself and the dancers.

The beating of the drum announced that the dance was about to begin. The men arranged themselves *vis-à-vis* with the women, as in a ballet dance in a European theatre. The dance opened by an advance of the women, who kneeled before the men and then retired. The men next advanced, slapped each other on the thigh, knelt, and withdrew. After a pause both men and women went through a figure

somewhat resembling "The Lancers." The women displayed some peculiar contortions of the limbs, and simultaneously the men passed in and out between the contortionists. This was only the prelude to a more exciting scene—a very lively dance, not unlike the French *can-can*, accompanied by savage gesticulations. Some of the men threw themselves violently on the ground; others crawled about "on all-fours," whilst the women sat down, clasping their knees with their hands. Subsequently the women formed a circle, and then retired into line joined by the men. The dancers vied with each other in grotesque contortions, and the one who succeeded the best was the loudest applauded. Every joint and muscle was brought into play, and at intervals the men and women would drop out to refresh themselves with millet and beer. In this way the "sorrowing for the dead" was kept up throughout the night without intermission.

The scene became tiresome, and long before it was over shelter was sought in a native hut, where hospitality was offered in the shape of rice and *Batauli* oil (made from Bambouk nuts and called *toulou* in the Lower Senegal). Amid the loud, joyful, and inharmonious sounds, sleep was prevented by the stifling smoke in the hut, and by the constant importunities of the natives for tobacco or gunpowder.

A pouring rain fell during the early morning, and those who had succumbed to the drink imbibed, sought solace in sleep in the open. Though ostensibly an occasion of sorrow, the natives really enjoyed

the dance, and probably would not much care how many brothers of the chief met with an untimely end in order to have a repetition of the festivity.

In the midst of the drenching rain the craft left the village. After a short sail, the unpleasant weather cleared somewhat, but still threatened a heavier storm. A contrary wind arose, agitated the river, and sailing had to be given up. There was no alternative but to engage some natives to tow the boat, which they did up to their waists in the water, until the sand-bank known as Oourogandé was reached. Here their services being no longer required, they were paid according to the contract made, but with the usual addition of bakschish, "beschkesch" of the Orient, or the Russian "na tchai."

The further progress of the boat was comparatively slow, owing to the windings of the river and the contrary breeze, in addition to which accumulated weeds almost choked the channel. Beyond Oourogandé, thick woods lined the banks. Further on the country again became open, where rich plains, extending to the horizon, were covered with high grass surging in the wind like the waves of the sea. Here the banks were dotted with flamingoes and other aquatic birds, besides parrots. Some distance off, on the left bank, a mass of high, rough, broken rocks, strongly contrasted with the beautiful plains. Poor little villages, facing the desert on the right bank, somewhat diversified the aspect.

At Guel de Diabé a reef of rocks almost blocked the passage, leaving only just sufficient depth at one

point for a light craft. The boat being unskilfully steered, ran against a large, sunken stump of a tree. The crew got into the water to push the boat off, which had sustained some injury and began to leak, requiring immediate repair. Malic, while bailing out the water with one hand, with the other threw overboard the caulking chisel and mallet, shouting, "Catch it! catch it!" when the chisel disappeared. The men in the water, not having noticed the tools, cried out, "Throw, quick!" "It is overboard," coolly replied Malic. Meanwhile the water rapidly gained on the leak, and necessitated the instant discharge of the goods to prevent their being saturated, but in the hurry of landing the bales many of them were wetted. Contradictory orders were given on all sides, in great confusion, to get the goods on to the bank and to recover the chisel from the mud. Notwithstanding the confusion caused by this thoughtless act of the guide, the repairs were at last completed, and the journey was continued without interruption until Saldé was reached, crossing on the way the great sand-bank of Baly N'Gayé. This bank extends nearly across the whole stream, the water flowing over being only about a foot deep in the dry season. The changes in the bed of the river are very rapid, and natives remember many feet of water running over this sand-bank at that season.

At Saldé a native hunter offered to sell some dried elephant-flesh, which was too odorous to be endured. His weapons were an old double-barrelled sporting gun and iron bullets, with which natives

venture to attack these savage animals. Very often hunters pay the penalty of their temerity, for they not only approach the elephants too nearly, but frequently miss their aim. Several Bambaras (Jews of Senegambia) came to the boat to buy tobacco, as did also a chief who was, with his men, on a visit to this and other villages for the purpose of arranging matters of order and government in his district. During such official visits, the villagers have to find food and shelter both for the chief and his followers without payment.

Beyond Saldé a small number of traders were met sailing down the river with cargoes of dates. Frequent changes in the scenery, and villages here and there situated close to the banks, with a number of small islands studding the river on the way to Bakal, diversified the journey.

Bakal is located on elevated ground in Lower Galam, which 200 years ago was tributary to and under the yoke of the Cassou tribe. The courageous natives freed themselves, and at present are powerful, enjoying a regular government. Their dominions extend on both sides of the Falémé River as far as the Felou Rock, and the state now comprises both Upper (Kamera) and Lower Galam (Gaye).

At Bakal a French fort was built in 1820, surrounded with high mud walls, chiefly for the lucrative slave-trade, and at this place the Senegal people bought slaves from the Bambaras and other tribes. In this old slave-market, men, women, and children were exhibited in chains, ill-treated,

starved, bought and sold, like cattle, according to their size, strength, and the quality of their teeth. Slaves, if unsold, were frequently killed, either to save the expense of their maintenance, or for want of food to keep them. How many natives have been drowned in the muddy waters of the Senegal, and how much unknown cruelty has been practised on them at Bakal, by white and black traders, remains a secret. Since the abolition of this emporium, the trade generally has declined, but, under the shady trees which ornament the village, business transactions are still carried on, and Bakal, being the chief seat of the Senegal trade, is yet regarded as important. For six months in the year it has a somewhat busy aspect, consequent on the navigation of the Upper Senegal being much limited.

Bakal is unhealthy through the mud walls emitting, in hot weather, noisome vapours. The muddy, filthy streets and pestilential swamps surrounding the village are frequently the cause of fever among the natives, who inhabit small, unventilated huts, which also conduces to ill-health. In the streets Saracolets (the natives of the place), Foulahs, Yollofs, Mandingoes, Braknas, and others, mingle together. Their dresses are chiefly of native make and indigo tint, and in character resemble the costumes common in Lower Senegal.

The native women of Galam are reputed to be energetic workers in the fields; but, on observation, this opinion is soon altered. Those who work on the

plantations combine singing and dancing with their duty, and, consequently, do not accomplish much. The men pride themselves on colouring cloth with the indigo dye, which is superior to the dyeing in St. Louis. In this district the cultivation of indigo is carried on to the neglect of other crops, as no other vegetation thrives near it. The native manipulation of the indigo is primitive. The leaves are plucked to the music of instruments, pounded in a mortar, and the obtained paste is dried in the shade. Indigo (*Ind. tinctoria*) is very common in Senegambia, and the leaves are gathered shortly before the plant flowers from September till December. This industry forms an important part of native trade, and affords a subsistence to many natives. An indigo plantation is a pleasing sight. The regularity with which the plant is cultivated in rows, and its handsome foliage and flowers, give a plantation the appearance of a well-kept and luxuriant garden.

The natural products of the country are very rich, comprising sulphur, marble, good ironstone, and rock crystal; but none of them are yet put to any practical use, though the natives are aware, from their former contact with Europeans, that they might be profitably dealt in.

A few of the natives work in gold, but the chief manufacture is sandals, although their work is very rough and inferior to that of the Mauris, who supply the natives with amber, which is worn, especially by the women, in large rough lumps on the forehead, or suspended from the neck. Glass beads serve to

decorate the hair, into which they are plaited. The entire head-dress of Galam women, so frequently praised by Europeans, is far less elegant than that found among the women of the savage Angola tribes of Central Africa.

In Bakal, no rain having fallen for some days, the heat and exhalations became intolerable, and a fever broke out among the natives. The French trader felt symptoms of it, and to avert the attack, a day's hunting was resolved upon. The excursion was joined by another French trader and three natives. After passing through several plantations and a well wooded country, the footprints of a wild boar were seen and followed. On the way a flock of Guinea fowls started up, and at the moment when the new companion aimed at them, a snake about three feet long, upon which he had trodden, turned and bit a hole in one of his boots without touching the skin. This so much disconcerted him, that he unconsciously discharged his rifle near the guide's feet, and the shot spurted up the earth to his face.

The way farther on laid through thorn-bushes, intermixed with thick trees; and occasionally fallen trunks blockaded the path. No game for a long time rewarded the hunt, only an occasional monkey grinned and chattered from the trees. At last the guide called attention to the well-known snort of a wild boar grubbing at the foot of a large tree at a short distance. My impatient old companion took the first shot, and, in the twinkling of an eye, put all his pellets into the stem of the tree instead of the boar.

Another more skilful shot wounded the retreating hog in the hind quarters. The enraged animal, turning about, ferociously attacked a root, but collecting his thoughts rushed at the guide, when another well-directed ball brought the brute down at the guide's feet lifeless.

Both Frenchmen, longing to taste ham, with great alacrity skinned the animal. Meanwhile the Mahometan guide, in disgust at the unclean game, comfortably seated himself at a distance on a fallen trunk under a tree, where a monkey watched with great interest the process of skinning. The little animal, with sparkling eyes, threw down branches, and expressed his enjoyment by loud chattering. In a twinkling he disappeared among the boughs, but soon returned with a whole tribe of his brethren to watch the wonderful operation. After some time, probably shocked at the shedding of the boar's blood, they all with one accord bolted away.

When the hind quarters of the boar were cut off, the natives stripped the bark from a branch, and twisted it into a cord, with which the hams were tied together and slung over a long pole. The happy Frenchmen then, forgetting their fatigue, carried their booty in that manner through the thick bush, fearing to trust the natives with the delicate fare. Our clothing was constantly hooked by the thorns, from which numbers of ants were dislodged like rain. The blood-thirsty insects instantly attacked their lawful prey, inflicting most severe bites on any part of the human frame they could reach. Their stings

at first were bearable, and even caused some amusement, until the numbers of ants, increased by the continual shaking of branches, were beyond human endurance. The temper of all the hunters, already tired by fatigue and the smarting caused by the thorns, soon changed to rage. The Frenchmen vented their wrath on each other for being entrapped into the adventure. They cursed the day and the country they were in, and hurled general anathemas at hogs in general. Solemn oaths were taken never to go hunting again. Thrice they cast down the booty with the intention of leaving it behind, but after walking a short distance, with fond regrets and grumbles returned to pick it up again. On an open spot all the hunters undressed, and a vigorous hunt and slaughter of the tormentors ensued. Rubbing backs against the trees, the grimaces and gruntings reminded one very much of a select party of gorillas searching for parasites. All clothes were shaken, dashed to the ground, and stamped upon to get rid of the tormentors. Somewhat relieved by this, good temper gradually re-asserted itself, but only for a short time. More thorn-bushes had to be passed, where a fresh colony of ants made their attack with greater virulence than ever. The suffering is hardly credible, except by those who have had experience of the African bush.

The pig caused much concern, even after its decease. Bakal being a Mahometan town, it was only courteous to make a detour on the road in order to hide from the eyes of the faithful the unclean

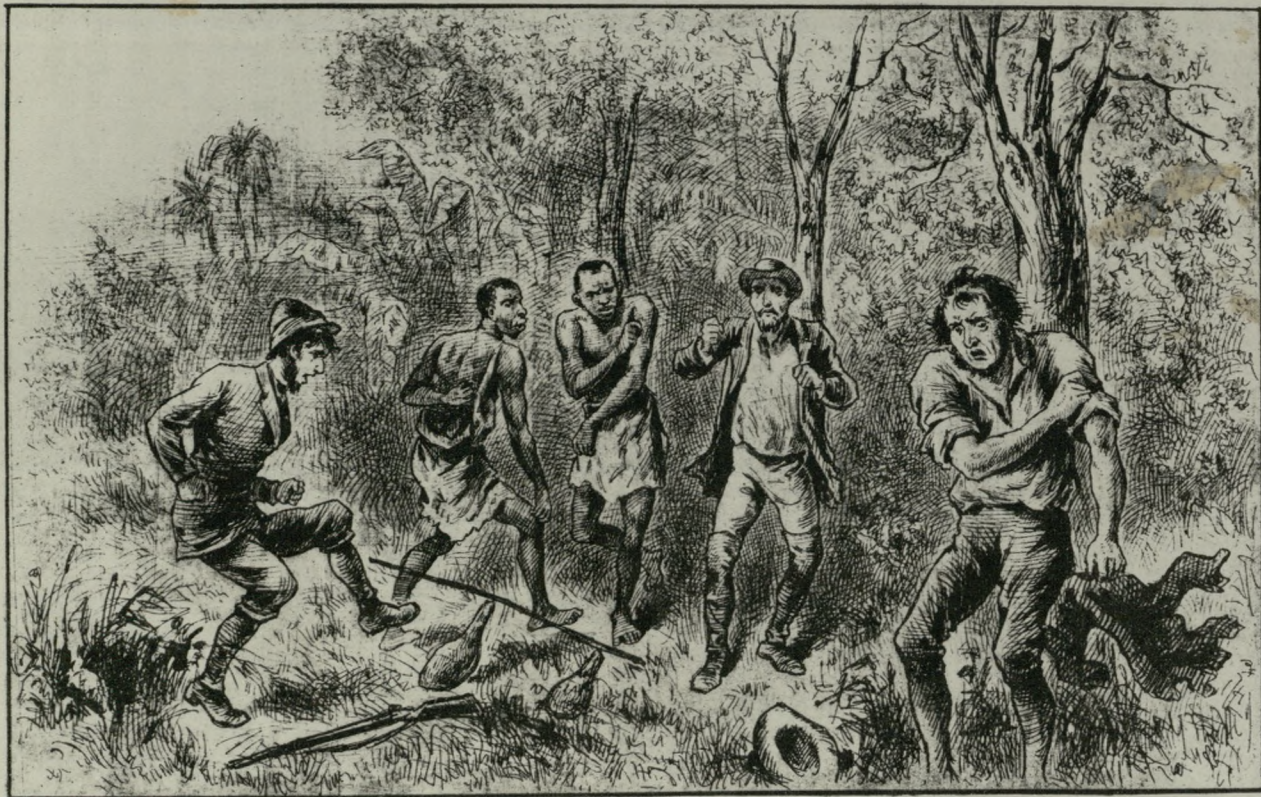
game, which was conveyed to the boat, where a most unpleasant night was passed. Rest was sought in native huts, where sleep was impossible through the stings of mosquitoes in addition to the pain of the ant-bites and the oppressive closeness of the air. Outside the huts, on the bank, the dampness was too great to be endured. After several trials here and there to find a comfortable night-shelter, the whole party stowed themselves in the craft, like herrings in a cask, pathetically renewing many oaths never to go hunting again.

At Bakal, Hadji Ahmed, an old marabout trader from Dramanet, had halted to buy goods and to proceed with them to Timbuctoo. My intention being to make the same tedious journey with an agreeable companion, a "palaver," under a tree in the village, was held with him on the subject. He appeared to be less fanatical than most of his caste. His tall figure, prepossessing manners, and wise-looking face with expressive dark eyes, inspired respect and confidence. A white turban, which covered his grey head, and a snow-white shirt he wore, both contrasting with the olive tint of his face, impressed on the latter a stamp of wisdom. In early life he had made several journeys to Timbuctoo; knew well the Cassan, Timbut, Cana, and Bambara countries, from the latter of which, especially, he used to procure his slaves and sell them to the English on the Gambia river. He soon became wealthy, and respected the English for their honesty and fair dealing. Disregarding the presence of the two Frenchmen, he said all the

people in Dramanet had a very unfavourable opinion of the French, as the latter sought undue advantages. This was the reason why in former days, when the slave trade existed, the Dramanéés took the longer journey to the Gambia, instead of trading with the French nearer home. Hadji Ahmed, in his younger days, had personally conceived a prejudice against the latter, as on one occasion six of his slaves were bought by a Frenchman, who, being afflicted with absent-mindedness, had forgotten to pay for them.

In respect of the proposed journey he urged many reasons against Christians travelling in the deserts, as at Timbuctoo, and other places on the way, they would be treated as enemies. He himself disclaimed any personal ill-will towards other religions than his own, and pledged his word to be my protector on the road as far as possible.

As evidence of the danger of travelling in the deserts, he pointed to a cut on his head, which had been received on the road to Timbuctoo, and nearly cost him his life. Beyond the fight with the robbers who attacked the caravan, he recollected nothing except that, on recovering consciousness, he found himself on a camel's back, and suffering for many days on his way home. Though nine years had since passed, he still felt pain from the wound at every rainy season. A second gash, on his arm, was also inflicted by robbers, four years ago on another journey to Timbuctoo. The large caravan he joined was overtaken by a sand-storm, which caused the animals and men not only to suffer thirst, but famine.



"At last a spot was reached where the tormentors were got rid of."



On arriving at a pit, instead of water, they found the ground occupied by robbers. Two days the whole caravan remained almost without food or drink, in the hope of avoiding a fight with the marauders, who at last attacked them.

After a few minutes reflection Hadji Ahmed continued, "I wonder what white men search for in our country? They know that we have nothing but deserts, yet they still insist upon treading our burning sands, where they leave their bones to be picked clean by ravenous beasts and hungry birds of prey."

A Tischitt, an inhabitant of the Timbuctoo desert, came to see Hadji Ahmed on business, and interrupted the conversation. The marked features of this man were good physical development, expressive face though flat, large sharp eyes, and slightly curved nose. He was an honest old servant of the marabout, whose camels and goods were entrusted to his care. His rough manners and style of conversation gave him an air of originality and eccentricity. He appeared in front of his master without saying a word, and stood like a motionless stone-statue, until Hadji Ahmed, after reflection, said, "This little man wants to go to Timbuctoo; is it good?" The man, eyeing me from head to foot, shook his head doubtfully, and replied, "He is tired of his life; let him go!" "No," said the marabout, "he wants to see the sand and then return home." "Let him stop," was the curt reply. "He will run the risk of the journey, and I have promised to be his protector," said Hadji Ahmed. "Will you like

him?" The Tischitt scratched his head, and replied, "You like him—I like him—you serve him—you are my master—I serve you and him." Then turning on his heel, followed by the marabout, he commenced singing some monotonous song, which proved that he was influenced by far kindlier feelings than his rough countenance and curt words expressed.

This palaver drove away all thought about the hams sweating in the boat, and it was now time to commence the process of curing. A convenient place was soon found for this intended operation among the thick bushes, where a hut was built with branches, and fuel collected for smoking. It only remained to fetch the future ham from the boat. Alas! what was the horror of the Frenchmen, on pulling the dainty out of the blanket in which it had been wrapped, to find it swarming with worms and entirely unfit for food. The odour was so strong that it could hardly be approached. The excessive heat accounted for the rapid decomposition of the pork, which, with the worms crawling out of it, were speedily drowned in the river.

The vexed Frenchmen returned to the town to alleviate their disappointment among the people in the streets, where groups of natives were talking, each vieing with the other in pitching his voice highest. Here were heard the sounds of Timmoni, Sokko, Bullom, Djallonka, Sousou, Bambara, Sarra-colet, Papel, Feloup, Yolloff, Toucouleur, and Mandingo dialects. The first four, with soft flowing

accents, were drowned by the sharp and loud Sousou. The jerking recitative Bambara outvied the quickly-spoken Sarracolet. The Papel, of somewhat similar sound, was drowned by the strong and expressive language of the Feloups, who are quarrelsome and hot-headed. The harmonious Yolloff, so well suited to the diplomatic character of those who use it, competed with the slowly-spoken Mandingo. All these different dialects appear to have had one common origin.

The Peuls and the Mauris of the desert, born enemies, seemed to avoid each other, even in the market, and their mutual hatred frequently leads to quarrels. The Timbuctoos, desirous to be free from the Peuls, but not strong enough to drive them out of the district, never neglect an opportunity of showing their dislike. A Toucouleur from Segou, with his half-wild looks, contrasted with the more pleasing features of Foulas, a race rapidly spreading themselves to Soudan, and promising ere long to play an important part in African history. They are hospitable, kind, and less fanatical than most of the Arabs. They, also, hate the Peuls, and call them "the misery of the country." Among these groups occasionally an ambitious Hassoun (a nobleman) favoured the crowd with a scornful and cruel expression in his face.

It requires some experience to detect the tribe to which a native belongs; for, though each has its own characteristics, there is a general similarity between the whole of them. The Yolloff has a jet

black face. The Bambara is, on the contrary, of a bronze colour; a Toucouleur is brown-black; the colour of the other tribes is intermediate between these three. The Mandingo has an expressive face, and looks a clever fellow. He has a slightly prominent but large forehead, a large nose, and a long and heavy upper lip. The Feloup has a long, oval face, with a prominent but narrow forehead. These characteristics particularly attract notice.

The theory advocated by some writers, that these tribes have each a separate origin, carries on its face its own refutation. It is attempted to show that the Feloup (otherwise Fellahs or Fellans) are the descendants of Malays, leaving altogether out of consideration the origin of the latter in Asia, who may have migrated from any part of the globe without leaving any distinct trace of their former habitat. There is, in fact, little foundation for the hypothesis that animal life existed in Asia before Africa and the other parts of the earth were populated. Efforts have been made to prove that the Malays were the progenitors of the Feloups, chiefly on the insufficient ground of the Feloup language having a similarity to the Malay tongue. Many of the roots of the Malay language are common to all languages of the globe. Ethnologists have also pretended to find a distinct race in the Peuls, who are scattered about all the west coast of Africa and far into the interior. Their arguments, for instance, are that the Peuls have long, curled woolly hair (a characteristic found all over the con-

tinent); that they have oval faces, sharp noses, keen eyes, and moderate-sized mouths (what a great distinction!). Such characteristics are not reliable. Different types are frequent in the same family, some members of which have round faces, large mouths, and very flat noses; while the rest have totally dissimilar features. Again, ethnologists have tried with great energy to prove a distinction between the Feloups and the Peuls, who very probably may be the same. Great reliance has been placed on difference of language, but on investigation it may turn out the fancied distinction is only a difference of dialect. Colour has also been imported into the argument, but with no better success. Similarity of colour may be found in parts of the globe far distant from each other. Colour of skin depends much on the heat, the nature and consequent colour of the soil, the quality of food it produces, and the mode of life adopted by the animal. The variations of African types are to be found all over that continent.

Arabs, according to tradition, are the descendants of Ishmael, the son of Abraham's concubine, and in ancient times were known as Agarensians and Ishmaelians. The legitimate descendants of Abraham were called Saracens, and considered more noble than the former. The great Arab nation extended through vast countries from the Persian Gulf through Arabia, the deserts of Africa to the Atlantic Ocean, and penetrated as far as Spain.

Men fond of hypotheses and wonderful discoveries

have found that the name "Bar-bar" was an ancient name in Africa. They jumped to the conclusion that the Barbarian race is the ancient one of Africa, of whom the existing Moors are descendants, and that at present there are but few of the pure "Barbarian race" left, without ascertaining the signification of the word "Bar-bar," which means "a stranger." This word was adopted by Europeans to express the idea of cruelty, and used by the Moors in Spain to indicate the strangers who visited them. By what means it was discovered that the "Barbarians" were the aboriginal Africans is as difficult to divine as it was easy for the propounders to advance their theory.

Agreeable and instructive as was the study of human nature in the motley groups of the Bakal market, time had passed, and the cravings of the stomach warned us to return to the boat. A mulatto, trading beyond the Govina Rock and in the Bambouk country, was awaiting the French trader to transact business, and at once return to Govina in his little boat with a crew consisting of two natives. This chance was more inviting to me than joining the old marabout and his surrounding fanatics. The intention of the latter was to stop for a short time at the village of Medina, near Felou Rock, where it was easy to meet him and then part company with the mulatto. Hadji Ahmed readily assented to this new arrangement, and started with his caravan overland. The mulatto trader being ready to go up the river, all necessaries for the

journey were provided, and he joined in the farewell dinner party. Sweets and other desert delicacies were freely enjoyed, forming a great contrast to the too simple diet on which African travellers usually subsist. Every one did his best to make the few remaining hours peaceful and happy. Time, on golden wings, sped rapidly, and the moment approached when my good and friendly old companion had to be left behind, and a new one taken to share the perils, discomforts, pain and joy in the thorny path of life.

CHAPTER XII.

KONGUEL—IN GLOOMY FORESTS—DROWSY MOCTARD—BAM-
BOUKÉES—AT MEDINA—A YELLOW NEGRO—A QUEEN
OF THE DESERT—HADJI AHMED IN CAMP—A PLUN-
DERED CARAVAN—FELOU ROCK—THE DEPARTED SEA
—DRYING OF THE UPPER PLATEAU—MICROSCOPIC
GLOBE-BUILDERS.

WITH mingled feelings of sorrow and future anti-
cipation, with a stiff morning breeze, Bakal
was soon out of sight. New scenery, and new faces
on board the boat, caused strange thoughts of the
changes in life—to travel from hour to hour, pluck
flowers on the thorny path of life, then throw them
away, to replace them only by fresh ones. The
old faces, familiar for many days, were now to be
forgotten. The tempers and the characteristics of
unknown persons were to be studied in order to
please them, thereby securing new friendships and
good-will—most important elements for the enjoy-
ment of human life.

The scenery changed with every curve. The left

flat bank was cultivated with rice and millet, and the hills of Bakal, extending along the river, gradually receded into the interior. On the right shore was the usual desolate scenery—rough hillocks, and scattered blocks of quartz, between which a shallow rivulet wound its way.

A short distance beyond, Konguel faces the river. The filthy state of this place, although the usual residence of the Tounka of Galam, reflects great discredit upon the people. One part of this large village is subject to periodical inundation; the other consists of deplorable dwellings surrounded by a black and broken tapadi (a wall of straw woven between stakes) only needing a gust of wind to blow it down. From the edge of the river a quartz hillock rises to the centre of the upper village, surrounded with an irregular earthen wall, loop-holed at the base for defensive purposes. Along the shore extend flourishing fields of cotton and millet, followed by small villages dotting the banks of the stream, which again widens. Beyond this, gloomy forests bound the horizon and line the banks, reflecting their shades in the river. Moist, dense, and heavy air, with the fumes of vegetable decomposition, prove that the light never penetrated to the soil covered a foot deep with rotten leaves, decayed trunks, and branches.

In this gloomy forest the progress was very slow. The wind repeatedly fell, and time passed heavily. The mulatto was somewhat morose, uncommunicative, and contented himself by alternately whistling

and murmuring, probably cogitating on his trading stock, but the crew regarded the delay with the greatest composure. However, the variation of wind was brief. Heavy clouds thickened, grew dismally black, and threatened to burst in a tornado over the woods. The boat, being incapable of standing rough water, for precaution was pulled to a swampy landing-place, where, on the shore covered with long grass, two canoes were drawn up and a group of negroes sat round a glowing fire of *Rhizophora gymnorhiza*. This wood burns remarkably clear, although freshly cut from the water in which it grows, and long remains without rotting. Beyond these qualities it is also of great value to the natives, who strip off the bark and use it for staining leather. These negroes had in their canoes some tubercules of the *yandouré* plant (used for preparing a yellow dye), which they had collected in the woods, and were about to take down the river for sale at a profitable rate to the Mahometans.

Our party seated themselves comfortably around the ruddy fire on the small space cleared of grass by these negroes. Without further ceremony an agreeable chat commenced with the unexpected company in such a dreary spot, which a few feet beyond the fire terminated in impenetrable under-wood. The yelping of wild dogs was heard in the thicket, and soon a pack of them rushed down to the river, swam across, and disappeared in the forest on the opposite side. Time passed quickly, but the expected storm did not break out, though there was

a little lightning in the far distance. Through this delay night set in and compelled all to bivouac round the fire, over which the usual errant meal was prepared and shared in a friendly manner. The wild cries of hyenas, leopards, and other beasts, and the moist atmosphere which soaked through the clothing, made night hideous. The presence of wild animals, combined with impenetrable wood on one side and the swamp and river on the other, prevented all possibility of taking exercise which was necessary for the avoidance of chills.

With the appearance of the morning star a stiff breeze sprang up, and the journey was resumed with new hopes of making more rapid progress. But Africa proves its character everywhere. Hardly three miles were passed before the wind again fell, and the boat lay for a couple of hours waiting for a breeze. In spite of such interruptions, the forests lining the banks for some thirty miles were at length left behind. The scenery was varied by a rough, barren, rocky, mountainous country, and the river became more shallow.

The rapidly increasing heat of the morning, after a restless tedious night, induced an overpowering desire for sleep. The natives soon yielded to this, and laid with their faces to the sun, which appears to have a soothing effect upon the African constitution. They were sonorously snoring, when the mulatto called "Moctard!"—one of the crew—who did not answer. A louder shout only had the effect of making him open his eyes and dreamily close them

again until the mulatto yelled several times "Get up! get up!!" Moctard opened one eye and, yet half-asleep, murmured "Yes, master," then lazily turned over again, while the boat was approaching a hidden rock-bank well known only to Moctard. The mulatto coolly allowed him to indulge in two or three dozen of redoubled snores, and then with anger shouted, "Will you get up and look out? Heh! you vagabond, man-eater! Moctard! are you dead? Brrr—r. I'll throw you overboard!" but neither of the natives stirred, and the only reply of Moctard was "Yes, master."

These efforts to rouse the sleepy man occupied about three-quarters of an hour, until at last even the African patience of the mulatto was exhausted. He then took a bucket of water, came close to the sound sleeper and called him again, when the same answer "Yes, master," followed. "I will souse you with water," said the mulatto impatiently, and with the repetition of the answer, instanter, the contents of the bucket drenched the dreamer's head. This effectually woke him just in time, for the village where it is the custom to seek help was close by. A gentle reminder on the back by the hand of his master brought the sleepy one to attention. The mulatto was well disposed to give the negro a good thrashing, but the fear that the native would desert prevented him from doing so. In addition to this the French Government forbids striking the natives, of which the latter take the fullest advantage. Moctard, in true African fashion, by clapping the

palms of his hands together, and a few short deprecatory whistles, expressed his utter surprise at such treatment. He then stepped into the water to reach the village to engage a couple of natives to tow the boat over a series of step-like rocks which bar the channel. The boat was relieved of its living freight, who followed along the rough and heated stony bank until deeper water was reached, where the natives were taken on in the boat for further help required at the Felou Rock. On the way thither, along the left flat bank, thorn-bushes here and there were the only signs of vegetation until the village of Medina appeared in sight.

Some fifty years ago, at this spot, the French built a factory for the gold and slave trades, which was abandoned for the same reasons as many other similar projects. Near the Felou Rock is a French fort, where, in 1854, war was carried on against the Mauris headed by Oumar, who at first victoriously besieged the French in the fort, but was ultimately defeated with a loss of 600 men.

The people of Medina and the Bambouk district made efforts to establish stations along their left river-bank to guard against the ravages of the Mauris, and prevent their driving off the cattle and the natives into the desert in captivity. Ultimately the Bambouks gave up the idea of retaining those outposts. There had been many struggles on the part of their chiefs to maintain a footing, but the inhabitants, discouraged by frequent attacks of their fierce enemies, at length disputed the orders of their

chiefs, and actually revolted. The chief who endeavoured to coerce them paid the penalty with his life, and his property was divided amongst his rebellious followers.

There is no comprehensive form of government in this district. Each chief acts with almost absolute authority, which, consequently, leads to personal quarrels between them, retarding all civilising and trading progress. Any individual scheme proposed by one chief for the good of the aggregate population is always opposed by the others. Only in time of war or common danger to their general interests will they congregate, and even then they act independently as to the mode of strategy. No wonder, therefore, that with such utter want of general organisation they have invariably been worsted by the higher military discipline of the Mauris.

In many instances battles have been lost owing to one chief giving the order to attack, while another, out of sheer personal grudge, ordered his followers at the very moment to retreat. The country of the Bamboukées in consequence of these dissensions has become tributary to the neighbouring Bondous.

At Medina, the first person met was an aged woman who begged us to save the life of her dying son, as he had once been cured of a fever at St. Louis by a French doctor. On entering her humble hut the sick negro was lying on the floor. His black skin had actually become yellow, a change which his mother said had taken place during the previous night. An overdose of the medicine given

by a native doctor having had the effect of increasing the malady, and weakened him by a too violent purging. The doctor, seeing the ill effect of his purgative, administered a strong infusion of *Acacia Verex*, a highly-esteemed native remedy for the cure of dysentery. To relieve the patient, cold compresses were continually applied to his forehead. The more readily to adopt this remedy, it was requisite to cut off his waterproof, thick hair, thus depriving the poor fellow not only of his fat-saturated wool, but of thousands of pampered parasites. His mother, almost frantic at the sight of the scissors, was perfectly outraged when the operation was finished. In her opinion his personal beauty was irretrievably ruined. The natives were directed to wash the patient's dirty body, and salt mixed with meal into a paste was then applied to his feet, and mustard plaisters to his arms, legs, and back.

While the patient was being attended to, Hadji Ahmed's Tischitt entered the hut, with a request to accompany him to his master, whose caravan was halting a short distance off. The Hadji, reclining on a sheepskin, invited us to seats on similar skins already spread in expectation of our arrival. A calabash of sour milk (a most effectual thirst-quencher), and fresh, sweet dates were speedily placed on clean mats spread upon the natural table, the earth, for welcome refreshment.

A few fathoms distant halted a small caravan, recently arrived, convoying a Maurish princess to Sénou Debou. Conspicuous among the others was

the camel upon which the lady and her female attendant travelled, bedecked with every conceivable specimen of native bric-a-bracs. Two bareheaded Lahmes,* with long hair and beards reaching nearly to their waists, unpacked the other camels, and speedily erected her tent.

The dusky princess was richly dressed in red silk trousers, with a long black robe, and a gaily-coloured striped cloth thrown shawl-fashion across the shoulders. Her toilette displayed a fine black head of hair, arranged at the back in a long plait, reaching far below the waist. Her animated, oval face, of dark olive complexion, indicated natural dignity and her aristocratic origin. She gave her orders in a clear, loud voice, with great rapidity, considering herself born to command those around her.

The princess's attendant was a very pretty young girl, simply dressed in a long, loose, bag-like robe. Over her shoulders was thrown a striped cloth, which she removed when attending her mistress. This girl spread a carpet on the ground near the erected tent, and brought two large pillows upon which the lady comfortably settled herself. She brusquely handed a white turban, probably as a present, to one of her attendant marabouts, who, although displeased with this mark of slight to himself, had to submit to it with as good a grace as his pride would allow.

A grey-headed Tolba (a high title given to a few marabouts who are the remnants of the supposed

* A name for the lowest class of Moors. "A piece broken off."

ancient barbarian race), who also accompanied the princess, was of a different character in figure and manners to the marabout just mentioned.

Everybody showed this Tolba the greatest respect, as the only person in the caravan entitled by his office to wear a turban ; but the reverence paid was more apparent than real. The Tolbas are, as a rule, disliked on account of their malicious dispositions. Their supposed power to work mischief and bring evil upon whomsoever they choose by means of their gris-gris, or charms and fetishes, keeps the natives in great dread. The princess paid this marabout a certain amount of deference, but was evidently less afraid of the gris-gris than her attendants. When the Tolba obsequiously placed a gris-gris inside her tent to drive away spirits, she thanked him with an ironical smile for being so careful.

The presence of a white man did not seem to be quite agreeable to this dignitary, but the lady evidently enjoyed the opportunity of displaying her importance. She asked Hadji Ahmed whether it would not gladden the heart of a white man to be an attendant on so important a lady as herself. She then gazed in a somewhat vacant manner, and suddenly called the girl to bring her a guitar. The servant obeyed the order, sat by the lady's side, with her own instrument, and both commenced to play and sing. The princess soon stopped her attendant's music, and continued to sing and accompany herself.

An aged native woman, bearing a basket in her hand, now appeared in the encampment. She was the grateful mother of the late fever patient, and after politely saluting the company, announced an improvement in her son's condition, and handed to us the basket containing millet, ground-nuts, a live fowl, and four eggs. Courtesy required the acceptance of the present, but the woman being in very poor circumstances, these articles were returned to her with a gift of tobacco. The princess on witnessing this became extraordinarily kind, and ordered her servant to give the poor woman a shirt to replace her ragged old one. The old woman, with delight, carefully folded up the present, clapped her hands, and, loudly expressing her thanks, hurried home rejoicing.

When night fell and fires were lighted, the lady again pleased herself with more music. She gracefully reclined on her pillows and carpet. The ruddy glow of the burning wood, reflecting upon her expressive features, imparted an air of almost weird-like beauty, while her clear, loud voice made the picture still more impressive. The scene was one worthy of a lasting reproduction by the brush of Titian himself, who would have been delighted to depict upon his canvass the effects of flickering night-fire upon a central group naturally arranged in the incidents of desert life. The diffused glow brought out in bold relief the figures, and the effect was heightened by the surrounding misty gloom, through which the forms of recumbent camels were just distinguishable.



"Far across the desert, in the stillness of the night, their melodious voices sounded

From time to time this queen of the sandy waste suddenly ceased singing, to listen to the echo of her own voice dying away into the silence of the night; then recommenced singing, with the occasional murmuring gurgle of a camel as an accompaniment. This concert continued until, apparently subdued by emotion, she sought repose in her tent.

After midnight the air became very damp and chilly. In spite of the good fires kept burning, all got up and walked about to restore warmth. In addition to this, sleep was prevented by the groans and complaints of a native suffering from a violent attack of cholera. Hadji Ahmed, seated dreamily by the fire, to keep awake solaced himself by murmuring prayers, counting his rosary, occasionally drawing a few whiffs from his pipe ornamented with gold. He at length called the Tischitt, whom he ordered to warm some camel's milk, give it to the patient to drink, and apply a cold compress to his stomach. In a short time this simple but effective treatment greatly relieved the sufferer. This disorder frequently attacks the natives after a hard day's exercise, especially when the nights are cool. A good man is merciful to his beast, and Hadji Ahmed went himself to spread a carpet over his beloved horse, saying, "I must cover him, or else I may lose twenty slaves," meaning he had given twenty men for it. The horse snorted a grateful response for such care, and, after a tender caress, Hadji offered a short prayer and returned to the fire.

At daybreak natives from the neighbouring village

reported that a caravan about five days' journey distant, conveying gold-dust in quills, kola-nuts, kourdy (small sea-shells serving as money), red flannel in bales, and other merchandise, had been attacked by robbers and plundered of great part of the goods. Robbers also spread themselves through the deserts, and ravage caravans on the road to Timbuctoo, especially beyond Boramadja. Here several caravans halt to join company with others to mutually reinforce their strength, and thus with more safety continue the journey past Timbi (fifteen days distant from Boramadja), where very daring and audacious robberies are frequently committed.

Hadji Ahmed on learning this news determined to remain at Medina until another caravan came up, and joined his company. This induced me reluctantly to forego, for the present, travelling to Timbuctoo, and to be content with reaching Govina with the mulatto. Leave was therefore taken of the good Hadji with the rest of the caravan, and the journey continued without delay.

Between the village of Medina and the Felou Rock, navigation is impracticable. The bed of the stream is filled with broken stones, over which boats have to be hauled with great difficulty by the crews and hired men. At the rock itself the journey is still more laborious. The goods and boats must be carried over the rough and steep rock, and then launched in the basin above the waterfall. This is hard work, and occupies about three hours. The cascade thus avoided is almost perpendicular, and,

being compressed between narrow cliffs, rushes with great force, roaring and foaming, over huge stones into the basin below. The scenery at this spot is grand and imposing, although the adjoining hills are barren, and the sandy wastes on the Lower and Upper plateaux are dreary and desolate.

The sandy plains on the Upper plateau, being devoid of high mountains, confirm the opinion that here once existed a sea, the waters of which subsequently burst through the rocks, and, by forcing their way towards the ocean through various channels, carried to great distances huge blocks, boulders, and sand. These were scattered about in all directions, until the water finally became absorbed, leaving these Upper plains, with the vast deserts of Sahara, as memorials of the pre-existing ocean. That the rock and peak of Félou, have been subject to the action of water at a much higher level than it now reaches, is shown by their being worn, polished, and fantastically grooved.

