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1903.



Drawn by W.A. Bowles General of the Creek Nation

A View of Tree-town, on the River, Sierra Leone.

Engraved by S. Colver

AN
ACCOUNT
OF THE
NATIVE AFRICANS
IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD OF
SIERRA LEONE;
TO WHICH IS ADDED,
AN ACCOUNT
OF THE
PRESENT STATE OF MEDICINE AMONG THEM.

Come fanciul ch'a pena
Volge la Lingua e moda;
Che dir non sa, ma 'l piu tacer gli è Noia
Così 'l desir mi mena
A dire:————
Mi palpita il cor!————ma forse diran
.....che un primo. Errore
Punir non si dovea; che un Ramo infermo
Subito non recide saggio Cultor.

BY
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VOL. I.

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PREFACE,

THE Author does not presume to offer any apology for laying the following work before the tribunal of the Public: but, before their sentence upon it be pronounced, he wishes to observe, that it is offered merely as a rude sketch of the domestic economy, and medical knowledge, of the inhabitants of the windward coast of Africa; or rather, as a collection of gleanings which have either escaped the notice of more successful reapers in that extensive field, or which have been passed over as of little importance. If this work should be found to add little to our present knowledge of Africa, the Author hopes that it may at least tend to remove some prejudices respecting its inhabitants, whose customs have, in various instances, been misrepresented.

The work is divided into two parts, the

latter of which, first engaged the Author's attention ; to this was subjoined a brief account of the manners and customs of the people whose diseases had been noticed. But this account having increased so much by successive additions, as greatly to exceed the limits originally marked out for it, and the medical part being thought likely to prove uninteresting to many who might be desirous of perusing the rest of the work, it seemed adviseable to alter the arrangement, and print each part in separate volumes, in order that the general reader might be at liberty to purchase the one, without being obliged to purchase the other also.

The Vocabularies placed at the end of the work, will probably appear to many to be too extensive and cumbrous ; but the Author hopes they may prove useful to Europeans who visit that part of the African coast to which his account relates, by facilitating the acquisition of a more accurate knowledge of the native languages, a point of indispensable necessity to those who desire exact information,

The difficulty of procuring satisfactory intelligence from the natives of Africa, respecting themselves or their country, is known only to those who have made the experiment; they frequently lead Europeans into error by answering questions in the affirmative, merely to avoid trouble and escape importunity. The questions themselves sometimes awaken the jealousy of those to whom they are addressed; feeling no desire to institute similar inquiries, they are apt to suspect that the curiosity of Europeans has some sinister end in view. It requires also much time, and a fund of patience, to propose the necessary queries; to vary them in such a manner as to enable the natives to comprehend their precise import; and to compare the testimonies of different individuals in order to avoid the risk of misconception. Even interpreters are not to be implicitly relied on, as they are apt to give to answers that colour which they perceive will be most agreeable to their employer.

The author begs leave to return his sincere acknowledgments to his excellent friend, Z. Macaulay, Esq. formerly Governor of Sierra Leone, for much valuable information, and likewise for the Map of the Coast which accompanies this work.