On closer acquaintance with the coast and Upper plateau at the waterfall and the surrounding rocks, it may be seen that the west coast is a bank which was formed by the action of this previously existing sea, which carried the *débris* towards the ocean, until the west coast became dry land. This caused the Atlantic ocean to recede from the Upper terraces to the points from which it is still receding. The incredible quantity of mud and sand carried from the upper drying regions for long periods, accounts for the accumulation of sand on the coast being over 150 feet deep, as is proved by borings at St. Louis.

Many believe that there have been only fresh-water lakes in Sahara, because alluvial deposits were found upon the surface where marine formations were absent. They regard saline ponds as simply the concentration of saline particles carried by rainy streams. How is it, that under these now dry saline ponds, frequently covered with a hard crust, some feet below the surface salt water is met with, and in these pans, in many places, shells of salt-water molluscs are found? It has been alleged that the sterility of the deserts is due to the "singular climatic state peculiar to this region." This, although having a plausible sound, means nothing.

There is more to prove that Sahara, and other land further eastward and southward, was formerly part of the ocean, than to prove that such was not the case. The so-called "slow and insignificant modifications in the globe," are the significant indications of its actual rapid dying out. The Atlas mountains are now free of ice, but the marks of it upon them are still observable. European glaciers on the Alps, as on Mont Blanc, also decrease. It is well known that rain, and, with it, evaporation, in Africa diminishes from year to year. The absence of additional humidity inevitably diminishes the volume of ice upon mountains. With the decrease of moisture in Africa the temperature increases, and the winds becoming drier and warmer carry less moisture with them. These winds, on reaching lands where humidity is still present, rapidly absorb it, and dry up the ponds. Thereby

not only do the winds passing over these places become more dry, but even the neighbouring districts become speedily deprived of their moisture through this effect, although different currents of air may pass over them. When the Sirocco blows, in spite of its carrying with it a great amount of humidity, still it has the effect of destroying every form of vegetable and animal life in its course, putrefaction rapidly ensuing; plants are scorched, withered, and, not unfrequently, destroyed for ever. This intensifies the progress of Africa's expiration.

Several distinct prognostications of African dissolution may be found in records of the old geographers. The ancient Palass was the large Triton lake, which in time became a mere swamp,* and was called Pallantias, in the waters of which Minerva is said to have admired herself. This goddess was also named Tritonia (Solin). The lake was connected with the Mediterranean Sea by the river Triton,† falling into the gulf of the Little Sirt between Macodama and Tacapa.‡ This same lake, Triton, extended to Senegambia, but now is represented only by deserts and a few swamps.

The sources of African rivers rapidly dry up. Many of those now existing are taken for actual sources, which may in reality be only the re-appearance above ground of the course of other rivers at considerable distances, which have been blocked up by sand. The rainy season gives ample proof of this,

* Pliny, lib. 5, c.

† Ptolemy, lib. 4, c. 8.

‡ Diodorus Siculus, lib. 3. 55.

because some rivers at one period of the year flow in one direction, and at another in the opposite or in different directions, simply depending upon the volume of water in them.

On comparing the maps of old and modern geographers, great differences may be observed. Leo Africanus stated that in Soudan there was but one river, the Niger, which flowed from a large lake. Marmol was of the same opinion, and described the Senegal and Gambia as two branches of the same river. Ortelius, in 1570, indicated these rivers as branches of the Niger, which runs from east to west, from a lake in Ouangara in Nubia. The charts of Farlani de Vérone (1562) and L'Sanuto (1588), in reality, do not differ from other maps. The last shows that the three streams in the Soudan, are the same river Niger divided into three rivers. On the east of Timbuctoo the river was called Iza, a name well-known by the Arabs to indicate the Niger. The Zamballa, a name given for the Senegal, is actually the river Niger, and in the rainy season they form one continuous stream. In former ages the Niger ran close to Timbuctoo. The shifting sands have gradually filled up the bed, and the river itself has now receded some twenty miles distant from this town, and runs towards the east; but as soon as the water flows abundantly in the rainy season, the river again runs close to the town itself, and flows into the Senegal towards the west.

According to old traditions Timbuctoo was situated at the junction of the Niger, Senegal, and

Gambia. This was possibly correct, for the deep ravines, now filled with sand here and there, indicate their former connection all the year through. The existing channel, running for many miles, joins a hollow basin sparsely covered with grass. How quickly African nature changes its appearance may be imagined if the traditions related by living Arabs may, as they ought to, be trusted, that their grandfathers went with calabashes to fetch water from the Niger river at the gates of Timbuctoo in the dry season.

In reference to the bursting of the lake at the waterfall, the following legend may be of some interest. The story is this:—There was in a distant well-watered country, a large and rich town, near the banks of a deep ravine, through which enemies came and attacked the town. The inhabitants betook themselves to the desert, where they built another large town. The king, vexed at being driven away from his former town, treated his people with cruelty, and they drove him out. He appealed for help to his brother-in-law, also a king, who had a beautiful wife, with a voice like a bird, eyes like lightning, and a face shining like the sun. The latter king refused to assist the dethroned one, who, to avenge himself on his brother-in-law, stole away his beautiful wife and established himself in a little town near a waterfall, where the beauty was closely guarded. Her husband did not attempt to take her away by force, for fear that she would be put to death. She pined to return to her husband, and to assuage her

grief resorted to the waterfall to sing and listen to the rushing waters.

One day, while so engaged, the water burst out at the fall and carried her away. Then her husband came to the king and asked for his wife, but the king could not answer him, upon which the husband called him "canagha," meaning "cruel"; and immediately after attacked the town with all the forces he could gather, destroyed it, and drove the cruel king out. The cruel king then went down the river to the coast, to deplore his reverses, and established at its mouth a town, which, with the river, were called Canagha.—There are some slight discrepancies in this tale, of no importance, but it apparently confirms the statement that the lake referred to did actually break through its barriers at the waterfall.

Another reason for believing that the water in the Upper plateau is rapidly diminishing, may be found in the statements of living natives. Places where, about thirty years ago, camels had to make their way through water up to their knees, are now dry sand. In other places to the south of Timbuctoo, natives now travel on bare sand for five days, where so recently as the time of their parents, caravans found plenty of grass for the animals. They also state that in Timbu (which means "terraces"), where the Joliba, or Niger river flows, their grandfathers proceeded from Timbuctoo to Faliba, the capital of Soliman, direct along that river in boats. Later on they had to travel, with great scarcity of

water three days by land to Faliba, from the place where the Niger was blocked up. The journey is now lengthened by one day more, over dry sand, making four days' forced stages to reach Faliba from the place where the river terminates. Travellers are compelled to dig pits to supply their caravans with water, which, when obtained, is only sufficient for a small number of animals. These journeys are invariably made during the rainy season, when water is more or less abundant; but travelling in the dry season requires from nine to fourteen days' walking to reach Faliba from the point where the Niger now ends. The doubts created by the difference in the statements of natives in the time occupied in travelling from place to place, is thus accounted for. Some say it takes three, others five, seven, or nine days to accomplish a given distance. Although they give different times for the journey, each may be truthful, according to whether it was in the rainy or the dry season. Such statements with the progress of time will, no doubt, differ in proportion to the sands blocking up the rivers. The sands alone might not so much affect the African continent were it not for the large percentage of gyps they contain, which, after rains, converts the sand to an almost stony surface, from under which no vegetation will grow.

The sands of the African deserts may probably be found, on microscopic examination, to be composed of the innumerable minute and beautiful *Foraminifera* shells. These tiny builders of a large portion of the globe largely contributed in the equatorial districts

to the formation of the deserts of Africa as well as Asia. This suggests that the geological changes traced on mountains and coasts of continents and islands are the marks of countless ages of a gradual drying up of the waters in which the globe was probably once enveloped. *Foraminifera* are playing a much more important part in the modifications of the globe than is generally supposed. Great importance is attached to the influence of the moon, and other theories and hypotheses have been formed to account for the currents of the ocean and changes in the surface of the earth; while the effect of the countless myriads of the *Foraminifera*, whose increase and remains have for an almost inconceivable period been silently but progressively effecting those changes, have been overlooked. It may be interesting to give a short description of one of these creatures. Although so small as to be visible only under the microscope, it consists of a shell filled with a glutinous substance of a tawny colour, and this substance is the powerful being which is ever working with incredible speed and energy. It lives, moves, and, no doubt, possesses a sensitive system of nerves, proved by the fact that increase of heat accelerates their activity, which is indicated by a thread or antenna protruded from the gelatinous substance, extending and enlarging in different forms and directions as if in search of sustenance. The effect of an individual *Foraminifera* is scarcely appreciable. Considering their numbers in the globe, in conjunction with all other forms of life in and on it, may not these living

organisms, by expanding and contracting themselves with the alternate heating and cooling of the earth, also expand and contract the globe, and thereby cause the ebb and flow of the tides? It is also to be asked whether a man upon the surface of the globe can possibly be conscious of the expansion and contraction of the gigantic heaving chest of the monster which we choose to call the earth, on which we, apparently independent living creatures, are nothing more than particles of this giant, whose seas, mountains, and soil, with all the life on and in it, is represented only on a small scale in our bones, blood, muscles, nerves, and membranes.

CHAPTER XIII.

ON THE WAY TO GOVINA—DINGUIRA—HEAD OVER HEELS
 —AT THE WATERFALL—GRATEFUL NATIVES—LOST IN
 DENSE WOODS—NARROW ESCAPE—UNEXPECTED WEL-
 COME FIRE—HADJI MAHMADOU—A USEFUL LESSON.

THE boat having been safely launched in the basin above the fall at Felou rock, and reloaded with the small cargo of goods, the crew, tired by their exertions, rested for a short time on a large boulder near the bank on the boundary of Galam, N.N.W. of which is the vast territory where nomads wander in search of pasturage. The mulatto now began to complain of the difficulties of life in Africa, of constant delays and expense, danger of sickness, prevalence of robbers, the extortion of the natives and their longing for presents, without rendering service in return, and a thousand and one other unpleasant things, until hunger imperatively suggested it was time for breakfast.

The meal consisted only of tea and millet boiled in water, with a pinch of salt to flavour it, to which

a palatable addition was desirable. The sight of a large assembly of different water-fowl, on the bank, tempted the mulatto to shoot a brace of them. Long before he could get within gun-shot, they woke from their dreamy quietness. A watchful pelican gave the alarm, and instanter the whole flock with shrill cries flew far away, depriving the party of the hoped-for relish to the insipid meal. A few minutes later, a couple of fine antelopes were seen quietly drinking from the stream about 300 yards off, unconscious of the proximity of men. The excited mulatto, clumsily taking up his gun, capsized the whole of the breakfast, and his hastily-fired shot, far beyond the mark, frightened the animals, which bolted away, adding another mortification to the necessity of preparing breakfast afresh.

The morning was clear and bright. The bare-headed natives took their places in the boat, and the journey up the river was resumed. A little way above the rock the river gradually widened, and then suddenly expanded into a large lake, over three miles in breadth. The flamingoes and pelicans previously disturbed, dotted the flat and sandy banks. The strong refracted light produced a mirage, making the birds appear to be in tremulous motion, floating like spectres in an expanse of water from horizon to horizon. From time to time they seemed close at hand, looming large as ostriches, and then suddenly vanished, to reappear miles off as mere dots.

Beyond this freak of nature the boat slowly progressed along the clayey beach of Bakhané island,

strewn with rough and polished stones. The scanty vegetation on it, though scarcely worth looking at, yet, by contrast with the isolated and desert district, deceived the eye, and appeared almost grand. Such contrasts are the cause of travellers breaking into rhapsodies in describing the imaginary luxuriant tropical vegetation they have seen in Africa.

Beyond Bakhané the river gradually narrows. It flows between massive hard rocks, where, in ages long past, the water had washed its way, many feet deep, through perpendicular, wall-like rocks, which confine the current rushing over huge, deeply water-grooved blocks and boulders. Here the boat was with difficulty towed from the rugged banks, or occasionally paddled in the serpentine course.

The almost intolerable heat rising from the stones severely taxed the strength of the crew. The only relief to the sight was the elevated plains bounded by ranges of mountains, covered with the blue desert-haze and intersected by numerous silvery streams which either joined other rivulets or fell into ravines. The shimmering gleam painfully dazzled the eye, and it required an effort to raise the head to look even in the proximate direction from which the sounds of water rushing into some cavern reached the ear. Tall, pyramidal heads and peaks of rock threw a strange peculiarity upon this scenery until the village of Dinguira was reached.

The reason for preferring this difficult journey to the overland route was that the latter presented still greater obstacles *via* Monsolah, where the

narrow path, running between high rocks, is in places covered with tall, thick grass and jungle, through which it is tedious to force a passage, and dangerous by reason of wild animals, snakes, and robbers abounding.

The inhabitants of Dinguira met us with a present of a pair of fowls, and an invitation to the village. The mulatto soon made himself at home with the people, and purchased ground-nuts for a very trifling price, as this produce abounds in the district, on the right shore of the river, in the Cassou country, lying between the Felou and Govina rocks, where there is good alluvial soil cultivated by the Saracolets.

The life of the natives on the Upper plateau is very miserable. They are unable to procure some most necessary articles of food, such as millet and salt; which can only be obtained at an exorbitant price, and form the only luxuries of the comparatively rich. Misfortune attends the natives on every side. The cattle, forming part of their riches, are subject to frequent disease, and a large proportion of them die.

In the course of friendly chat with the villagers, they sorrowfully referred to a Frenchman, who some time previously had fallen sick of a fever contracted on his journey from the interior, and was conveyed by them to Medina. Some time before, two other white men had visited the village, but on proceeding down the stream to Felou Rock, their boat was capsized over the waterfall and one of them lost his life.

In the village was a man, who had been attacked with all the symptoms of yellow fever on his return from Segou. The natives were fully aware of the danger of this disease, and kept the sick man isolated from other people, smoked the hut in which he had lain, and forbid all except an attendant to approach it. One of the elder natives had recommended his fellow-villagers to kill the patient, and bury him deep under ground. At first this advice was ridiculed, but when they saw the poor man eject black vomit, which was recognized as the harbinger of death, the sufferings of the patient were soon terminated, and the hut burned to prevent the further spread of this horrible disorder.

This summary mode of treatment was the more readily adopted in consequence of the heavy lesson they had received by the spread of an epidemic disease, which broke out among their cattle some years previously. A caravan had halted at the village, with a few sick camels. Soon after their departure, disease broke out among the cattle of the villagers, and more than half died in a short time, and for several years their flocks and herds had been devastated by disease. Meat, however, can be purchased at a very cheap rate, owing to the fact that the natives, as a rule, seldom eat animal food.

The village being near Govina rock, it was arranged to proceed thither. The river beyond Dinguirra becoming unnavigable from a succession of small rapids, the boat with the goods was left behind in the hands of the natives. A couple of donkeys for

personal use were hired, and, accompanied by a few natives, the difficult journey commenced at dawn along the rugged river-banks. The way lay over rocks, through thickets, ravines, and high grass. Game was plentiful, and partridges, fowls, and other birds continually started up. There were but few trees which did not contain merry grey monkeys, whose grotesque antics afforded much amusement to the party, thus keeping it in good humour. There was no end to the gesticulations and odd sounds made by the natives in imitating these creatures. The negroes, being encouraged in their sportive vein, to keep up the good humour so essential in tedious journeys, appeared quite regardless of the heat and rugged path, and travelled on at a swinging pace. Stones, trunks of trees, little ravines, were cleared at a bound in play, under the influence of light spirits. None of them seemed to have time even to take a draught of water, and this abstinence averted the almost unavoidable weakness ensuing from drinking on a journey. Passing through rivulets, amusing themselves by throwing pebbles and dabbling in the water, they unconsciously absorbed the reviving fluid through the pores of the skin. This is the best and safest way of imbibing water in hot weather, the result being far more beneficial and lasting than drinking.

Umbrageous trees and heavy passing clouds served as protections from the heat. Several tributary streams, which had to be crossed, obstructed the path, the last being the worst of all, and required

great caution in crossing. The bed was very uneven, and had in several places deep pits, to avoid which the natives, knowing the locality, proceeded first. All crossed in safety except the last donkey, ridden by the mulatto, who remained behind with a guide. The animal, being unwilling to take the water, would not budge an inch. No entreaties or blows could make the brute move. At length the attendant tried another course, by laying hold of its tail and pulling it back. The ruse succeeded, but unfortunately the jackass started off with an unexpected bolt, plunged donkey-fashion into deep water, head over heels. The languid mulatto, who rode the animal like a pair of scissors on a pig, not prepared for such a rush, was off the donkey's back in a twinkling, which instantly washed away the rider's characteristic phlegm. He managed at last to paddle himself to a point where he could get a footing, and so got across. The donkey, once in the water, swam over, and on landing began quietly to graze.

The mulatto's temper was roused by the dipping. His clothes stuck to his body like feathers on a fowl, and he rushed towards the donkey with a stick, called it a vagabond, and threatened instant death. The jackass paid little attention to the threats of the mulatto, and continued feeding until his late rider was within stick's length, when the now roused animal, sniffing danger in the air, turned his tail to the dripping mulatto, gave a couple of kicks, and, with a loud hee-haw, set off at a gallop. This impertinent act almost broke the mulatto's heart.

“ Ah! you long-eared devil!” he shouted, and with all his strength threw his stick at the offender. The stick whizzed through the air, but instead of punishing the donkey the mulatto’s wrath was vented upon an inoffensive stone. The animal, which had probably often before practised this trick, from a distance faced the mulatto, and indulged in a derisive heehaw. This still more provoked the rider, who in his rage rushed towards the animal, picking up and throwing stones at it until he was tired. He then gave up the chase, leaving the natives to continue the sport, which lasted nearly an hour, until the wayward creature allowed himself to be secured, submitting to his capture with a final heehaw.

Under such pleasant circumstances the solitary village of Banganoura was reached in the afternoon. The poor inhabitants provided the party with as comfortable accommodation as they could afford. After a short rest the journey was continued to the Govina rock, then only a little distance from the village. Near the rock the river expands to a considerable width. The majestic waterfall, about 650 yards broad, rushes down with a roaring sound, raising clouds of mist from the basin into which it falls, displaying several beautiful rainbows.

The surrounding country had no vestige of animal or vegetable life, with the exception of a solitary tree near the rock by the waterfall, where marks of pilgrims’ camping-fires were visible. Here the fire was lit, and night soon fell. The hungry party, exhausted by toil and sore feet occasioned by

the rugged path, hurried to cook food, and soon succumbed to the soothing embraces of Morpheus. The deep roaring of the fall, and the heavy, long snores of the hippopotami in the basin, increased the inexpressible sense of desert poesy, when a glaring fire casts its light upon the scene through the pitch-like darkness. Before dawn it became chilly, and the poor, half-naked, trembling natives crept to and crouched round the fire to warm their stiffened limbs. The air was calm, not a breath of wind stirring, and the jet-black sky was illuminated with millions of brilliant blinking stars, amongst which beautiful Mars pursued its course towards the horizon.

At daybreak some natives halted under the same solitary tree to rest and quench their thirst. They were on the way to Baffoulabé (a village situated on the course of the river, some distance off), and came from the neighbouring woods, where they had gathered several calabashes for household use, large bunches of *N. lotus*,* and one "Oualbou."† They, like others, complained of the deficiency of millet and salt, and suffering starvation. After a brief rest and the usual inquiries about health and road, these natives made their way across the river by the aid of their floating calabashes.

* *N. lotus* grows plentifully on the beds of dried-up swamps, produces narcotic flowers, and is esteemed by the natives as an article of food. The leaves are large, fleshy, and nourishing.

† A fruit of the Boabab tree (*Adansonia digitata*), popularly known as monkey-bread. From the pulp of this gigantic tree is prepared a decoction reputed to be a good medicine for dysentery.

Several hippopotami were sporting in their clumsy fashion in the river, occasionally coming to the bank, taking no notice of the presence of men. Some descended the slope of the rock and made their way along the deeply trodden trails to the rich, thick grass in the vicinity of the fall.

Before the morning rays had time to heat the sand and rocks, the short journey *via* Banganoura to Dinguira was resumed. It was impossible to proceed along the banks of the river, there being swamps in some places, and rocks, deep ravines, and thick jungle in others. The only alternative was to take a longer and circuitous route through woods and less thick jungles, both abounding with prickly thorn-bushes, making travelling far from agreeable and very destructive to clothing and cuticle. Years ago both Europeans and natives frequented this route for trading in gold, salt, and other commodities. The tracks were then clear, and transit was easy. Since the fitful colonisation failed, all traces of roads have disappeared under jungle, and the few small villages near the banks between Felou and Govina are in a state of decay.

Dinguira was reached long before dark. An old man in the village was suffering from a wound caused by a thorn which remained fast in the flesh of his left foot. The patient and his relatives entreated for help, even though it might be necessary to cut off his leg. The dangerous operation was reluctantly undertaken, and, with great difficulty, the thorn extracted by making a deep

incision. During the operation, although the pain must have been very severe, the old man did not move so much as a muscle.

By daylight all necessary preparations for the journey to the interior were made. The ground-nuts bought by the mulatto were to wait until his return from Koundian, where he was going to exchange his commodities for different native produce. Six carriers were engaged for a trifling remuneration to convey the goods on their heads, and, the boat being entrusted to the care of the honest inhabitants, the hospitable village was left behind.

A few miles off Dingira two natives on donkeys overtook the party. They were the sons of the grateful old man whose foot was relieved by the operation. He had given them orders to serve the party as guides, place the donkeys at our disposal, and not to return home without fulfilling his commands. The way laid southwards from the river, through large tracks of bush, thick grass, here and there burned down by the natives, through woods, across steep ravines, and a couple of small deserted villages. Further on, the road led through dense woods, covering the range of rocks, intersected by numerous small streams.

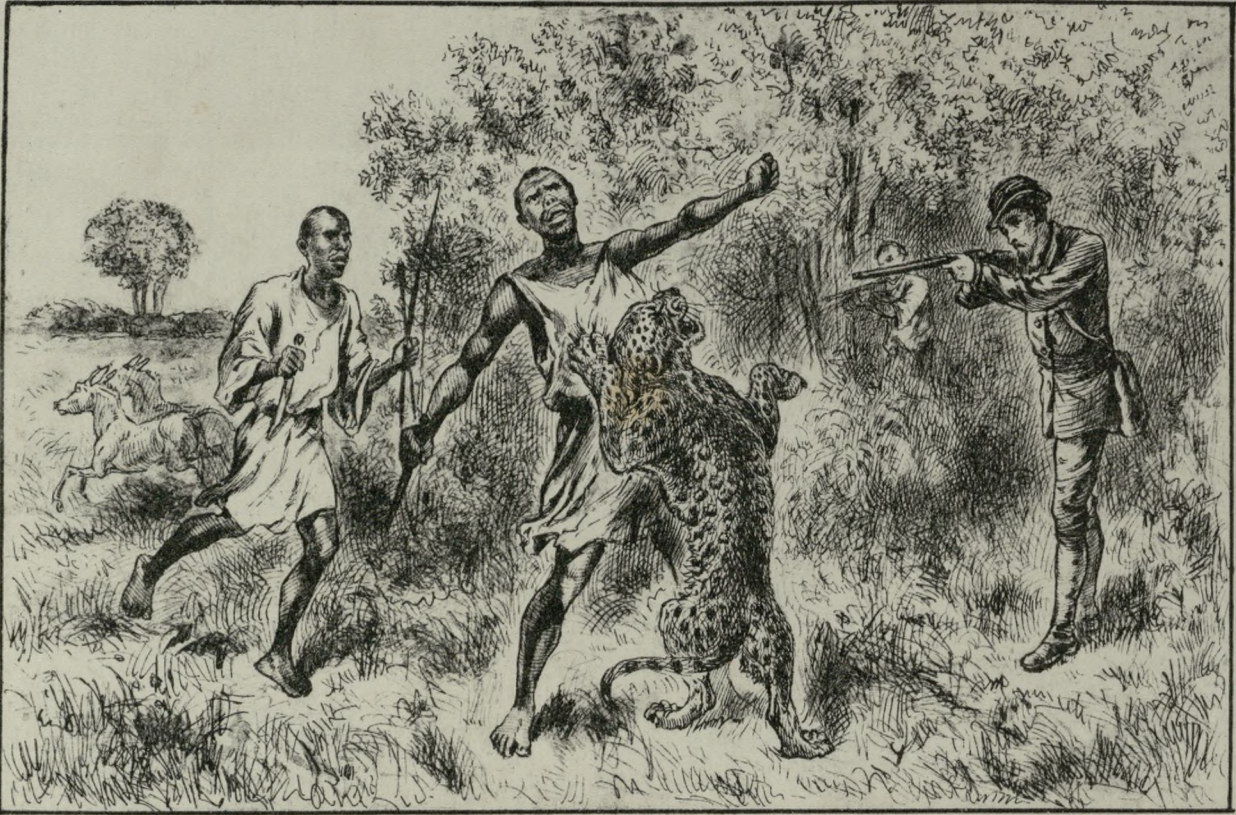
In the afternoon a passing antelope inspired me with the desire to get a shot at it; but in the pursuit the track and the party were soon lost. The bewilderment caused by the thick bushes rendered it no easy task to rejoin the company. Shouting and firing shots were of no avail, and the despairing wan-

dering continued, until just before nightfall two of the negroes came in sight, and only then the main body sitting round the fires was rejoined. The night was passed in a most disagreeable manner in the dense thicket. Heavy exhalations, roars, cries, howlings, and whistlings of wild beasts, birds and snakes, made the darkness hideous. There was not a single block of wood, nor a branch dry enough and fit for bedding, upon which the necessary rest could be sought. The continual libations in which the mulatto had indulged from the streams, and the fatigue of travelling combined with the effect of chill, damp night air, caused him an attack of dysentery. At day-break he was in so exhausted a state as to be scarcely able to keep his seat upon a donkey to proceed on the journey. Fortunately, much to his satisfaction, a pair of fine, fat, grey monkeys were shot and converted into excellent soup, which had a magic effect upon him.

In consequence of the tangled thicket, fallen trunks and stones, one son of the old man remained with one of the donkeys, some distance behind his fellow-travellers. A leopard came across the man's path, who rashly fired at the animal, which, being wounded, retaliated by a furious attack, inflicting a severe wound upon the man's shoulder. Attracted by his shot and cries, we rushed towards the scene of attack. The brave and strong native, although severely bitten, resisted the pain, and inflicted upon the animal a deep cut with his knife. This being the first introduction to a leopard, my aim was not

very accurate, and the bullet instead of killing the animal broke its spine. The beast losing strength, passed its left paw over the chest of the native, and with its claws tore the man's stomach open. The mulatto, although weak, did what he could in helping to save the wounded native. However, the leopard was quickly despatched by a well-directed shot in the ear. The poor fellow had been brave, and deserved the best treatment that, under the circumstances, could be bestowed without a moment's delay. All our limited medical and surgical skill and appliances were employed. His lacerated stomach was sewn up, the wounded arm dressed, and he was placed on a donkey to continue the journey. Being a man of great self-possession and nerve, he endured the shock and pain without a sound of suffering or complaint.

The weakness of the mulatto and of the native necessitated proceeding very slowly through the thorny bushes, here and there interspersed with fine-grown trees of ebony (which the natives call Jalambanne), until nightfall, when the edge of the wood was reached. The unexpected but welcome sight of a distant fire imparted fresh energy, and all the fatigue of a long and difficult march was forgotten. The party rapidly proceeded through the thorn-bushes towards the fire. The scratches the thorns inflicted, the rugged way, and the stumbles met with from fallen branches and half-concealed roots above the surface, were unnoticed in anticipation of meeting with human beings. The fire was that of a caravan halting near a deserted village.



"A moment's delay, and the man would have been torn to pieces."

Half a dozen dogs, by furiously barking, warned the inmates of the kraal of possible danger. A man, seated by a fire, rose to his feet, gun in hand, and watched the approaching party with a suspicious look, ready to repel any attack. According to the usual custom of travellers, he was "called out," before he approached the entrance to the kraal, and inquired about our intentions and object in travelling. He then disappeared into a tent, leaving us anxiously to await his return and repel the furious attacks of the dogs. He soon re-appeared, followed by a tall old man in a white cotton shirt, with a sort of loose blue overcoat (the usual colour adopted by Mahometans), and white trousers covering his naked feet. His waist was encircled by several folds of a red belt, where he kept his hands, and from which a pair of pistols were seen. He placed himself by the fire, in such a position as to get a good sight of the party and display a gleaming cutlass. His erect figure, with a long streaming white beard, and defiant attitude, his picturesque dress, with long white sleeves, loose, and hanging down from the elbows, presented a noble and determined man, ready to attack or defend himself. After a while he slowly advanced to the kraal with a salaam. On seeing a European face, he immediately opened the passage through the thorn-branches, and, with the words "Allah Akbar!" offered the customary hospitality of Mahometans. The man first seen called in the dogs, closed the passage of the kraal, and returned to the fire to add some wood to comfort the unknown visitors. The host examined

each man from head to toe, and shook his head with an expression indicating that he thought the whole lot were fools. After this silent compliment he kindly invited all to take seats around the embers.

On getting a better view of the camp and the host, whose name was Hadji Mahmadou, his manner, voice, and the expression of his countenance, inspired confidence, and made all feel at home with him. The natives placed their loads on the ground, and with the wounded man seated themselves. No one was neglected nor forgotten by the kind Mahmadou. Even the donkeys were cared for, and had a good portion of grass. The host carefully examined the wounded man, questioned the mulatto about his state of health, and thanked the Prophet for their safe arrival.

When all the details of the journey were explained to him, he reproached the guide in a calm, paternal, tone, for losing his way, especially when travelling with a white man, and allowing the latter to leave the path without attendance. After this good lesson he again offered his hospitality, with the words "Whoever you may be, while my visitors, I am your servant and wish my tents were your home." He then again looked at me, nodded his grey head, saying, "If you were my son, I would as soon trust you to travel in this country as a long-haired woman. You do not know how properly to approach the tents of strangers, and such inexperience may some day cost your life. Hear from me a good lesson for the future. Never

face the light when meeting a stranger, because he may be an enemy. What could you have done, if you fought ever so well, against my strong arm and sharp cutlass, while I was shaded and your eyes dazzled? The least movement, even of your eyebrows, would have given me an opportunity of killing you on the spot." This practical and sound exposition of the tactics which should be adopted by travellers, was carefully treasured up. In the course of future journeying it was repeatedly acted upon, with results proving the value of the experience and advice of a wise and courageous patriarch of the desert.

After the lesson on past and future conduct, an attendant served the party with a bowl of steaming couscous, and a jar containing Toulou oil, with the friendly invitation, "Eat all of you till you are tired—this is good." The natives did ample justice to this meal, the flavour of which was much improved by the addition of "lali," the leaves of the *Cucurbita lagenaria*.* The man who first appeared was seated among the party, occasionally taking a pinch of couscous. He was busily employed in cleaning out a calabash, of a pear-shape form, for domestic use, by washing and polishing it with sand and water. The seeds of the calabash were roasted, and the white pulp boiled for the benefit of the two invalids. Soon after supper, the host, following up the hospitality of his faith, ordered a slave girl to bring a large

* The pulp has a good reputation among natives for purifying the blood and preventing attacks of fever.

calabash, filled with water, to wash the feet of the party, to alleviate the fatigue of the journey. During this comforting process, Hadji Mahmadou carefully re-examined the wounds of the native, and directed him to be laid upon a sheepskin and well covered. The Hadji then spoke of his son, who was absent, hunting, and expressed a desire to see him well educated. The host then retired to his tent, giving his visitors a liberal supply of "She,"* to anoint their bodies before sleeping.

* Native name for vegetable butter, or palm oil, extracted from the *Elais Guineensis*, a tree plentifully growing on the plains. This oil is also used, warm, as an external remedy for spasms.

CHAPTER XIV.

MORNING IN THE CAMP—THE CAMEL MESSENGER—WARY TRADERS—A HAPPY FAMILY—TO BAFFING RIVER—FATE OF CAMELS—NIGHT IN A DESERT VILLAGE.

AT daybreak all were awakened by the lowing of cattle. The men of the caravan then sang and recited the prayers with which Mahometans commence the duties of the day. The daylight displayed clean, new, hide bags, containing milk and butter, carefully placed on mats, and well-made bags of rice straw, filled with rice, millet, salt, and other necessaries, conveniently arranged. These proved Mahmadou to be a man who insisted upon the observance of cleanliness and order, and at the same time a lover of good and wholesome living. The richly ornamented jelfé (a lady's saddle), with silk curtains and other ornamentations, manifested his love and care of his wife. The condition of his noble Arab horse, hobbled under the shade of a tree, and quietly feeding on short-cut dry hay mixed

with millet, showed his great attachment to the animal. When prayers were over, Mahmadou caressed his horse, and ordered an attendant to give it more pounded millet moistened with fresh milk. While this was being done, two white sparrows flitted about the encampment, hopping and picking up the scattered grain. These birds are very rare, and were only twice met with in the course of our travels.

From the horizon, a speck rapidly approached the camp. This dot soon enlarged, and proved to be a rider, sitting on his *rahèlle* (short riding saddle) with his legs crossed on the neck of a camel, guided by a cord attached to a ring passed through the nostrils. The man was armed with a double-barrelled gun, slung over his shoulder. He wore a white shirt and a fantastical broad-brimmed hat, with a crown of upstanding straw, having coloured ends. This is a favourite head-covering of many *Bamboukies*, to which tribe the man, no doubt, belonged. He quickened his pace from a trot to a gallop as messengers or warriors usually ride when pressed for time, pursued by robbers, or in chase of game. Although the rapid motion of the camel was uneasy, the rider kept his balance in a way which only long practice can secure. The appearance of a camel when put to a speed of seven miles in half an hour is very peculiar, with its small head, outstretched neck, and lanky legs, bringing its soft cushioned feet down with a thud upon the loose sand. These animals, even when hard driven, rarely continue their

gallops for more than half an hour, and then lapse into a trot; the most unpleasant and difficult riding that can be imagined.

The rider, on reaching the camp, touched the camel with his stick as a signal to kneel. The animal emitted the usual bubbling sound, indicative of pleasure at having arrived at a halting-place. The rider then dismounted, and the camel was taken off to graze. Mahmadou had expected the man's earlier arrival, and questioned him as to the cause of his delay. The latter coolly replied, "My camel has too little wind to jump from there" (pointing in the direction he had come) "as quick as you can think."

The rider had been despatched three days previously, by Mahmadou, to a caravan from Soudan, halting with ivory and other goods near the Baffing river. This caravan was on its way to the Gambia to buy salt, of which Mahmadou had a quantity and desired to exchange for other goods, but neither of the owners wished to come to the other for fear of trading at a disadvantage. Nearly a fortnight had elapsed without coming to an actual treaty for barter, but messengers continually passed from one camp to the other. Each messenger was treated hospitably at the respective caravans, and delayed as much as possible, in the hope that the other caravan would give in. Eventually, Mahmadou resolved to visit the other camp and open trade.

When about to commence breakfast, the son of Mahmadou, a fine, tall young man, entered the camp. He was a pure-blooded Moor, and contrasted greatly

with those mixed types having short, frizzed, woolly hair. He had long, black hair, clean-shaven face, expressive eyes, and gallant bearing. A tame eagle perched on his shoulder, and a double-barrelled breechloader was slung over his back. He was followed by a strong gepard, an animal used by Arabs for hunting, but scarcely known to Europeans. The wild aspect of this formidable beast induced all to keep at a respectful distance, but the owner, to prove its tameness, caressed and played with it, trying to persuade others to do the same, but without effect. He procured this animal three years before, when a cub, from a caravan on the road to Soudan, and brought it up as tame as a dog. He had returned from hunting, and having shot a buffalo, left his followers to cut up and bring the meat to the encampment.

After the meal, Mahmadou consulted his son, and resolved upon sending him to the other caravan, to arrange the terms of exchange. The sick mulatto and the wounded native being unable to continue their journey, the time seemed likely to hang heavily, and therefore my wish, when expressed, to accompany Mahmadou's son, was readily agreed to.

Before departing, the wife of the host first made her appearance, followed by her daughter and two female servants from the tents. After a short conversation with the old lady, the mulatto gave her a little looking-glass and a chain of coral beads, which she prized more as a mark of respect towards her, than for their intrinsic value. She wore a comb in

her back-hair, and on being presented with another her pleasure was so great, that her face, although bearing the marks of age, seemed to become ten years younger for a little time, only to return to its normal wrinkled appearance. Neither the heavy golden chain from Galam, which ornamented her neck, nor the carefully-dressed tresses falling over her ears, after the custom of the married women, nor the heavy ear-rings and amber balls from Tagand, with which she was bedecked, could hide her age, or prevent her from appearing what she was—a wrinkled old woman.

Whilst preparing for the journey, Mahmadou sat on his carpet of sheepskin, counting the beads of his tessébé, or rosary, as he breathed a prayer. When the son was ready to start, his little sister, a pretty-looking girl, approached him with a dagger in her left hand, its handle being of handsome filagree work, and the sheath of red skin, while in the right hand she held a tessébé. The dark, silky hair of this girl, was simply dressed, with two little tresses hanging over her brow, and small amber balls dangling at the ends of them. Her eyes sparkled with animation and love, as she gazed with affection on her departing brother.

The whole appearance of the camp and its inhabitants proved the contentment which reigned in this nomadic family. The beneficial results of Mahometism contrasted strongly with the condition of their idolatrous neighbours. How little do many Christians know about the social life of these semi-

civilized races, who, although professing a different faith, yet know how to ensure happiness and morality ! A special creed is neither essential to attaining perfection in intellectual development nor social enjoyment.

On taking leave of the host, in company with his son, the messenger and other natives, we proceeded towards the caravan. The obstinate donkey at once showed his bad temper, and refused entirely to move. This forced me to walk on foot, at which the animal seemed delighted, without any presentiment of the sad fate awaiting him. A short distance from the camp of Mahmadou lay the little village Gourba, where his son dismounted from his horse, adjusted the saddle, and, on remounting, beguiled the way with native songs. He rode in front of the cavalcade, and occasionally addressed a few questions to me, which were answered with the aid of the mulatto's guide (Moctard), who spoke a little French. The Bambouki messenger, who rode a camel, to divert himself commenced playing upon a Bambara flute. Mahmadou's son then asked for a guitar from his servant, and added to the melody by playing and singing, in which the natives, as usual, all joined. Their music, although somewhat strange to European ears, was not devoid of harmony, and far superior to that of the coast inhabitants.

After crossing a small rivulet, the only signs of animal life were footprints of antelopes, and some hungry crows and eagles feasting upon the carcase of a dead camel. The poor creature, probably having

become exhausted, was left behind by a passing caravan, and had wandered to the water, where it at last sank down, evidently not long before; for if a night had intervened, hyenas would not have left a vestige of its body.

Camels have a hard life, and frequently for four days and more travel without a drop of water, cropping for their only food the short thorny bushes they pass. The fate of this patient animal is to be born in a desert, exert all its powers of endurance for the benefit of unthankful man, and as the end of all its toil and privations, when sick or exhausted, to be left in the desert to perish by starvation, or the cruel, though really more merciful, attacks of savage animals, who at once put an end to its sufferings. Even absolute starvation is light compared with the torture endured when left behind in a spot where it can get an occasional bunch of grass to prolong its tormented life, and recover for a short time to starve again. When laying powerless and half dead on the ground, a single jackal or other small animal will come and prey upon a leg, eating the flesh to the bone. The suffering creature, its vital powers not being quite exhausted, then rises on its legs, walks to a bush, or to a puddle of rain-water, which it unfortunately sees, and thus its miserable life is sometimes protracted for many days.

It seems scarcely to enter the minds of otherwise merciful Arabs that by abandoning their camels one of the principal tenets of the Koran is violated. This apparently thoughtless cruelty may arise

from the fact that the men themselves are always exposed to the same perils, and regard such things as matters of course. Not unfrequently caravans crossing deserts are overtaken by sand-storms, and buried in a common grave of sand. Or if they are not actually overwhelmed, the sand-storm obliterates all marks and traces of the route, leaving the exhausted travellers to be guided by the hovering of birds of prey over a camel which has dropped out from a caravan near a road. Thus, although unwittingly, even loathsome birds of prey serve as the aerial directors of the natives through the desert.