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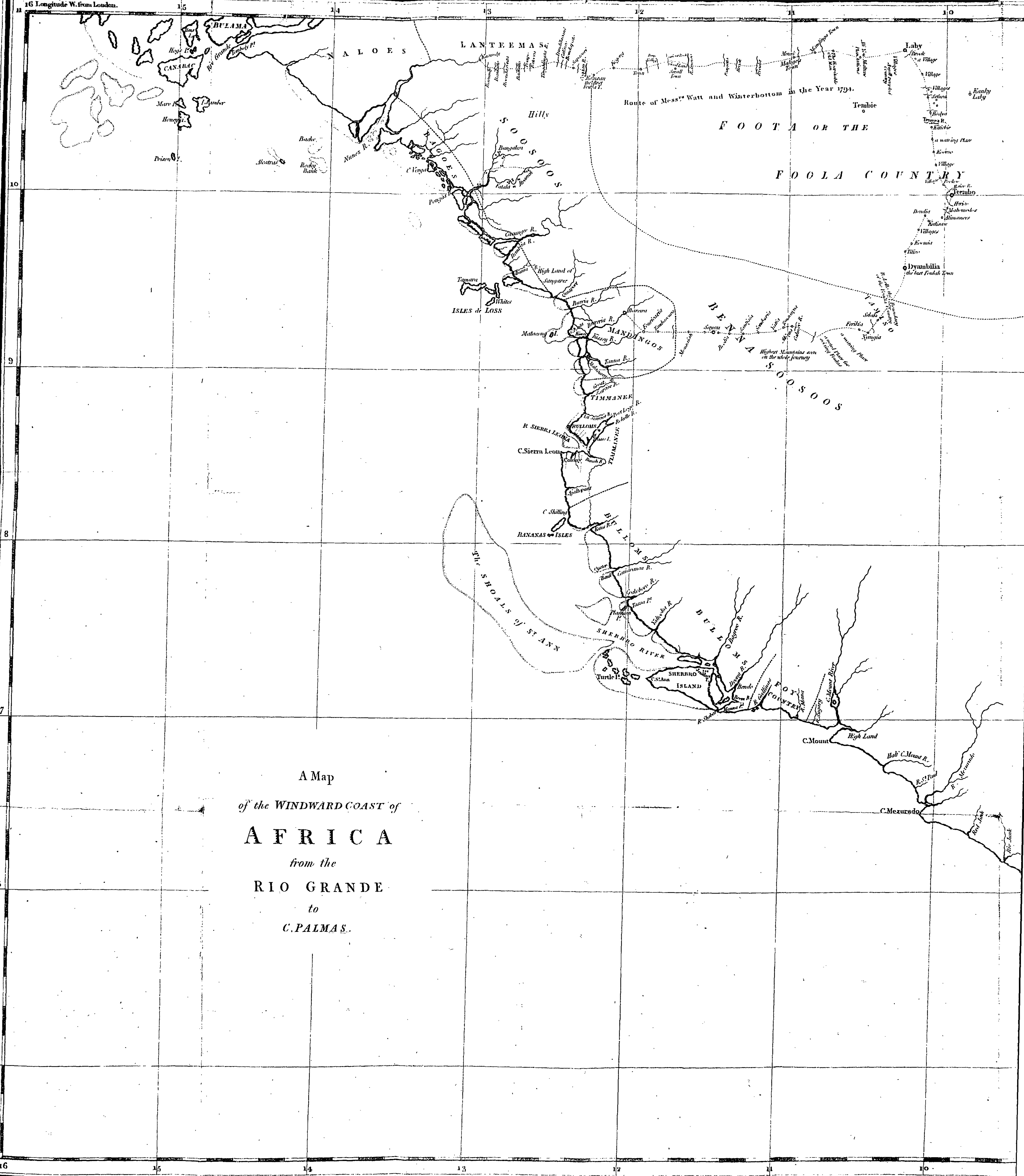
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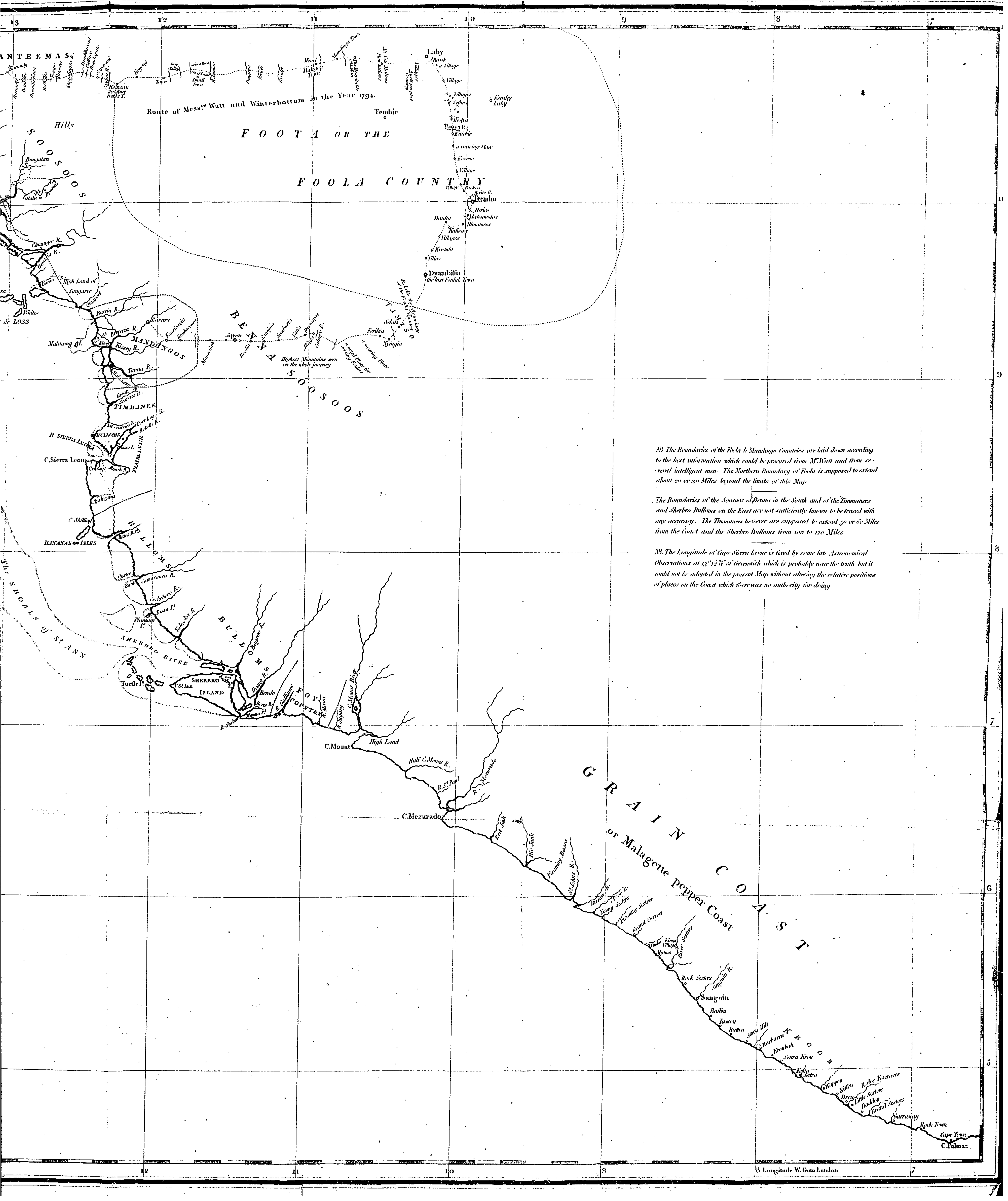
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A Map
of the WINDWARD COAST of
AFRICA
from the
RIO GRANDE
to
C. PALMAS.



Route of Messrs Watt and Winterbottom in the Year 1794.

FOOLA OR THE
FOOLA COUNTRY

BEYNASOOS

GRAIN COAST
or Malagette pepper Coast

NB The Boundaries of the Foola & Mandingo Countries are laid down according to the best information which could be procured from Mr Watt and from several intelligent men. The Northern Boundary of Foola is supposed to extend about 20 or 30 Miles beyond the limits of this Map.