Mahmadou's son, fatigued by his early hunting and the heat of the day, resolved, about an hour before sunset, to pass the night at a small village. Soon after twilight, the last hot exhalations rising from the ground were followed by the penetrating coldness of the air. Not even an insect indicated the presence of any life, and the spot was as silent as the grave. Suddenly, in the midst of the gloom, the disagreeable tones of a cowardly hyena (*il. crocuta*) were heard. The animal was trotting towards the village in quest of its evening meal, to compensate for the hunger of the day passed in its hiding-place, and in all probability it was directing its way to the dead camel which it had scented. At a long distance the voice of another hyena echoed. It became louder as the animal approached, and ceased only now and then, to make the deep silence still more impressive. Its howling was answered by another of the species, whose almost satanic laughter seemed

to come from underground, causing an involuntary shudder. Then a whole herd of them galloped full speed in the direction where the dead camel laid. Who knows from what distance these animals came to disturb the sleep of the isolated villagers by their discordant voices, reverberating among the rocks and sand-hills, until they find their prey, or the morning rays drive them back to their lairs?

CHAPTER XV.

BEFORE DAWN—DISPUTED ELEPHANTS—DEATH OF THE
DONKEY—DIVIDING THE SPOIL—A PAGAN VET.—
ABANDONED VILLAGE—A SMOKE CURE—NATIVE CON-
TENT—PIPE OF PEACE.

A FULL hour before the faint gush of the dawn air heralded the first trembling morning ray, about to break through the darkness, the attentive Bambouki, seated near the embers, took a handful of tea from the travelling-bag, and busily engaged himself in the chemical process of violently boiling the fragrant herb for the morning meal. He then roused the rest of the party from their prostrate positions round the gleaming fires; and the chief of the village, with several of his people, soon joined the group. The chief's wife brought a large calabash of native beer and boiled millet, for the refreshment of the party before starting. The hasty but substantial meal ended, the animals were saddled, and the kraal was left while it was yet dark. The air was very

cool and favourable for making rapid progress, especially for the camels which are usually more active and better disposed for travelling after the heat of the day has decreased; hence the preference of the natives for prosecuting their journeys by night, when the road is well-known. After a short distance had been covered, the camel upon which the Bambouki rode proved to be in a feverish state, and trembled, compelling the man to dismount. Heavy clouds from S.W. floated overhead in *cirro-cumulo*, over which white cloudlets, like fleeting spirits, chased each other in rapid succession, and then as suddenly vanished. A black cloud from S.E. rapidly met those from S.W. and a great turmoil ensued. Their contact was marked by a confused and rolling motion, as of the waves of an angry sea. Then a small black spot, rapidly approaching from the horizon, increased in size until it assumed the form of a large bell. This opened like a hand, extending its fingers to a huge length, until their form was lost. After these cloud-displays, the sky assumed its usual deep blue, and the fervid heat of the tropics burst forth.

A rivulet winding between rugged, broken stones, and flowing from the neighbouring hills into the Baffing river, had frequently to be crossed. Like many other African streams, it owed its origin to the late heavy showers, and gave opportunity for man and beast to assuage their thirst, while occasionally resting under the shelter of a tree. The Bambouki tried to refresh his camel with water through its nostrils, but this had little effect. The weakness of

the animal increased until it could only be forced to continue its pace by repeated and heavy blows, and thus be saved from dying of starvation, or becoming the prey of wild beasts. In contrast to the dispirited condition of the sick camel, the obstinate donkey, instead of indulging in his frequent fits of stubbornness, was full of "go" and spirit, and required great efforts to hold him in.

The rugged nature of the path was varied by grass, covering thick mud, along the less winding banks of the stream. In one of these marshy places fresh footprints of elephants had trodden the mud into innumerable deep holes, causing continual stumbles and falls. Mahmadou's son and the Bambouki, with their sporting instincts, followed the prints, until three native hunters, who had struck the trail at early morning, came up. One of them, the principal hunter, called Kikala, insisted that, according to fair hunting rules, the elephants were theirs. A long and somewhat angry discussion as to mutual rights ensued. Kikala then inquired whether Mahmadou's son had heard the cuckoo, but as he had not heard it, the rival hunters contended it gave additional force to their claim. Mahmadou's son, intimating his disbelief, asked whether they were sure the cuckoo really cried for them. As if confirming their right, a cuckoo sang out close by, which the hunters asserted was a decisive confirmation of the game belonging to them. But another cuckoo gave note, and Mahmadou's son then insisted on his claim. This was not assented to by Kikala, upon

which a further discussion commenced, enforced by pushing and jostling, with the prospect of more serious consequences following. A superstitious importance is attached in these regions to the cuckoo, whose note and the number of its repetitions are taken by the natives as an omen of the success or non-success of anything undertaken.

Eventually, after much wrangling, it was arranged the elephants should be jointly pursued, and divided into fourths—three parts to Kikala's party, and one to Mahmadou's. A still more favourable concession was made by the latter, when he found the three hunters belonged to the caravan with which he was on the way to trade. Leaving the riding animals with the attendants, the trail of the elephants was followed through the thicket, until the rivulet spread out into a pond, walled by long grass. A large flock of pelicans were wading and disporting themselves at a short distance from an elephant, drinking and wallowing in the shallow water. Under a shaded tree, on a slight elevation, another elephant refreshed itself by pulling off leaves and branches. The presence of these huge animals did not disturb the equanimity of these birds.

Kikala had been an elephant-hunter from his youth upward, and knew the peculiarities and the best way of bringing these animals down. He assumed the part of director, and led the attack upon the as yet unsuspecting monsters. He crept noiselessly in the front, giving orders by signs as to the position in which all should place themselves, and

occasionally stopped, being anxious that no alarm should be given to the animals until well within range. From the nature of this desert district, elephants are particularly exposed to the assaults of wild beasts and hunters, making the brutes very cautious, and furious in their retaliation upon either animals or men when discovered.

When the hunters reached the edge of the pond, the wilful donkey, who had been left behind, made his way from the other animals to the water, for a draught, thereby alarming the pelicans, who flew up with a great commotion. The elephant under the tree ceased plucking leaves, turned round, but observing nothing worthy of his suspicion, continued to browse. Only the pond and a small elevation separated the hunters from the game. High grass, several *Acacia Senegalensis* (gum-tree), intermixed with the *Eutanaia*, with its long and curved swinging branches ornamented with leaves in the form of garlands, and the troublesome thorns formed a barricade and shelter.

A spot was soon found from which shots could be fired without being diverted by intervening branches. Kikala, in place of his creeping posture, now assumed an erect, commanding attitude. He gave a short whistle, and instantaneously ten bullets sped on their fatal errand, five taking effect in each elephant, but the shots were not mortal. Each animal raised up its ears and trunk, backed a pace, gave a loud shrill sound, like the whistle of a locomotive, and rushed furiously onward. The elephant under the tree, on reaching the margin of the pond, where his feet sank



“ The infuriated elephant, with his ponderous foot, put an end to the wayward donkey ”

into the mud, would not venture to cross, but rushed too and fro at the edge, uttering an infuriated shrill trumpeting. This being at a distance of about forty yards, gave a fair chance to the hunters of lodging in him another volley of bullets. The elephant, irritated by the wounds, plunged through the grassy swamp, and sank helplessly up to his belly in mud, in which position he was killed where he stood.

The other elephant started off from the water in the direction of the donkey, which, being frightened, galloped across the pond. The enraged animal, with the speed of the fastest horse, reached the trotting donkey, knocked it down with a tremendous blow from its trunk, and trampled it to death with its huge feet, breaking every bone in its body. Meanwhile guns were reloaded and repeatedly fired, when at length the combined effect of the numerous bullets deprived him of life. He fell with a heavy thud upon the lifeless remains of the ill-tempered but unlucky donkey. The sharp, startling sounds emitted by a wounded and infuriated elephant are so impressive, that a man of adamant frame and nerves of steel, no matter what his courage, would find it difficult to overcome the feeling of fear and dread.

When the hunters began cutting out the tusks, several pagan natives came upon the scene, as if from underground, to congratulate the party upon their good fortune. After exchanging salutations with the hunters, the pagan chief claimed a share of the elephant-beef, as the animals were killed upon his ground. Some little parleying ensued, and the carcass

of one of the elephants was given to the pagans, who immediately proceeded to cut it up and divide the flesh between them. Arrangements were made with these natives to slice the meat of the other elephant, remove the four tusks and bring them with the flesh to the encampment.

All went on peaceably until several women made their appearance. They at once incited the men against us for killing the elephants on their ground, asserting their husbands were good hunters, who would soon have discovered and killed the animals, and strangers had no right to deprive them of their lawful property. These remarks excited the men, who manifested angry feelings; and although the agreement had been made, they tried to get out of it, claiming the whole of the elephants and the tusks. The women even carried their requests to the extent of insisting upon taking away the hunters' guns. Kikala, who evidently well understood such tactics, ridiculed their pretensions, blamed the men for first making a bargain and then allowing women to persuade them to break it, and placing his hand to his throat, as if in the act of cutting it, asked the women whether they wished to eat him as well as the elephants? He then appealed to the chief, who ordered the natives to listen to what Kikala had to say. The clamour at once ceased, and the hunter, with all the eloquence and gesticulation of native oratory, justified his title to the elephants. This discussion, however, resulted in the women being partially successful in their demands. As a compro-

mise, the men agreed to accept the smallest tusk and the mangled carcass of the donkey, in addition to the elephant-meat.

The operation of cutting up the carcasses presented a busy scene. Each native cut, according to his fancy, huge lumps of flesh; but particular attention was directed to the highly-prized fat. Some smeared their bodies with it, others secured it to carry home for medicine or about their persons as a preventive against the attacks of wild beasts, which are supposed to have a terror of the smell of elephant's fat. Meanwhile, other natives lit fires, and the famished horde, like crows round their prey, surrounded the embers. Boiling and roasting of the delicate food rapidly proceeded, and hungry mouths were set in active operation, bones cracked between the strong teeth of the natives, as if between the jaws of a pack of starving wolves.

After the feast, some of the pagans manifested their satisfaction by singing and dancing. Others, as agreed, were ready to start for the camp, with large lumps of elephant-meat. Several natives surrounded the sick camel, carefully examined it, and called to an old man seated by the fire enjoying his share of succulent beef. He rose as rapidly as his age permitted, came to the camel, made it kneel, looked into its mouth, then, with tender dexterity, tested its stomach with his hands, and stopped at a particular spot, where he pretended to find two calculi. The natives, one after another, also tested that part of the body, gave short whistles and several

claps of their hands in token of admiration of the correctness of the old man's judgment. He took upon himself the duty of bringing the animal to the camp, with the intention of performing the necessary operation. The whole party then made a forced march to reach the caravan before dark.

A little village, which could be seen from the spot where the elephants were killed, was soon reached. It had been abandoned by its inhabitants on account of large quantities of snakes, scorpions, and other venomous reptiles. The sun was rapidly sinking like a large red globe, covering the horizon with its lurid reflection when the camp appeared in sight, and the sounds of evening prayers became distinctly audible on nearer approach. The cattle, sheep, and camels entering the kraal for the night's rest, with their lowing and bleating, seemed well to harmonise with the prayers.

Kikala entered the camp at the head of the party. Pagans, Mahometans and a Christian mingled together in friendly society, regardless of their religious differences. All quietly enjoyed the hospitality of a Mahometan around a blazing, cheerful fire, except one sick native, who, wrapped in a large shirt, inhaled the fumes of medical herbs from a "smoking basin."* He was attentively waited upon by an old man who frequently repeated, "You will recover when the storm comes. You tremble much and smell bad. You won't die."

* This practice is frequently resorted to by the Arabs, especially in cases of fever.

The recovery of the sick often depends upon the electricity in the air. It is a well-known fact that if the perspiration of a negro in sickness is of the same or, still worse, of less odour than in his usual health, his recovery is doubtful. With the increase in the odour of perspiration, the more rapid is the recovery. The rational treatment of sickness adopted by the native doctors, namely, purging, vomiting, warmth, ablution, and strict regimen in diet, extending in some cases to the total abstinence from animal food, have as good an effect as the more refined and complicated European medical practice.

After prayers, two men were busily engaged in cutting into thin slices the elephant-beef in order to dry, for future use; meanwhile poetical congratulations were heartily rendered to the hunters, and culinary preparations were made for a comforting repast after the fatigues of the day.

When the moon rose and shed its silvery light upon the encampment, a griot placed himself by the fire and sang in praise of the hunters, accompanying himself upon a guitar. A talaba (a drum) sounded by one of the natives brought round the griot all the inmates of the camp, who forthwith took part in the vocal entertainment, and manifested their enjoyment by dancing in the native fashion, a pastime which the natives never fail to indulge in on any suitable opportunity.

The Africans appear to better understand and appreciate life, under almost any circumstances, than most Europeans. This disposition to make the best

of transient prosperity is the natural result of having frequently to undergo great hardship and privation. In contrast with these unsophisticated feelings of Africans, the European, who dwells in the midst of civilisation, too often has his mind pre-occupied with anxieties for the future. A constant desire to secure his own personal interest, prompts him to take advantage of the ignorant. This makes him simply an actual materialist, hardens his reason, and renders his heart callous and indifferent to the welfare of man. Such persons, although having great pretensions to goodness, exhibit only their emptiness and the absence of kindly feeling. This invariably produces dissatisfaction with himself and all his surroundings, and he falls utterly from the position which a civilised man ought to occupy. The African, however, who has not been brought under the smothering influence of civilisation on morality is far more estimable as regards his disposition to enjoy himself and be grateful for present blessings. His sensitiveness to changing incidents, daylight or night darkness, fair or stormy weather, the light of the moon, or its absence, plenty or privation, causes him to rise or fall in his joyousness or gloom with as great variety, yet regularity, as the rising and falling of the barometer.

When the natives got tired of their singing and dancing, and Kikala was requested to tell the hunting story, two women came from the tents. One of them, with a looking-glass in her hand, assuming a coquettish air, walked towards a woollen carpet of

Fermagha* spread on the ground by her attendant some distance from the noisy circle of men. When the lady had comfortably seated herself upon the carpet, Kikala looked round at his attentive audience, and, clearing his throat, narrated all the incidents from the beginning to the end, with great self-possession and ease, in a strain of native eloquence, accompanied by graceful and impressive gesticulation. He presented a marked contrast to many civilised lecturers who appear frequently to be at a loss for words to express their thoughts, and find it necessary to pinch their coats, or pull their buttons, and hum and hah in order to keep to the thread of their discourse, and what the audience often may think, "*O oratores quam pulchra eloquentia est!*"

After the oration, a garba (snuff-box) was handed to Kikala. He took a good pinch, and passed the box round from hand to hand. Silence reigned amidst the group, as if awaiting something more, until Mahmadou's son, sitting side by side with the owner of the caravan, Ali Kerim, said, "It is all true," when conversation, intermingled with music and commendations of the conduct of the hunting-party, recommenced. Ali Kerim charged his touba (fancy pipe), suspended from his neck by a silver chain, and passed his tastefully-ornamented kisset (tobacco-pouch) to his neighbour. After the host had taken a few whiffs, he handed his pipe to those around, as a manifestation of friendship and confidence. The first

* Fermagha, in the neighbourhood of Timbuctoo, is celebrated for the manufacture of carpets of excellent design and colour.

person to whom the pipe is given is considered the most honoured. Following the example of the host, smoking became general. Mahmadou's son took from his vest a *buit* (a leathern bag for carrying tobacco, flint, and steel), more handsomely finished than the *kisset* of Ali Kerim. The *buit* was of the celebrated Timbuctoo work, the second and only industry except goldsmith's work and jewellery, for which this town has a reputation. The *buit* took the fancy of the host. Mahmadou's son, being hospitably entertained, acted upon the well understood rule in such cases, and presented his pouch to the host.* Although the latter wore a pleased expression on his face, he received this present with calm dignity and indifference. It is contrary to native etiquette to show any surprise or return immediate thanks for a gift.

The moon was high, but none thought of retiring until Ali Kerim drew out a handkerchief from his vest. This was a signal for all to seek repose. With most refined native manners, he wiped his face and hands, then slipped his feet into his sandals, and rose. The attendant removed the carpet, and the lady, attired in a loose flowing robe with long and ample sleeves, and similar pantelets, retired to the tent. Her entire figure was enveloped in a sort of large blanket, richly ornamented with corals, heavy pieces of amber, and gold. This was the final signal for a general retirement.

* A handsome pipe, *kisset*, and well-finished sandals are highly esteemed by the natives, as marks of their respectability and position.

CHAPTER XVI.

PRAYING TOWARDS MECCA—CAMP INDUSTRIES—AMONG
THE MANDRILS—ISOLATED CAVERNS—STORIES IN THE
CAVE—HYENAS' LAIR.

WITH daybreak the usual pleasing sounds of voices in prayer fell upon the ear. The devout Mahometans were engaged in their religious service outside the tents, with their faces to the rising sun, the direction in which their sacred place Mecca lies, and towards which all well-regulated Mahometan assemblages pray four or five times a day. Different forms of religious service were engaged in by the people of the caravan. One rubbed his hands and arms up to the elbow, and his face with sand in default of water. Another stood erect with the palms of the hands upon his head. Others held up their hands in supplication towards heaven, and then dropped them, or devoutly knelt, bowing the head to the dust, pronouncing in slow and measured tones the words, "Allah Akbar," and then slowly whispered a prayer. This was followed by reverently and slowly murmuring, "La Illah ela Allah, Mahomed, rasoul Allah, salah

aleh!" ("Mahomed is the Prophet, peace to him, and salutation; God is great!"). The manner in which these words are uttered produce a deep, solemn impression, and would touch the hardest heart. Any one who has travelled in the desert and heard these impressive words uttered by a devout Mahometan, will never forget them.

Prayers over, the ordinary routine of camp-life commenced. The occupation of women consists in attending to their domestic duties, smearing their bodies with butter, a process which lasts for two or three hours, or combing and arranging their hair, for two or three successive days. At intervals they have hunts for the numerous and fat parasites, which speedily increase and multiply under the influence of heat in their greasy and dirty hair, perhaps not again touched for a month or even longer, until hair-dressing time comes round again. The women, while undergoing this performance, are models of patience. They will lie on the ground as motionless as blocks for six or seven hours, while their long hair is spread upon the knees of a native parasitologist, to undergo the requisite research. This amusement is varied occasionally by dressing and undressing their children, trying their sensitive nerves by making them sit still for hours; or making their own toilettes, looking-glass in hand. So they pass their time as hard-working women.

The day life in camp is also occasionally varied by sewing together the materials for new tents, putting patches upon old ones, and making articles

for use, such as scraping out and carving calabashes, and preparing leather. The method of preparing leather is simply steeping the skin with the hair on in a mixture of water and ashes for several days. This causes the hair to fall off, and the skin is then dipped into a solution of *Boscia Senegalensis*, or of a fruit known as "Moumba." In some places a similar solution is used for removing the hair of camels instead of clipping it. Other industries are those of working "Akhlef" (carpets of lamb-skins), and weaving new materials for tent-making from long sheep-wool. Woollen thread is prepared and placed upon a primitive machine, consisting of two frames worked by the feet, as a rough sort of loom. A shuttle is passed between the crossing threads, irregularly pressed with a thin board, and in this manner is slowly produced a very strong sort of cloth. The same system of weaving is adopted by all Mahometans in Africa, and not even yet given up in the east of Europe. These processes, instead of being hard work, are practised more for amusement, and to pass the time. Little actual work is carried on in camps.

The herdsmen collected their cattle, and drove them to pasture. Mahmadou's son negotiated with Ali Kerim for the exchange of salt, ivory, and other commodities; and Kikala started off to hunt with his two fellow-hunters, Moctard and myself.

On a little swamp, to which the course laid, a young *Balanites Ægyptiaca* attracted the natives to pluck its fruit, of which they are very fond. Kikala, stretching out his arm to secure some, with his

shoulder touched an overhanging snake, mistaking it for a branch, upon which the reptile immediately disappeared, and he gave an involuntary start, which elicited from one of the party the remark, "A pretty sort of elephant-hunter you are, to be frightened at a harmless snake." Kikala replied, that he never yet feared to face any animal, but he would rather encounter an elephant or wild beast than be bitten by a snake. In the same swamp were fine specimens of the *Adersaia Essenaia* and the *Boscia Senegalensis*, used in dressing skins.

Beyond the swamp the path led through the thick shade of the *Mimosa*, a few *Ficus*, the rare *Acacia Giraffi*, and other trees, intermingled in disorder with *D'Orchidées* and *Convolvulus*. A loud barking of the *Cynocephale Mandril* proceeded from the woods. On approaching the spot numbers of the large monkeys barricaded the way, like a regiment of well-drilled soldiers. The females, with the young ones pick-a-back, or holding them by the hands filled with fruit, were carefully placed in the rear. The greatest gourmands had fruit not only in both hands and under their arms, but cheek-pouches also distended with it.

Among these creatures, half a dozen were particularly amusing. One, leaning against a trunk, busily crunched his juicy food, and looked under his arm-pits to see whether the rest of it was safe. Two of the group, after grave consultation, and artful looks at the epicure, separated, to hide their fruit under roots. This done, one, walking sideways on all fours,

appeared in front of the gourmand, and diverted his attention by various antics, until the latter lost temper, threw all the fruit down, and rushed at the impudent offender to punish him. Meanwhile, the accomplice, hidden behind a tree, pounced upon, and, in a moment, hid the cast-away fruit in a hollow trunk. This was not enough for him. Without losing a moment, he returned to the spot where both rogues had placed their own fruit. He was sharp enough to hide one share, but on pulling out the rest of the concealed fruit from under the root, was caught in the act by his accomplice and the plundered monkey, when a merry mill took place, good hard knocks and slaps being mingled with bites and scratches. The three others then displayed their pugnacity and threw their fruit at the combatants, which was the signal for a general *melée*.

Here and there, on branches, many of the largest mandrils were stationed as warders, and gnashing their teeth, made every conceivable gesticulation. Only a few, of a less warlike disposition, amused themselves by acrobatic performances from branch to branch and tree to tree. The main body of warrior monkeys were not disposed to retreat. They put on a bold front as the party, preceded by Kikala, pushed its way on through the opposing animals and forced them back. Gradually the hunters were encircled by these playful but dangerous simians, who threw showers of branches upon the ground until a little pond in an open space was reached.

The mandrils then retreated, jumping, galloping,

creeping, peeping, barking, and crying in every possible intonation. They were in a hurry to join a circle of their hairy brethren congregated on an elevation. An attempt was made to follow the group, but the whole regiment, with increased malice, forced the party to retreat. There was no possibility of getting a closer observation of this assemblage, which probably was a funeral.

Near the pond was a sandy space, containing fresh-water shells of the *Bythinia* variety. Kikala, in his youth, had hunted there when this spot was covered with grass. Further on steep sandy hillocks run parallel with the Baffing river. High, naked rocks rose like pyramids, with thinly scattered bushes between them, without any sign of animal life, except occasional tracks of small antelopes or hyenas.

The river-shore was followed until a narrow sandy ledge enabled the party to ford to the other side. This bank was formed of sand brought down by a current from the hills, and, no doubt, at no distant time will entirely block the channel of the river. Deep ravines in some places were filled level to their edges with sand; in other places the sand, being prevented by the rocks from dispersion by the wind, had accumulated into hillocks. Although the rocky and desolate appearance of this region denoted, even by its geological composition, the general absence of fertility, still there were occasional patches not yet deprived of vitality. This was owing to the disaggregation of the molecules of the rocks, and the moisture contained in the sand, during the rainy

season, when strong underground currents are percolating into the Baffing river.

In the sands were two stumps of trees, one about seven inches and the other about fourteen inches in diameter, buried to a depth of nearly thirty-feet, and encrusted with silica and gypse. It may be, hundreds of years ago rich vegetation flourished here, and the place was inhabited, as grottos were seen in the rocks. As such places are frequently the lairs of lions, leopards, hyenas, or wild dogs, a sharp look-out was kept, and the hunters from time to time threw stones into the caves, to ascertain whether wild beasts were in lurking.

To one of such caves, half-filled with sand, the entrance was about two feet high by three feet broad, of an oval form, running for about six feet inwards, the bottom being sand. It then suddenly curved to the north, only permitting a man to crawl through. From this curve issued a strong current of moist and cold air. In all probability, it was a cavernous passage, formed by the currents, which found their way out miles and miles off. A few feet above this grotto was a cave in an almost perpendicular wall. Rough steps, less of a natural than artificial formation, led to it. They were more or less regular, but barely sufficient to afford a firm foothold in climbing up to the cave, where a most pleasant cool shade was found. The cave was of half-circular form, about twelve feet in diameter, and seven feet high; the entrance being of about the same height by ten feet broad. At the back was an oval recess, apparently

for storing provisions. Two stones in the centre of the cave bore marks of a fire, there being a couple of small pieces of burnt branches, and a few very old and broken bones.

When resting in the cave the conversation turned upon the deserted and lonely appearance of the district. Kikala related a story about a large village at which he had stopped when travelling several years ago to Soudan. On his next journey, on passing the same place, he found only several broken roofs protruding from the sand. A heavy sand-storm having suddenly overwhelmed the village in the night, blocked up the entrances, broke through the roofs, and buried many inmates and cattle in kraals, before they could escape. The caravans that used formerly to halt at this place are now compelled to take a longer and more circuitous route, all the wells having been blocked up.

A similar story was told by another of the hunters, as to a village which had met the same fate, where now only devils lived with scorpions and wild beasts for their companions. A devil came to this village, and directed a fetish to tell the inhabitants to leave it at once, for the place belonged only to the devils, who wished to take it back again. The people disbelieved the fetish, and the devil complained to another fetish in the next village. This fetish, by the devil's order, went to the villagers and repeated the warning to clear out of the place before the devil was vexed, but the natives only laughed at him. The devil then took his revenge by strangling men at night in their

huts, leaving them with swollen necks, horrible faces, their tongues hanging out, and eyes open. Strangers who came there met the same fate. At last the fetish himself was found strangled, upon which the frightened natives left the village for ever.

Another story was about many devils inhabiting trees and not allowing caravans to halt under their shade. Those who did so soon fell asleep and never woke again. It may not be the devil himself who is the cause of this, but, undoubtedly, there are natural causes unknown to the natives, which they, in their ignorance, ascribe to his Satanic majesty.

The descent from the cave was more difficult than the ascent, and, after the cool shade, the heat seemed scarcely bearable. In the loose, hot, and glittering sand, numerous trails of hyenas, in almost every direction, were observed. A solitary, mountainous country, with woods adjacent to the desert, is usually selected by these skulking animals for their lairs. Here they can freely practise their discordant night howls without being interrupted by other animals. It is the hyena's repulsive form and voice, and superstition, that has brought them into such ill-repute among mankind. They, in fact, are more useful as scavengers than mischievous.

"Bouki! bouki!" said the keen-eyed Kikala, pointing in the direction where a hyena was trotting, with a large piece of flesh in its mouth, towards a cavern, where it disappeared. This was an affectionate mother, carrying food for her five cubs, which, on seeing the hunters approach, speedily devoured

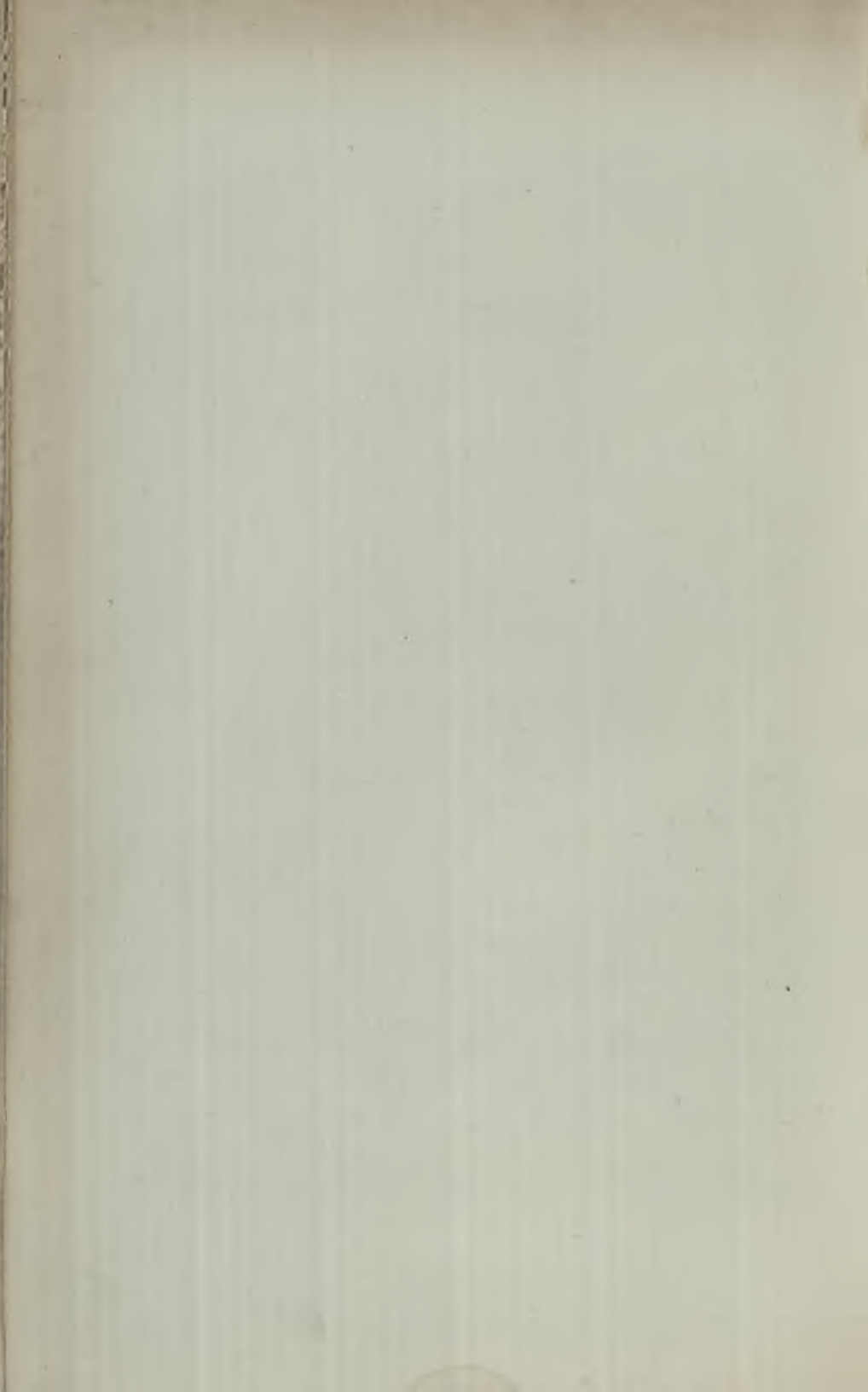
the provisions divided amongst them by their thoughtful dam. She came to the front of the cave, gnashing her teeth, and looking full of fear at the idea of losing her beloved cubs, then at the interesting age of about two months. They imitated her by grating their teeth as well. Their thick, soft fur, of an ashy colour, with black stripes on the sides, and irregular spots between, a black stripe on the back, each exhibiting its teeth, and their sparkling eyes, gave the whole group a striking, if not interesting, appearance. In the moment of danger, it presented an indication of domestic and social life among these animals, and their readiness to stand or fall together in the face of a common enemy,—a quality not always found in more intellectual animals—human beings.

One of the hunters, desirous of slaughtering them for the mere sake of killing, was with considerable difficulty dissuaded from carrying out his intention. Kikala abused him with great vehemence, saying, "Kill a bouki, and defile your gun! I will tell to all what you do," and pushed him away. To cool the blood-thirstiness of the man, he was offered some tobacco to smoke. This had the effect of soothing him in the same manner as passionate children are pacified by a gift of something they like.

The cubs, on seeing no danger, retired to a corner of the cave, and occasionally gnashed their teeth, as if in disgust. Kikala offered to catch one of them, and suggested my coat should be thrown over the head of the dam. The coat was pulled off



"All the cubs tugged at the coat to liberate their dam."



without a thought of its inevitable loss, and holding it in front of the dam, she was driven to the back of the cave, where the coat was thrust over her head. She immediately seized the coat between her teeth and shook it violently, keeping a tight grip. The young ones also seized it in different parts, and with their teeth and talons soon tore it into shreds, keeping the fragments in their mouths, and shaking them furiously. In one of the pockets was a forgotten breakfast, wrapped in a handkerchief. In spite of the loss of the coat, the sight of one of the cubs poking its nose into the pocket, and tearing it into still smaller fragments, to get at the choice morsels, and then ravenously swallowing them, made all the hunters laugh heartily.

While this was going on Kikala managed to seize one of the cubs by the neck. Although young, it was a dangerous task to hold it by its scruff, as it wriggled violently, twisting its head about and viciously attempting to bite. The weight of the cub, and its determined struggles, made it no easy task to carry it far. It was, therefore, dropped on the ground, to see whether it could find the road back to its bereaved dam. The little animal then trotted round, in the same manner as a dog trying to recover the scent of his master or his fellows. Failing to discover which way to go, it broke out with a pitiful cry, until it caught the sound of the dam's voice. The cub stopped short, pricked up its ears, turned its head in every direction, and anxiously awaited another signal. A second pitiful cry from the dam followed,

and then the little creature galloped off in the direction from which the sounds came. Such is the natural, indeed affectionate, feeling to be witnessed, even in savage animals.

The hyenas and wild dogs had driven away other animals, and in the course of the march to the camp the only living creature was an unlucky hare, which Kikala shot and carried as a present to Ali Kerim, who was fond of such a delicacy.

The fatigue made the hunters taciturn, but the cool breezes, which blew occasionally in puffs from S.E. replacing the hot winds varying from N.E. to N., rendered the heat bearable. The daily variations of temperature in this district being more rapid and greater than on the sea-coast, heavy clouds threatened every moment a change to a violent shower, or even a tornado, to refresh and purify the air. Such is frequently the case at the end as well as the commencement of the rainy season, when the rain generally falls more abundantly in the night.

CHAPTER XVII.

HERCULEAN CONTESTS — NOBLE KIKALA — A MANGLED
ATHLETE—AFRICAN DEVIL COMES—TORNADO FREAKS—
LOSS OF THE NUPTIAL TALISMAN.

THE red horizon was lighted up with the large lurid orb of the descending sun, and a magnificent circular rainbow crowned the camp when the hunting party entered. The camp presented a scene of animation.

One woman was busily engaged in working the well-known fancy Tissoura (bags made of skins); others were at their household occupations. The women, if compared with the men, are hard-working, as the men, during the day-time, are engaged in sleeping, and in the evenings, by way of change, amuse themselves by athletic sports, to the admiration of those who rouse themselves up to witness them. Athletic contests are practised by the Moors on the coast during the holidays called Tabasqui and Gamou, which continue for a whole week.

Two men were thus engaged in a sort of parody upon the real feasts. Music played and plaudits were showered upon the conqueror who threw his opponent to the ground, amid loud laughter. At the real contests, the conqueror is carried round the town or village in triumph; in the camp he was honoured by riding, pick-a-back, upon his trotting fallen foe. If this contest had been a genuine one at a feast, the conquered, if he did not surrender himself as a slave for life to the conqueror, the latter would be at liberty to put him to death. A second trial of strength was more comical. A tall, long-legged fellow rode on the back of a short-legged one, who evidently did not like acting the beast of burden, and made such peculiar grimaces as to elicit shouts of laughter from the by-standers.

All were so engrossed in these amusements, that the hunters entered unnoticed, until Kikala, carrying the wretched little hare by the hind legs, directing his course to the tent of Ali Kerim, crossed the path of the galloping conqueror. Kikala was known as a very strong man and a good hunter, but when he was seen carrying this small game as a trophy of his skill, the sight was too much for them, and the laughter became louder and more boisterous than before, accompanied by rough jokes and caustic remarks. These roused the ire of the cool Kikala: he stretched out his tall, muscular frame, altered the expression of his energetic countenance, and told one of the loudest jokers to be quiet, for he could, although tired, as easily carry the joker as the hare.

Such words were sufficient to rouse the pride of the man and impel him to resort to force, but knowing Kikala's strength, he did not then attempt a contest on Kikala saying he never fought children. The other members of the party still insisted on their fighting it out, which increased the wrath of the man. Kikala stood looking steadfastly at his assailant, who, swinging his arms, cried, "Come out!" "Allah nghubberu dega" (God prolong your life) replied Kikala, "I am tired!" He stretched his limbs, planted his feet firmly on the ground, adding, "Grasp me—throw me over—if you can. I will not throw you, but I will bend you," upon which the assailant seized Kikala.

The keen eyes of the spectators closely watched the struggle, and it was for some time uncertain to which of the competitors the advantage inclined. While Kikala stood with his hands hanging down, the other exerted his utmost strength to throw him. At last Kikala shifted his feet, still retaining a firm attitude. "You are stronger than I thought, but your bones are weak," said he, grasping his opponent by the shoulders with the power of a vice. He shook him with such force that the man, although a well-developed athlete, relinquished his grasp round Kikala's waist, and dropped on his knees. Loud shouts of laughter ensued, while the vanquished man rubbed his shoulders.

"Kikala," said Ali Kerim, who was looking on, "is a great hunter and strong as a rock. He can kill a camel or an ox with his fist. Praise him!" This

was loudly responded to by the spectators, accompanied with music, to an improvised song, the burden of which was, "Kikala is a strong man—strong as a rock. He can remove a rock if he chose to do so. Kikala can carry off the moon. He is the strongest man of all and the bravest; but he is gentle as a girl. He never harmed a child yet, so kind is he. Therefore, Kikala must ride—ride till he is tired—till the sun sinks. The man who dared to fight with Kikala, let him smear his face with mud and pay respect to Kikala for the future. He must feel Kikala's weight, and carry him until his great heart is pleased!"

Kikala remained nearly motionless during this time; then taking a handful of sand and sprinkling it between his fingers over his body (the Mahometan form of taking an oath), said, "True, Kikala never did harm to anyone, and knows his strength, which God gave him, therefore praise God." The surroundings, with one voice, cried out, "Kikala must ride!" who, in a dignified tone, replied that he never rode a camel, because he could kill it, and still less would he ride a weak man. "Very good, very good," was the response by the natives; but the intoxicated pride of the tall man who had just ridden upon the short one, induced the former to call out in an opprobrious manner, "Then, I will ride Kikala!"

Kikala silently looked at the man, until at last, displeased by his persistency, he exclaimed, "You are too proud of your strength. Let us fight! You will feel more pleased if you ride on Kikala's back.

If you can do that, it will be worthy of your pride. But I know you are not strong, for you could only ride on the back of a man weaker than yourself. Come then, and try to ride on Kikala's back. Think about it. I do not waste my words upon the wind. Kikala will not reproach himself for riding upon the back of a man he fairly conquers. He hates proud people who do not know their real power. Think before you fight me! God may at once deprive you of your strength, and then I will not joke with you, but I will throw you there" (indicating by a wave of his hand some little distance off) "and break your bones, so that you will never again attempt fighting."