The Boundaries of the Seesooes of Senega in the South and of the Timmanees and Sherbro Bulloms on the East are not sufficiently known to be traced with any accuracy. The Timmanees however are supposed to extend 50 or 60 Miles from the Coast and the Sherbro Bulloms from 100 to 120 Miles.

NB The Longitude of Cape Sierra Leone is fixed by some late Astronomical Observations at 13° 12' of Greenwich which is probably near the truth but it could not be adopted in the present Map without altering the relative positions of places on the Coast which there was no authority for doing.

ACCOUNT OF THE
NATIVE AFRICANS
IN THE
NEIGHBOURHOOD
OF
SIERRA LEONE.

CHAP. I.

DIVISION OF THE AFRICAN COAST; GENERAL ACCOUNT OF THE COUNTRY IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD OF SIERRA LEONE. ITS INHABITANTS, AND THEIR LANGUAGES. DISCOVERY OF THE RIVER SIERRA LEONE, AND ORIGIN OF ITS NAME. DESCRIPTION OF THE RIVER; ITS ISLANDS; AND THE ADJACENT COUNTRY.

THE Coast of Guinea, as it is commonly termed, is divided into the Windward and Leeward Coast. The former extends from Senegal, in about 16° N. lat. or according to some from Cape Roxo, in $12^{\circ} 23'$ N. lat. to Cape Palmas, in lat. $4^{\circ} 26'$: the latter includes the remaining space, reaching from Cape Palmas as far south as European vessels commonly trade for slaves. The Windward Coast receives its name from lying to the northward and westward of the other parts

of the Slave Coast, from which quarters the wind blows during a great part of the year. The line between Cape Mount, in lat. $6^{\circ} 46'$, or perhaps more accurately between Cape Mesurado, in $6^{\circ} 13'$, and Cape Palmas, is called the Grain or Malaguetta Coast; from the quantity of grains of paradise or Malaguetta pepper procured there: it is also frequently called the Kroom Coast. The space from Cape Palmas to Cape Three Points, in lat. $4^{\circ} 40' N$. is called the Ivory Coast; and where it terminates the Gold Coast begins, which extends about 180 miles eastward.

Almost the whole of the sea coast, for some hundred leagues to the north and south of Sierra Leone, is very low; and in some parts, the tops of the trees which appear like an immense forest growing in the water, are the first indication of the approach of land. If the river Sherbro be excepted, which is remarkable for its majestic size, and for the distance which it runs inland, there is no river of much consequence to the southward of Sierra Leone until the Gold Coast be passed. To the northward we meet with a number of fine rivers, some of which are large, and navigable by vessels of considerable burthen. Among them are the Scarries, called by the Bulloms and Timmanees Ma-bayma, Sama River, Kissec, Rio Pongas, Rio Nunez, Rio Grande, Gambia, &c. These rivers penetrate into the interior by a great variety of windings, and divide into innumerable branches and creeks, which communicate with each other and with the branches of neighbouring rivers, so

as to render the inland navigation very extensive. In sailing up these rivers, the eye is charmed with a landscape perpetually varying, which would afford full scope to the genius and pencil of a Claude. The vast diversity of trees, unknown in Europe, which overhang the banks; the immensity of their growth; the vivid hues of their luxuriant foliage; the sombre shade which they afford in despite of a dazzling and vertical sun; and the awful stillness which prevails in places so distant from the busy haunt of men; and which is interrupted only by the melancholy cooing of the dove, the shrill cry of the parrot, or the noisy mirth of the hordes of monkeys occasionally to be seen on these shores; fill the mind with astonishment, and cause it to exclaim in the language of the poet,

What solemn twilight! what stupendous shades
 Inwrap these infant floods! thro' ev'ry nerve
 A sacred horror thrills, a pleasing fear
 Glides o'er my frame. The forest deepens round,
 And more gigantic still th' impending trees
 Stretch their extrav'gant arms athwart the gloom.

The Windward Coast, as above described, is inhabited by several different nations. The Timmanees possess the south side of the river Sierra Leone, together with its branches of Port Logo* (so called

* The river gives its name to an old town called Port Logo or Baga Logo, situated near 60 miles above Free Town. There are four other towns close to it. 1. Ar-re-bát. 2. Sédigo. 3. Sierra Leone or Mi-yín-ga. 4. Bóm-ba. The Logo country is distant three days journey from Ar-re-bát; the Limbo Country is four days journey distant. After passing through the Limbo,

from running into the Logo country) and Rokelle, called by the Timmanees Robung-dakell or River of Scales. Thence they penetrate to a considerable distance inland, where they are subdivided into Timmanees, Logos, and Krangos; all of whom it is said, speak dialects of the same language. This nation formerly lived at a distance from the sea coast; but being of a warlike and active disposition, they forced themselves down the river Sierra Leone, among the Bulloms, who formerly possessed the whole region from the river Kissee to the Sherbro. They have no tradition by which we can learn at what period this event took place. Not contented with dispossessing the Bulloms of a part of Sierra Leone, they have in like manner forced themselves down the river Scarcies.

The Bulloms inhabit the country on the north side of the Sierra Leone river, called Bullom, which extends as far as the river Scarcies, from the banks of which, as has been said, the Timmanees have driven them. To the northward of the Scarcies the Bulloms chiefly occupy the sea coast, as far as the mouth of the river Kissee. They also inhabit to the southward of Sierra Leone the river Sherbro, the Bananas*, the Plantains, and

the Foola country succeeds; Teembo the capital is said to be thirteen days walk from Port Logo. The names of the towns between these two last mentioned places are, Ma-kóoma, Mén-dee, Bám-ba-lee, Bántee, Sá-fro-go, Wo-see-yáyma, Mongo, Kamóo-ga, Teembo.