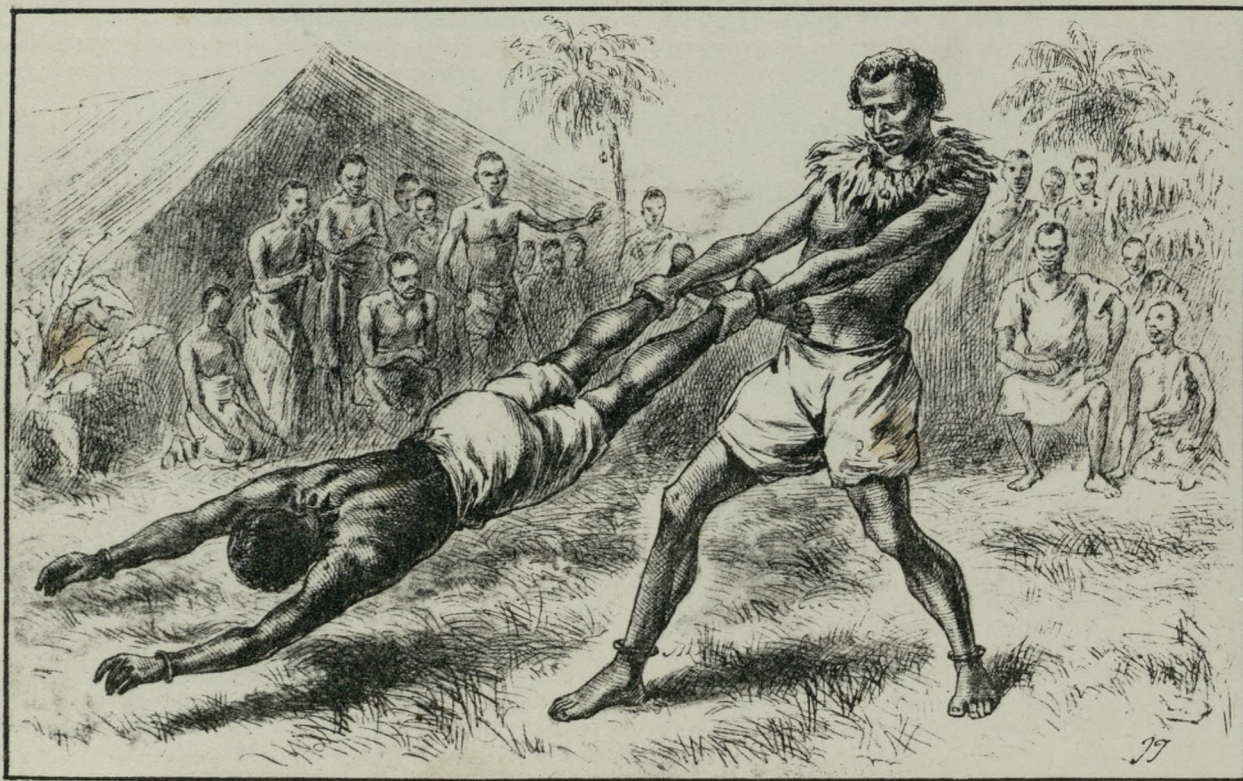
The man, encouraged by the spectators and stimulated by his pride, paid no heed to these warning words, beyond laughingly replying, "I *will* ride Kikala!" "Ride Kikala?" exclaimed Kikala, with an expression of wounded pride, "Who has ever heard of a man who rode upon him? No one shall sit upon his back. This knite" (he continued, pulling from his belt a long hunting-knife) "kills only beasts, and it shall kill Kikala if he is beaten!" His tone and expression indicated a firm determination to be as good as his word.

From my sympathy for Kikala, under these provocations, fear of a deadly encounter following, Ali Kerim and others were appealed to, to prevent it, but the pugnacious natives insisted upon the contest taking place. Kikala could not withdraw without losing the respect of his people, and, unless he had that, he did not care to live. He was willing to give

way if the other would retire from the contest. But the excited combatant could not be brought to understand that the shame would be less if he at once refrained from the contest, rather than, after having his ribs broken, to be obliged to confess himself beaten. Africans are not singular in their love for savage conflicts. In Spain, from the grandee to the peasant, all delight in the barbarity of bull-fights; and, not long ago, the English, from the blue-blooded aristocrat to the horny-handed labourer, could watch with pleasure and enjoyment the brutal contests of the prize-ring.

Only about half an hour remained before the natives, like all good Mahometans, were to be called to evening prayer, after which the fight would not come off, and by the morning the angry feelings of the combatants might subside. Kikala's foe, looking at the setting sun with excitement, called upon his enemy to come out. Kikala, with piercing glances, viewed his opponent from head to foot, and recommended him not to be in such a hurry to have his bones broken. "There is plenty of time to rest well before fighting," said Kikala, turning towards the horizon; "I do not joke, and will not lose my life for nothing, but will not fight with you until you are as cool as a stone," and with these words retired from the spot.

Every movement of both these Herculean combatants was eagerly watched by the surrounders. While the one was violently gesticulating, Kikala, with a calm, steady step, for some time paced to and



“The powerful Kikala swung his enemy round and hurled him with a crash to the earth.”

fro, then reclined on the ground, and after rubbing his arms and legs with sand, came up to the scratch and faced his enemy.

“Will you give up?” asked Kikala, extending his muscles. “No,” said the other. “You are mad,” replied Kikala, and with the words “Allah akber,” both men grasped each other with their muscular arms. Kikala was the first to waver, but soon resumed a steady position. Then the other gave way, and again both stood firmly together, as if riveted to the spot, each trying to lift the other from the ground. Their eyes sparkled with rage. Their compressed teeth, strained muscles, and veins almost starting through their skins, showed plainly the tremendous efforts they were making.

“To live or to die!” suddenly cried out Kikala, and seizing his enemy by the throat with one hand, with the other arm violently squeezed him against his broad and powerful chest, until the opponent, half choked, relinquished his grip of Kikala. The latter swiftly lifted his foe by the waist, and with great force dashed him on the sand. Before the fallen man could recover himself, Kikala got hold of him by the ankles, whirled the man twice round, and, with the third swing, threw his enemy to a distance of four fathoms, where the body fell with a heavy thud.

The lesson he received from Kikala was sharp. The right arm, two ribs, with almost the whole of his upper set of teeth, were broken. While the vanquished one was trying to raise himself from the

ground, loud praises greeted Kikala, of which he took no heed, but stood like a marble statue, watching his defeated foe. By this time darkness had set in, and the usual scenes and occupations of evening nomad life ensued.

In every caravan there is a person to be found with some practical medical knowledge and skill. Frequently the treatment of a griot, or more usually a marabout, is beneficial in trivial ailments; but in serious matters, involving amputation or any surgical operation, their skill is very limited and generally fails. However limited my surgical knowledge, it was superior in such cases to the uneducated native practitioners. Bark, rags, and other appliances were readily found. Arnica and a few medicines forming part of the light travelling equipage in case of accidents on the journey, were called into requisition for the alleviation of the sufferings of Kikala's conquered enemy, whose broken arm and ribs were set. Fortunately the fractures were not complicated; but to replace the broken teeth was utterly impossible.

Late at night the sound of distant thunder roused the camp, and the griot thereupon engaged in prayer against storm. The moon was veiled by heavy clouds, and the griot, looking upward, whistled, waving one hand as though he were dispersing the threatening clouds, diverting the descent of the rain, and directing it to the desert. With the other hand he was busily counting his tessébé. His desire to drive the rain to the desert was very natural, for there the

human race is rapidly dying out, even if not killed in war or by robbers. In the case of a long and continued drought, the whole of the inhabitants of villages or towns may be stricken down. Such, evidently, was the impression upon the mind of the griot. "God is displeased with the people, and therefore punishes them," said he, and drew a deplorable picture of native life in deserts. The natives are dominated by what may be called puerile ideas and aspirations. These, in their inception, are in many respects founded on exactly the same principles as those prevailing among civilised communities. The savage, in the hour of adversity, danger, mental or spiritual depression, through his priest (marabout), fetish, or his own inward promptings, appeals to, and supplicates aid and comfort from, an over-ruling power, good or bad, be it God or devil.

A vivid flash of lightning, instantly followed by a tremendous clap of thunder, rolled over the camp. "Nakamou! Nakamou!" (Devil! devil!) cried the griot. In fact, the African devil was coming. The two ancient principles in nature, Good and Evil (God, creator; and Devil, destroyer) seemed to contend for the mastery. It appeared likely that the devil would be the conqueror, for there immediately followed a second stunning peal, preceded by a blazing flash which split a tree in two, set it in flames, and caused a native standing close by to drop down from fright, suddenly rise and rush away, holding his hands to his ears. "Stop, stop!" cried the griot, "the devil is strong, and can run quicker than you if he means to

kill you. Do not vex him ; there he is !” (pointing to the burning tree). “ You saw him break the tree which God gave for shade, and the devil did not like that.” The griot shook his head, and added, “ Stand still. People who move to serve the devil are often killed.”

This primitive idea of the devil-destroyer explains the reason why up to the present day, even among Christians, the devil is depicted with flames around him shooting upwards, and God with flames in a downward direction. In ancient times the conflicting powers (destroying and constructing) were represented by two flames, one upwards and the other downwards. Later on the same idea was conveyed by symbols of flashes in opposite directions, as two continually opposing forces. Humanity naturally seeking for good rather than evil, in the days of hieroglyphics the good was represented above the evil, and so the upper flash signified God. The Jehoviennes, according to tradition, were the first to represent sounds by hieroglyphic writing, and called both God and devil “ Niam.” At a later period, God was represented as an old man in a flame, while the devil was delineated as an old woman or warrior, also in a flame.

Shortly after the griot’s theological lecture, a sudden gust, with more lightning and thunder, brought on the last heavy downfall of the rainy season, accompanied by a violent tornado. The tents were all blown away, half of the kraal was destroyed, and torrents of water rushed through the camp. Nobody even thought of trying to keep the camels and other

animals together, as they had rushed in different directions. Vivid lightning flashed across the murky sky, illuminating the surroundings as distinctly as the day. One of the tents was lifted to a great height by the wind and carried about three miles away, where it was found next day on a tree. The cracking of wood was heard at a distance, and the trunks of trees were seen flying through the air. Two men of the camp were carried to a distance of twenty-five feet. The deserted village traversed on the road from the elephant-hunt was cleared away, and only broken stumps of wood indicated where it had stood. About two miles from the camp, beyond this village, the tornado branched off from its direct track through a dense wood, cutting a path six fathoms wide for over half a mile. On the tops of trees by the side of this path lay here and there an uprooted tree, pressing down those on which it had lodged. Beyond this cleared path lay trunks which had been twisted off close to the ground, and broken branches scattered in the wildest disorder. Further on, the tornado had taken another curve to the N.E., cracking only a few trees and inclining them. A few fathoms further, upper branches were twisted off, showing the gradual lessening of the wind.

The other branch of the tornado continued its course over a large plain and hills, raising enormous cloudy columns of sand, distinctly seen during the continuous lightning. All this mischief had been wrought by this powerful element in a few minutes. The majestic and terrible grandeur of the scene could

only be appreciated and represented by an artistic and sharp-eyed observer.

The collecting of the cattle, tents, and other property at long distances, gave much labour, but this was nothing compared with the vexation and turmoil created by only two women at the destruction of the panniers in which they had travelled. The recovery of the pieces of their silk curtains, hanging among the thorn-bushes in the devastated kraal, was a perplexing and difficult task. But can the reader even imagine how great and horrible was the disagreement and the difficult exertions, in which all the camp shared, in trying to remedy the consequences of the spiteful joke of the African devil-tornado? He had blown down and demolished the tent of Ali Kerim's wife, carrying away in dire disorder rags, carpets, and other things—who knows where?

All this was submitted to; but imagine, if you can, the horror which seized this lady when she found that this rude joker (the tornado) had been cruel and impudent enough to blow away exactly the pair of pantalets (tak) which were handed to her by the marabout when she was united to her beloved husband. The marabout, on handing these "tak" to the lady, particularly cautioned her to take great care of them, as they should, according to usual Mahometan custom, only have been worn as a talisman, on very important occasions or crises.

The tak had, unfortunately, been washed, and hung inside the tent to dry, just before the tornado visited the camp, being too precious to be risked outside.

Large and wet, they were just the very thing that the joker would carry miles and miles away. The lady, on discovering her sad loss, broke into loud cries, tears, and tearing her hair and dress, rushed frantically about the wrecked camp, in search of her vanished treasure. The girl, to whose care they had been handed for drying, had not yet recovered from the fright of the tornado, but she soon encountered a second tornado worse than the first—her mistress. The girl's beautiful hair, the arrangement of which had been the work of three days, was in a moment dishevelled, and her shirt torn into rags by the frantic lady. The distressed girl stood in the light of the moon like a water-nymph in a blissful state of nudity, with her loose hair waving in the breeze, while receiving an unmerciful spanking from the hands of her infuriated mistress.

The bewildered Ali Kerim could do or say nothing to assuage his disconsolate and wrathful spouse, whose hysterical wailing and howling resounded far in the distance, until she had vented her injured feelings by immediately ordering all the men to start off to hunt for the unwhisperables. The unfortunate lady, like Rachel, refused to be comforted, for her unmentionables were not, when the exhausted natives returned with long faces and downcast eyes from their tedious but fruitless search.

Thanks to the storm and the great changes effected by the tornado in the camp, the trading negotiations between the young Mahmadou and Ali Kerim were speedily brought to a close. The camels, being

loaded with the tents, merchandise, and good store of dried elephant-beef, the caravan proceeded to Mahmadou's camp, accompanied by the rueful countenances of the lady bereaved of her talisman, and the Bambouki whose camel had been operated upon by the native vet. The latter had very successfully extracted the *calculus* from the old camel's body—but, fortunately for him, had killed it, and now the skilful operator, with a face half-sorrowful and half-roguishly smiling, was on his way home for assistance to convey the meat of the deceased camel for a feast with his brethren.

CHAPTER XVIII.

CAMEL-FIGHTS—THE FOULAHS AND DJALONKEYS—A CAPTIVE MONKEY—RESULTS OF FATIGUE—CAUTIONS IN TRAVELLING.

ON Ali Kerim's arrival in the hospitable Mahmadou's camp, an accident occurred. After the usual native courtesy and receptions were exchanged, sandals taken off, and all comfortably seated themselves upon mats and sheep-skins, to enjoy a friendly palaver, a great disturbance ensued among the animals. One of the newly-arrived camels was an ill-tempered brute, and disagreed with an equally bad-tempered camel belonging to Mahmadou. Both animals furiously attacked each other, kicked and bit, until the new comer with its teeth seized the other by the neck, and after several vicious twistings and shakings, tore out the flesh with the jugular vein, and thereby caused the speedy death of the poor brute. This misfortune led to the attendant of the attacking animal being called forward by Ali Kerim, who feeling the unpleasant position in which

he stood, by the act of his own camel, was disposed to deal very harshly with his slave. Mahmadoou magnanimously interposed, saying it was not the man who had killed the camel, and, therefore, he was not to blame, and ought not to be punished for what had happened.

The laws prevailing in Africa, although in some instances strict, and, perhaps, unduly severe, are in the main just and equitable. The speedy way in which rough and ready justice is sometimes done, sets an example which it is to be regretted cannot be followed in our own complicated and tardy jurisprudence.

The trading transactions between the chiefs of both caravans, after the previous long negotiations and interminable chaffering and bating which usually characterise dealing between traders, were now satisfactorily adjusted. Quite different from this were their feelings when they examined each other's horses, worth in native value about £35, and discussed which was the best. The quality of a horse is a most tender subject to a Mauri. In this case, each understood and admired his own animal, and could see defects in the other, making it impossible to come to a satisfactory conclusion. Each, therefore, retained the opinion that his own horse was undoubtedly the best.

By the evening fire, the two merchants held a long conversation over their coffee and pipes, about trading prospects and the political condition of the country. Both spoke very highly of Hadji Oumar, who saved Timbuctoo from its enemies by his power-

ful army. Up to that time there had been constant quarrels between two rival claimants of Oumar's family for supremacy. Their struggles caused much hindrance to trade, and rendered travelling through that region very difficult. Oumar's enlightened mind brought about many beneficial changes ; but after his fall, troubles were again renewed.

The conversation then turned upon the Fouta Djallon people, their mines of gold, and complaints of its high price since the country had fallen under the sovereignty of the religious Almamy, during which the population increased by the immigration of numerous and industrious Foulahs, who drove the handful of resident Djalonkeys into the mountains. Formerly these people were under the domination of military chiefs, and great disorder then prevailed. The Djalonkeys, expatriated by the Foulahs, for many years sought safety in the mountains, lived in misery and poverty among the rocks, and avoided all other tribes.

In consequence, they made little progress in trade or industry, but, at present, some of them live in good bambook houses, built in the same style as those of the Foulahs. This improvement is due to continual contact with the latter nation, and the good example of energy they have always shown. The Djalonkeys, being isolated in the mountains, and free from the troubles of war, are now developing trade and industry, and improving the state of their social life. How long peace will last is a question for Europeans to decide.

At night the usual hospitality was offered by the

good Mahmadou, not alone to the healthy visitors, but the sick were not forgotten. The mulatto had so far recovered as to be able to continue the journey, and, to the honour of the denizens of the camp, the native wounded by the leopard, although still suffering severely, was very attentively treated. The bite on his shoulder, though well-washed, had, from the venom of the leopard's fangs, become violently inflamed and suppurated, which had increased his weakness and thrown him into a fever. The wound had been dressed by Mahmadou with powdered *calculus*,* taken from a pig. This well-meant remedy only aggravated the inflammation, while arnica and alum, of which there was a good supply, were disregarded.

One of the most affectionate sympathisers with the wounded man, was a pretty little monkey, which was unceasing in its caresses. The little creature, during our absence at the other camp, had been ingeniously captured for Mahmadou's little daughter. The natives hung to a branch in a neighbouring wood a cocoa-nut from which the kernel had been removed, and replaced by millet and other dainties dear to the simian tribe. The hole cut was just large enough to admit the empty paw of a monkey. The nut had not hung long before an inquisitive monkey found out by his scent the nut containing delicacies. He was wise enough to thrust his paw through the

* *Calcuti*, especially human, being regarded as a good remedy against both external and internal poison, command an exorbitant price in the African markets. Calculus is very common in Africa, and is chiefly caused by an undue proportion of flesh-food, being aggravated by the bad quality of the water drunk.

little hole, grasped as much of the treasure as his fingers could span, but could not draw his now closed fist out. While endeavouring to solve this problem, the unfortunate creature was taken captive, and brought to the camp; where the mulatto made for the prisoner a cloth-belt, to which was attached a cord, and handed to the girl. The monkey, in revenge for this outrage on his liberty, sprang at all who came in his way, and after spitefully pulling their hair, would run back to gently scratch the head of the sick man.

A pleasant evening was brought to a close by a plentiful repast of couscous to which had been added, as a flavouring diakhor, the red grain of nenuphar (*N. coerulea*), imparting to it a most delicious taste. Mahmadou, before retiring, dressed the wounded shoulder and stomach of the native with an application of goui (the leaves of *Adansonia digitata* macerated in water), after which the patient fell into a sound sleep, and others followed his example.

The dogs, after turning round several times, ensconced themselves around the fire; but, apparently, slept with both ears and one eye open. The slightest movement by the native in charge of the camp, or the crackling of fresh fuel, awoke them in an instant. They then resumed their usual movements before settling down again, until aroused by a wild beast passing the caravan, to which they instantly gave chase, but soon returned to continue their wakeful slumbers.

The long and fatiguing hunting excursion caused

me a headache, and the air being in a highly electrical condition, aggravated this sensation. In hot regions, to the north of the equator, the tendency of the blood is to flow to the head, frequently resulting in apoplexy. This may be occasioned by the greater rarification of the air, as well as from the influence of electricity expanding the body by reason of the lighter pressure of the atmosphere. At a certain height on the northern side of all mountains, as a rule, the blood is also forced to the head, but there are some exceptions to this. It happens that on the same side of a mountain, at one spot, the blood is attracted to the head, and a short distance off the blood will rush to the feet.

To relieve the headache, a thoughtful native supplied some of the pulp of the *Cucurbita lagenaria*, highly extolling its virtues, not only as a remedy for this but for assuaging the pain of burns, often occurring by sleeping too near the camp-fires. On applying a cataplasm of that substance the oppressive and throbbing sensation in the head was soon relieved, and a pleasant slumber ensued upon a sheep-skin, which is the invariable bed of the Mauris.

Europeans, especially those who live in Africa, never adopt this invaluable comfort, but use carpets, to the great injury of their health. The natives, having slept upon sheep-skins for centuries, are accustomed to use them as a matter of course and fashion, unconsciously thereby escaping many dangers arising from the electricity. The sheep-skin being a non-conductor, is exactly the bed required in

Africa, and is the best material for head-coverings in hot countries. The Persians, Caucasians, and other oriental nations who avail themselves of these skins, stand the fiercest heat for a whole day, without the slightest sensation of headache, and feel less weight on the head than that of a fancy-looking helmet, under which many a good soldier has paid the forfeit of his health and even life in Africa.

After several days' fatigue, it is not unusual, in Africa, to awake from sleep with one or more limbs paralysed. This may also happen in Europe from sleeping in an awkward position, but the feelings and sensations in the former continent are very different from those in the latter, especially if it is not the first time. A traveller in the desert has a gloomy foreboding of it becoming permanent, and, with the paralysation of even one limb, the consequence may become serious. Similar sensations may occur with regard to the paralysed head. On attempting to rise, although the brain has not lost the capacity of thought, there is a horrible sense of the head being no longer connected with the neck. The first thought is "Where is my head?" On trying to dismiss this idea, being still sure that the head must be in its proper place, an effort is doubtfully made to test this with the fingers, which are equally paralysed, and consequently the sense of touch is, for the time, stopped. Next follows a dread that the head is actually severed and lost.

Such sensations cause the waker to look for his head, and he fancies he sees it, in frightful reality,

lying near him. Questions then suggest themselves in rapid succession, "Have I a head—Is that my head before me? Can I replace it?" Then follows the thought, "Is the mind in the brain or the stomach? What do we think with?" A thousand other unpleasant ideas rapidly crowd the imagination, which becomes dazed, until determined efforts are made to regain the missing capital of the human column. This generally ends in a profuse perspiration, followed by a tingling and throbbing coursing of the blood through the veins. The waker then eagerly stretches out his arms to reach his head, but this has suddenly rejoined the neck, and the sensation of the head growing to the body follows. With child-like delight the hands are placed to the head, to prevent it falling until firmly reunited, and then a feeling of unutterable happiness takes possession of the mind.

Another curious physiological phenomenon which befalls a traveller making a forced march, is the sudden sensation of his head falling before him. He stretches out his hands to catch it, meanwhile he hears distinctly the pulsation of his heart. Then suddenly he loses the sensation of his feet coming in contact with the ground, fancies he is walking for several seconds in the air, gradually rises and then rapidly descends again, conscious only of using his legs and feet in the act of walking. At length he feels himself on the solid ground, but his feet are sinking deep down, and it requires his utmost strength to drag them up from an imaginary thick and heavy

quagmire. This is the very critical moment for a traveller. If he has not sufficient self-command to overcome an almost irresistible desire to rest, next will succeed an overpowering sleepiness, which, if yielded to, may, in tropical regions, be followed by apoplexy, and possibly death. If he has the requisite moral force to continue his exertion, in a very short time he will be rewarded by the feeling of returning strength and vigour. His chest will expand, the pulsation of the heart become regular, the respiration normal, and the nerves and muscles will resume their proper tension, with increased power. With well-tightened belt, his feet wrapped in linen rags smeared with fat, instead of socks, lips compressed (not open, as some men walk, apparently expecting to catch flies or other small game), hands clenched, elbows kept close to the sides, he can proceed with vigour. Under such conditions, the lately jaded worn-out traveller can make a forced march for many hours, without the slightest fatigue after covering dozens of miles. If the desire to rest, when very tired, is indulged for a short time by a strong man having a firm will and the fullest confidence in the strength of his nervous system, he may do so ; but a prolonged repose may prove most hazardous, especially if the barometer is falling, and still worse if the temperature is also decreasing, as the nerves are liable to sudden change.

The position of the body when resting, while on a prolonged walk, or after unusual fatigue, is of the utmost importance. Unfortunately a matter which

many, even intelligent travellers' neglect, or are unaware of, is the necessity for observing the direction of the prevailing winds.

After sitting for some time with the back towards the N.W., as soon as a chilly sensation is felt in the spine, the heedless traveller, unless he gets up and walks on, may speedily fall a victim to its influence. Or, if he for a time escapes such an occurrence, he may ultimately find himself suffering under a fever from which he will not easily recover.

The dangers from S.W. or S.E. winds are not so great, but even from them apoplexy, rheumatism, or other painful ailments frequently result. At all events the traveller should carefully avoid sitting or resting with his back towards these winds, and, if possible, try to walk from station to station without stopping. Or, if rest is imperative, then it should be but short, and the position of the body frequently changed, so as to equalise the exposure of the different parts of the frame to these winds.

It is of great importance that the blood-vessels should be influenced to such an extent by the air in the blood that their expansion or contraction, under diminished or augmented pressure, should not render the blood and heart vessels relaxed or turgid, and prevent the blood varying from its normal circulation. Especially should these precautions be adopted by those whose vascular system is in any degree disordered, and they should avoid, as much as possible, sanguineous effusions.

Many men may travel *ad infinitum*, but very few

become travellers in the proper sense of the term. A traveller, having frequently to sleep and eat when and where he can, after passing hot days and restless, cold nights, must, with the dawn, jump up, and with wish, will, and strength of nerve dispel fatigue, to feel strong and fresh as ever to continue his long and fatiguing journey without sickness. The capacity of a traveller does not consist merely in walking so many miles, and then dying on the way; but, in accomplishing the purpose without injury to his own mind or body, and to return home with intellect and health invigorated. Hardships and want of experience have, if not killed, shortened the lives of many good men travelling in Africa.

CHAPTER XIX.

FORWARD—A CLEVER MAGNETISER—NEW COMPANIONS—
STOLEN COWS AND JUSTICE—TRAVELLER'S REVERIE.

AT dawn, the mulatto was the first to wake, and with the usual difficulty roused his sleepy men to hurry them to prepare for the journey *via* Gourba to Koundian, before the heat of the day set in. The wounded man, being still unable to travel, was recommended to return home on his brother's donkey; and bidding farewell to Mahmadou and his family, we left the camp.

Gourba, an insignificant village, was soon reached, but the locality having no trade, the journey was continued to the next village, where the mulatto was attacked by fever. The large doses of quinine to which he had been accustomed, had done him more harm than good. In addition to this, biliousness had been caused by his too great liking for fresh butter, eggs, and new milk, the last being especially dangerous in Africa.

Although this village was only one day's march from the camp, the change of air was very perceptible, the soil being sandy, covering clayey mould. The continual evaporation of moisture from the subsoil rendered the air oppressive, and respiration difficult. It being the commencement of the dry season, the heat increased, and the condensed exhalations from the surrounding marshes aggravated the feverish symptoms of the mulatto.

The electrical currents from the marshes at this period of change are powerful, and to electric causes should be attributed many diseases, instead of to "malaria." African regions may be divided into three "climates." First,—the scurvy climate, principally through want of salt; second,—the bilious climate, for reasons already mentioned; thirdly,—the dysentery climate, caused by feeding on fish and drinking filthy river water.

A native doctor, on seeing the mulatto sick, offered to cure him for tobacco and powder. He treated the patient by passing his hands over his body from head to toe, and magnetised him so thoroughly that the mulatto soon fell into a sound and refreshing sleep. The doctor, on seeing the beneficial results of his art, in order to display his abilities, pretended to know a devil who had taken up his quarters in the village by lodging himself in the stomach of a woman, who entered into conversation with the arch-fiend. The natives, he said, were to bring this woman outside her hut, when he (the doctor) would attend to her, and drive the devil out. His statement soon proved

to be true, for in the night the patient, suffering strong cramps, spasms, and from frequent violent convulsions, was brought out of her hut, and laid on the ground, with her face to the moon.

The doctor placed himself near the woman, and sprinkled over her boiled medicinal plants, repeating with great vehemence, "Devil, devil, lose your way!" He then muttered some unintelligible words, tickled her feet, and again called out, "Devil, devil, lose your way!" The wise curator then commenced rubbing her body from the stomach towards the head, occasionally dipping his hands into the mixture, with which he sprinkled his patient's face. With a paste of white clay he traced a cross extending from the forehead, along the centre of the nose, and the body, with a transverse from shoulder to shoulder. This sympathetic cure probably exerted a sort of magnetic influence, for certain it was that soon after this performance a short but strong twitching of the patient's legs took place. She then was carried by the natives back to her hut.

The magnetiser seated himself near our fire, with the simplicity of a mortal man. He displayed neither pride, nor showed the wisdom of a great curator, but mutely stretched out his arm for tobacco, and held his hand open until his palm received two or three pipeloads. He then looked at the gift, gave a short, satisfied whistle, filled his pipe, and resumed the conversation about the sick woman. On being told there was no devil in the woman, but that she simply suffered from disease, the curator, with a

scornful laugh, asked how she could foretell future events, and why she frequented a certain tree to speak with the devil every time the moon rose, and when she returned to her hut the devil danced in her stomach. On asking him to show the spot visited by the woman, he flatly refused to do so for fear that the devil might enter into him if he approached the tree, under the shade of which she often slept soundly.

The strange peculiarity of some trees to induce sleep in those who rest under their shade, was known in Europe, even during the Druidical age, such trees as the sacred alder and laurel (under which sacrifices were made), as well as the shade of the oak. Convulsions, cramp, and spasms are, not only in Africa, but even in Europe, up to the present day, attributed to the devil, and in former ages, for instance, during the reign of Charlemagne, many sufferers from those ailments were burned for being possessed of the devil. Magnetism, as is known, when properly employed by a skilful operator, has effected many surprising cures. The secret of magnetic cure was known in ancient times, and has passed from mouth to mouth to the present day amongst the African doctors, who magnetise sick people and ease their pain. It is to be regretted that this powerful agency is not more studied by European medical practitioners, instead of dosing their patients with unnecessary medicine, often given simply as a matter of experiment, and to swell up a bill.

Next morning the mulatto rose somewhat relieved

of his fever, and resolved, after another day's rest, to continue his journey to Koundian. Having seen enough of broken stones, sand, deserted villages, and hungry natives, in addition to which the irritability of the mulatto, made me resolve to part company and go in another direction. In the village a small caravan of five camels had halted with a few men ready to start to Farabana, a town situated near the rapids of the Falémé river. An arrangement was at once made with the party to accompany them for the small gift of one pound of tobacco and five yards of Manchester calico. The mulatto was kind enough to allow his drowsy Moctard to serve as a guide and interpreter, and the caravan started on the journey.

After an hour's marching the caravan made a short halt under an old thick boabab tree, at which, like a wayside hotel in Europe, travellers usually stop. On the way salaams were exchanged with some Malinkées busily engaged in cultivating ground-nuts. Some distance on, in a small roadside village, an industrious grey-headed Malinkée was engaged in manufacturing soap from ground-nut oil. A rivulet was then crossed, beyond which the journey became very tiresome. The road lay past mountains, through rocky, sandy, desolate, and ferruginous districts, covered with haze and heavy fogs. Occasionally, near the road, here and there, solitary native graves were surrounded with thorn-bushes to prevent wild beasts devouring the corpses. Only a clever old eagle relieved the monotony of the way. He was amusing

himself with attempting to break the shell of a land-tortoise, which he seized in his talons, and, expanding his wide wings, majestically rose high in the air. Then steadily poising himself, he let the unhappy tortoise fall with a crash on the rock, and in a moment the eagle was down upon his prey, trying with his strong beak to break the shell, which the fall had not fractured. The process was repeated until the shell was broken, and the bird regaled himself with the mangled remains of the tortoise.

The owner of the little caravan and half-a-dozen attendants seemed to be well-acquainted with European customs. When the night became chilly they all begged for a drop of brandy, to keep out the cold. White man and spirits were in their minds inseparable. As there was no brandy, requests for tobacco were substituted, and responded to now and then. The refusal of tobacco to a native is regarded as enmity, and, therefore, a good supply of it had been purchased from the mulatto, to meet requirements on the journey.

The bracing night-air was favourable for the camels, who kept up a brisk pace, and the shouting of the men rendered the march pleasant. A few neglected and ruined villages were occasionally passed, here and there a jackal trotted by, and so the journey continued, until at midnight a halt was made at an isolated but rather large village.

Early next morning, in the palaver square of the village, an opportunity was presented of observing the African manner of administering justice. It

was a native court, presided over by the Chief assisted by the head men, to investigate a charge against a native for stealing two cows from an adjacent village.

All the proceedings were conducted with the greatest decorum, and an utter absence of the wrangle and jangle which too often disgrace the tribunals of justice in civilised countries. The charge was preferred in a clear and distinct manner by the aggrieved party, and listened to by the accused and those assembled in strict silence. The evidence was given in a plain, straightforward way—no chopping, bewildering questions to catch the unwary witness or accused, and the fairest opportunity given to the latter for making his defence and clearing himself, if he could, of the charge. The culprit was asked why he had stolen these cows, when he had cows and a hut of his own, and whether he would like anyone to steal his property. These questions were not satisfactorily answered, and after due consultation in the thief's presence, the sentence passed was, that he should restore the stolen cows to their owner, and give him all the cows which the culprit had. In addition, by way of fine, he was ordered to pay to the chief a sum equivalent to one-third of the value of the stolen animals.

The thief not having means of meeting this fine, his relations were called upon to pay it, to save him from being sold as a slave to the man he had robbed. The relations promptly satisfied the demands of justice, and the court dispersed. With these stringent

laws in force, theft and robbery are very rare. The sentence was evidently regarded by the people to be a lenient one, as sometimes such delinquents have been consigned to the merciless jaws of crocodiles, or bound hand and foot, placed upon an ant-hill, and there left till dead. Travellers have made wholesale charges against entire nations of being thieves and robbers, for the delinquency of an individual man, but seem unwilling to comprehend that no social nor moral life would be possible in Africa if that continent were so black with crime as they paint it.

The village was left after the heat of the day had subsided, and the silvery moon rose above the horizon. Her pale light falling on the sandy soil, reflecting the fantastic shadows of rocks and stones, speedily dispels the idea of weariness in travelling. An impressive stillness is the main characteristic of the desert at night, and predisposes the traveller to dreams, which are occasionally rudely broken by a startling rush of wings, or piercing shrieks from flocks of birds or wild beasts. The dreamy monotony of the camel-ride is pleasantly interrupted by a monotony of another kind, the ting, ting, ting of the bells carried by the camels. The sidling swing of the soft-footed creature on which one is mounted, disposes the mind to turn from the desolation without to the world of thought, and the eyes see, as if from within, the extending horizon, with all the sparse objects standing out in relief from the sands.

The cool gentle breeze and the soft white light of

the young moon in the tropical night are in the most perfect contrast with the fierce glare and the burning atmosphere of the tropical day. The solitude, by its very intensity and boundlessness, fills the soul with high and noble thoughts. If a man desires to wrestle with any of the secrets of nature, or work out of his inner consciousness some problem of philosophy, he should ride through the desert in a cloudless night, in the secure seat afforded by the hollow of the saddle. Perfect abstraction, wakefulness, dreams without sleep, sensitiveness without sensation, raise the mind to an unknown world. An intense egotism of self-consciousness, with an unbounded sympathy with every manifestation of nature, cause the traveller to think that though he is only an atom, still he is something great in the vast field of nature. These sensations, paradoxical as they may seem, the traveller on the ship of the desert experiences. What wonder that, for the child of the desert, this mode of journeying has charms that make it impossible for him to relinquish it.

Go where he will, he can never forget the scene ; at rest for a time and dwelling in houses, the beautiful calm of his camel night-journey returns to his memory, and he will sit still in his room for hours, dreaming it all over again. He strains his ears as if to catch the faint tinkling of an approaching caravan, just as he would have done on an actual journey. In imagination he sees one, two, three, then a string of black specks flecked against the moon, denoting as many camels in a caravan traversing the pathless

waste in the contrary direction. He watches them with increasing interest as they become larger in approaching. He joins in the grave but hearty fraternal greetings of the two parties of travellers, and in the mutual interchange of good wishes as they again separate with an impressive salutation. He watches again the departing forms, and again listens to the tinkle of the bells. The sensations of the brain become duller and duller, till as the last camel disappears below the horizon, the waking dream then degenerates into real, unconscious slumber, and the dreamer, lulled by the illusions of his fancy, becomes an unromantic sleeper. So passes hour after hour, day after day, in the monotonous journey. With every mile the distance is shortened, and old, though different, feelings fill the mind when the destination appears in sight.

CHAPTER XX.

AT FARABANA—WEDDING CEREMONIES—FUNERAL MOCKERIES
—AN INQUISITIVE MIND—EXPORT GUNS—EVENING
TOWN LIFE—A LION STORY—END OF A BRAVE HUNTER.

FARABANA is a caravan-serai, deriving its importance from being at a spot where several practicable roads join. The chief roads are to Gambia, and the river Falémé, leading towards the Galam country, to the Senegal river. Traders and European agents, who penetrate so far into the interior, find here an opportunity of tapping the stream of native commerce, or, crossing the country further inland, they buy first-hand goods from caravans passing *via* Medina from the Upper terraces.

At Farabana our caravan was met by the chief (Badel al Quier), who immediately gave orders as to the placing of the camels, and received his customary dues. Difficulties are occasionally experienced in arranging the tolls demanded from Europeans, but not if the chief sees that all their property consists of a

gun, a box easily carried away by one or two men, and accompanied by a good guide kindly treated by the traveller. A salaam, a few civil words, a friendly smoke together, frequently result in another guide being appointed by the chief to facilitate the journey, at a remarkably cheap rate.

At the door of a newly-built house in the town, several people were gathered round a woman having a calabash with corn, a piece of inferior Manchester calico, a string of beads, ground-nuts, and two cakes of tobacco. A wedding was taking place in the house, and this woman was probably the sister of the bride, as only a sister, if there be one, gives the presents on such occasions. She put the basket on the ground, arranged the calico, placed it in front, and the beads on the top of it. One could imagine from her business-like manner, she had been accustomed for years to display to the best advantage worthless articles to deceive the people. Then arranging her attire carefully, she crept on all fours into the enclosure. In this prostrate position, she must approach the bed of the bride, who in native style expresses her joy by clapping hands and clicking the tongue, after which the presents are received with due honour in the presence of her parents. With the same ceremonies, the bride at her father's house receives gifts from her spouse.

At the very same time, in a hut a short distance off, a funeral was taking place. A piercing cry of wailing sorrow for the dead was heard, but these wailings were soon to be changed to merry shouts

and laughter. The howlers were waiting for a solemn-looking marabout to perform the last religious rites for the departed, wash away sin from his body, dress it with his own hands in the best clothes of the deceased, and place the corpse for the last time on the bed on which he slept. After that, the marabout's duty was to despatch the deceased to the other world with prayers for his happy entrance into the seventh heaven of the faithful, amidst howling cries, thundering shouts, and great commotion, to prevent the dead hearing the creaking of the ricketty doors when opened to admit him to the sweet society of the houris.

When the stately marabout appeared, and majestically entered the hut to discharge his pious duties, relations who, perhaps, before never crossed the threshold, now ceased their cries, and, with put-on faces of woe, quietly followed the marabout. One after another, they touched the hand of the dead, and asked him loudly, "Answer, answer, man—are you dead?" but fearful lest he might awake, the questioners broke out, "He does not answer—he must be dead." The nearest relations were in too deep sorrow to perform the last duties to the departed, and, therefore, delegated the trouble to others. They had enough to do in selling the property of the deceased; and thanks to this lucky occasion, with smiling faces, had also killed an ox for a funeral feast. With the proceeds of the property brandy was procured, to drown their grief and feast and revel for several nights and days. In such cases the

use of brandy, even among fairly strict Mahometans, is permissible.

The indoor ceremonials finished, the outdoor parade commenced. Two active men carried the body, followed by the marabout, preceded by the chief widow, and other women. Men with drums and future howlers silently followed in the rear. Those who had not yet joined the procession, went into the hut to look at the property and preparation for the feast. If the latter answered their expectation, they hurried to join the funeral.

Suddenly, a dreadful howling broke out on the way. From the group rose a strong, shrill voice, louder than all the rest; the artiste, at once appreciated, was pushed to the front, as the prima donna of the screeching party. She exerted her howling powers to the utmost, scratched her face, tore her hair, and the other howlers followed suit to the grave. The whole of these proceedings forcibly carried the mind back to civilised Europe, and, but for the heat and black faces, it might have been an Irish wake.