* The Bananas are three small islands situated in about 8° 8' N. lat. and scarcely distant a league from the continent. At the

some other smaller islands. This once powerful nation formerly possessed the whole of the river Kissee, from which they were driven by a nation called Soosoos or Suzees. The Soosoos extend from the river Kissee beyond the Rio Pongas, nearly as far as the Rio Nunez, of which tract they dispossessed a nation called Bagoes, who were once masters of the whole of the Rio Pongas, and of the country between that river and the Rio Nunez, together with a considerable line of sea coast extending from the Rio Nunez south-

distance of seven or eight leagues thence to the south east, are situated three other small islands, which are low and sandy, called the Plantains. Dapper calls the Plantain Islands Las Sombreras, and the Bananas Las Bravas, but if we may judge from the etymology of the words, it is probable that these names are misapplied. Sombreyro signifies in Portuguese a broad brimmed hat, and was probably applied to the Bananas from the fancied resemblance; the mountain in the middle island being not unaptly compared to the crown of the hat. On the contrary, Las Bravas signifies wild or desolate, an epithet more applicable to the Plantains. The same writer continues, "on fait dans les îles las Sombreras de l'excellent vin & de l'huile de dates, & du marc de vin melè avec cette huile, on fait du savon, qui est beaucoup meilleur que celui de l'Europe."

Between the Bananas and Plantains the coast forms a great bay, called the Bay of Sherbro, which has been compared to the Pampus of the Zuider-Zee in Holland. Into this bay four rivers discharge themselves, the Kates, the Camarancas, the Sherbro, and the Shebar, which were discovered by Le Maire in 1615, whilst searching for the river Sierra Leone. The river Sherbro divides into three branches, called the Boom, the Deong, and the Bagroo, which run to a great distance inland. The countries within this tract are generally named from the rivers. The coast between Shebar and the river Galinhas, so called by the Portuguese from the number of fowls found there, is named Kittim; and the country about the Galinhas, a river between Shebar and Cape Mount is called the Foy Country.

ward as far as the river Dembia, nearly opposite to the Isles de Los.* They still retain a few straggling villages scattered here and there among the Soosoos; but are chiefly confined to the sea coast and to the Isles de Los, upon the largest of which, called Támara, they have plantations and villages. The Bagoes, like the Bulloms, seem to have been of a mild and peaceable disposition, and to have fallen a prey to ambitious and restless neighbours. It is said of them, that they will not allow Europeans to settle among them; and the reason assigned for their conduct is, that they dislike the slave trade. They make earthen vessels of a blue kind of clay, fashioned into a variety of forms, and burnt in the fire, which they use for holding water and other domestic purposes, and sell to their neighbours. Their canoes shew little ingenuity; they are long, very low and inconvenient, and taper very much from stern to stem. They are rowed by paddles, which the rowers use standing, and they can only go with the tide.

The Soosoos however have not remained in undisturbed possession of their usurpation. A few emigrants from a powerful nation, called Mandingos †, settled themselves upon the banks of the Kisseé, and have since become possessed of a considerable tract of country in its neighbourhood. The Mandingos are strict Mahomedans, very zealous in making converts, and have spread their religion with much success among the Soosoos,

* Called by the Soosoos For-tó-ma, or White Man's Land.

† For an account of this nation see Parke's Travels.

where it appears to be daily gaining ground*. Europeans call every one on the coast who professes Mahomedanism, indiscriminately, *Mandingo Man*, or as the Pagan natives term it, *Book Man*. This is the same with the *Maraboo* or *Marbut* of travellers. These *Bookmen* are much respected by the illiterate natives, and are very frequently met with in the Bullom and Timmanee villages, where they have great influence.

* The following extract from a report made to a Committee of the House of Commons by the Court of Directors of the Sierra Leone Company, with which the author has been favoured, will throw further light on this subject: "A remarkable proof exists in the neighbourhood of Sierra Leone, of the very great advantages of a permanent though very imperfect system of government, and of the abolition of those African laws, which make slavery the punishment of almost every offence. Not more than seventy years ago, a small number of Mahomedans established themselves in a country about forty miles to the northward of Sierra Leone, called from them the Mandingo country. As is the practice of the professors of that religion, they formed schools, in which the Arabic language and the doctrines of Mahomed were taught, and the customs of Mahomedans, particularly that of not selling any of their own religion as slaves, were adopted. Laws founded on the Koran were introduced. Those practices which chiefly contribute to depopulate the coast were eradicated; and, in spite of many intestine convulsions, a great comparative degree of civilization, union, and security was introduced. Population in consequence rapidly increased, and the whole power of that part of the country in which they are settled has gradually fallen into their hands. Those who have been taught in their schools are succeeding to wealth and power in the neighbouring countries, and carry with them a considerable portion of their religion and laws. Other chiefs are adopting the name assumed by these Mahomedans, on account of the respect which attends it, and the religion of Islam seems likely to diffuse itself peaceably over the whole district in which the colony is situated, carrying with it those advantages which seem ever to have attended its victory over negro superstition."

It is not easy to draw the precise boundaries of each of the nations mentioned above, as villages of neighbouring nations are often met with considerably advanced within each other's territories.

The Foola nation lives at a considerable distance from the sea, Teembo, the capital, being nearly in the latitude of 10° N.; they are strict Mahomedans, and are much employed in agriculture and the breeding of cattle*.

Several different nations inhabit the coast to the southward of Sierra Leone, between Cape Mount and Cape Palmas; among the most remarkable of whom are the people of that part called the Kroo Coast, the inhabitants of which spend much of

* The country inhabited by the Foolas is called Foota. It is supposed to extend about 300 miles from east to west, and 160 miles from north to south; and is said to be surrounded by twenty-four different nations. Those which lie between Foota and Tombuctoo are the following; as related by the chief of Laby, a large town in the Foola kingdom, to my brother in 1794:

1. Belia. The king's name, Mamadoo. Their chief trade consists in gold, ivory, wax, cattle, and slaves; in return for which they receive salt, an article of indispensable utility to them; tobacco, silver, shells or cowries, which pass for money as far as Tombuctoo; cola, and beads.
2. Booree which is only seven days journey from Teembo. King's name Boorama. They export gold, ivory, slaves, wax, &c. and receive in return salt, tobacco, silver, cola, cloth, and beads.
3. Manda. Trade as above.
4. Sego. King Mansung. Trade the same. Thus far Mr. Parke proceeded.
5. Genah. King Alkaida. A very rich people. Trade as above.
6. Tombuctoo. King Albass. People richer than any of the others, but having nearly the same trade and returns.

their time on the water, and live chiefly on fish and rice* ; they are remarkable for the robustness and fleshiness of their bodies, and also for their great agility.

The Kroos, or Kroomen, are a very industrious people, and frequently engage themselves to European vessels upon the coast, continuing on board several months, and acting in the capacity of sailors and traders, in both which situations they shew much intelligence and activity. But notwithstanding their utmost exertions none of them become rich. When any person returns home from the service of Europeans, he is obliged to make large presents to the old men of the town : when this has been neglected, or when it is suspected that a part of his wealth has been concealed, he is summoned by the old people to the Palaver-house, where a fire being made of green pepper bushes, the culprit is suspended over it with his hands tied behind his back, until nearly suffocated with the smoke ; a ceremony which never fails to extort a discovery of his treasure, and a compliance with all their demands.

All these nations have languages peculiar to themselves, most of which are not merely dialects of the same language, but essentially different, though confined in some cases to a small district. Even the Bulloms of Sierra Leone, and those of Sherbro, though constituting one nation, differ in their mode of speaking ; and this diver-

* Ichthyophagi, natantes ceu maris animalia.

sity, which is still greater in other instances, proves a great obstacle to the acquirement of a competent knowledge of the customs of the natives*.

All these languages are highly figurative, and abound in metaphorical expressions, images, and comparisons, drawn from natural objects, which, when translated into European languages, give them a poetic turn. The languages to the northward of Sierra Leone are softer and more harmonious than those to the southward. Those of the Timmanees and Bulloms † are both agreeable to the ear, but the Soosoo excels them all, and in softness approaches the Italian. The Mandingo is the fashionable language in this region, but it is more difficult to acquire than the others, and abounds in guttural sounds. As we proceed southward, the languages become more harsh and unmusical: the Kroos have a guttural, singing pronunciation, which is very disagreeable, and one nation below Cape Palmas receives the name of Qua-qua, from their speech resembling the cry of a duck. The frequency of Europeans on the coast has introduced among the natives a kind of lin-

* Bosman observes, "though the Gold Coast is not extended above sixty † miles in length, yet we find there seven or eight several languages, so different that three or four of them are interchangeably unintelligible to any but the respective natives: the Negroes of Junmore, ten miles above Axim, cannot understand those of Egira, Abocroe, Ancober, and Axim."

† The Bullom language is spoken from a little to the south of Cape Sierra Leone to Shebar; from which to Shuggree, near Cape Mount, the Foy language is spoken.

‡ A Dutch Mile is $3\frac{1}{2}$ English.

gua franca sufficient for the purposes of trade; though it is not uncommon to meet with individuals among them who can speak English, French, Dutch, or Portuguese with tolerable fluency.

The general face of the countries which have been here noticed, appears to an European uncommonly beautiful and attractive: it is covered with stately and umbrageous trees, among which the elegant palm tree*, from the novelty of its appearance, is not the least conspicuous. The soil varies in different parts, but is pretty generally fruitful, and yields abundantly all the necessaries of life. The savannahs, or large open spaces of ground, are the least productive, and consist chiefly of beds of sand or rock: they are usually overflowed in the rainy season, and are covered with tall, coarse grass, and a few stunted trees.

The River Sierra Leone lies in $8^{\circ} 30'$ N. lat. and in $13^{\circ} 43'$ of W. long. By early geographers it was named the river Tagrin, or Mitomba. The name Sierra Leone, or Mountain of Lions, applied to it by its first discoverers, the Portuguese, has been supposed to originate from the mountains hereabouts abounding in lions†. This supposition,

* The palm tree has different names given to it by the natives, at various periods of its growth; when young it is called by the Bulloms Pur; when it has nearly reached its full growth, but before the branches have fallen from the trunk, they call it Bat, and the Timmanees Obbat. After the stem has become free from the branches, the Bulloms call it Wá and the Timmanees Ok-kóomp.

† The opinion that Sierra Leone abounded with lions has been maintained by almost all old writers. Barbot, a Frenchman,

however, is certainly ill-founded, as lions are not to be met with in this part of the country at present, nor is there any tradition among the natives of their ever having existed here; and in Cada Mosto's relation of the voyage of Pedro di Sintra, who first discovered Sierra Leone, the following description is given, which shews the true origin of that appellation. "Liedo is the next place they discovered; it is a cape, to which they gave this name on account of the gay appearance which that and the country afforded them. At this cape a mountain begins, which extends fifty miles along the coast; it is high and perpetually covered with the loftiest green trees. Towards its extremity they

who was here in 1678, describing the Baie de France, or St. George's Bay; mentions the watering places, situated on the western extremity of Free Town, in a delightful small bay, "which is easily known by the fine bright colour of the sandy shore, looking at a distance like a large spread sail of a ship. The strand there is clear from rocks, which render easy the access of boats and sloops to take in fresh water. A few paces from the sea is that curious fountain, the best and easiest to come at of any in all Guinea, where a ship may fill an hundred casks in a day. Its source is in the very midst of the mountains of Timina, stretching out about fifteen leagues in a long ridge: there is no approaching it for the many lions and crocodiles which harbour there." This, in Barbot's opinion, "is one of the most delightful places in all Guinea." The bason which receives this water being encompassed with tall evergreen trees which make a delightful shade in the most excessive heat, and the very rocks standing about it, at a small distance from each other, contribute to beautify the place." Barbot used frequently to spend the whole day here and dine beside the *Fountain*.