At length the cries died out in the distance, and the town was left in comparative quiet, interrupted only by the talking of old men, women, or those who were not friends of the departed soul, and remained behind with several persons having weak, inflamed eyes, or blind. Ophthalmic diseases are not only prevalent among the inhabitants of Farabana, but are common and in rather severe form among the whole of the population of this district.

A marabout, richly dressed, with a white turban on his head, displaying a large piece of cotton cloth thrown over his shoulder, came to the caravan to exchange for goods his kola-nuts in a bag, and gold kept in quills in his belt.

This marabout, being of an inquisitive turn, put many questions about European affairs, the government, the mode of life of the people, and, referring to the wedding which had just taken place, was anxious to know the way in which European weddings were celebrated, and how many wives rich and poor men have and might marry. On receiving the answer "One, and only one, at a time," he stroked his beard, and rolled up his eyes to heaven in astonishment, and continued, "And how many husbands can a white woman marry?" On receiving the same answer "One," he appeared still more surprised, and added that the European law against polygamy was not suitable for their country. Robbery and frequent wars among them destroy the lives of many men, and the superabundant number of women would have to starve, which was forbidden by the law of God. He further asked if there were frequent wars among civilised nations; if many men were killed; and whether there were fewer women than men. When told that amongst us wars were of such dimensions as he never even dreamt of, and women superabounding in numbers infest the streets in thousands, demoralise humanity, and destroy health, he answered that such women would be killed in his country. His next question was, who made such laws? On explain-

ing to him that wise men made them, and they were considered moral, right, and proper, he, after some reflection, said white men were not wise, for such laws could not exist in reality but only in words, and if they did exist, they were worse than their laws, and Africans had not much to learn from white men.

It was very difficult to understand what this wise grey-headed man meant to convey, until he said, "If you have but one wife, and the wife is sick, you certainly marry another wife, don't you?" This was a worse question than the former, but, anyhow, it was answered, "Certainly not." With an interrogative look, after some further reflection, he shook his head, and continued, "We don't let a man live with a sick woman, for it kills her, and, therefore, allow him to marry other women." He followed this up by asking, "Is it quite true that white men and women have only one wife and one husband each?" On being again assured that such was the case, at least officially, he added that, in the name of the Prophet, he could not believe it, finishing by devoutly pronouncing "Allah! Allah!" with an indication on his countenance that of all the liars ever created, white men were the worst. We felt our helplessness, laughed heartily in concert with him, and parted on friendly terms.

The travellers, as usual, made themselves comfortable, and exposed their goods for sale, amongst which were indigo in small packages and indigo-coloured shirts. The chief article of trade was the stone salt, bought on the way, of a caravan from Bahr el Chassal,

a place celebrated for this scarce and precious article in this vast, expiring continent. The price of salt, if compared with Europe, may be computed at two shillings a pound, and in more remote places it amounts to almost double that price, even if it can be obtained at all. Many a poor native will wet his fingers, and, with an almost ravenous expression, rub it on a piece of salt, convey it to his mouth, and suck it with all the enjoyment of a delicious sweetmeat.

A native, who came to buy salt, offered to sell a handsome white donkey, from Dar For, at an exorbitant figure compared with the usual price in Senegal, where for about ten shillings a good common donkey can be obtained. The price of this fine animal was a camel, the usual value of which is from £5 to £7. The donkey not having met with a customer, its disappointed owner joined a small party of his countrymen, who had only just come in, and were awaiting the arrival of a caravan to proceed to the interior, and then cross the immense sandy wastes, to salute the grave of the Prophet at Mecca, and become Hadjis. They had European guns, some, alas! of English make, flint locks, barrels of gas piping, and red-painted stocks, worth—well, they would be dear at five shillings a piece. With such splendid specimens of gunsmith's work, recommended by white men as of good quality, the swindled natives succeed, not in bringing down the game they fire at, but in lacerating their own hands and arms, tearing open their cheeks, and destroying their eyes—frequently with the very first shot.

Among these men was one with a maimed left hand by the bursting, on the first discharge, of an infamous gun for which he had parted with his small stock of hardly-earned money. No wonder the duped man indulged himself in heartily cursing the Mandingo trader from whom he had bought it, in particular, and heaped curses on all white men in general. So acute was his indignation at the latter, that a small present offered to him in sympathy for his misfortune was indignantly and scornfully rejected. Probably he could not understand that such guns were made to promote African civilisation and evangelism amongst people whose means only admit of the purchase of a narrow strip of calico, just sufficient to pass round their loins.

Before dark, the women of the town went with their basins for water to a deep ravine where shepherds usually watered their herds on returning from the grazing-grounds. The thirsty cattle rushed down the ravine, and in their eagerness pushed each other down and fouled the stream. A lazy Maraboo bird (*Ciconia Marabu*), sitting on a stone, with his head snugly tucked under his wing, took no notice of the lowing and bleating of the cattle, till an angry pelican, perched on a tree, apparently disgusted with the apathy of the maraboo, flew down and gave him a good pecking, after which the maraboo made the best of his way off.

By the time the herds reached the kraal two more caravans arrived. The usual fires were lit; and while fish and couscous for supper were boiling in

kettles, groups of different traders from the interior seated themselves around the embers of different fires, talking of trade matters or telling anecdotes.

The town by fire-light presented a picturesque appearance. Camel-drivers were engaged in preparing paste for the camels resting here and there. The hum of friendly conversation; the call of a native, "Laloo! laloo!"* running from camp to camp, and speedily selling his stock; the voices of servants quarrelling over the ownership of the goods, mixed when unpacked from the camels' backs; the roar of camels pleased on getting cake, and the grunts of those displeased at being aroused from their rest,—enlivened Farabana.

Among the newly arrived travellers were two men from Caldeene, a village chiefly occupied by dyers. On their journey they sought work as dyers of cloth, or solicited orders for work to be done at home. They were accompanied by a man who was the owner of an indigo plantation in their neighbourhood, and was distinguishable from the others by his good-looking intelligent face, his well-developed frame, manners, and clean apparel. He wore a rich silk turban and a snow-white shirt. By his side sat an old grey-headed man who had resided for some years at Farabana, and formerly lived at Caldeene, consequently all four were fellow-countrymen. The old man had a son, named Boucary, who hunted in the woods near the latter place.

* An indispensable addition to flavour couscous, made from dried boabab leaves.

This group attracted the attention of others so much that a fresh fire was lighted to accommodate the additions to the circle. In a few minutes fresh pots of couscous were boiling by the new comers, and “*Youne*” (a native fruit, in taste not unlike a potato) was handed round, as a matter of hospitality. The conversation became free, lively, and discursive, till one of the dyers named Tonca Maco, who sat next the grey-headed man, said loudly to the latter that Boucary had joined them to surprise his father with a visit and give him a present, but on the road was killed by a lion, upon which Maco pulled out of his travelling-bag a new white shirt and a pair of handsome Timbuctoo sandals.

For a long while the old man looked silently at the presents, then placed them near his feet and pronounced a short prayer. To mitigate his sorrow Maco observed, “Boucary was the best and bravest hunter in our woods ; but the Prophet willed that he should die, or his gun would not have failed. Boucary died like a brave man, and the lion like a brave animal.” He tapped the old man on the shoulder to arouse his attention, and then continued, “Hear, Father, hear ! this is how it happened, and it is true. You know lions seek safety in the woods when hunters like Boucary drive them away from villages. In our woods there is plenty of food for lions, and they have no occasion to devour each other as they do in the deserts when hungry.”

During the narrative the old man sat in deep reflection, leaning his head upon his hands, shaking

it from time to time, tears rolling from his eyes.

“We wish the Prophet would deliver us from this evil!” continued Tonca Maco. “Last year lions and leopards ravaged our country, and hunters met a large lioness with ten cubs. God saved them from the beast which will devour its own cubs when hungry. The lion we encountered was old, otherwise he would have ran away or killed us all. Boucary told us to throw stones to drive the beast away, which sat in the path, as if grown into the earth, and did not move his head as young lions do. Boucary never fired at any animal when still, nor would he kill a weak or small one, and even in the village, when boys struck him hard in play, he never drove them off. Boucary was a good man, and we sorrow for him. Before we left our village a lion came and destroyed many cattle, and hunters pursued him, but in vain. Then Boucary undertook to trace the lion, and not return without its skin. He was in the wood three days and nights before coming back with the hide, for which he was praised, and received the present, which he wished to give you. I wanted to get out of the way, but Boucary would not let me, and said, ‘Never get out of a lion’s path, otherwise he may follow behind you.’ We did not leave the road, and I helped to kill the lion,” showing his cutlass as he spoke. “I warned your son, but he said there was plenty of room to fight, lifted up a branch, and threw at the beast.”

Tonca’s companion listened to this story till he

could bear it no longer, and interposed with—" True, true, Boucary said all that, but he never spoke to you nor you to him, because you were already in the bush. It was with me he conversed, and you heard it all."

" Bah ! Bah ! " cried Tonca ; " I hear what you say, but the Prophet be witness that I saw *you* behind the bush with my own eyes." At which all the party burst into a loud laugh. Such prevarications are common among narrators, though the facts themselves may be reliable.

After the laughter had subsided, Tonca continued : " Boucary said, ' Be ready,' when the lion moved his tail and ears, and we at once stood behind Boucary."

" That is true," said Tonca's companion, " for Boucary said to me, ' Be careful, he will jump at you,' and pulled his trigger, but the gun missed fire. Then he said ' Don't fear,' and I raised my cutlass ready to strike the lion, which rose and pawed the ground, lashed his sides with his tail, and roared so loud that the woods trembled."

A short pause followed, while Tonca was trying to bring the scene before his mind. All were so silent, that the boiling of the couscous was distinctly heard, until Tonca continued the narrative. He said the lion and Boucary moved to opposite sides, then both stood motionless, when Boucary raised his gun and stunned the lion with a heavy blow from the butt end, which broke, and the butt flew high into the air. Boucary then gave the beast another blow with the barrel, when his foot slipped, and he fell on the ground, with his face towards the lion. Tonca

then ran his cutlass through the lion's body, from which the blood ran "like a river," and Boucary, rising from the ground, plunged his knife into the animal's chest. The lion lifted its paw, struck Boucary a strong blow, cutting his side open, and seized Boucary's head between its jaws, smashing up the bones. That was the end of poor Boucary.

A thrilling murmur of horror ran through the group. Tonca placed his hand sympathisingly on the shoulder of Boucary's father, who during all the time still held his head between his hands, and sobbed, in a deep, mournful tone, "Allah ! Allah !" and again tears coursed each other down his wrinkled cheeks.

A gloomy silence prevailed until the announcement of the couscous being ready. To this fish was added, and supper began in the ceremonious manner customary among Mahometans. Each man, in succession, took up a pinch from the dish with his right hand, and carried it slowly with solemnity to his mouth.

After the meal, each man wrapped himself up in the best way he could, and slumbered in the open air, as is usual with caravan travellers.

CHAPTER XXI.

DOWN THE FALÉMÉ—SANSANDING AND ITS PEOPLE—GOLD
 —NEGLECTED FACTORIES—A PHENOMENON—QUARRELS
 ABOARD—GOLD-STEALERS—SIMPLE-MINDED CHIEF—
 A BOAT-WRECK—WATER-SNAKES—BEYOND DENGUI—
 SÉNOU-DÉBOU—A BELT OF FIRE—CANNIBALISM—
 THE SARCASTIC DIAVANDOUS—ROMANCE OF WONDERS.

WITH daybreak, all the travellers were astir, and engaged in preparations for the further journey. The major part of the travellers were soon to be scattered to all points of the compass: the rich trader was going to Bakal; Tonca Maco and his companions directed their course to Fattatenda; whilst the destinations of the others were Medina, Keniaba, Boulebane, and other places.

The Chief of Farabana was busy collecting his customary dues, and after transacting his business, returned to us to have a chat about worldly troubles, and asked for writing-paper (an expensive commodity), which was handed to him with two cakes of tobacco. The Chief showed a friendly disposition by placing at

our service two honest natives for the journey down the Falémé river, that being the cheapest route for reaching the Senegal.

With the aid of Moctard, an old canoe, with these two men, were engaged for a trifling price and the small remaining stock of needles, thread, beads, pins, looking-glasses, fish-hooks, gun-caps, and other articles, were in a few minutes put on board. A farewell was taken of Farabana, and the boat swiftly glided over the ripples of the Falémé.

A short distance from Farabana, the first rapids were safely passed, and the crew energetically paddled to the second rapids, where blocks of stones in the stream caused some delay. The boat then descended the river, from mile to mile nearing Sansanding. Every journey commences with fresh vigour and proceeds more rapidly than it terminates, and consequently that place appeared to be reached more quickly than it was in reality. All the way beyond the rapids the scenery consisted of rocky shores covered with vegetation.

Sansanding is pleasantly situated in the midst of forest trees. The houses were clean, and nestling each in its little grove, which gave the town a picturesque appearance. It is divided by the river into two distinct portions, one belonging to the Bondou and the other to the Bambouk people. The river here, as above and below Sansanding, forms the boundary between the two nations; but the accidents of position, soil, and the facilities of communication afforded by the river, have made a settlement equally neces-

sary for both, and hence their joint town. The difference in condition between the two portions of the town is somewhat marked. That on the right bank is smaller, dirtier, and less orderly in every respect than its neighbour on the Bondou side, the inhabitants of which pay tribute to Almamy (the king) of Bondou.

The district is rich in minerals, especially gold, and to work the latter, attempts had been made for more than a century by the French to obtain a profitable share in working the mines, but factories formerly existing at Sansanding, and other places, met with but little success. These failures are, however, fully accounted for by the misconduct and mistakes of the managers and agents, or by wars and accidental misfortunes, rather than risks inseparable from the business. The manager of the first gold company, a rapacious, cruel, and unjust administrator, lost his life at St. Joseph, a victim to the vengeance of the long-oppressed natives. The greatest obstacle to success was the instability of life of the agents, who frequently had destroyed both character and constitution in Europe, and accepted their positions in the distant African colony as a species of honourable exile. In spite of such failures, there is every reason to believe that with modern machinery and science the most splendid results might fairly be anticipated. The activity of the French will probably before long lead to a more thorough and systematic opening up of the mineral wealth of this part of Africa. If the grand dream of a railway across

the Sahara, connecting Senegal with Algeria, should ever be realized, one of its most probable and immediate effects will be to give a stimulus to the exploitation of the gold mines of Bambouk.

A little trade is at present carried on by small caravans, passing to and fro through Sansanding in different directions, between the Senegal and the Gambia rivers. The position of this village makes it a bustling station. The Mandingoes, agents of European houses, and natives of other tribes, also find an adequate remuneration in buying goods from the traders at Medina, and from caravans passing on the way to Bakal, and exchanging them for European commodities, or selling to European agents at the latter town. Besides the overland traffic by caravans, a trade is carried on by the Falémé river during the rainy season.

The country along the left bank belongs to the tribe of the Sarracolets, who regard themselves as superior to the Mandingoes of the eastern shore. Between these two races a certain feeling of bitterness prevails, which often shows itself in an amusing manner. The Sarracolets, and with them the Foulahs, who dwell on the same side of the river, call the Mandingoes by the term Malinké, which means "lazy, incapable dog," and traces of this word are to be found in modern English in "malingerer," in French in *malin*, in Arabic in *malingi*, and, perhaps, in other Oriental terms of opprobrium.

Having landed on the left shore of the river, it would have been imprudent to decline the invitation

given to visit the town on the right, and the first visit was paid to the Chief. In the town was a mulatto in charge of a caravan on the point of departure for another Farabana (lying far north from the one previously visited), a trading centre of the Falémé river, to which it is united by a small tributary, the Sanou. This agent suggested our joining his caravan by the overland route to Farabana, but this friendly offer was declined, the river-course being more interesting, cheaper, easier, and the difference in time scarcely appreciable.

A Mandingo Phenomenon, who understood a little French, belonged to this caravan. He was tall, lithe, with a rusty-black skin, shining as if polished, and a face indicating a want of energy, which was contradicted by the good development of his muscles and the free expression of his eyes. A pale yellow mark, the width of a hand, disfigured his chest, and the entire absence of hair upon his body made him still more remarkable. He seemed intelligent, talkative, and strongly contrasted with the drowsy Moctard, who, although he joined in the conversation, soon fell asleep under the selected palaver-tree, where the Phenomenon recounted something of his history. He was a freed man from Fattatendra, and received his liberty from his master, whose life he had saved in the war which had desolated this region a few years previously, during the reign of Omar.

The boatmen, after a refreshing meal, hurried to proceed on the journey, and with some trouble woke

up Moctard. The mulatto, on finding him more capable of sleeping than guiding, offered to let the Phenomenon accompany us instead of Moctard, and convey the latter to Farabana. The Phenomenon gladly availed himself of this opportunity, but Moctard stood bolt upright, and with a knightly air extended his hand towards me, and said, "I am bound to protect him," and refused to stop behind with the mulatto. He was with great difficulty induced to allow the Phenomenon to travel with him, and an agreement was, therefore, made to meet the mulatto at Farabana, the station he was going to.

The party now consisted of five men—the new guide being a clever, pure Mandingo, from the Gambia; Moctard, a civilized Sarracolet, native of Bakal; one of the boatmen a Foulah, the other a Malinké or Bambouk Mandingo, and myself. Between such a motley crew of different tribes and characters, during the whole of the journey they diverted themselves by their bickerings and the "chaff" with which they pelted each other. There did not appear to be a subject on which they had an opinion in common, and the Phenomenon constantly stopped their quarrels by reminding them of the frequent sand-banks, against which the old boat could be easily wrecked.

A few miles below Sansanding on the left shore, the Neril flows into the Falémé. Formerly the bed was deep and wide, through which the waters of the Gambia found their way to the Senegal. At present it is a swamp, and its direction marked for miles by

a rank growth of reeds growing in the stagnant pools of water. Up this half swamp, half river, the boat was paddled and pushed for a few miles, principally for the purpose of shooting game.

Returning to the Falémé the boat again proceeded at a good speed with the current, and the quarrels among the crew recommenced. From the tone of conversation amongst them, a stranger might suppose they were about to fight. Even the warnings of the Phenomenon not to run the frail craft against the sand-banks were disregarded.

The civilised Moctard, not liking the interference of the Phenomenon boldly contended that he was wise because he could speak white men's language. The Phenomenon, to show his superiority, called the former a fool for chanting the Koran and prayers, which he never did himself, because white men call those who sing Koran fools. Such was the tone of the controversy, and mutual reproaches continued. The Foulah described the Malinkés of Bambouk as an idle people, incapable of working their gold mines, bad servants, scattered like cattle, poor, wretched, never keeping together, and slaves to the Almamy of Bondou ; while the Foulahs were closely united, rich, and strong. The Bambouké excused his people for not working the gold mines, as the labour was not rewarded, therefore they live on fruit, mealies, and hunting in the woods abounding with game and also elephants. In the heat of their dispute, the boat stuck on a sand-bank. Moctard was the first to give orders, but did not stir an inch himself to render assistance.

After this accident there was peace for a considerable period, and the boat floated leisurely down the stream, when the Phenomenon beguiled the time by a gold story. When a new gold site is discovered in the Bambouk country, the Farim (chief) must be informed, and before any person is permitted to dig further, a survey is made of the locality. The regular inhabitants never venture on an infraction of this law, for fear of punishment, though robbers and wandering Moors occasionally do so.

The simplicity of Farim's character and the astuteness of Moorish thieves, were shown in the following tale:—"Some time ago, the discovery of a new gold mine was reported to the Farim, who went with slaves and workmen to the spot, where they found two Braknas digging out the gold. On the approach of the Farim the men endeavoured to escape, but were made prisoners. A horn full of gold grains and dust was found upon them, and handed over to the chief. As a punishment, the two robbers were compelled to work at the mine on the same terms as the slaves of Farim. The mine proved to be a very rich one, and the chief was so gratified with his half of the produce, that he before long sent the prisoners a pardon.

"The wily robbers, on being set free, asked the chief's permission to remain one night for rest, and each promised to give a present of a cow for their liberty. Their intention was to steal the chief's portion of gold during the night, but they were caught in the act, rearrested, securely bound, and brought

before Farim, to hear their sentence. He ordered them to be whipped and kept in slavery.

“The unabashed Braknas then tried another experiment on the simple-minded chief, and the spokesman said, ‘Farim, it is easy for you, with all your men, to do with us what you please, but to make us slaves will be no honour to you. It will seem that you are not strong after all, because you are afraid to release us. A strong chief of our nation dares not only to punish, but to pardon. Show your power by daring to pardon us, and we and your own people will then know that you are not in want of more slaves, but are strong and contented.’ The chief was stung by their taunts into granting their request, and pardoned the rogues, to the great discontent of his own people, who now openly murmured. The bolder of the Braknas, then addressing Farim, said, ‘Mighty Farim, if you now give way the people will despise you, and will think you no chief.’ Seizing a stick, the now enraged chief threatened to inflict summary vengeance on any man who dared to complain, and, in order to prove that he was master, declared that the strangers should now have not only liberty, but gold also, and handed to the Braknas the coveted hornful of gold.”

At the end of this characteristic story the boat was sailing past a few trees, the only ones for many miles around in the Bambouk country, which is otherwise devoid of vegetation, and the scarcity of water so great as sadly to interfere with the successful working of the mines, and the welfare of trade generally.

The course of the Falémé is much impeded by sand-banks, and, as is usually the case with the minor rivers of Africa, the positions of the sand-banks shift rapidly from season to season. This small stream is only navigable for boats drawing more than five feet of water during two months or ten weeks from August to September. The first portion of its course is more winding and tortuous, more sluggish and uninteresting than the middle course near Fanira, where the boat was halted. Here the people were actively engaged, under the direction of a minor Bondou chief, in building a brick fort. It was clear the place was preparing for war, and, to judge by appearance, the expected attack would be delivered by a powerful enemy.

Beyond Fanira is the village of Foulah Djallon, where a short stay was made to repair the boat, which had commenced to leak. The inhabitants of this district, being good shepherds, raise cattle of a much finer breed than those in the vicinity of St. Louis, and the place has a flourishing appearance. Numerous herdsmen are constantly engaged in driving teams of cattle to market, to be sold with milk, butter, and cheese. A good cow-doctor resides in the village. To him all healthy cattle are driven, that he may, with his own hands, hang a charmed gris-gris around their necks. So he ensures them from disease, until they fall sick, when such native doctors frequently display great skill in their treatment.

When the boat had been repaired and launched into the stream, the crew went on board. The heavy

Phenomenon, forgetting her weakness, and stepping into her somewhat incautiously, soon found both his feet through the bottom planking, and there he was, up to his shoulders in the muddy stream, with the wrecked canoe as a necklace. The most delighted of the party was Moctard, who thought it a good opportunity to chaff the Phenomenon about this sample of his superior wisdom. The boatmen were perfectly satisfied with the wreck of their old canoe, being quite sure they would get a better one in place of it. This mishap necessitated the purchase of a larger and stronger canoe. There being but three in the village, the choice was limited, and half the remaining stock of goods was given for it.

The new craft had not proceeded far before it entered a labyrinth of narrow channels, formed by a large number of small rocky islets. The passages between them were half choked up with the rank vegetation, and swarming with thousands of water-snakes, gliding in all directions. Natives avoid killing snakes, having experienced the dangerous results of their vengeance if attacked. If one of them be killed, all may become at once infuriated, and combine for an onslaught that the boldest cannot resist successfully. Any attempt to annihilate them is hopeless. The thick vegetation of the swamps everywhere shelters them in thousands. They may sometimes be met with in great mounds, coiled one upon another, with heads protruded on every side, a veritable hydra.

Having at length cleared the haunts of snakes, a

wider channel, with deep and clear water, abounding with fish, branches off. On the bank of this channel is Dengui, a fishing village, situated on a beautiful and well-timbered plain. The hospitable villagers regaled the whole crew with fish and meat, for which even the tempting offers of tobacco were gently declined.

At a certain distance beyond this village is a kind of *batardeau* or barricade across the stream from shore to shore, to intercept the fish and prevent them passing to the lower course of the Falémé. The fishermen were kind enough to offer to break a passage through the barricade to allow the boat to pass. This was declined, on account of the probable great loss of fish which would follow, and the boat, with the assistance of the natives, was dragged along the shore, past the obstacle, and relaunched.

This part of the stream was the prettiest yet seen. Long narrow islands, covered with gorgeous flowers, tropical trees and shrubs, lay generally in mid-channel, compelling the boat to be steered sometimes to the right, sometimes to the left of the river.

The Bambouk country, true to its character, lay bare on the right; the quartz rocks, in irregular groups, advance and recede with the windings of the river. On the left the land maintains its pastoral character, but with an increasing tendency to exchange its flat plains for hills and valleys, with a general direction nearly at right angles to the river. In places where a mass of rock projects into the river-bed, the channel becomes very narrow. In other

places, where the fall was greater, the current increased in velocity, and between the rapids and the gorges of the navigation a sharp look-out was kept. In passing some of these places, where the water was shallow as well as swift, it was more prudent to leave the water, and drag the boat overland for a longer or shorter distance, according to the extent of the obstacle.

At some points not a sign of bird or animal life was observable among the luxuriance of the vegetable growth. On rounding a very sharp curve, between rocks, there suddenly appeared in front Sénou Débou, the most important town on the Falémé, after Sansasanding. This station has been fortified in a rude manner by the natives, similar to the fortifications of Morocco, Egypt, and other oriental countries. Round and square bastions alternate around the ramparts, and two or three low doors in the masonry give access from the ditch to the interior of the fortifications. Sénou-Débou is on the caravan route between Farabana and Bakal. As the mulatto's caravan was there, and ready to proceed at once to Farabana, the Phenomenon was handed over to his master, who was kind enough to settle with the boatmen, on condition that they should proceed with me on the further journey.

After a rest, each started on his way, and the boat was paddled down the Falémé river, until Nayi, on the Bondou side, opposite the mouth of Sanou creek, a short distance from Sénou-Débou, was reached, and Kidira appeared in sight. Here quartz rocks and the

same evidences of mineral wealth as those seen during the latter stage of the previous voyage down the Falémé were visible. The gold in this district is allied with sulphur, and it is probable that an enlightened prospecting company would make a rapid fortune by an intelligent process of smelting and refining. Not far distant are the ruins of St. Joseph, the ancient French gold station already referred to.

The stretch of the Falémé, entered on debouching from the Sanou creek, formed a fine wide waterway, much less encumbered by islands than the upper course. Soon after leaving the village of Nayi, at a long distance on the left front, clouds of heavy vapour rose from the soil. On a nearer approach, they proved to be clouds mixed with lurid flames of a forest fire. There was but little wind, and columns of mingled fire and smoke rolled spirally upwards, shutting off by an impenetrable veil the view of the town of Kidira, which lay within the fiery belt. Antelopes and other wild creatures fled scared over the plain in all directions. Flocks of birds flew for safety across the river, and the very snakes crawled out of their holes, and swiftly crept off to save their loathsome bodies from the threatened roasting. At length, on the shore appeared a group of shrieking terror-stricken natives, who, with the despairing cries of "Allah, Allah!" turned to look back at the place where their poor homesteads had stood. The burning trees and shrubs formed the chief wealth of the inhabitants, the villagers' occupation being the cultivation of the cane from which a kind of brandy is

obtained. The panic-stricken natives, in their excitement, could do nothing to prevent the fire from devouring their property, and were incapable of following the directions of those who were able to advise them as to the best means of averting the fiery stream. On the eastern side of the village was a narrow belt of high and dry grass, which, with mutual efforts, could have been easily beaten down long before the flames reached the place, and stopped their progress in that direction.

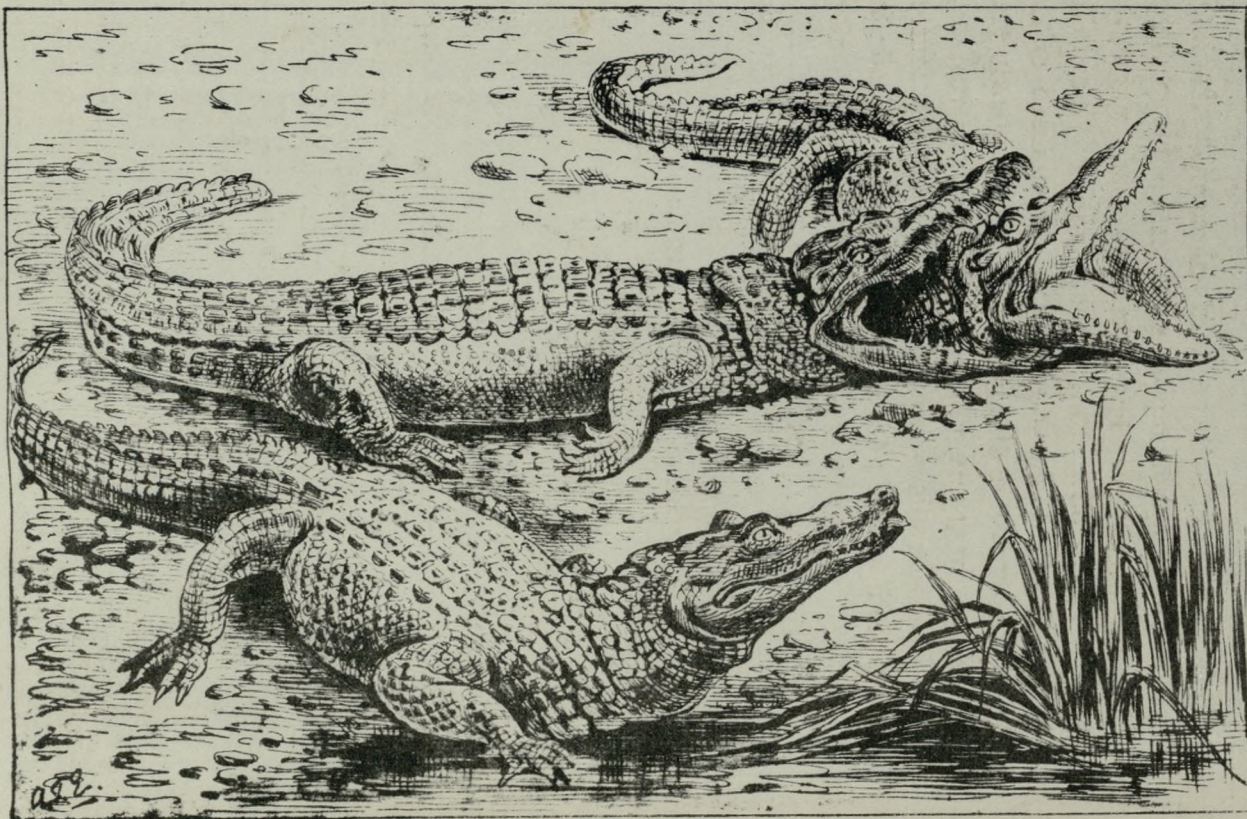
A few miles beyond Kidira, at a town appropriately named *Diboli*, a curious native superstition prevails. A hill, rising suddenly from the plain, at some distance from the shore, is pointed out to strangers as the habitation of a race of devils, whose special mission is to frighten, kidnap, and otherwise annoy passing travellers.

At the mouth of a tributary falling into the Falémé, something very unusual was taking place among the foul family of crocodiles swarming near the shore. One of the monsters lay, apparently helpless, far up the bank, several others were lying half in and half out of the water, while at the approach of the boat a few of the younger members of the fraternity splashed into the stream to hide themselves, as if they had been detected in some criminal enterprise.

Retiring within the shadow of the bush at a little distance, we watched the movements of these animals. Moctard thought it was a dead crocodile that lay on the bank, and that a deed of cannibalism on the part of the rest of the family was in progress. After a

while the youngsters peeped out, ventured on shore, and, after a number of wary, cat-like movements, two of them made straight for the inanimate monster. One of them pounced upon the hind leg, and giving it a furious tug, escaped again into the water with a piece in his mouth. In a moment the other brute made a snap at the animal's right side, displaying the interior of his horrid mouth. The moribund reptile, no doubt stung by this fierce bite into a last exertion of strength, swung himself round and encountered his assailant, exposing at the same time a terrible wound in his bleeding side. Catching his young assailant's neck within his murderous jaws, he closed them with a supreme effort and held him there in a death-grip, from which his most desperate struggles were unable to extricate him. After vainly endeavouring for a long time to free himself from the grasp of the now really dead brute, the young cannibal at length lay as still as the former, and both became the unresisting prey of their affectionate young relatives, who, after every stolen mouthful, rushed back into the water to eat or hide it. This episode had so trespassed on the time that it became necessary to row doubly hard for the rest of the day, to avoid the unpleasantness of spending a night on the river. By dint of hard toil the large pastoral village of Dialiguel was reached before nightfall.

A sad feature met with in all these Bambouk villages is the nearly universal tendency to blindness which afflicts their inhabitants. The great disposing cause of this is the irritation to the eyes caused by



“The lethargic brute, roused by pain, suddenly seized the enemy between his powerful jaws.”

the constant presence of clouds of fine sand or dust, and the scarcity of water that prevails during eight or nine months of the year. The habits of the inhabitants are a curious mixture of the nomadic ways of the pure children of the desert, together with the more settled mode of life of the people in the fisher-villages of the smaller streams and the towns on the larger rivers, which get a share of permanent trade.

The last section of the Falémé had now been reached. At the commencement of the delta of the Falémé is the populous village of Tata Guimby, inhabited by the Diavandous, a race that cultivates a taste for caustic and satirical poetry. The Diavandous, as well as the griots, who greatly resemble them, are much more feared than loved by their richer neighbours, whom they frequently make the butt of their sarcastic compositions. Being also of a different caste, they hold themselves much aloof from the majority of their townsmen, and are in consequence often treated with scanty hospitality. Seeing strangers in the village, three Diavandous came round to the party with improvised rhymes of a flattering character, in expectation of reward. Though so similar in tastes, the griots despise the Diavandous, and call their songs rubbish and lies; consequently little love is lost between the two minstrel races. The Diavandous fully reciprocate the jealous depreciation of the griots. The songs, or rather the metrical allegories of the griots, like the shastras of India, and perhaps most of the religious

romances of pre-Christian eras, are exaggerated allegorical descriptions of either natural phenomena, great physical or political disturbance, or the deeds of remarkable men.

A griot pilgrim who mingled in the group, in emulation of the Diavandou *improvisatori*, recited a story, evidently having reference to the times of Mithridates, whose prowess and great deeds must have afforded a prolific subject for the minstrels of the ages immediately succeeding his epoch. The story may be roughly translated as follows:—"Far, far from here, where the white sands roll up in great waves, falling, rising, heaving on every side like the waves of the sea, our grandfathers walked on the great plains of the desert. But they learned from their ancestors that those interminable plains of sand had ages before been covered with tall trees, from which the rain-drops were scattered in tears of plenty by the bounty of the great Prophet, so that they were no longer athirst. The ground was fruitful then, where now the camels die on the thirsty sand; and the sun, that now kills as much as it cherishes, was then only bountiful to all the land. In that far-off time the Mighty One worked wonders in the heavens. Three times the sun stood still at its rising, and never set for three moons and ten days. This wonder came when the Great Sultán was born, as all our forefathers testify. Again the sun remained suspended in the heavens when the young king of kingdoms spake from his mother's arms, and his voice was heard like the voice of God. Again, after many

years, the sun rested in the heavens like an abiding fire, and then all the earth knew that the great king was no more. After his death the trees withered, and the sun burnt up the grass, but the signs were seen no more except in the visions of the minstrels, our fathers, from whom we have learnt our songs."

Desirous of ascertaining whether any more definite facts of history were embalmed in the legends of the griot, the name of Mithridates was mentioned to the latter, but it awakened no chord of recollection; he replied, "The great king is dead and his name is not known to me, but he existed, and of what consequence is it by what name he was called?" Nothing more could be elicited from him. He had learnt the song as his predecessors had learnt it, without troubling himself about its philosophy or historical origin. He appeared nettled by persistent questioning, and warned us against learning too much, his opinion being the exact opposite to the apothegm, "A little learning is a dangerous thing."

CHAPTER XXII.

WITHERED NATURE—WITH THE OLD COMPANION—A CANVAS TOWN—RHINOCEROS-BIRD—A WOODEN LEG—KING DAMEL—FAREWELL TO SENEGAL.

AT the point where the Falémé enters the Senegal river a long island rose near the left bank, to the height of about fourteen feet above the water-level. When sailing up the Senegal the island was submerged. This afforded a good criterion of the height of the inundation and the rapidity with which the river had fallen after the rains ceased.

On the shore of this island a short halt was made to cook food and bid good-bye to the Falémé river and the surrounding region. With a feeling of hearty thankfulness to all the inhabitants who had offered hospitality in their poor huts, the last look was taken over the whole country to the horizon, and the paddles were set to work down the Senegal, to terminate the journey. The crew, disposed to work to the utmost of their power, encouraged by kind words and small gifts, plied their paddles vigorously, at a racing pace.

The season of drought having now set in, the

scenery on the Senegal could not be recognised. The forest, a few weeks previously clad in emerald green, was represented by bare trees, with black and grey branches interwoven most intricately, forming a sort of tangled network. High trees, that had been submerged, were entangled by masses of leaves, straw, branches, blocks of wood, and dead fish brought down by the current, presenting the most fantastic appearance. In some places they reminded one of huge nests, in others the debris formed a sort of long wall hanging from the upper part of the trees, or lodged like a semi-circular kraal on the ground. The discolouration of the trunks corresponded with the rise and fall of water. The highest point was marked by a reddish tint below the natural colour of the bark; the second by a dark grey; and the third, and next to the ground by a light grey colour. The points of junction between the colours were sharply defined. The marks upon the trees showed, with the accuracy of a water-level, the inequalities of the ground, which otherwise would not have been noticeable. The colours visible at the same level on trees distant from and behind one another, gave the latter the semblance of being conglomerated into one solid mass. The ground was covered with a thick matting of yellow leaves, and the last remnants of the late verdure floated down the stream. All the herbage and flowers of the plains were scorched and withered, giving a desolate and lifeless appearance to the country. Pools and lakes, several feet deep, formed by the late inundation, had evaporated or were absorbed, expos-

ing sand and broken trunks of trees stranded or stuck in the mud. Scenery of this kind at various points met the eye down the river.

The vigorous exertions of the crew, aided by an improvised mast, and a blanket for a sail, soon brought the boat to the beach of Bakal. The first inquiry on landing was for the old companion, the French-trader, who had left for Matam further down the river. With lively recollections of the hunting exploit, and the attacks of the ants, the now desolated scene was revisited, accompanied by the drowsy Moctard, but neither game nor ants were met with. Having no business to transact in this place, regardless of all difficulties and discomforts, a hurried journey was made to rejoin the Frenchman.

After a long, fatiguing, and most uncomfortable sail the boat arrived in the afternoon at Matam, where the French trader was seen on the bank, ready to start for St. Louis. Old acquaintance-ship was renewed, and arrangements made to proceed down the river together. The crew from Fara-bana was discharged, Moctard sent back to Bakal to await for his master the mulatto, and the craft got ready to sail with the first breeze and tide.

A pleasant sight soon relieved the monotony of the past tiresome journey. At the horizon large herds of cattle, driven by slaves, and flanked by armed horsemen, followed by camels laden with tents, household utensils and stores, were visible in a cloud of dust. Then succeeded the mounted owners of the caravan, and the rear, which extended as far as the

eye could reach, was brought up by more camels in single file, at regular distances, like a long chain dragging itself along the plain. It was a pretty and pleasant picture to watch, as the weary train passed by, and halted some distance beyond in the plain, not far from the village.

Ouddourou, the favourable locality for the former plunder of many European vessels, and next to it Sadel, inhabited by Torodos, surrounded by rich plantations, were soon passed on the way to Podor *via* Saldé, where the king of Fouta formerly levied custom duties amounting to 1,500 francs upon large vessels. The duties were collected by the minister, above whose house remains the king's flag-staff. The shipowners were also heavily mulcted by the chiefs of smaller villages on the river, and these exactions greatly hindered trade.

At Podor a short halt was made. On the opposite side of the river is the stream Ras-el-kra, which, after running parallel with the Senegal for some distance, joins the latter, and thus forms an island with good pasture land, where large caravans halt. The island being small, the grass is soon eaten up by the numerous herds, and the cattle then become subject to disease and hunger, causing numerous deaths. The nomads are then compelled to drive their herds and flocks to fresh pasture. As long as grass lasts the place represents every year a little canvas town, and a pretty scene. For exercise a visit was paid to this lively island. The tents were grouped and enclosed with thorn-branches, each cluster forming a kind of kraal, into

which the cattle are driven at night, to prevent straying. Mauris were chattering to each other in groups. Donkeys were coming in and going out with and for water, carrying leathern bags on their backs, braying, and playing all sorts of pranks. On the river-bank here and there cattle were drinking or grazing. Some of the women were busy in the tents at their household duties, whilst others were walking about gaily dressed, or with little or no clothing above their waists. The latter were the slaves or secondary wives of the Mauris, and occasionally came out to dry the clothes they had been washing, or the pots which they had rinsed.

At the entrances of the kraals, now and again, women were going through the process of dyeing their nails red, or cleaning their teeth with the bitter *kélélé*; others were melting butter over low fires, to preserve it, or preparing milk for food in the form of curds and whey, as fresh milk is not drank in Africa, for fear of fever ensuing from its use.

At one of the kraals a master scolded his boy for not looking after the cattle. The boy had been sent by the shepherd for butter to dress cattle wounded by the *Buphaga Africana*, which the man considered a good justification. This bird is popularly known as the rhinoceros-bird, which, by picking out parasites from the hides of animals, is beneficial in that respect. It sometimes does injury by causing very severe wounds, through tearing the skin and flesh with its strong beak, often making a hole large enough to admit its head, when the worms or the larva of the

bot-fly (*Estridæ*) are deeply seated, and the bird, covered with blood, leaves the animal. If these wounds are not plentifully dressed with butter, flies and vermin deposit their eggs, which, in the extreme heat of Africa, cause inflammation, fever, and deaths frequently attributed to the so-called Tsetze fly. The nomads are very strict with their slaves who neglect to drive these birds away, which are a vexation to the shepherds. A great part of their time is taken up by smearing the wounds with butter, and for protection sticking gummed rags over them. This operation is the only possible way of saving the animals from death.

The overpowering mid-day heat compelled everyone to seek the shelter of the tents. In one of these simple hospitality was offered, sour milk served as a refreshment, and the hot tent lifted up to admit fresh air. Inquisitive children came to the entrance to look at the strangers, pushed about like a pack of schoolboys, or pulled each other by their "grous."* The loud exclamation "Nosrani" (stranger), was frequently repeated by the women, and invitations were given from different kraals.

A tall Arab, with a wooden leg, pushing through the inquisitive group of noisy children, presented himself. This was not a little surprising, as African natives, on losing a leg in battle or otherwise, are generally put to death, as men unfit to live. He willingly narrated the story of his lost leg. He was

* A tuft of hair dressed on both sides of the head of youths who have not gone to war and killed an enemy.

yet a young man when he ceased wearing his *guellarieur*,* and went to war under the great Ouled Ahmed, whose slave he was. Jeloffs, Braknas, and many other warriors joined his tribe in the great fight against their mortal enemy King Damel (at Gandiola near St. Louis). Victory appeared to be on their side for some time, when King Damel, dressed in white, reinforced his troops, which he led, riding in front on a white horse, and carrying a white flag in his hand. The warriors fought boldly, especially Damel's forces, who were better mounted. Damel challenged his assailants with, "Come, who dares touch my coussaly!" (mantle); and all who approached were slain by him or the "devil" in his horse. Although the brave Sedi Ely, the King of Cayord, joined the other combined forces, Damel was victorious, and all the chiefs of the Jeloffs and Braknas were killed. The now one-legged man was the staff defender at the side of the standard-bearer of the tribe of Ouled Mocmach (the staff with a horse-tail is the emblem of the Mauris), who attacked Damel, was slain by the latter, and the narrator also received from the king a cut which caused the loss of the leg.

When the battle was over, the narrator, with his broken leg, crept behind a bush, from whence he saw Damel's men killing their wounded enemies, and expected every moment to be his last. Suddenly a messenger from Damel appeared on the scene of battle, and under pain of death ordered, in the name

* A tuft of hair also called *Oryfa*, plaited around the frontal and over the head, to the rear of the scalp.

of the king, that no more wounded men should be killed, as a good white man present with Damel had promised to enable all those who had lost their legs to walk with wooden ones. Soon afterwards Damel, accompanied by two Europeans, marabouts and warriors, came upon the field, and the narrator was the first attended to. He then became senseless from the loss of blood and pain. When recovered he found himself in the village of Gandiola, where a man put a wooden leg on the stump, and said, "Damel promised the white men to spare your life, and kept his word." The narrator then thanked the king, who directed him to remain in the village, where he was kindly treated, until strong enough to leave it. On being quite cured he searched, without success, for the white man, and went to a sacred place to pray for him. "Look," continued he, parading on the sand, "how I can walk. Tell me where the white man is, and I will go there and be his slave. I am now free, have cattle, and good children, but will give all to find him!"

The bystanders nodded their heads approvingly. An old man, sitting on his bed, solemnly ejaculated, "La illah"; and the Arab added, "I often pass the grave of the holy Chikh-el-Oualid side-Mahomet-ouled-Meani. It is a day-and-a-half's journey from here, and I always pray there for the white man who gave me a leg, which is stronger than my first one, and never gets tired." Saying this, he struck his wooden leg with a stick and displayed a gris-gris, containing blessed

sand taken by himself from the holy grave, with the intention never to part with it. Since his recovery from the amputation, he had worn this talisman in token of gratitude to those who had saved his life.

On leaving the caravan, the hospitable denizens of the encampment presented the crew with two calabashes of sour milk, for which they would receive no remuneration. With hearty good wishes they pushed off the boat from shore, and the journey was continued to St. Louis.

St. Louis has been already described. On reaching that port there remained nothing more to do than pay a visit to the mulatto and his portly wife, in pleasant remembrance of their former entertainment on my first landing in Africa. The advent of a steamer for the final departure from Senegal was anxiously awaited, until at last the moment arrived when a trail of smoke became visible far across the sea.

It may be of no great interest to the reader to record the sentiments of mingled regret and anticipated pleasure which fill a traveller's heart on leaving the scenes of savage but suffering humanity. Many hardships had been cheerfully undergone among and with people who in their primitive state of life are content with only general and short impressions, and even these are soon forgotten. Although their vacillating minds wander like pilgrims lost in deserts, their souls are not devoid of sensitiveness to the most refined impressions, roughly expressed in wild dances and great love for music.

Rewarded by grains of useful information gathered from the open book of nature in these far-off lands, cordial thanks were tendered to the mulatto for his hospitality, a last friendly squeeze of the French trader's honest hand given, and with few impediments, the steamer on its coming to anchor was boarded.

With every puff of the steamer from St. Louis, mangrove after mangrove, the English island, the dry and barren banks of the Senegal, the here and there solitary low bushes on the right higher bank, the last salines near the mouth,—one after another were passed. The steamer left a long wake of foam on the dead, still ocean, and the continent of Africa disappeared from sight.

CHAPTER XXIII.

AGAIN AT MADEIRA—GAMBIA IN SIGHT—BATHURST—
 BLACK BRITONS IN THE MARKET—ENGINEERING
 WORKS—SCHOOLS—CHURCHES—MISPLACED PRIDE—
 LAND OF MOURNING—EVILS OF SPIRITS AND TOBACCO—
 RECKLESSNESS OF SETTLERS—CHRISTIAN FUNERALS.

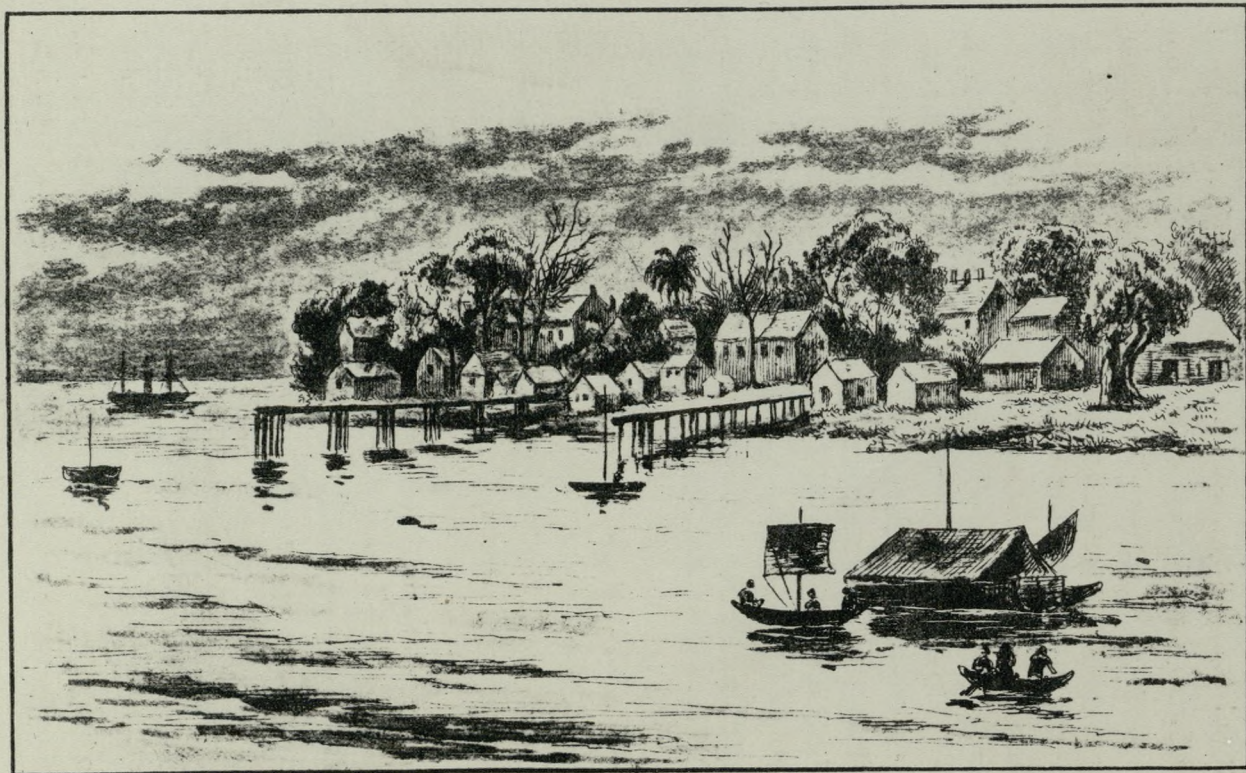
THE steamer easily ploughed through the calm, blue waters of the Atlantic, and anchored in safety off Madeira, where it was necessary to appear in person for the transaction of some private business, as well as for preparations for further journeying in Africa. At Funchal, now familiar to me, the time passed pleasantly among some old acquaintances. The streets, houses, and shops, the churches with their monotonous bells, the listless life of the inmates, the equestrians, sledge-drivers, and the levée of the invalids in the principal avenue, wore the old aspect. Contrary to expectation, a steamer for the Gambia direct anchored for a short time at Madeira, and, through the kind assistance of H.B.M. Consul, a passage was secured, and the voyage resumed earlier than intended.

After a few days' steaming the first indication of the approach to land—viz. at Bathurst, a port at the mouth of the Gambia—a dense haze, which enveloped the low, marshy coast; a range of trees like the teeth of a huge comb appeared to grow out of the water, and were only clearly perceptible on nearing the shore, where the blue water changed to a grey tint. Here the log was frequently cast for soundings, until the water became green, and the buoys marking the channel were in sight. The steamer, at ten miles' distance from the first buoy, entered the Gambia at Point St. Mary. The grandeur of this river lost much of its effect through the haze rising from the swamp, and the noxious vapours from the impenetrable jungle on the right bank, where a few fishermen were collecting oysters amidst the tall reeds.

The steamer anchored in front of the gloomy town of Bathurst. Two black policemen and some idle loungers stood gazing on the jetty, listlessly awaiting the disembarkation of the passengers, but there seemed to be no boat whose owner was disposed to approach the steamer. Only a dozen or so leaky canoes turned upside down, a few nets suspended on piles, and large, oblong, torn sails made of matting, placed on the beach were ready for their masters, who daily risked their lives in these frail crafts in the open sea, swarming with sharks, for the sake of earning a scanty living by fishing. At last, by means of a couple of these canoes, the few passengers were landed in front of the main sandy street, consisting of a range of houses shaded by palaver-trees.

The most important things for a traveller are the first and last impressions made on arriving at and departing from any place; therefore, a preliminary survey of the little town was taken on the way to the Governor's house. This was the work but of a few minutes, consequently the description will not be long. Four establishments for the promotion of civilization—drink-shops—were passed in succession, the fourth being in course of construction; and now an open sandy waste, with an avenue of magnificent trees, appears before the traveller. On two sides of this square are little houses with palisades, and each range of these buildings, separated by streets, also has drinking-shops. On the third side is again a drinking-shop, and next door another drinking-shop; a few feet further on, only separated by the old "Engineering Works," is a church. The barracks front the observer—high red-brick walls serve to confine the drunkards committed to prison there. In the centre of the building rises a square clock-tower of some architectural pretensions, above a lofty entrance and yellow-painted apartments for the accomodation of a few officials, with yellow faces.

Adjacent to the barracks is the pleasantly situated Governor's house, over which waves the torn flag that has evidently braved "the battle and the breeze." A pretty and well-kept garden is seen through the railings of the mansion, which faces the river defended by a few mounted guns. A black sentry at the gate paces backwards and forwards with pendulum-like regularity. On entering the garden a



"Gloomy Bathurst on the swampy beach."

native servant politely showed me the way to the Governor's reception-room. The Governor soon appeared and, on the production of credentials, kindly offered comfortable lodging and hospitality, in a way creditable to any governor working in the interest of the colony committed to his charge, and desirous of encouraging those who are ready to praise the good condition and expose the evils and wrongs of his district.

On leaving the Governor's house the survey of the town was continued towards the barracks, at one of the corners of which is a well where the women wash linen, discuss their political questions, and, like all servants, enliven their toil by scandal respecting their masters and neighbours. At this spot a traveller may in a few minutes learn a great deal in regard to the moral and social life of the inhabitants. The best mode of gaining information about the character of themselves and their masters is, first to offer these women tobacco, and then decide the contest going on between them.

After a short walk through various wide and sandy streets with bad gutters, and few trees for shade, the market street was revisited. Under the trees the inhabitants eagerly purchase oysters either ready boiled or raw; a few fishermen are engaged in mending their nets, while women are selling bananas, palm-oil measured in cocoa-nut shells from calabashes, plenty of ginger and other commodities.

Above this busy scene hundreds of chirping bats flitted in zig-zag courses, now and again suspend-

ing themselves head-downwards from the leaves of palm trees in the palisaded gardens of the adjacent houses, or the branches of palaver trees, some masticating their juicy spoil, others hanging motionless, either asleep or dreaming. Thoughtless boys amused themselves by flinging sticks and branches at the harmless bats, and missing the mark, occasionally struck the gossiping or busy natives. The latter took little heed of the mischievous acts of the playful youths, until an urchin knocked down a female bat with two tiny young ones clinging tenaciously to her teats. The boy was soon caught by a native, and pulled to the spot where the victims lay. A lecture against cruelty was illustrated by many a sound box of the ear, after which the boy scampered off. Another native caught the flying culprit and brought him back for further punishment, when a second edition of the lecture was delivered, followed by a further chastisement, administered more vigorously than the first, for being cruel to harmless creatures, and also being cowardly enough to run away.

The palaver-tree in the market, the chief point of attraction for the residents in Bathurst, as well as of the neighbouring villages, is usually selected as a gathering place, more especially as all the drinking-shops are in its vicinity. The object of these assemblages is chiefly to discuss scandal or kill time, showing indifference for home life and domestic happiness. In Europe, some clubmen delight in sitting at windows, reading advertisements of horses, dogs, and other articles, or revelling in the revolting details of

the last fashionable divorce case, leaving near the club-house door elegant carriages with sleepy coachmen and footmen waiting for them. In Bathurst, clubs are replaced by drinking-shops, where natives pass their hours over glasses of poisonous spirit, leaving outside the doors their servants or wives to gossip and discuss the secrets of family life. Curses loud and deep are heaped upon white men, and fruitless appeals made to husbands and brothers to cease their indulgence; but the infatuated men, encouraged by the vendors of liquor, sacrifice even their household property and leave families in poverty and starvation.

Among the groups near the palaver-tree, those beggars from birth, the Wallofs or Djelovs, ask every white man they see for "only a penny." If refused, their usual response is, "You don't like me—but if you do, give me your hand, that I may know you are my friend, as I want to be English; take me and my sister with you. When you are ready to start home we will go with you. So long I will sit in the sun to keep in good health, but if I sit in the shade I will take fever, and then you won't take me. When my back is too warm in the sun, and you don't fetch me, I will come to you. Now I know you are my friend, I don't want your penny. Good-bye."

The arrival of the monthly steamer, with news from Europe, is impatiently waited for by both whites and blacks. The Colonial authorities, in order to attract trade, and keep up regular mail communica-

tion with the rest of the world, pay an annual subsidy of £1,000 to the British-African Steamship Company. This amount is scarcely a sufficient remuneration to the Company for a regular service, which seems to be maintained rather for prestige than commercial requirements, as the trade with Bathurst is insignificant. These steamers, to promote the progress of the colony, also run to Sierra Leone, and the third-class passage fare for this short distance is only 25s. Steamers running to Goree charge third-class passengers 10s., but there is postal communication overland, and for 25s. Goree can be reached on horseback, without great difficulty. This communication, like many other useful and convenient arrangements in this part of Africa, is solely due to French enterprise. Sailing vessels, occasionally calling at Bathurst, often remain there a long time, and the instances when they proceed to Goree or St. Louis are rare.

The long-expected steamer at length cast anchor opposite the town. White men dressed in uniform, or in civilian garb, soon made their appearance in the market-place, some directing their steps to the drinking-shops to celebrate their safe arrival. The natives, quietly lounging under the trees, admired the dress of the new comers, some of whom, attracted by the wheeling flight and faint chirps of the bats, came to the trees. Stones, broken branches, and walking-sticks were brought into requisition. The inoffensive natives quickly made themselves scarce to escape mischances arising from the bombardment opened upon the harmless bats. During this onslaught,

sailors, stokers, and tipsy passengers made a demonstration against the dark-skinned softer sex. Women and girls were caught, cuddled, and kissed, and the shrieks and screams of assailants and assailed, the laughter of the spectators, and the chirps of bats, filled the air with confusion, until the signal from the steamer called the gay Lotharios on board, and the town resumed its wonted quietness.

Close to the palaver trees is the principal or European market, surrounded by substantial walls with an iron gate, at the entrance of which is a small building where an official collects the dues from traders entering the place to sell their goods. During business hours order is preserved in it by two native policemen. The market is well supplied with fruit, sweet potatoes, and other vegetables. The popular "locos," or "kinder," made of a fruit which is allowed to putrify in water for a fortnight, is exposed for sale on empty casks or candle-boxes. The stench of the "locos," the putrified flesh, and half-decomposed fish (the latter being nowhere in Africa eaten fresh), diffuses an intolerable odour all over the place. There are stalls for the sale of cutlery and all the varied requirements of natives. European goods, such as looking-glasses, beads, and almost everything that can be expected to take the fancy of the people, are to be found in this market, and may be purchased at very reasonable rates. The stock of each seller generally does not exceed in value four or five pence, or at the very utmost a shilling.

The business is carried on chiefly by mulatto women, who dispose of their goods with more quietness and method than would be expected among the motley assemblage in the market. Most of these women, as well as the black Britons in Bathurst, are very fond of talking English, and pride themselves upon their superiority over those who cannot, or carry on a small trade, outside the market-place, to avoid the payment of dues.

The market is the principal place where English is spoken. The following are examples of their proficiency, heard at one of the stalls:—"Te-le ma-me bony bo-bo." The literal translation of this lucid English is, "To-day mother born boy." "We you da-de?" is the inquiry, "Where your father?" "Me da-de go va-ca," expresses, "My father go walk." "Tell-ee he I say." This means, "Tell him I say." "Abecamea," is, "I came here." "Me no see he," "I did not see him." "Tellee he fork rock," means, "Tell him at four o'clock." "Me go catchea," "I will catch him" (or find him at home).

At the next stall two mulatto women were exchanging their ideas in this manner, "Wheree ear systr child?" meaning, "Sister, where is your child?" "My bo-bo broke davood put da fayia," meaning, "My boy broke the wood and has put it on the fire?" Then the speaker, placing her hands on her hips, and with a turn of her head towards her home, continues, "Te-te ma-me, white man kooms, me cook big kitten soup; me catchea." This means, "I cook big kettle of soup till white man comes; he will wait for me."

“Good-by, good-by, ma-me!” And with the provisions, she quickly leaves the market to regale her friends with the mal-odorous “locos.”

A further object of interest is the barracks, especially in early morning, when the discipline of the black soldiers may be observed during their drill in the open barrack-yard. The black officer, who put them through their facings, was a fine well-built man, conducted the drill like a thorough soldier, and his men showed themselves smart and efficient.

In close proximity to the barracks the ghost of the engineering works was visited. There they stood forgotten near the river-bank, not having been in operation probably since their foundation. The memorials of intended industry were still visible in the shape of a pair of broken doors, a rusted tank, a few hammers, and other old tools equally rusty. A broken carriage in the yard, and a couple of old calabashes at the door of the room occupied by the venerable negro under whose care these works were placed, comprised all the visible plant. With as deep an air of interest as a thoughtful medical man would examine a dying patient, the grey-headed negro examines these remnants from day to day.

The missionary school connected with the Protestant church is a pleasing object, and evidently well appreciated by the native children, whose behaviour, going to and returning from the school, shows their willingness and pleasure to avail themselves of educational opportunities.

Civilisation in Gambia would probably progress

satisfactorily were it not for certain hindrances thrown in its way. Although the schools are attended, education seems to have been introduced more as a matter of course than reality, if judged by the churches and schools (the latter especially being very poor), and some were constructed in so slight a manner as to induce the idea that there was no desire for the permanent establishment of Christian institutions. Three temporary buildings as schools and chapels were built, but of such solidity that the very first tornado demolished the structure and scattered the materials. The missionary appealed to promoters of Christianity for further assistance, but this was only whispering to deaf ears, and appeals to English residents in the settlement met with but a meagre response.

The church is well attended, and the decorous and reverential mode in which the service is conducted reflects great credit upon the missionaries. A grey-headed native fulfils the duty of verger in a most conciliatory manner to Christians, Mahometans, and even pagans, who, from curiosity or listlessness, gather round the building. All are courteously invited by the verger to witness the service; and those who enter the church, by their behaviour, set an example which many Christians on entering a mosque would do well to imitate.

The state of the town is a reflex of the apathy and lifelessness of its people. Those who have lived there continuously scarcely recognise the place in its present condition, compared with what it was

some years ago. No friendly associations exist for the advancement of the colony, and meetings for the general good are very seldom held. The European residents possess no bond of union, and avoid each other, but have not failed, with few exceptions, to gain the respect of the natives.

It would revive pleasant recollections to speak of the conduct of some white men in this locality. A few words will show the estimation in which they are held by the blacks. Occasionally a white man, without pride, enters the barracks, and immediately the words "Here he comes" are whispered round the yard. All private or military persons show respect in his presence, and so soon as he leaves the barrack-yard, it becomes manifest, from their behaviour and remarks, that such white men who do not presume too much upon their superiority are appreciated. The natives in these and similar cases form a shrewd estimate of Europeans from their affable or supercilious conduct.

On one occasion a white resident, having no official position, stalked into the barrack-yard, evidently expecting, if not a military salute, at all events a flattering reception. The soldiers, not in the least awed by his arrogant bearing, did not rise from the benches. The white gentleman looked at them with a scornful expression, and exclaimed, "How dare you sit in my presence! don't you know who I am?" and threatened to complain to their officers. An angry native, instead of instantly rising to pacify his wounded pride, told him they knew well who he was; and then,

in good plain African-English, said to the high and mighty one, "Clear your way—take yourself off," advice which was wisely followed. This tends to show the effect produced upon the native mind by the haughty bearing of white men. Bitter as it may be sometimes to be placed lower than desired in the esteem of others, and false and hollow praise may be preferred to genuine respect, it is nevertheless far better to hear the naked truth than lies dressed up in honeyed phrases and flowing robes. The sentiments of mulattoes with regard to these white settlers may be summed up in the not flattering expression often heard—"If God only saved us from such white men we should be happy."

Soon after sunset the town presents an extremely dull appearance when the inhabitants retire to their homes, and the deserted streets are left to swarms of mosquitoes. The people have a dread of the heavy fogs and night dew prevailing, the first advice to a new comer being to avoid them. From the excessive moisture in the adjoining swamps the night dews are so dense that in less than half an hour's walk, even in the streets, the clothing becomes saturated. In the early hours of the morning the heavy dew, especially after a hot day, drops from the roofs. The sky, as in London, is seldom clear. Clouds frequently hang very low, and give a sombre appearance to the neglected and almost floating town of Bathurst. There is no place in it where water is not to be found at the depth of a fathom, and more frequently at one foot below the ground.

During the rains the chief part of the town is overflowed, and the people catch fish in the middle of streets. Occasionally a crocodile from the creek makes its appearance, affording the natives considerable amusement, usually ending in its being killed near the wine-shops on the way to the cemetery. Other natives enjoy the Venetian pastime of rowing up and down the streets in boats, when the water forces its way into the barrack-square and other places to a depth of a foot. Luckily these floods soon subside, the muddy soil being covered with a coat of sand, under which the water stagnates, and becomes prejudicial to health from the air being loaded with evil odours.

The surroundings of Bathurst are not devoid of a certain beauty, and afford to a stranger great excitement, especially if he is fond of exercise and shooting game near the creeks. But here, if unacquainted with the locality, he may be surrounded by the tide, stick up to his chin in filthy sticky mud, or even meet a fearful death by slow drowning or fatal sickness.

All sorts of phenomena present themselves in this locality. In the months of January and March Father Neptune is often in one of his wayward moods, and, in a fine vein of irony, scoops out the coffins of deceased residents from the loose sandy soil; and having toyed with and tossed them hither and thither, restores them to Bathurst, the former domicile of the departed. The burial-ground, being at the northern side of the town, is exposed to the breezes, which

carry the pestilential vapours arising from decomposition of corpses to Bathurst, and increase the unhealthiness of the locality.

With such unfavourable conditions, what would become of Bathurst if the kindly operations of the natural sanitary commissioners, the Harmathan winds, did not perform their welcome offices? These drying winds blow regularly from December to February, and soon change the land of mourning into a land of joy. The noxious moisture is dried up, and the sick recover as if by magic.

The following figures of the hospital of Bathurst tell the tale of sanitary neglect. During the past twenty years, the total deaths among the coloured population have been double the total number of births. The number of male deaths alone exceed, by eighteen per cent., the total births of male and female children. The mortality among the males exceeds that among the females by 340 per 1,000. The highest rate of mortality is amongst infants from one year to seven years of age. Up to the age of twenty, the death-rate diminishes, and then again increases to forty. Only a small proportion of the natives live beyond the latter age.

The secret of the causes of the high death-rate in Bathurst is not so much its bad position as the wanton poisoning of the inhabitants by the introduction of fiery deleterious spirits. These are, unfortunately, regarded by many as a great preventive against the ill-effects of swampy localities. True, the use of the alcohol of the apothecary is beneficial when a

cold may have been caught, but the stomach should never become accustomed to it. Its habitual use not only deprives the blood of oxygen, serves as a good conductor of disease which it intensifies, but inevitably hastens death.

A large proportion of the Africanders, as the white settlers are sometimes called, by medical advice indulge in brandy on an empty stomach as a tonic. Before mid-day, perhaps, a spirit bottle is emptied, and in the afternoon abundant evidence is forthcoming of the indulgence of the morning. The temperature of the blood rises dangerously near the fatal 102° , and, in their alcoholic excitement, such men often over-exert themselves. This produces excessive perspiration, followed by great thirst, and a further dangerous consumption of liquids. Oblivious of the danger, and heedless of the warnings of natives, wiser and older residents, they frequently walk or repose in swampy places just when their heated, perspiring condition is most open to the attack of fevers, and, if any harm then comes of it, the horrid "African climate" is held responsible.

In addition to all the unfavourable conditions of Bathurst the water is brackish, there being only one spring from which pure, fresh, and soft water can be obtained, and even of this very few avail themselves. The increase of sickness is much aggravated by the great use of snuff-tobacco, which is snuffed and eaten by native men, women, and children, and immediately afterwards washed down by different liquors. As if this were not bad enough, tobacco is even

steeped in spirits for days, and forms a most deadly venom, the indulgence in which has shortened the days of many a poor and ignorant native. The spirit, if chemically analysed, would in all probability be found poisonous. The price at which it is sold to natives, even in the remotest parts of the West Coast, 5s. a dozen (!) bottles and case included, after paying Government and shipping dues, abundantly proves its vile character.

There can be no doubt that those who should and do know better, wickedly encourage and invite the natives to indulge to excess in the horrible "trade spirits." Unscrupulous, lawless spirit-traders, and those who encourage them, with the assistance of the roguish griots and native professional brandy-dealers, have not only greatly demoralised the people, but prevent the future development of Africa for the sake of an unholy profit. Those who have the power to prevent such evils if they choose, calmly look on. The unhappy results of this trade are only too visible. The natives of Oualo, the Sonninkées, and others who engage in agriculture, will deposit or exchange their millet to the last handful, or any other property, at a ridiculously low price for the "trade brandy," and starve their wives and families for the rest of the year. During this period of privation the unfortunate natives are obliged to live on roots, bark, hides, wild fruit, and other indigestible and dangerous food, which of necessity cuts short the thread of life, and thins the already sparse population of Africa. Starvation and intoxication have often driven the

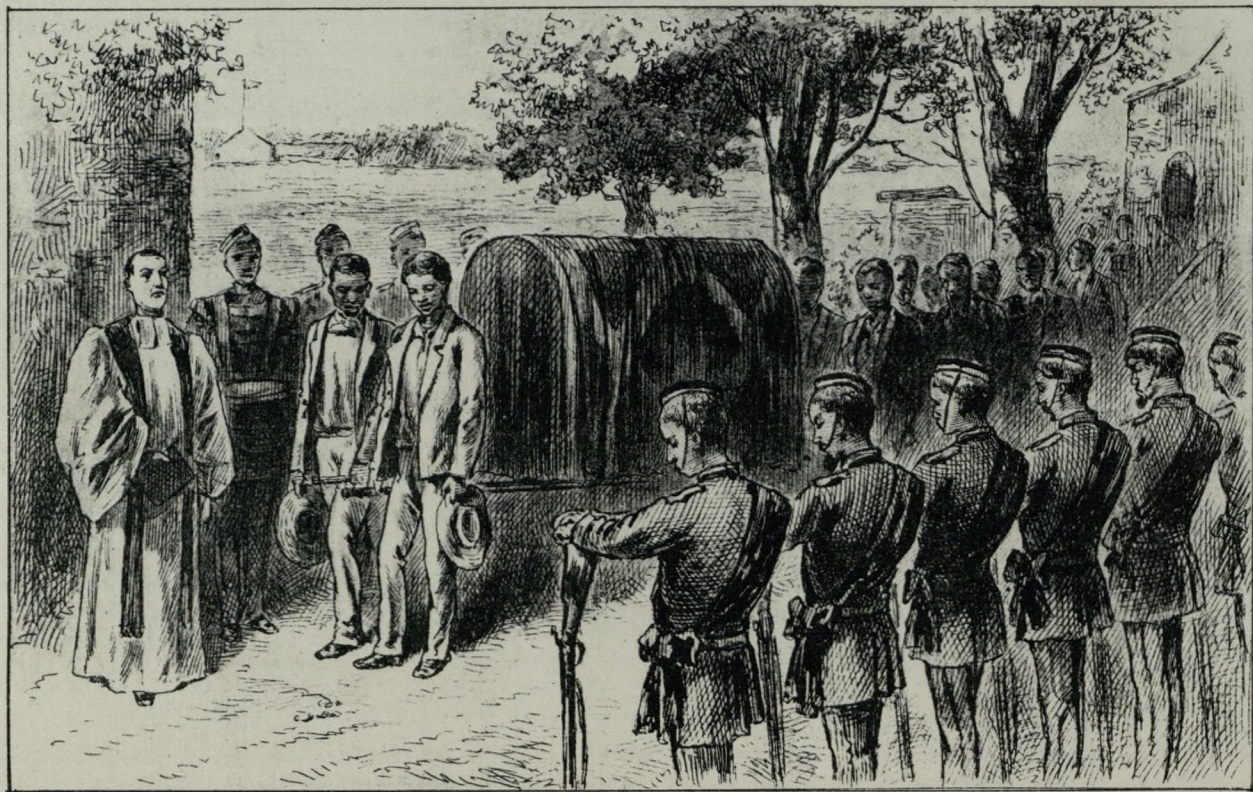
unhappy victims to rebellion, war, robbery, and murder, in many instances simply to procure more brandy, especially in the Upper Senegambia districts. These facts, their causes and results, are notorious, and yet no means are attempted or even thought of to prevent them.

Will the time ever arrive when effective measures will be taken, without preventing free trade, to render it impossible, under such a guise, for avaricious traders to ruin in mind and body their fellow mortals? There is scarcely any hope for the progress of civilisation so long as the small native factories are allowed to retail "trade brandy" without any restriction, especially when there is no scope either for agricultural industry or other manual labour on the part of the natives.

With a few exceptions the mortality in Gambia is equally great among the white population through neglect. When attacked by fever on the river, instead of returning home they remain in their boats until powerless, especially in the rainy season, which is most prolific in causing disease. The most prevalent diseases at this time are dysentery, diarrhœa, cholera, and yellow fever, all, except the last, common to temperate climates. Rheumatism and gout are also prevalent, but these are generally either inherited, or occasioned by careless exposure to damp, or by debauchery, or by recklessness. Goitre, a swelling of the thyroid gland, is a disease much more frequently met with in the moist districts of the West Coast than elsewhere.

Many of the settlers do not even take the trouble to consult a medical man unless at some serious crisis, when, as it generally happens, the physician's aid has been sought too late. They take quinine in absurdly large doses, literally eating it with a spoon, and calomel they consume in alarming quantities; but of the advantage of small doses the majority of the settlers appear to be profoundly ignorant. A pinch of quinine, taken at the moment when a fever attack is first perceived, will be of great benefit; but this valuable drug should only be used when actually required. It is worse than useless to take it beforehand, as many do, as a precautionary remedy. The fact that some Frenchmen are residents of seventeen years' standing is a good proof that fevers are for the most part preventible even in the wretchedly situated town of Bathurst.

Sanitary science is a sealed book in Bathurst and other West Coast towns, and the name of sanitary inspector is there scarcely known, although the exercise of the functions of such an officer could with great benefit be performed in Bathurst. The most appalling indifference to the presence of festering sewage in the midst of a town population pervades the inhabitants. Thousands of gallons of putrifying animal and vegetable refuse, in uncovered, or barely covered, holes in the ground, form filthy cesspools close to the dwellings, and have not been emptied for years. The nauseating mixture of gases that arise not only from these cesspools, but from the slaughter-house, is intolerable, and through the neglect and



"The last obsequies of the black Christian."

lazy indifference of the population, the air is laden with the poison they have themselves created.

The funeral customs are worthy to be noticed. When the corpse is brought to the church, twelve or fourteen of the militia, with arms reversed, crape sashes, and craped drums, are drawn up in single file on each side of the entrance. Between these the body is solemnly borne on the shoulders of the bearers. After the service, which is reverently conducted, and the singing of a dirgeful character, the corpse, preceded by the clergyman, is brought out of the church and placed in the catafalque waiting at the entrance; this is then covered with the British flag. Each of the soldiers reversing his rifle, with the muzzle on his foot, bows his head and pays the last tribute of respect to the departed. After this ceremony they follow the corpse to the place of sepulture, accompanied by friends. This form of funeral leaves a deep religious impression on the spectators. The respect which, under the noble policy of the government, is shown even to deceased black Christians, inspires the native mind with equal respect for the English and the English flag.

When a native British subject is thus buried, the people from surrounding villages, witnessing these rites, clap their hands, shake their heads, make a clucking noise with their tongues to indicate their sense of high admiration, and exclaim, "Good English! Good man! Good country!"

CHAPTER XXIV.

NATIVE SUBURB OF BATHURST — A MOUNTEBANK — THE
 DJOLAS — THE DJOSHOA — ADJACENT VILLAGES — OLD
 TRADE-RIVALRIES — ALBREDA — SÉRÈRÈ.

ADJACENT to Bathurst is a village, the huts of which are built of wicker-work, mostly plastered with mud. The peaceful inhabitants appear to have little desire to extend acquaintance with the people of the town. They keep apart from the latter, and pass their evenings in friendly palavers, while jet-black, naked, and healthy-looking children sport about the huts on the soft sand, or run after and round their mothers, when proceeding to the river's edge to wash clothing or to fetch water for domestic purposes. The women of this village are distinguished by their short, woolly, and small-curved hair, ornamented with coins. Their arms and ears are adorned with bracelets, ear-rings, and other trinkets. A bright-coloured handkerchief, arranged hat-fashion, completes the attire of these sable belles.

Near one of the huts four men in white shirts

were surrounded by a group of natives. Two of these men, being strangers, were receiving special attention. Sweets, cola-nuts, and fruits of which they occasionally partook during the gossip, were placed before them on a mat spread on the sand. A dancer or fetish for the amusement of the group displayed his performances for a trifling gift. While he was executing a preliminary series of vigorous leaps and contortions, his assistant beat a drum to attract a larger audience. The dancer presented an odd appearance in his too ample trousers and a loose flowing shirt. His face was concealed by a hideous mask having three holes, two for the eyes and one for the nose and mouth. This mask was embellished with two long ears, behind which antelope-horns were attached, and between these a kind of conical hat was perched, with two discs of looking-glass in semblance of two monstrous goggle eyes. This strange head-gear was surmounted by a stick bedecked with feathers, and gaudily ornamented with ribbons of every hue of the rainbow. His garb was grotesquely decorated with European playing and pattern cards with sham rings, buttons, and jewellery. His get-up was of a most extraordinary kind. With small bells attached to his arms, legs, and other parts of his person, it might be said of him "With rings on his fingers and bells on his toes, He shall have music wherever he goes."

The approach of evening warned the two visitors of the time for their departure. They, accompanied by the group, proceeded to the beach, where

fifteen negroes were waiting, paddles in hand, for the visitors. The latter, after exchanging ceremonious salutations, seated themselves in the boat, one at the bow, the other in the stern. The boat was pushed off, and the rowers, with low and regular hissing whistles to imitate the plash of paddles, like well-drilled mariners, kept an uniform clockwork circular stroke. From time to time they held their paddles upright, like the crew of a man-of-war saluting an admiral. Swiftly flew the large canoe, impelled by the muscular men, across the wide Gambia to the opposite shore, directing the course to Albadar, a small village of several houses, some seventeen miles distant from Bathurst.

The paddles were worked with as much regularity of stroke and feather in circular form as a first-class University boat crew might be proud of, until the plash of the paddles and the sound of the whistles became fainter and fainter, and the boat disappeared from sight behind the trees.

In the neighbourhood of Bathurst are the Djolas. They distinguish themselves from other Mahometans by allowing their hair to grow, and by boring three or four holes in their ears sufficiently large to carry cane snuff-boxes in the Zulu fashion, both women and men being great snuff-takers. The women in the otherwise unoccupied ear-holes place white buttons, while the men display large ear-rings. The girls have their hair arranged in different styles according to their age. Young girls shave their heads, leaving only on their foreheads and the back of the

head just sufficient hair to form two small plaits. A bride has a "dgimbi," a hair-dress consisting of plaits ornamented with beads and other articles. The hair is naturally very minutely curled, and never exceeds the length of nine or ten inches. The married women part their hair in the middle and wear kerchiefs on their heads; a custom prevailing among all Djelovs.