Harduin, in his notes upon Pliny, derives the name from the noise of the surf on the shore "Hesperium Cornu, hodie le *Cap de Sierra Liona*: facta a Lusitanis Nomine, quod maris ibi fremitus leonæ rugitum referre quodammodo videatur."

found three islands*, about eight miles from the shore, the largest of which was ten or twelve miles in circumference. They called these islands Salvezze, and the mountain Sierra Leona †, on account of the tremendous roaring of the thunder upon the summit of it, which is continually wrapped up in clouds and mist ‡.”

* The Bananas.

† Romarong is the Timmanee name for Sierra Leone. Marong signifies a mountain, and Ro or Rok is a particle prefixed to the name of almost every Timmanee town, as Ro-baga, Ro-banna, Rok-bonko.

‡ Voyages of the Portuguese in the fifteenth and sixteenth Centuries.

The honour of discovering this coast is claimed by the French, who assert that their Norman ancestors carried on a very extensive trade here long before it was known by the Portuguese; and further add, that they had reached Sierra Leone as early as the year 1364, from whence they extended their commerce along the coast, and in 1382 built the Fort of del Mina, on the Gold Coast, nearly in 5° N. lat. If the French had any well authenticated facts to bring in support of this claim, it would still appear very extraordinary, that within the short space of twenty-eight years these transactions should be entirely forgotten, and that the utmost exertions of an enlightened prince should be required to induce men, who possessed enterprising spirits, to retrace the same ground. Besides, the rapidity with which these people are said to have extended their trade bears no proportion to the gradual and tardy progress of discoveries in that early period of navigation. “In the beginning of the fifteenth century the Portuguese were totally ignorant of that coast beyond Cape Non, 28° N. lat. In 1410, the celebrated Prince Henry of Portugal fitted out a fleet for discoveries, which proceeded along the coast to Cape Bojadore, in 26°. but had not courage to double it. In 1418, Tristan Vaz discovered the island Porto Santo; and the year after the island Madeira was discovered. In 1439, a Portuguese captain doubled Cape Bojadore; and the next year the Portuguese reached Cape Blanco, lat. 20°. In 1446, Nuna Tristan doubled Cape Verd, lat. 14° 40'. In 1448, Don Gonzallo

The river Mitomba, or Sierra Leone, is conspicuous for its magnitude, and is one of the most beautiful in Africa.

Its entrance is formed by two projecting points, one on the north western termination of the Bullom shore, called Leopard's island* ; the other on the north west extremity of Sierra Leone. The last-mentioned point is a low, narrow neck of land, running out into the sea, and is called Cape Sierra Leone ; in old charts it is often named Cape Ledo (Liedo) or Cape Tagrin. It is sometimes also called the True Cape, to distinguish it from a projecting high land, about five miles to the south-

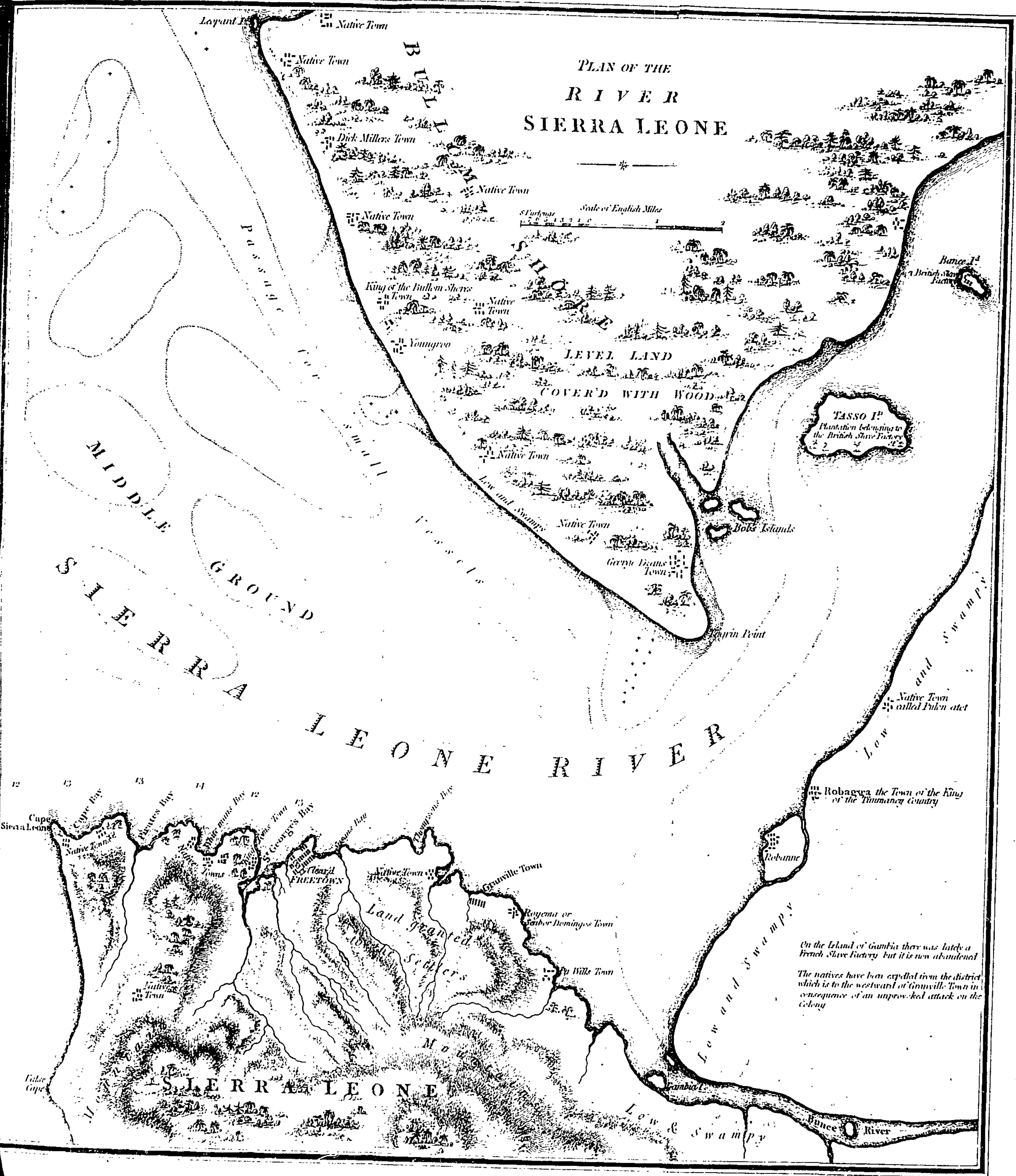
Vallo took possession of the Azores. In 1449, the islands of Cape Verd were discovered for Don Henry. In 1471, Pedro d'Escovar discovered the island St. Thomas, and Prince's island. In 1484, Diego Cam discovered the kingdom of Congo. In 1486, Bartholomew Diaz, employed by John II. of Portugal, doubled the Cape of Good Hope, which he called Cabo Tormentoso, from the tempestuous weather he found in the passage †." Of all the possessions formerly held by the Portuguese upon this widely extended coast, they retain at present only their settlements at Bissao, in about 12° N. ; St. Salvador, in the river Congo, in about 6° S. ; and Loango St. Paul's, in 10° S. lat. (at which last place they have a large city, and several forts and settlements, and carry on a very extensive and lucrative trade for some hundred miles inland) ; and the islands of Cape Verd, Fernando Po, Prince's, St. Thomas, and Annabona, besides a few others of little note, which still belong to them.