The Djola men, especially in the village of Combo, are palm-wine collectors, and usually select the tallest trees for tapping, as these yield a larger quantity and better quality of wine than the younger trees. The women plant rice, and by their exertions support themselves, husbands, and families. At dawn the women start from their villages with heavy loads of palm wine, rice, and also palm oil on the way to Bathurst.

A mile and a half from Bathurst is a group of beautiful shady trees, under which, near an old, square, iron tank, a colonial official in the early morning is stationed to collect the duty upon the wine.

The trade in palm wine is very strictly supervised: not a single bottle can be sold without paying the toll, which, if evaded, is punished by a heavy fine. The duty per gallon of nine bottles is 1s., which gives a good round yearly sum to the local revenue.

This tank is close to the only road open to the natives, and here they remove the calabashes from their heads and take a short rest after a long walk. This place, lying low, is at every flow of the tide inundated to a considerable depth, excepting only the

roadway. Here the women usually bathe and anoint their bodies with oil to give them a distinguished and shining appearance in the market of Bathurst, where the wine is speedily sold at two or three pence a bottle. Those who delay purchasing for an hour or two in the morning deprive themselves of an evening draught of this delicious, but not very wholesome, wine. In Djola villages, several miles distant from the town, this wine is procured for a penny a bottle by speculators, who re-sell it with cheap coconuts in Bathurst.

The beautiful cocoa-nut palm, growing luxuriantly in Gambia, is most unaccountably neglected. This valuable tree, after being once planted, requires little or no attention, and would recompense a hundredfold the small expense and trouble of its cultivation. From the coir which covers the nuts cordage of a very durable character is made, having greater tensile strength, more elasticity, and less weight than that made from hemp. The very best cables, known as "Palmetto," are formed from this tree. The nuts yield a valuable oil, and the tree itself is applicable to many other useful purposes.

The close neighbours of the Djolas are the Djoshoa the latter mostly naked, but hard workers, and all invariably carry snuff-boxes in their circular ear-holes. Their heads are uncovered, and any member of the tribe wearing a head-covering would be expelled from their village. The women are in the habit of curling their hair corkscrew fashion. For this purpose they use thin sticks one-eighth of an inch in diameter,

upon which the hair is tightly bound for a couple of days. To make the curls lasting for a month or more, they plentifully smear the hair with fat or oil. Djoshoa children are from their birth fed upon rice, which causes cutaneous disease, and frequently death. The unenviable mark which distinguishes this tribe from all others, is extreme filth in their habitations, their persons and habits. They are avaricious, and seldom is a man among them who has not money concealed in rags wound round the body, or hidden in the earth inside his small miserable dwelling. They sleep on the ground, never wash their bodies, and after partaking of food invariably wipe their fingers and hands upon their thighs. When in Bathurst they walk through the market, pick up and eat the most repulsive garbage.

The Djolas are divided into Djola and Funi-Djola. The latter being traders, inhabit the Bintain creek, and bring unclarified red wax, as well as rice cultivated by their women, from the village of Funi to Bathurst. Here the wax is sold at from 4*d.* to 5*d.* per pound in cash, or exchanged for flimsy Manchester calico, guns warranted to burst, and gunpowder consisting chiefly of charcoal and fine black sand. This, with slight moisture, turns into a paste, thus insuring the safety of the native hunter as well as of the game. With these goods slaves are purchased from the Djolas in the interior, the price being £3 or £4 for boys and girls, who are profitably re-sold on the right shore of the river to the Mandingos at the rate of from £10 to £12, or exchanged for cows, ground-

nuts, cola-nuts, and other goods, which are again sold to European traders up the river. Two baskets of ground-nuts (fifteen by fifteen inches), bought on the river are made into three in Bathurst, where they are vended at about 2s. each.

Cola-nuts form a very important article of trade on the Gambia, and are purchased by the Mahometans at high prices. This product is brought from Sierra Leone by the mail steamers, and is valued at from £15 to £20 a basket, varying from two to four cwt.

The villages adjacent to Bathurst, where native peculiarities are to be observed, may be of some interest to the traveller. Visits to these villages involve a journey of about three days in one direction. They are Djosuan, Hamilton-town, Sabedje, Youndoum, Busun-Bala, Djambur-Sanja, Kunjuroo, and Katon, where a river must be crossed, and then Funi, Kaffunti, Mantal, and Caruni. On the road at the last station the traveller will probably be compelled to sleep in the bush. All the villagers are well off, especially the Youndoum people, who breed domestic animals and numerous pigs. The Djolovs and Caruni people also keep cattle, but only eat flesh as a rule on the occasion of funerals.

The neighbours of the Caruni are the naked Djugodj (wild Djolovs), who profess no religion, live in the bush, and are located nearer to the sea-coast than are the Caruni. The Djugodj are distinguished by their hair, a foot in length, and their weapons being bows, arrows, and two long knives. They, like others, cultivate rice and collect palm-wine, but are

reported to be very hostile, and murder is almost a mere matter of business with them.

In the next neighbouring places to Caruni, such as Belis and Casamas, the inhabitants are peaceful, and chiefly trade in palm oil and hides. A journey through all these localities can be made at a very small expense and with little difficulty in travelling, food and entertainment being easily met with in the district, especially if the traveller is provided with snuff, smoking-tobacco, and cola-nuts. All the chiefs being fond of these products, for a small gift willingly accommodate a travelling party. Passing Kunjuroo and neighbouring villages inhabited by Mahometans, Djolovs, Foulahs, Sérérés, Mandingos, it is well to be provided with a stock of cola-nuts. Goundour, *via* Djambur, can be reached in one day, the journey laying through woods. These villages are characteristic of others more distantly located. A visit to them will acquaint the traveller with the manners and customs of the people, and thus facilitate his journey into the interior or up the river.

In the course of our rambles about Bathurst, acquaintance was made with two traders, who were about to proceed up the river, one to Bintain Creek, a short distance from Bathurst, and the other to Fatatenda. As the latter was to sail two days later, arrangements were made to proceed with the former to Bintain, and await there the arrival of the second. This mode of travelling is the cheapest, safest, and most comfortable way of proceeding towards the interior.

Before describing the people inhabiting the Gambia region, a few words as to the past history of the settlements on the Gambia may not be without interest. Towards the end of the seventeenth century, the French took the Fort St. Jacques (built on a little island for the protection of the trade, some thirty miles from the mouth of the Gambia) from the English, blew it up, left the place, and thus put an end to the trade. Three years later the French settled upon Bintain Creek, and energetically pushed on the trade, while the English totally neglected all opportunities of advancing their own interests. The few English trading vessels that proceeded up the creek were attacked and destroyed by the French, and the English were compelled to relinquish their trade. Such savage policy displeased even the king of a semi-savage nation. The King Foigni of Bintain regarded these acts on the part of the French as a declaration of war against himself, as the English were under his protection. He therefore prohibited the French from entering the creek or trading in the district. This prohibition had its effect for some time, until the French sent armed vessels, and recommenced their operations in the Bintain district. Since then, French competition and English jealousy resulted in the almost total destruction of the trade of Senegambia. The French prevented the English proceeding up the Senegal river, and the latter settled on the Upper Gambia, and in return opposed the French going there, leaving only the station of Albadar or Albreda open to them, where the French

established a factory. The greatest disorders and crimes committed on both sides arose from a desire to secure the emoluments of the slave trade. Only after long experience did the rivals understand the mischief resulting from national jealousy, and come to a mutual agreement to trade on friendly terms, without interference in the wars or quarrels of the natives. This truce, however, was of but very brief duration, and in a few years fresh disorders sprung up. In 1703 English factories were again destroyed by the French, and paralyzation of trade followed. Friendship was renewed, but soon after further hostilities on both sides ensued. In this manner trade on the Gambia river has been carried on, and it is not surprising that it does not progress.

The old factory of Albreda was situated some seventeen miles from Bathurst, on the right bank of the river, in the territory of Barra. Formerly a brisk trade in wax, ivory, gold, but principally slaves, was here carried on by the French. They were on friendly terms with the king, in whose dominion the factory was established, and to him they paid tribute. The king assisted them in obtaining slaves and cheap cattle from Cahone, some thirty-five or forty miles inland from the Gambia river, in the vicinity of the Barra country. The English could not compete with the French, being few in number, and their goods inferior.

Albreda in point of salubrity possesses but little advantage over Bathurst, the latter being surrounded by mangrove swamps, and the former by stagnant

pools, but which do not extend beyond the large village of Gilfré, from whence stretches a vast sandy plain with only here and there occasional trees. At Albreda the river is wide, and the shores are covered with thick vegetation.

The soil of all the Barra country, extending eighteen miles along the shore, is very fertile and covered with beautiful forests of *Caya senegalensis*, *E. guineensis*, from which palm oil is extracted, and used as an emollient against spasms, and *Pterocarpus erinocceus*, which, when scooped out, forms good canoes. The latter wood is of a red colour, and yields a powerful astringent. There is also the *Eriodendron anfractuosum*, next in size to the Boabab. It has a beautifully straight and soft trunk, from which the natives also make canoes, sometimes exceeding sixty-five feet in length and six feet wide. The timber being light the boat can be heavily loaded, and yet have a shallow draught, an important element for navigating African rivers and creeks. The only disadvantage of this wood is that, being soft and containing a large amount of sap, the tropical heat causes it to shrink rapidly and split in all directions. In this district fine fruit trees and medicinal plants also thrive.

In the fields good rice was grown abundantly, but at present its cultivation is neglected for some reason or other, and only a small quantity of rice is sown about June along the shores. An important reason for not continuously cultivating the ground is that, on breaking up the surface, swampy vapours are released, which have a deadly effect upon the people.

Consequently many African chiefs, in various low-lying localities, interdict the cultivation beyond a few years. The natives, however, show much ability in planting and cleaning the rice, and in the manufacture of very good starch, which finds a ready sale in the native and other markets. They also raise numerous short-horn cattle which, like all those bred in the swampy districts of Senegal, are small and of sickly appearance, supplying abundance of milk but of very poor quality. Cattle readily fatten in such localities, but these are far more suitable for pigs, which thrive well.

The Sosés, or more correctly Sousous (Mandingoes), who may be considered as the people of Barra, are very troublesome, in consequence of the French formerly paying tribute to them. This has had the effect of making them importunate beggars, and very difficult to deal with. They are a mixture of bad Bambara and Sarracolets. The original inhabitants of Barra were savages, but by the immigration of Mandingoes for many years, and having come under the instruction of marabouts, they are now Mahometans, and have learned to read and write. At the present day, they may be regarded as the most intelligent natives in that district. Their influence, like that of the European residents of Bathurst, has for many years gradually developed among their neighbours the Séréré a desire to improve their condition.

The Séréré tribe inhabiting the west coast extend to Cape Verde. They are wild bushmen professing

no religion, but have gradually imbibed a belief in the death of the soul, which has been a stepping-stone to higher thoughts. Being naturally hospitable, kind, and timid, they avoid all trade with their neighbours, and having no chiefs, subject themselves to a republican or tribal form of government, all their laws having a sound moral foundation. They are of an eminently peaceable disposition, and, with a marked absence of quarrels or disturbances, pass their lives quietly in round conical huts in small villages, gaining a subsistence by tillage and hunting. This tribe is more eager than any other Africans to avail themselves of education, especially since they came in free contact with Christian churches in Bathurst. This had the result of bringing many to a serious consideration of the future destiny of man after death, and numbers of such enquirers are to be met with in the vicinity of the Bathurst churches. The speedy development of civilisation among these people, is much hindered by the untoward conflicts unfortunately always existing between their Christian and Mahometan neighbours.

CHAPTER XXV.

BINTAIN CREEK — SURROUNDING VILLAGES — BAINUNKAS' IDOL — PAGAN AND MAHOMETAN FUNERALS.

SOME distance from Albreda, on the left bank, is the Bintain creek, near which, in a thick shady wood, stands the village of Bintain. Most of the huts are built of straw, and only a few in European style, in imitation of the buildings of the former settlers, who established themselves on the left shore of the creek for trading purposes. Some hundred and fifty years ago, several rich Portuguese inhabited the shores of the Bintain creek, married native or mulatto women, and lived in large, well-built, and clean houses, shaded with trees. Gereges was their principal trading-station. The village then flourished, but has gradually decayed, until it fell into the same state as other African villages. All traces of the ten former factories, surrounded by high, thick walls, which served as enclosures for negroes during the

slave trade, are now swept away. Only slight indications of these stations now remain, and several majestic palm-trees in the rich fields of the district are the remnants of previous European factories; but the slave-trade still continues, and as in former ages the principal traffic is between November and May. The rainy season in Gambia is from June till October, when the natives are occupied in cultivating the soil, until the district is deeply inundated for about 115 miles, being 65 miles larger than the inundation of Senegal. During this time the chief trade carried on by the people is in wax.

Referring to the preceding observations on slavery, it may be added that a great reason why slavery cannot be stopped, is the preference of the natives to be subject to the orders of the chiefs and richer natives rather than to Europeans. The latter engage native labour only for short periods or on emergencies, after which the native, having worked a brief but the best time of the year, must either find other employment, live or starve as he can the rest of the year. This makes the native chary of taking service under a European master, and go to a native slaveholder, who is more humane in his general treatment, and does not regard a slave as a mere piece of human mechanism to be thrown aside when not wanted, as is the case among capricious, egotistic, and often unfeeling Europeans.

Gereges, some twenty miles up the creek, was reached in a single tide from Bintain. The shores up to this village are lined with thick mangroves,

and in several places infested by large numbers of water-snakes. At the turn of the tide, when the water becomes brackish, these snakes may be seen rushing in all directions towards fresh water. With the ebb they return to their haunts, where they climb bushes and trees, committing sad havoc among the numerous birds' nests, destroying the eggs and swallowing the young. The bereaved parent-birds flit from spray to spray, filling the air with their shrill and anxious cries, indicating horror at the unwelcome intruders.

The Feloups, dwelling on the shores of the creek, adhere, up to the present date, to their idolatry, or, rather, acknowledge no religion whatever. Due credit must be given to them for their honesty, kindness, and hospitality. They are far superior to the nearest bordering tribes of Bathurst, the Tancluor (Mahometans), the Sendabar, and the drunken Sonninkées on the right shore.

In reference to the character of the Gambia tribes, the worst of all are the Golovs, who in bands lurk in the vicinity of routes or rivers, to rob and possibly murder travellers. The further inland the more audacious these robbers become. Among all the neighbouring tribes, the Golovs have the reputation of being the most cruel and predatory race in the district. They usually call out to travellers, natives especially, "Go away, the earth is tired under you." The safest plan for avoiding these robbers and murderers, is to travel by night.

The small villages around Bintain creek are in-

habited by pagans, who collect palm wine, and engage, to a small extent, in planting rice in low-lying localities, as the whole of this district is subject to inundation. On the higher ground, and along the roads to larger villages, the people cultivate melons, pumpkins, and millet. In all the district on the right and left shores of the creek rich herbage grows, and the laborious and peaceful inhabitants raise fine cattle. Their home-life is more comfortable than in many other villages higher up the Gambia. In addition to cattle, they rear numerous fowls, and their stores are well-stocked with millet, rice, butter, and sour milk. Sheep, as in the Lower Senegal, are subject to and die from many diseases.

The plains surrounding the creek are thickly dotted with very high, grey-coloured hills of white ants. Here and there these hills cluster, like small towns, swarming with these industrious but devastating marauders of rice. Numbers of fine, shady trees, and the Lianas, twining round the trunks and interweaving in festoons among the branches swarming with harmless, flitting bats, add much to the beauty of the region. The country is thickly populated, and in a walk of six or seven hours westward from Gereges several separate one-family kraals, and villages enclosed by palisades of from six to nine feet, are passed.

These small, pleasant villages, like many others in Africa, are protected by a spiral, circumscribing, strong wall, of six or seven windings, the distance between which is about a fathom. At certain dis-

tances in these walls low and narrow doors are formed, to admit of the inhabitants passing in and out. The dwellings are collected in an open space in the centre of the last spiral turn. The people of all this district usually inhabit well-built houses, with grass-covered roofs. In the yard of the village enclosure each family house is again separated from the others by a similar wall, with an equally narrow passage. Villages of this kind are met with in a distance of from two to three miles, and the huts are furnished with clean mats spread over the floors, on which the visitors, seated on wooden-block stools, are regaled with pure, unadulterated, and pleasant beer, prepared from boiled fruit, called "*courburg*," without the help of hops.

The numerous deep minor creeks which intersect the country abound with crocodiles and fish, both affording a plentiful supply of food for the people. They train dogs to destroy the eggs of the ugly amphibian, but this system of destruction, although carried on for years, has had very little effect in diminishing the numbers of crocodiles. Before the decline of the trade in this district, when monkeys were mercilessly slaughtered for their skins, crocodiles overran the country. There being now no market for monkey-skins, the natives have ceased hunting monkeys. Consequently they have much increased in numbers; and, being of a naturally inquisitive and mischievous turn, among other amusements, help the trained dogs to destroy the eggs of crocodiles.

Communication by these numerous creeks, which greatly obstruct overland transit, facilitates the trade between different villages and native towns where small markets are usually held. All these creeks extend from a large marsh, the seat of a formerly existing lake, but now almost entirely overgrown with reeds and grass.

An easy excursion of two days in the Bintain district would enable a traveller to collect some valuable information, not only about the African tribes, but, in observing their customs and manners, to form a tolerably clear conception of the primitive state of Europe. No book could give so well-defined an idea of human life in past ages as mixing with people who are more animal than man-like.

On the Bintain creek dwell the Bainunkas, their neighbours being the Djolas, who are of a warlike disposition and inhabit the right shore of the Gambia. Both these tribes are savage idolaters. The Bainunkas worship idols of stones covered with mud, ornamented with sticks and all sorts of finery in the shape of feathers and shells. A brief description of the manner in which an idol is erected by these ignorant people may be interesting.

Three men are chosen to go after sunset, in different directions, in search of three stones. Each stone must be found between two bushes, and during the night brought to the worship-place, where the bearers are not allowed to meet one another before the construction of the idol.

At daybreak the three stones are surrounded by

circles : first of very old men, second of very old women, thirdly of middle-aged men, then another of the same aged women, and so on in gradation down to children. The old men then smoke a sort of grass, and chant, "Ha-a, Ha-a, Ha-hoo," while the assemblage clap hands. This continues until the chief appears on the scene, followed by his principal wife, a band of discordant music, and the three stone-searchers carried on the shoulders of three strong men. The circles then open a passage, through which the procession passes to the spot on which the idol is to be built. Each stone-searcher then points out his stone. The largest one is retained, and the other two taken back to their former places, but their bearers are first subjected to the indignity of being covered with mud and spat upon by the assembly.

The selected stone is then raised by two men, and the procession, after passing through the gap already made in the circles, returns to the former spot, where the chosen stone is duly replaced. A ditch is next dug round it and filled with water. The stone is then covered with mud in the form of a cone, and sticks about seven inches long, feathers, mussel-shells, and other fantastic adornments are stuck into it. Music plays during the whole of the ceremony until a fowl, anointed with palm oil, is placed on the top of the idol. All these mystic rites performed, the congregation kneel and pray with uplifted arms, turn head-over-heels, jump up, clap their hands, and alternately cry and sing. At the close of the ceremonies a bullock is killed, its blood smeared upon

the idol, and the bones placed round about it. The flesh is then cooked, part of it eaten, and the remaining portion left beside the idol until next day. After the lapse of three days the fowl is divided into small pieces, distributed amongst the old men, and the idol then remains untouched for a fortnight. During the whole of this time the parade dress of these poor heathens while engaged in their religious services consists only of a few tattered rags, treasured up from fathers to sons, and worn only on such occasions. Their hours of worship are 8 A.M., noon, and 4 P.M.

These ceremonies may appear unmeaning, but the worshippers, no doubt, attach deep symbolic importance to them. The idea expressed by the building of the idol and its adornments is, that heavy stone signifies solid religion, which nothing can destroy. Covering with mud indicates religion guarded by tender feelings. The sticks stuck in the mud symbolise steadfastness in devotion. The shells used, being invariably heart-shaped, are intended to convey the idea that religion should be deeply seated in the heart. The feathers, no doubt, indicate that religion should be accompanied by happiness and light spirits. The secret search for the stones in the night among bushes, conveys the idea of all good deeds being done without ostentation. The gradation of age in the circles round the idol, clearly manifests the reverence paid to age among these benighted savages, and indeed throughout the whole of Africa. Blood poured on the idol means purification, blood being considered by Africans the emblem of purity. Even



"They poured blood upon their idol, and feasted and danced night and day"



among Mahometans, when offering hospitality, many of them will kill a fowl and sprinkle a portion of its blood upon the feet of the guest, as a pledge of the fidelity and purity of the host. Oil, used by the pagans in their religious services, is regarded with the same sentiments as those which prevail among Christians, who have adopted the use of sacred oil from paganism.

The funeral ceremonies of the Bainunkas differ from those of the Golovs and other neighbouring tribes. Among the latter these ceremonies continue for seven, eight, or fourteen days, while the former protract their mourning for forty days, in many ways resembling the funeral observances of the Greek Church. The cry over the corpse, "Why did you die?" is a very customary exclamation among various Europeans. A remarkable coincidence between these savages and civilized Europe, is the custom of veiling looking-glasses when a death occurs in a family.

The Bainunkas lay the corpse on the ground inside the hut of the departed, where it remains from two to three days, surrounded by people uttering loud cries. The corpse is then enveloped in four or five rag wrappings, and conveyed by relatives to the burial place. The grave is usually three feet deep, and at one side of the bottom a cavity is scooped out long and large enough to receive the body, which is placed there at sunset. The cavity is then closed with branches and rough wooden planks, secured by stakes, and the perpendicular hole is filled up with earth, which does not come in contact with the

body. This mode of sepulture is adopted to prevent wild beasts digging out and devouring the corpse. About 8 o'clock every succeeding morning, until the funeral rites have been fulfilled, relatives and friends visit the grave and continue their lamentations. Most pagans, especially women, have a great liking for beads and shells. These are largely used not only for personal decoration, but also for making head-coverings for departed relatives as marks of affection.

The laborious cultivators, the Séréré, bury their dead outside the village in huts similar to those that the living inhabit. The sepulchral huts are of a conical form, built of interwoven branches, and hermetically plastered with a thick coating of clay. To distinguish the sexes of the departed, on the top of those huts in which females are deposited a mortar as an emblem of female industry, is placed, and in the case of males a bow and arrows.

The funeral custom of the Caruni is to place the dead in a sitting posture in the hut, and to cover all the body except the head with cloth. On completion of the ceremony of wrapping, long-continued lamentations and crying proceed from men sitting round the dead, until their grief is vented. The corpse is then laid on the floor, all the property of the deceased is brought before it, and pathetic questions follow:—"What made you die? Look at them! Look at this; look at that" (pointing to the people and various objects). "Are you not satisfied with them and your life?" After this the body is

placed in the grave in a standing position and covered with earth. The top of the grave is heaped up about two feet high, and surrounded with sharp-pointed sticks to keep off wild beasts. All the property is divided among the relatives in a very equitable manner, and the firing of guns then commences. Any stranger present not joining in their wailings and the firing, is considered an enemy, and neither received in company nor well treated. The firing and the crying are continued for six or more days. During their mourning they feast upon their principal and usual food, rice and dried fish, in addition to which a bullock is always killed.

The corpse of a Mahometan in Gambia is surrounded by a screen of cloth held by four men, inside which a sanctimonious marabout secretes himself, and holds a whispered monologue with the departed, the relatives observing the most profound silence. The marabout places the weapons of the dead man, a pot of couscous, and a pot of water at the head of the corpse as a provision for a whole year, the time presumed to be occupied by the journey to paradise. The deep philosophical lesson given by the marabout, unfortunately to a defunct believer, if given during life would probably have saved the deceased from an early death, and prevented his falling into many errors. The good man has perhaps eaten too much during his earthly life, and now for want of food or breath he is dead. The marabout tells him, "God gave you a certain quantity of food for your life, you have eaten too much, your food is gone, and God

will give you no more." The departed is then told, *sotto voce*, that the food placed at his head is to save him from starvation, and if wise he will eat less than he did on earth. The screen is then removed, and the relatives all join in a horrible howling chorus. When the ears of the reverend marabout are tired of the discordant sounds, a signal for drum-beating is given, upon which the cries cease, and the mourners return to their village to eat, drink, and dance.

If during the mourning no other death occurs, it is regarded as a good augury. But should a boy happen to die, his juvenile friends arm themselves with cutlasses, run about the streets, and engage in fencing contests as a preventive of further youthful deaths.

The pouring of the blood of an ox over a Mahometan grave is not observed so strictly in Gambia as it is amongst the Mahometans of Senegal. Alms are liberally given to the poor in both regions, and a widow is subject to the same restrictions. She must avoid men during the week of mourning, have her hair plaited by her sister-in-law directly after the death of the husband, and not leave the hut until this is done. The widow, when "purified" after the mourning, has her hair unplaited, and is then allowed to marry the eldest brother of her late husband.

The peaceful cultivators, the Sonninkées, of whom a description has been already given in Chapter IX., have among them a few nominal Mahometans who scarcely observe the customary rites of that faith, and, like the rest of their tribe, are distinguished

from the orthodox shaven-headed Mahometan oppressors by allowing their hair to grow. Their funeral ceremonies differ from those of the Bainunkas by placing the corpse in a grave three feet deep, on branches closely laid crosswise, with the head southward, and the chest to the east. The body is then covered with calico or native cloth, according to the wealth of the relatives. These are the most striking of the native funeral observances.

It is a somewhat remarkable fact that in some cases after death the corpses of African natives change to a lighter or a darker shade than in life, and a similar change occurs to the living from strong excitement or fright.

CHAPTER XXVI.

GAMBIA NAVIGATION—HIPPOPOTAMUS AFFECTION—BEYOND
ELEPHANT ISLAND—BEYOND KASAN—A LEOPARD LEGEND.

THE sailing-boat bound for Fatatenda soon arrived at Bintain, and the journey up the Gambia was continued much in the same way as that up the Senegal. During the rainy season the Gambia flows more swiftly than the Senegal, and being deeper is navigable by large vessels at high water from July to September, and at this time trade is carried on with the Mandingoes, who come from great distances. The navigation could formerly be easily conducted by large vessels for some 150 miles, and vessels of 140 to 160 tons could sail up to Baraconda in the dry season from December to July; but for some years past the river has diminished in its upper part in depth, and several banks have been formed which impede the passage. The depth of water greatly increases in the rainy season, but that advantage is counterbalanced by the strong current, and

the course being very winding, it is as difficult as the Falémé river for sailing.

Although the Gambia is in many respects a counterpart of the Senegal from the vegetation on its banks and other similarities, yet there is a great contrast in their characters. The Senegal is favourable for navigation during the rains, when vessels of a certain draught can proceed to Galam; while the Gambia is more easily navigated during the dry season. The general character of the scenery along the river may be shortly described as thick impenetrable jungle on both sides, impassable swamps, or muddy and slimy beach. The fall of rain at this part of the West Coast being very heavy, and the land more or less level, the swamps never become even partially dry, and constant noxious and pestilential exhalations in one part or other arise.

The shores of the Gambia river are much less densely populated than those of the Senegal. The few villages which dot the banks here and there consist merely of several huts inhabited by poor people. The names of these places, scattered along a great distance, are the following: Bintain on the left, Sica on the right shore, further on Kasera on the left shore, Jurunkee on the right, Tambana on the left. Sailing further up the river, Kianmandina is on the right bank, Swaraicunda on the left, Oulomesen on the right, Tancular on the left, Salikonjeba on the right, Jamali on the left, and Jaliblom on the right. If but little attention is paid to the river scenery during the day, most of these places, being scarcely

noticeable, may easily be passed by, and the few small and low straw huts be mistaken for bushes. But on the approach of nightfall, high perpendicular columns of smoke rising into the air will, at a good distance, indicate the place inhabited by human beings, who, for years and years, have been in intercourse with Europeans and frequent the city of Bathurst.

Forty-five miles from Bathurst the shores of the river are sandy and free from obstruction, admitting of easy and safe landing. Here two small Mahometan villages are situated on the left shore. Further on the banks are unapproachable by reason of great numbers of large roots rising from the deep water to five or six feet above the surface. These same obstructions continue for nearly thirty miles, until a solitary and poor village, of some ten houses, close to the river's edge is reached. The stream at this part is enlivened by large flocks of pelicans and other water-fowl, actively engaged in securing their finny prey.

Beyond this little village the width of the river decreases to about a mile with a depth of from five to seven fathoms, and a sandy bank from the left shore extends for about thirty fathoms into the stream, threatening at some period to develop into an effectual barrier to navigation. The river becomes more shallow on the left shore, and the gently sloping banks of sand offer every facility to get a boat to the beach, enabling travellers to camp on firm ground, instead of passing the night in the boat on the river, or, as in other places, close to swampy marshes.

HIPPOPOTAMUS AFFECTION.

On the way two large single masted-European cutters were passed, with which the usual nautical salutations and a few words of conversation were exchanged. They represented the two competing nations, the English and French. After passing them, the only craft seen on the river were a few native boats crossing from one bank to the other, until reaching Elephant island, distant about ninety-six miles from the mouth of the river.

At the southern point of Elephant island an amusing scene was presented by a happy pair of hippopotami caressing their interesting offspring. The juvenile hippopotamus was about the size of a large sheep, and at so early a period of its development was somewhat weak on its pins. Its legs had sunk into the swamp at the edge of the river, and Pa' hippopotamus was making paternal efforts with his huge head and muzzle to assist his heir or heiress (whichever it might be) out of the difficulty, while Ma' hippopotamus trundled slowly towards the land, now and then turning to see if the young one was following. Assisted by paternal snout-pushings, this way and that, the juvenile was at last got into motion and followed the dam, who stopped to allow her young one to imbibe a plentiful draught of maternal sustenance.

The parental solicitude of the two huge mammals was even tender, the male keeping a watchful lookout to prevent any interference with the dam and her little one. On observing the approach of the boat he assumed a defiant attitude, placed himself in front

of his mate, stretched wide his capacious jaws and indicated his readiness to charge down upon the boat, which for safety's sake gave him a wide berth by steering close to the opposite shore to avoid his fatherly vengeance. For some time his dull eyes watched the boat; the dam meanwhile continued her assistance to accelerate the progress of her young to the water by pushing and nudging it with her head, now this way, now that, and occasionally with a sort of butt hastening its movements. Coming to still softer mud, the legs of the baby hippopotamus became so deeply sunk that its own strength was unavailing. The female opened her huge mouth and with it gently lifted the stuck-fast from the mud, then repeated her knocks and nudges, sideways and forwards, until maternal patience was exhausted. Again opening her mouth wide, she took the young one between her ponderous jaws, raised her head, and with an easy jerk chucked it far into the water, where it fell with a heavy splash.

This feat accomplished, the dam plunged after her infant, disappeared under the water, and presently rose again, bearing her precious progeny upon her broad capacious back, and quietly swam away. The loving father manifested his delight at his wife's successful efforts by following her with a heavy splash into the stream, and on rising to the surface puffed water from his mouth and nostrils with snorts like a steam engine.

The boat had just left the island behind as the sun rapidly sank below the horizon, and the first

half of the moon appeared overhead, illuminating the river in a most fantastic manner. This induced the crew to continue the journey in the cool air, every object being clearly visible. It was not until a late hour that a safe landing could be effected on the river-bank, where around a cheerful fire the tired crew fell asleep, trusting for safety to the watchful dog. Warm air with occasionally the cool light wind of April afforded a welcome relief from the moist and oppressive heat of the day, 110° F. The temperature decreased gradually, and at 7 o'clock in the morning it was only 73° F., which caused the crew to shiver. The day temperature towards the end of April was hardly bearable, although only rising to 106° F. in shade. The immense volume of hot vapour caused a feeling of greater lassitude than on the Senegal in December at a higher temperature.

Beyond Elephant island the river is very deep but narrow. Further on it widens to about 200 fathoms, with a depth of from twelve to thirteen fathoms, islands become more frequent, and the depth varies from four to ten fathoms. The same swampy banks still continue with here and there little villages occupied by the Vaslunka tribe, a well-developed and thoroughly black people. Their neighbours the Djolovs are also jet black, the Foulahs of a dark brown and distinguished by having hair four inches long, that of the other tribes being short.

About eighty or ninety miles up the river, as far as the tide flows, the water is generally green and salt; but not so pestilent as beyond that distance,

where the river becomes turbid, of a grey colour, though the depth is not less than four fathoms. The fresh water in the dry season reaches Damasensi, beyond the Elephant island, but during the rains the fresh water flows as far as Segar point, about thirty miles only from the coast. The strong fresh current prevents the salt water flowing beyond this point; the salt water being heavier remains as a distinct current over which the fresh water flows to the sea.

At the distance of ninety miles the monotonous character of the river scenery changes. Palm trees are more frequent, thick papyrus and other vegetation grows luxuriantly; while from the coast up to this distance nothing but jungle, with a very few palms, are to be seen.

On the right shore, beyond the ninety miles, canes grow to a great height in the swamps, and in one place three little hillocks, from twenty to forty feet high, run in the form of a wall for a short distance. At the foot of these hillocks large swamps covered with high trees extend for five miles, clearly indicating the former existence of a large lake. An almost incredible number of water-fowl haunt this locality, intersected by narrow channels passable for little boats. The small islands so formed are covered with bushes, above which tall and straight palms raise their large and verdant foliage.

Beyond these swamps the river divides into two branches, forming a large island, indicating the continuation of the same lake or former ocean. This island is also covered with impenetrable jungle. Here,

at a distance of about 105 miles from the coast, the swamps extend far beyond the horizon, and are the seat of the most noxious vapours. The air having a strong sour smell, through the immense quantity of putrefying animal and vegetable matter, is hardly bearable. From this spot elevations from three to four miles long are visible. These are equal in height to those already mentioned, and bear the marks of the intervening soil having been washed away by the current. The bed of the river, from Moto point to Devil's Point, consists of red sand and mud. From Devil's point or Balingo the river-bed is covered with thick mud, and a still thicker coating of mud covers the river-bed up to Kasan hillock.

On the right shore, where these elevations rise, most luxuriant palm-trees, in ranges as if regularly planted, spread their graceful heads over the vast swamp reaching to the feet of these elevations. The left shore presents a different character; a level swamp covered with thick bush, behind which curved palm-trees are scattered in disorder, and form the haunts of storks and other aquatic waders.

The same kind of scenery is presented for some fifteen miles further up until a solitary little rocky hillock, known as Kasan, is passed. The hillock is about five fathoms high, almost perpendicular on one side, bearing deep marks of the different heights of the water which had flowed past it. This region is selected as a home by the monkeys, who, in great numbers, sit among the trees inquisitively watching all that comes under their eyes. Numerous birds

of every conceivable plumage adorn the branches, but so lethargic as to allow themselves to be approached within thirty feet. The same kind of scenery extends for several miles beyond Kasan. Near Baboon Island the depth of the river diminishes to about two fathoms and a half, and continues to be the same up to Balajeli, where the river-bed is again covered with mud, and the depth diminishes to one fathom and a half, increasing to five fathoms near Sapo Island, from whence to Macarthy's Island the depth remains the same. The mud covering the river-bed from two to three feet up to Baboon Island, then changes to grey clay, intermixed with decayed leaves, and the water becomes of a whitish clayey colour, but soft to drink. The trees on the shore appear as if pruned by the shears of a skilful gardener, and with all its richness of animal life the district represents a vast and wonderful zoological garden. With all the luxury, variety, and mass of tropical vegetation, very few trees exceed the diameter of seven inches. Those of twelve inches are scarce, and not one was seen exceeding fifteen inches.

Among the bushes native canoes were here and there hidden, or paddled by a couple of fishermen or hunters. Most of the inhabitants of this district live by hunting. A native trader in a canoe heavily loaded with goods passed on his way down the stream. Travelling on the river being slow and tedious, the natives are compelled to load their frail craft so heavily as to bring them down to about an inch above the surface of the water. The boats are thus easily

swamped, capsized, and the boatmen often snapped up by lurking crocodiles. The river basin, especially between the 130 and 140 miles from the coast, seems to be the chosen home for these amphibians, which find the flat and clean sand-banks a comfortable resting-place after their breakfast. Almost every hundred yards one or two of the brutes were seen dozing before noon. The hippopotami seem to dwell in friendly terms with these hideous monsters.

In the woods of this district buffaloes abound, and occasionally come to the shallows to quench their thirst. Soon after sunset the loud roars of a few lions and numerous leopards were heard in a discordant chorus throughout the night. Near the haunts of these savage animals a little village is situated on the river-bank. Neither fires nor the courage of the brave hunters inhabiting it can drive the numerous beasts away. The news of natives or cattle being attacked or mangled by beasts is regarded as a matter of course in this region. The hunter's life is difficult and dangerous, and the endeavour to gain a shilling, or, as a very high price, two shillings for a good leopard-skin, has cost many a brave man his life.

Various stories and traditions are related by these villagers about wild beasts, leopards especially, which, like wolves, make certain places their haunts from year to year. Many natives consider water touched by the whiskers of a leopard as poisoned, and will not drink from the stream below the point where the animal quenched its thirst.

One of the legends ran as follows:—A great

hunter in these woods, with his bow and arrows, inspired the beasts with such terror that they all fled or fell powerless before him. For a long time the animals consulted together to devise measures for the hunter's destruction. Among the leopards one was a spy, which informed the hunter of their intentions. The latter, fearing their spiteful vengeance, strictly cautioned his wife never to open the door of their hut during his absence, unless in reply to a given pass-word. The wife implored him not to stay late in the woods; but he knowing some magic words to appease wild animals turned a deaf ear to her entreaties. A treacherous snake sent by the beasts lurked near the hut and heard the pass-word. She revealed the secret to the leopards, by means of which they could call the woman out and carry her off in revenge for her husband's slaughter of their friends. The leopards made several trials to tempt the woman out, but she always detected the deception.

Everytime the husband returned home he brought in his belt whiskers of leopards, and placed them in a particular corner of the hut. The more whiskers he carried home, the greater was the fear of the wild animals, and the more of them he killed. One night on returning home he found the hut surrounded by leopards, which intreated him for pity sake to return their whiskers; but he killed them all, none having the power to run away. The hunter then called out for the spy leopard, and gave to it an order to tell all other animals not to poison the river which flowed near his hut. After this caution,

when the leopards came there to drink, they took care not to wet their whiskers. Whenever one accidentally did so and shook off the water in the direction of the hut, he was immediately devoured by the others. The hunter, observing the punishment the animals inflicted upon one another for poisoning the river, spared their lives until, forgetting his caution, they again became malicious and revengeful. He then determined to exterminate them, came to the river's edge, uttered his magic words, and shot three arrows in the air, upon which all the leopards came towards him. In their presence he cast a great part of his store of whiskers into the river. This made all the animals run away in a great fright, and any that returned and drank the poisoned water died immediately, except those who were wise enough to wipe their whiskers dry with their paws.