* This has at a distance the appearance of an island, as it is joined to the beach by a narrow, sandy neck. Although very small and rocky it is verdant, and covered with wood ; it receives its name from the number of leopards which the natives suppose take shelter there. The Bulloms call it Ec-yil-eek-bill ; Ec-yil signifies an island, and eek-bill a leopard.

† Kaim's Sketches.

PLAN OF THE RIVER SIERRA LEONE

Scale of English Miles



On the Island of Gambia there was lately a French Slave Factory but it is now abandoned
 The natives have been expelled from the district which is to the westward of Grenville Town in consequence of an unprovoked attack on the Colony

12 13 14 15
 Cape Sierra Leone
 Cape Bo
 Cape Mesurado
 Freetown
 Land granted to the Settlers
 Grenville Town
 Royema or Father Demingos Town
 Py Wills Town
 Sierra Leone
 Fulae Cape

Bance I.
 British Slave Factory

TASSO I.
 Plantation belonging to the British Slave Factory

Native Town called Fula atet

Robagga the Town of the King of the Thumaney Country

Robanne

Robanne

Bunce River

MIDDLE GROUND
 SIERRA LEONE

LEONE RIVER

SIERRA LEONE

ward, called the False Cape, which is frequently mistaken for the former. The breadth of the river, taken from Leopard's island, to the cape Sierra Leone, is about fifteen miles; from this it gradually decreases until it reaches St. George's Bay*, about six miles above the cape, where it does not exceed six or seven miles. From St. George's Bay the river preserves nearly the same breadth, for the distance of near twenty miles higher up: it there ceases to become navigable for vessels of a large draught of water, and divides into two large branches called Port Logo and Rokelle rivers. Before it terminates in these two last-mentioned rivers, it sends off on the north side a small branch, which from running into the Bullom country takes the name of Bullom river, by the natives called Shallatook; and on the south side it sends off a more considerable branch, called the Bunch, which with the Kates, a river running into the bay where the Sherbro empties itself into the sea, nearly divide the mountains of the peninsula from the main land to the eastward. In one place the river Bunch approaches within six miles of the Kates river, which is called by Dapper, Bangué. "Au midi du Cap de Sierra Liona, il y a une autre riviere nommee Bangué, & celle de Mitombo etant au nord, ces deux rivieres forment une espece de presqu' ile, & la langue de terre qui les separe a si peu d'étendue que les batteliers negres, qui

* By French writers this is commonly called Baie de France.

veulent aller d'un fleuve à l'autre, portent leur barque sur les epaules." *Déscript. de l'Afrique.*

Several fine bays are formed on the south side of the Sierra Leone river; all of which open to the north. The tide of this river rises about twelve feet at spring tides: during the rainy season it is very rapid, and flows about four or five miles in an hour: it is high water half an hour after seven o'clock at full and change.

The high land, from which Cape Sierra Leone projects, is continued in a chain of hills running to the south as far as Cape Shelling, which forms the northern extremity of the bay of Sherbro. From Cape Sierra Leone the mountains run nearly parallel with the river, in a W. N. W. and E. S. E. direction, continuing to be very lofty until they pass Gambia island, about ten miles above St. George's Bay*.

The land forming the peninsula of Sierra Leone, when viewed from the sea, or from the opposite shore called Bullom, appears like a number of hills heaped upon each other in a very irregular manner. On a nearer approach the face of the country assumes a more beautiful aspect. The

* The echo which these mountains return when a gun is fired is very great; in consequence of which, and of the rumbling noise produced among them by thunder, they were named by the Portuguese Montes claros.