One day the leopards caught a bird with a long neck and thin legs, and ordered it to take the remainder of the whiskers away from the hunter's hut. The bird then appealed to its flock, and all combined during the night, stole away the remainder of the whiskers, and brought them to the leopards, who, after burying the whiskers deep in the earth, became powerful, went to the hunter's wife in his absence and carried her off. When the husband returned home and found his wife was missing, his sorrow became so deep that he fell asleep for many days, and during this time pondered the question how to revenge her loss. In his dream a large animal with long wings flapped above him, and told him

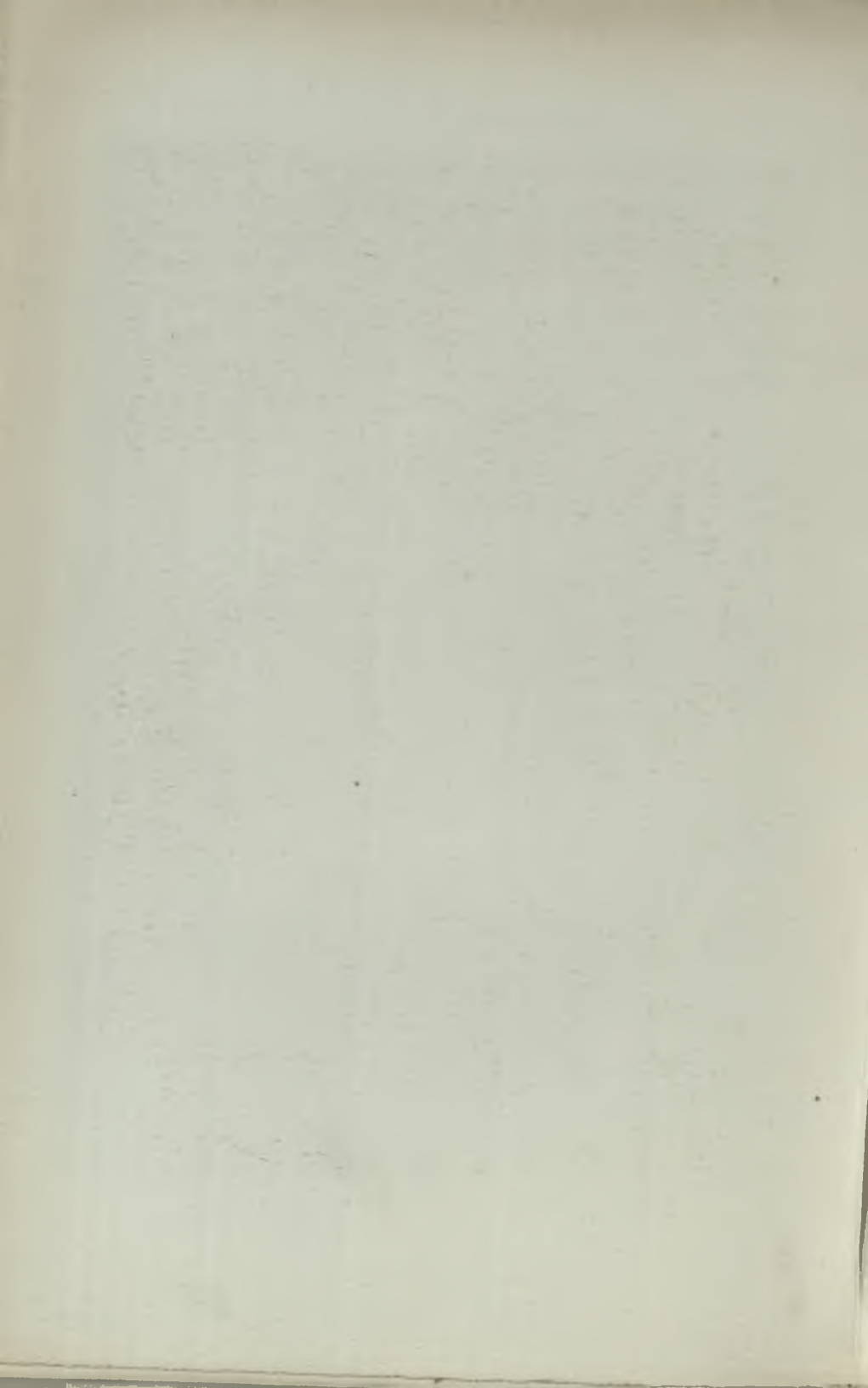
to take the bile of seven leopards and smear his body with it, but to avoid encountering any animal on his way, otherwise he would not find his wife. The winged animal directed him where to find a certain root which must be always kept in his hand, after his body was smeared with bile. The hunter followed this direction, but on returning home tired with searching for the root, he fell asleep. The long-winged animal again appeared and urged him to save his wife, who would otherwise, by order of the king of the animals, soon take the form of a winged creature and for ever fly about, sit on trees, and continually call for her husband, who would hear her voice, but never see her more.

The hunter, on waking from this startling dream, rushed out of the hut, forgetting to take the magic root. The leopards, smelling their bile upon him, overpowered and killed him, and the lost wife was immediately transformed into a winged animal. Many other similar animals, hearing her bewail her fate, joined in her lamentations, and for many years suspended themselves by their legs from the branches overhanging the creek near the village in the neighbourhood of the hunter's hut. There they cry from morning to night, in order that the inhabitants may always keep in memory and deplore the great hunter, since whose death wild beasts have largely increased and through their ravages have become the terror of the people in this region.

This tradition, which circulates among the natives, causes the hunters whenever they kill a



“They assembled every evening to bewail the departed hunter.”



leopard, to bury its poisonous whiskers, the bile, and the tip of the tail deep in the ground. This accounts for leopard-skins being seldom sold in the markets with the tips on their tails. Many hunters also entertain the belief that when they kill a leopard and eat its flesh (which is not of an unpleasant taste), they become strong and easily destroy these animals.

It is also very possible that this tradition is one of the reasons why many a native will, on no condition, either kill or even catch a bat, and severely punish any boys who destroy these creatures, as narrated in the instance at Bathurst, under the palaver tree. The chirping bats which swarm in the arcade over a little creek in the vicinity of the village near Baboon Island, are supposed to be the long-winged animals into one of which the loving wife of the hunter was metamorphosed, and the cries of the bats are the wailings of herself and her friends.

CHAPTER XXVII.

MACARTHY'S ISLAND—CATTLE WITHOUT HEAD—BARAGALLY
 —“COME AND TAKE IT”—ABSENCE OF PROTECTION—
 MONKEY PARLIAMENT.

THE river scenery between Baboon island, Cadjay, and Macarthy's island is very similar to that which has already been described, but the last place, which may be reached in two days by the steamer from Bathurst, is worthy of a little more detail. The swamp which surrounds this island is more pestilential than that of Bathurst, and rapidly undermines the health of those exposed to its enervating influence. The island literally teems with almost everything to make life miserable, and is, therefore, unhealthy, except for the land-crabs which crawl out from a million holes and dot the muddy shores, and frogs splashing here and there or leaping on the ground. Snakes glide noiselessly about, entering even the dwelling-places of the inhabitants, whose precious sleep is frequently disturbed by the loud shrill chirps of millions of crickets and the bites of swarms of mosquitoes.

On Macarthy's island are two European factories. The government agent of the island lives in the commandant's quarters, a separate building from these factories, and a short distance from the official residence of the surgeon, whose duties in such a locality are most onerous. The sickly appearance of the garrison and most of the inhabitants, among whom are a few hospitable mulatto traders, show most unmistakably the unhealthy conditions by which they are surrounded. The moisture from the swamp hangs over the island like a dense London fog, and in the evening, although the thermometer may be at 80° Fahrenheit, the air still strikes chill and cold. The island, in short, is shrouded in an atmosphere of horrors. Dysentery, yellow jaundice, and affections of the respiratory organs attack the residents with grim impartiality, and Death seems always ready with his scythe to mow down old and young, black, white, or mulatto, not sparing even the comparatively robust.

Under such depressing circumstances the inhabitants, resorting to stimulants to drive away dismal thoughts and impart an artificial exhilaration, soon succumb to the evil influences surrounding them. From the absence of social intercourse among the settlers their lives are passed in comparative isolation, and their only mental diversions are the questionable enjoyments (?) of drinking brandy and playing at cards, or vacantly staring through the haze of the island. The liberated African slaves inhabiting the villages on the island might be expected to withstand

the enervating effects of the district, yet, like their lighter-coloured neighbours, they suffer in the same way, requiring constant treatment by the solitary surgeon, himself no less sickly. The Europeans, who have willingly taken up their quarters in this antipodes of Eldorado for the sake of increased emolument, have almost invariably been overtaken either by death or shattered health.

Macarthy, like Bathurst, must have been lighted upon haphazard, without the slightest care in selection as the site for a settlement. If but a little judicious examination and care had been exercised, a healthy district could have been chosen only a short distance off, possessing all the important features of Macarthy's island for trade and protection where Europeans might, if temperate, industrious, and thrifty, live comfortably and die happy. The nominally Christian natives pray more fervently than for any other blessing, the preservation of their health, and the Mahometan residents have a joking proverb: "If there is a hell at all, it must be Macarthy's island, and the men dying there are sure to go straight to paradise."

The island is under the control of an officer, who, as representative of the British Government, is responsible for the preservation of order and the protection of those under his charge, although having but limited power. The natives, having experienced the feebleness of Gambia officials, through their scarcely having even the right of free speech with the tribes without express authority from home,

have only a sentiment of contempt for the authorities, and laugh at their orders as being only empty words. All this is due to the instructions from England being generally long delayed, frequently useless, and destitute of local knowledge, and, according to the native uncivilised mind, impracticable and absurd. The effect of such native opinion is that experienced officials are regarded by the people simply as common servants, and, to use a native expression, "Cattle without head."

The following well-known story will prove the light estimation in which the natives hold the colonial authorities. Sixteen miles from Macarthy's island, up the Gambia, is Baragally, a native town about twenty minutes' walk from the shore, surrounded by a thick mud wall and a strong stockade. The inhabitants of this place at the end of March, 1876, arrested two British subjects, one of whom they called "long" and the other "short," in a canoe belonging to one of the traders of Macarthy's island. They were put in irons, and, as alleged, flogged, and threatened to be sold into slavery, for having forcibly attempted to carry off a slave girl belonging to Baragally, who was said to be the sister of the wife of one of them. This girl had been allowed to visit her friends in Macarthy's island, and consequently had a certain amount of liberty and good treatment.

The Government agent, on hearing the facts, proceeded to the spot and tried to get the captives released. His orders were disregarded, and he himself

was ill-treated by the people, who demanded for the short fellow fifty-five dollars, and for the long one sixty-six ; threatening to sell them in a fortnight, if the ransom were not paid. The natives usually treat all white traders with respect, and there is no reason to suppose they had any intention to treat the Government agent with personal contempt because of his being a white man, but simply because of his powerlessness as an authority.

The Governor at Bathurst, on receiving a report about these disorders, immediately proceeded up the river, that is, immediately after the lapse of all the time necessary for the news to come down the river to Bathurst and to prepare the steamer for the two days' passage up to Baragally.

When the Governor arrived on board the colonial steamer " St. Mary " at Baragally and went on shore, five of his constables were carried off prisoners before his very eyes. After a while they were restored to the Governor, but no threats could force the natives to release the first two captives. During this episode an agent of a merchant at Bathurst was present. The Governor, desirous of saving the goods of the former, offered to take them on board the steamer, to convey them to any place the agent wished. This was at first readily agreed to, but when the soldiers were captured, the agent resolved to let his goods remain where they were, to show his confidence in the people, as he well understood their policy, relied upon their hospitality, and that by adopting this course he would retain their friendship.

On the Governor's departure to Bathurst for reinforcements the "hostile natives," without delay, sent a mounted messenger from Baddiboo to Bathurst, to discover what the terrible threatened force was to be. When the messenger returned to his tribe, and informed them that a force of thirty-seven policemen was coming, the tribe were so "horrified" that they incontinently released the two captives.

This affair, however, resulted in the Alcada's condemnation to a fine of 300 dollars for the disturbances, and to collect this sum two months' grace were allowed. The natives were very thankful for this consideration, and promised to do their best to pay the fine. When the days of grace expired the administrator took a pleasant trip by the steamer to Baragally, in the sanguine hope of receiving the money. The natives, however, acting upon the Roman "*Come and take it,*" received him courteously, but, alas! he found a numerous force surrounding the chief. The latter, instead of paying the fine, deplored his condition and the distress of the country, beseeching the administrator to be philanthropic enough to assist the tribe with "ten pounds to buy rice for the famishing people" (!) This modest request was hard-heartedly refused, but the adroit pretext was merely urged for the pretended postponement of the fine until the harvest. When the chief found the Governor still insisted on payment of the fine, he pointed to the assembled force, reminding him that his life was in their hands; they were not afraid of him, and he need not expect

the fine would be paid. The Governor with his guard, in the face of overwhelming numbers, adopted the sensible course of beating a retreat, with as much dignity as could be assumed, and thereby avoided the sacrifice of his own and of the soldiers' lives, a fate which had befallen some of his predecessors in Africa.

After such displays of utter want of power there can be no wonder that the Colonial authorities are only laughed at by most of the natives, and that the Gambia settlement has failed to make any substantial progress. Much more might be said on this subject, but enough light has been thrown upon it to enable the reader to form his own conclusions.

The traders sailing up and down the Gambia are exposed to the danger and fear of attacks by robbers, especially beyond Macarthy's island. Even within British limits property is not safe. Places like Ki Hi (where goods in transit to a factory belonging to a firm at Bathurst were plundered), Yanimaroo and Cower, are not the only localities on the river noted for robberies. Such may be also perpetrated upon British traders at many other points by audacious thieves like the well-known Fan-Yama. This is mainly owing to the absence of protection on the part of the authorities. The risks to which the Gambia traders are exposed are much greater than those on the Senegal, where the French succeed well in protecting their own traders throughout all the district. The latter are thereby encouraged to push on the trade, while the English are obliged to

restrict their operations, and thus allow their commercial interests to go into the hands of French competitors.

There are few places of interest which do not bear great similarity to the descriptions already given, on both the Senegal and Gambia. Beyond Macarthy's island the river becomes narrow and the vegetation sparse. A few miles ahead thick bush, further on verdant trees line the shores and frequently catch the sails of the passing boat. Among the vegetation are numbers of beautiful mahogany trees, especially near Deer Island, some thirty miles from Macarthy's. Further up the river there is a hillock called by the people Manidungabi, where, according to tradition, a spirit resides, whom the natives invariably salute on passing.

The river bed is composed of shells and red sand, succeeded by a deep coating of mud, as far as Countin, where the Gambia becomes very shallow. Further on it does not exceed two feet in depth for about three miles, where it again increases in depth and flows over a bed of red sand until Majombo-me is reached. There is little variation up to Mangrin (about 150 miles from Macarthy's), where a rock in the centre of the river is washed on both sides by water $2\frac{1}{2}$ fathoms deep. From here to Jabutenda and to Cantalicunda the depth of the river is about nine feet. Beyond the latter place, the river is only one fathom deep close to the bank, which is covered with thick bush.

“Majombo-me, or Monkey Hill,” about a mile in

length, is a sort of terraced hillock nearly round, about thirty-five feet high, and having six steps narrowing as they ascend. The hill is only a few yards from the rock, the intervening space being filled up with bushes. The clear channel at this spot is some twenty feet wide, the rest of the river being blocked up with rocky banks rising above the water. The depth in narrow places is only two feet, while in the channel proper it is from five to seven feet.

Upon this hill monkeys, called by the natives "Dombu" (dog-face), have for many years held their parliamentary sittings in ludicrous resemblance of many distinguished European assemblages. The monkeys usually meet soon after the heat of the day has subsided, and remain in solemn conclave until sunset, when, at a given signal, all retire.

On the lower steps the junior members of monkey parliament are gravely seated in expectation of their turn, probably by election, to take their places on the highest or treasury bench. Progressively, according to age, ability and eloquence, monkeys of various ages are arranged. The oldest simian, by virtue of seniority and his second age of childhood, perches high above all the rest, in the proud position of premier, directing the destinies of the four-handed nation. He, like his human prototype, is invested with supreme authority, and conducts the debates with dignity and decorum. The ordinary members, in baboon fashion, when their distinguished orators make clever intonations and gestures, express their monkey feelings and approbation with deep and

repeated sounds, "Heah! heah!" reminding the spectator very forcibly of the satisfaction of a pig grubbing in a pea-field.

Wonderful is the sympathetic influence of these sounds upon all the members assembled. Even those who sit on the other side of the hill, not knowing from which side the sounds emanate, whether the "ins" or "outs," re-echo sonorously "Heah, heah," smacking their tongues and fidgeting on their seats in token of approbation, while the venerable premier with an absent-minded look, titilating his person in various places, scrutinises the members on the lower benches and utters a cry of assent or dissent.

The odd spectacle of this august assembly is a most comical parody on the proceedings which sometimes take place not two thousand miles from Charing Cross. This hillock (Majombo-me) is well known, and when this monkey parliament is held, all men, white or black, passing by are obliged to proceed slowly and dance in front of the assemblage.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

FATATENDA—WOOLI PEOPLE—BARACONDA—THE LION AND
DOG FIGHT—THE MAGIC FLUTE—A SNAKE TEMPLE.

IN a region where means of communication are slow, a traveller or trader naturally avails himself of the first opportunity to reach his destination; consequently every tide and favourable wind was taken advantage of, and as few halts as possible were made beyond Majombo-me before reaching Fata-tenda. The villages inhabited by the Mandingoes, and the customs of the inhabitants above and below Majombo-me, are all of the same character. The Mandingoes throughout Senegambia are distinguished from other tribes by wearing long white shirts, and, being more warriors than cultivators, are armed with daggers and cutlasses. They, like Jews, associate on friendly terms, and assist each other if necessity arises. Many of them, as on the Senegal, are engaged in direct trading with other natives, and thereby monopolise the trade. The women, as compared with the men, are more industrious, and attend to all house-

hold duties, and the rearing of cattle and a few fowls. A donkey is attached to almost every domestic establishment, well treated and fed, but very few natives are rich enough to keep horses.

One simple style of building houses prevails throughout the Gambia region, and closely resembles that in all eastern countries. The houses are oblong with small windows, plastered outside with fine chopped straw, mixed with moistened clay and whitewashed. From a sanitary point of view these buildings are fairly good. To avoid the effects of damp, they are built on earthen embankments about four feet above the surface, according to the means of the builder, and surrounded by walls about eight feet high. Young trees are invariably planted round these houses when built in localities destitute of timber.

Fatatenda belongs to the Wooli, a people who have always been on friendly terms with the English, and to whom they ceded the place by treaties in 1829 with one hundred acres of land for ever, which they have never broken. A similar compact was made with the chief of Cantalicunda also in 1829.

At Fatatenda, as in all other villages in this river-district, the arrival of a European cutter is awaited by an assemblage on the shore. A favourable impression is produced upon villagers by the traveller carrying with him a strongly perfumed kerchief, and a present of "Caraban Idou" (news-carrier water) for the chief makes that official amiable. The women, with children on their backs secured by strips of rag, one after another come to smell the pockets contain-

ing the scented handkerchiefs, and express their pleasure by a smack of the tongue and a long-drawn "Ahr!" The best quality in the character of all these Mahometan people is the candid acknowledgment of their laziness, which they do not strive to overcome.

Like all Africans, the Fatatenda people have great faith in gris-gris, some of which are supposed to have the power of securing white men's love, and their honest dealing, by selling genuine and cheap goods, or buying produce from the natives at a fair price. Other charms are to prevent all evil effects arising from the white man's cupidity, injustice, and cruelty. What a bitter satire is conveyed by these fetishes upon civilisation, which arrogates to itself the noble qualities of humanitaria-philanthropinism!

From Fatatenda, the site of the last European factory, only a few boats proceed up the river to Cantalicunda. There is not much difficulty nor any great expense in joining one of these occasional boats belonging to petty traders, especially if returning from Fatatenda. The next station to Fatatenda is Prai, inhabited by the Saragolas, or Sarracolets, a mixture of Foulahs and Mandingoes. Then comes Kunjubili, Kusson, Yaboutenda, and Cantalicunda. The journey beyond Fatatenda is more pleasant than on the lower course of the river, the banks being more picturesque. While the left shore is bordered with beautiful green and enlivened by aquatic birds, the right bank is barren, elevated, and almost perpendicular.

The Foulahs were supposed to be unfriendly at the time of this journey. Their spirit of hostility was attributed to their king, Molak, and the chief, Fodycaba, was considered to be even more hostile than anyone else, but neither the one nor the other manifested any ill-will towards the party, and were just as hospitable as they were previously reputed to have been. The hostilities and disorders were greatly exaggerated, and existed purely among the people themselves without being extended to strangers.

At Cantalicunda, a place of equal importance in trade with Fatatenda, two Frenchmen trading in birds for the Paris feather-market were about to proceed to Baraconda for an excursion, and their invitation to join them was accepted.

On the way from Cantalicunda to Baraconda the traveller passes Koina (a large town), Banange, and Kongoboloto. Near the latter is the waterfall of Baraconda, which is caused by a huge rock, over which the current rushes at the rate of eight or nine knots an hour during the drought and twelve knots during the wet season, when the massive rock is covered; but the passage, though dangerous, is practicable. Beyond the rock up stream the water is always deep, and during the rains the natives in their canoes pass to the Senegal from Baraconda. The Gambia at such times joins with the Black and the White rivers, and thus forms an island called Baba Degou.

The journey to Baraconda is tedious and somewhat dangerous, the river abounding with crocodiles

and hippopotami. The latter are met with in herds of twenty or thirty at a time in the water or on the banks. Great precaution is requisite, on landing, not to go far from shore, the district being infested with lions and leopards.

Baraconda reminds the traveller of the waterfall of Felou. The sandy shores, with deep pools of rippleless fresh water, the shells and stones scattered about, and the gloomy aspects of the dark rocks, represent the same grave-like quietude and absence of active life, save for the numerous lizards of different sizes and species running about, or basking in the intense heat, their sparkling eyes gleaming like precious stones.

The inhabitants near the waterfall, although more wild and savage-looking than those on any other part of the Senegal and Gambia rivers, are harmless and inoffensive, but living, as they do, from childhood, on friendly terms with troops of monkeys, their manners are monkey-like, and their movements resemble those of gorillas. Elephants here are also numerous but tame, and revel in their resting-places free from the attacks of hunters from the interior.

Among these natives, a very few of the modest-minded adopt the fashion of wearing a narrow and very short apron formed of leaves, suspended from the hips. Salt being very scarce in this remote district, a pinch of it renders the gentle savage happy and ready to perform any service required. Instances have been known of gold, equal in value to a sovereign, being given for a tablespoonful of salt.

It must not, however, be imagined that a gold-



"A whole herd of wild dogs tore to pieces the king of the desert."

seeker would meet with large nuggets or cradles full of the precious dust. If a trader penetrated so far with salt to the value of about £20, he would probably have little difficulty in disposing of it in exchange for five times its worth in gold-dust. This, after deducting the cost of his journey, and making due allowance for the discomforts undergone, would not, however, leave him much profit.

Beyond Baraconda there is little to be seen except massive rugged rocks and sandy wastes. The most natural course for a weary traveller to adopt is to construct an improvised tent near the cascade, and rest in the shade, while the natives prepare a meal and amuse him with their monotonous music.

During such a brief rest in a comfortable hammock, inquisitive and talkative natives from the neighbouring village joined the party, and beguiled the time by an exciting tale of a fight which took place on the day previously, about two miles up the river. The combat was between a herd of wild dogs and a lion which they chased, the victory remaining with the former. On proceeding to the spot where this occurrence happened some of the remains, both of dogs and the lion, still strewed the ground. The natives discoursed eloquently on the details of the fight, and from their story the annexed picture has been drawn.

There being little of interest to detain the traveller at this spot, the return journey was commenced the same day. One of the feather-collectors remained at Cantalicunda, while the other accompanied the party

down the Gambia. Some distance below Majombo-me a halt was made close to the mouth of a creek running out of the river near a village inhabited by Mandingoes. The boat was left in charge of the villagers, and the guidance of a professional hunter and a couple of followers secured. During a few hours' walk from this place, along the creek, numerous birds of almost every variety, size, and plumage were seen, and incited the Frenchman to exercise his skill in procuring a good stock of ornaments for the fashionable ladies of Paris.

In a well-shaded place an unexpected buffalo showed his head for an instant only between the bushes. The animal having a keen scent and an ugly habit, when observed, of hiding in ambush, then suddenly charging in the rear, made the party very cautious. In this manner the brother of the hunter, a year previously, while hunting, was tossed in the air by one of these animals and trampled to death. The Mandingo, remembering the death of his brother, was most unwilling to go though the thicket, until the beast was either discovered again or killed. He was a good performer on a native flute, and proposed to call out the animal with it, which was willingly acceded to. He placed himself under a tree and played a tune, while the party remained on the watch; but as the buffalo did not show, the others insisted upon continuing the route.

“The buffalo is asleep,” said the hunter, “but my flute will call him out. I must kill him to revenge my brother's death.”

With long-drawn-out monotonous tones he led the way for full two hours, when suddenly, under a tree, the shining eyes of the buffalo reappeared. The beast's ears were pricked forward, evidently attracted by the music. Nothing indicated fury, and its tail hung motionless.

"Stop," said the Mandingo; "don't laugh at my flute. The buffalo belongs to us."

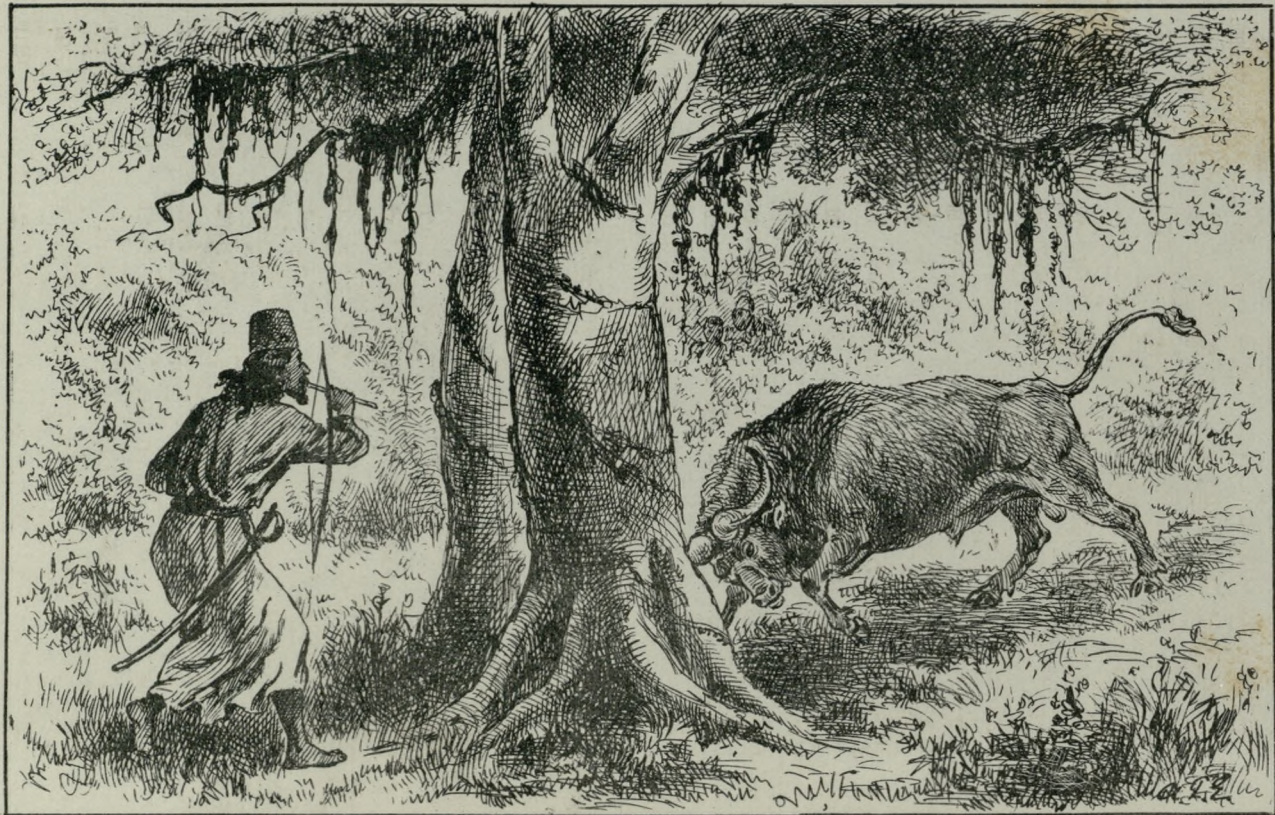
The party concealed themselves again. The bewitcher commenced with soft, long-drawn notes, broken at intervals. The soft tones were succeeded by shrill and loud ones, followed by trills and an imitative cry, resembling the whispering of the wind among the leaves. The animal raised its head and sniffed round in every direction with anxious looks, then slowly approached the place whence the sounds proceeded. In a few minutes it had come within a distance of forty yards, and though manifesting greater anxiety as it detected the presence of men, showed no inclination either to attack or to retire. The Mandingo suddenly came out of the bush, giving a very loud and harsh grating shout, at which the animal backed. The man renewed his peculiar music, which influenced the animal to such an extent that it remained motionless until the flutist lodged an arrow in its shoulder. The enraged buffalo, foaming at the mouth, with bloodshot eyes, and tail erect, furiously pawed the ground. The Mandingo had just time enough to hide himself behind the tree in front of which he had been standing, before the thick-skulled buffalo, in blind fury, charged the trunk. The shock only stunned

the brute. This gave the Mandingo an opportunity to discharge a second arrow into its side near the heart. He immediately followed up the attack with a fresh tune.

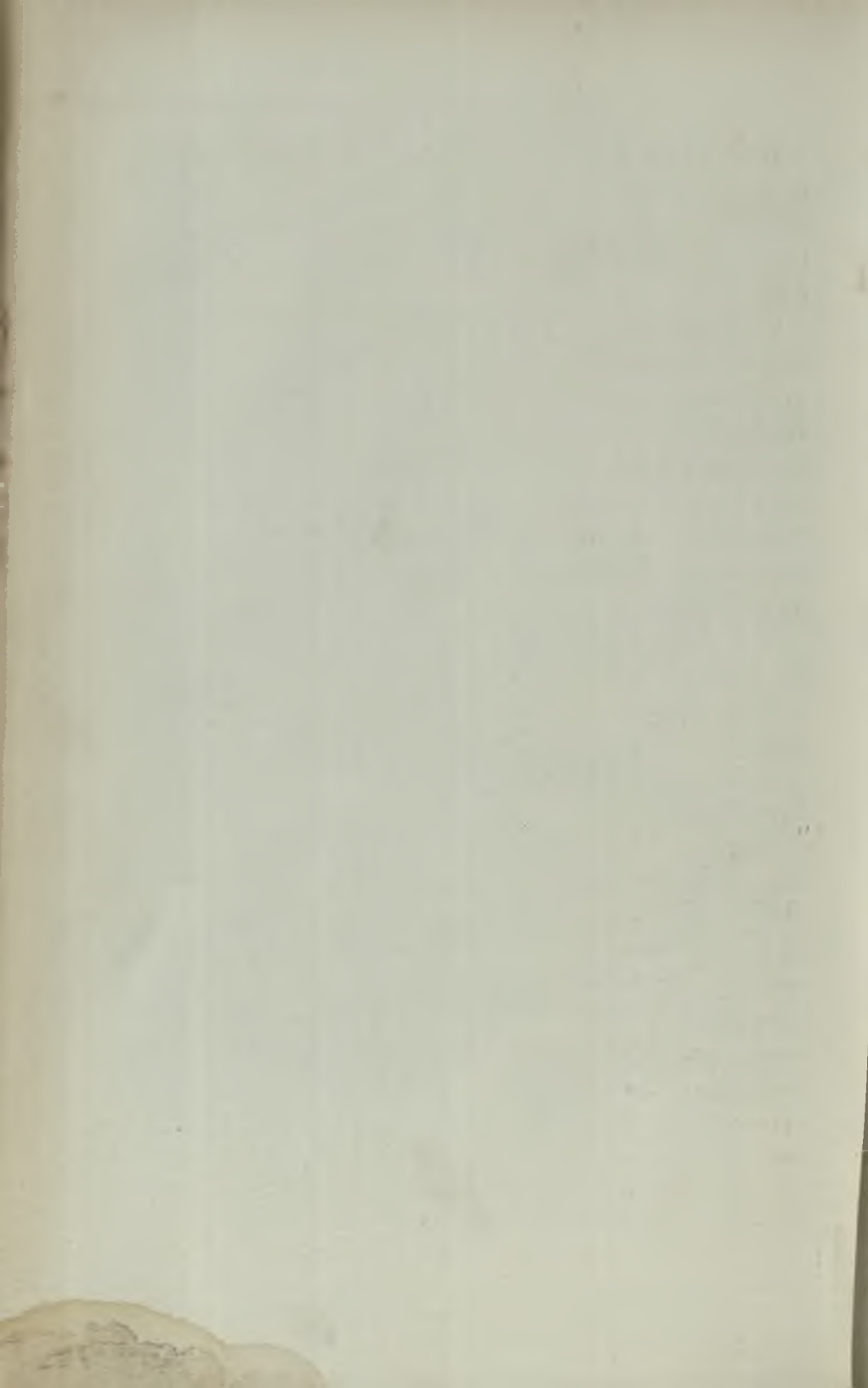
The buffalo looked distressfully in all directions as if seeking for rest, and appeared wondrously puzzled whether to attribute his headache and the smarting of his wounds, from which the blood streamed, either to the tree or to the magic flute. Not observing the sorcerer who had caused the mischief, it backed a few paces, and then, with redoubled force and fury, again charged the tree.

The Mandingo, who at first appeared the greatest coward of the party, now proved himself to be a thoroughly bold and courageous hunter—a “master of arts” in killing buffaloes.

This second charge against the tree still more stupified the animal. Before it had recovered its senses, a well aimed arrow from the steady hand of the hunter lodged deeply in the neck and severed the jugular vein, from which the blood spirted like a fountain. The beast's end was fast approaching. It swayed violently from side to side, thereby increasing the irritation of the wounds. After several furious shakes of the head, it gyrated round and round on the same spot, first quickly, then slower. The hunter now rushed at the animal and passed his sharp cutlass through its heart. A short stream of blood issued from the mouth of the buffalo, which moved a few paces, when a heavy stream of blood followed, and a moment later the beast lay prostrate on the ground.



"He played his magic flute, and the buffalo, blind with rage, charged the tree."



With a look of just pride, the Mandingo, showing his flute, exclaimed, "Now see what my flute can do!" In reality, the skill and courage he had displayed was worthy of the most celebrated matadore of Spain.

This hunting-feat put a stop to bird-catching. As the night rapidly approached, the carcass of the buffalo was hurriedly cut up, large pieces taken to the village, and what could not be carried off left for the prey of wild beasts. Some of the villagers, on learning the news, ran towards the place to secure the remains of the departed, while others busied themselves in preparing for the feast and dancing, which follow such exploits.

The succeeding days occupied in the journey down the river to Bathurst were partly given up to bird-hunting and the collection of remarkable insects and plants. During these rambles, a few miles before reaching Elephant Island, the boat was taken a short distance up a creek, and moored near a narrow path leading through the jungle towards lofty trees, overhanging a dry circular pond which they surrounded. The wide-spreading branches formed a canopy across the basin of the pond, thus darkening the spot. The regularity with which the trees grew would have induced one to suppose that they had been planted there; but it was nature's own work. Some of the lower branches extending over the pond had been denuded of their leaves and twigs, on which several skeletons of snakes and dead snakes were suspended. At the bottom of the pond eight fire-places were

arranged; these consisted each of two stones placed one opposite the other, between which coals still smoking plainly showed that the native snake-worship had just ceased. On the ashes lay the heads and ribs of snakes; in the centre of the basin, at the principal fire-place, a snake some five feet long was stretched across the stone. Opposite this, a large mill-stone, with a smaller one upon it, and a few grains of millet scattered about, together with a calabash of water placed near, indicated that their act of worship was celebrated by boiling and eating snakes. Here the guide explained the mode in which the snake-worship is conducted. At mid-day the snake-worshippers come to the place, followed by a fetish dressed in a long white shirt, with a leopard's skin on his back and his sleeves tucked up. He lights the central fire, and receives from one of his assistants the largest snake of the number that have been caught on the previous day, each worshipper having brought one. The latter and the rest of the worshippers, having each a leopard's tail attached to their hunger-belts, as the largest snake is handed over to the fetish, commence dancing and beating drums, with their bows and arrows in their hands. After the dance each native places his snake at the feet of the fetish, who kills it, and puts the head into the fire; after which process it is handed over to the owner, with the words, "Come snakes, come, be our friends, and charm our enemies." After some further ceremonies and dances the snakes are boiled or roasted, and the ceremony concludes with a feast.

This custom is carried on every day from the full moon to the last quarter.

No other incident of importance worthy of record occurred until Bathurst was reached, at which place the necessary arrangements were made for a further journey along the West Coast of Africa.



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Author's Route

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Dinguira

Govina

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W O

Monkey Hill.

BOUK

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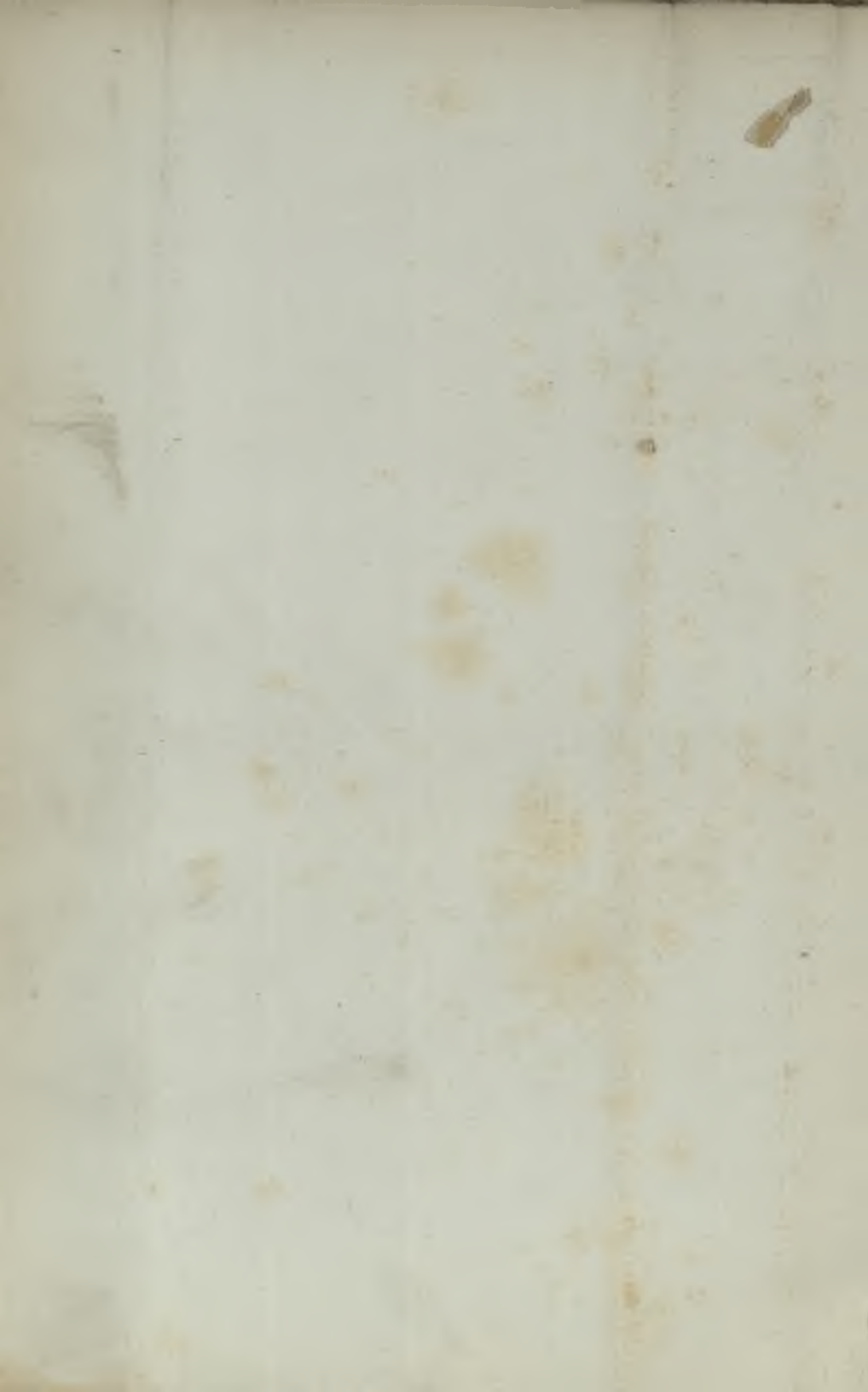
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11

MAP OF ROUTE THROUGH SENEGAMBIA.

The Author's Route





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