Non fan si grande e si terribil suono
Etna, qualor da Encelado è piu scossa;
Scilla e Cariddi quand' irate sono.

PETRARCA.

rugged appearance of these mountains is softened by the lively verdure with which they are constantly crowned; their majestic forms, irregularly advancing and receding, occasion huge masses of light and shade to be projected from their sides, which add a degree of picturesque grandeur to the scene. The most craggy and inaccessible parts of the mountains are covered with forests of immense growth, which yield

A boundless deep immensity of shade.
 Here, lofty trees*, to ancient song unknown,
 The noble sons of potent heat, and floods
 Prone rushing from the clouds, rear high to heaven
 Their thorny stems, and broad around them throw
 Meridian gloom †.

The lower grounds which are cultivated, preserve a considerable degree of verdure through the whole year, which, contrasted with the darker hues of the more distant hills, forms a spectacle highly grateful to the eye.

The shore of Sierra Leone, for the space of six or seven miles from the mouth of the river, is very

* Among these, the wild cotton, or pullom tree ‡ as it is called by the natives, is one of the most conspicuous, and is probably that which the poet had in view in the above description. Bosman, an author who very seldom deals in the hyperbole, may be suspected perhaps of using this tempting figure, when, describing the vegetable productions on the Gold Coast, he says "I have seen some of these trees so high, that their tops and branches growing out of them were scarce to be reached by a common musquet-shot. They are here called capot trees, because on them grows a certain sort of cotton here called capot ||."

† Thomson.

‡ *Bombax Ceiba.* || Description of Guinea.

rugged, and consists chiefly of rocks abounding in iron, which lie upon a sandy bottom. Excepting on the banks of the small creeks, which proceed from the bottom of one or two of the bays, it is quite free from mangroves and ooze, and is little incommoded with swamps.

The land on the opposite or north shore of the river is called Bullom, from a word in that language signifying low land. From Leopard's Island, which forms the north western extremity of the Bullom shore, at the entrance of the river, the land runs in a south east direction to its easternmost extremity called Tagrin Point, from whence it runs almost north. The Bullom shore, though low when compared to the high land of Sierra Leone, may be called high when compared to the coast in general from the Rio Nunez southward, but more particularly from the River Sherbro, called by the natives Mampa, as far south as Cape Palmas. We must except, however, Cape Mount and Cape Monserrado (or Mesurada) both which are high lands. The aspect of the country of Bullom is extremely beautiful; the land is finely shaded by a variety of lofty spreading trees. The soil is remarkably fertile, and the shore, though in some places very swampy, is for the most part bordered by a fine sandy beach.

The island of Gambia, formerly a slave factory belonging to the French, but at present deserted, is placed in the mouth of Bunch River, and is of considerable extent; the land is pretty high, but the shore is covered with mangroves and ooze;

and as its situation, in a kind of bay, half surrounded by very high hills, renders it extremely hot, it has always proved very unhealthy. The direction of the River Sierra Leone, as far as this place, is nearly east and west, but now it takes a northern direction, after sending off Bunch River to the east south east. In its course northward it forms a number of islands, most of which are small, and many of them are overgrown with mangroves, and overflowed by the tide. Some of them, however, are of considerable extent, as the island of Robanna, upon which there is a small town of the natives, and a few straggling houses, built to guard their rice plantations. The land is low, swampy, and greatly infested by musquitos. The islands of Tasso and Marabump are also considerable in point of size, and upon the latter are some towns belonging to the natives. The soil of Tasso is rich, and the appearance of the whole island is picturesque, but the land is low, and the shore is nearly surrounded by impenetrable mangroves*. The proprietors of the

* *Rhizophera Mangle*. This tree, like the banian tree of the East Indies, *ficus religiosa*, is propagated by shoots thrown out from the upper branches; these descend, take root, and become parent trees, throwing out leaves, branches, and shoots, in their turn. Hence a whole forest of mangrove trees are intricately connected with each other, and by these means are so firmly rooted as to resist the most rapid tides and most impetuous currents. These trees always grow in wet places, and their trunks are generally covered with large quantities of oysters, hence called mangrove oysters. They render creeks unhealthy, by retaining the mud and ooze, and other putrefying substances, among their tangled roots; they render them also dangerous, by affording

adjacent slave factory have lately established a cotton plantation upon it, which is likely to become productive.

To the north of Tasso, about eighteen miles above St. George's Bay, is Bance Island, upon which is established a slave factory. This is a small barren island, considerably elevated, with a dry gravelly soil; but being placed as it were in the midst of an archipelago of low marshy islands, the breeze, from whatever quarter it blows, is impregnated with moisture and marsh effluvia, which render it sickly. The air also is very much heated, and the thermometer generally stands four or five degrees higher on this island* than it does at Free Town. During the dry season the river is salt several miles above Bance Island.

a secure retreat to alligators. The wood of this tree is extremely hard and much used by the natives for building houses, as it is not so easily destroyed by the termites as other kinds of timber. The coarse bark is used in the West Indies for ropes, and the softer bark is beaten into threads as fine as flax.

* On the 2d of March, 1793, Fahrenheit's thermometer rose at Bance Island, at noon, to 98° in the shade, whereas at Free Town, at the same hour, it was only 89°.

CHAP. II.

DIVISION OF THE YEAR. RAINS. TORNADOS. TEMPERATURE OF THE AIR. PREVAILING WINDS. APPEARANCE OF THE SKY, AND THE HEAVENLY BODIES. NOISE OF CRICKETS, &C. AT NIGHT. LENGTH OF DAY. SMOKES. HUMIDITY OF THE ATMOSPHERE. STATE OF THERMOMETER AND BAROMETER. EFFECT OF DEWS AND RAIN. THE HARMATTAN.

THE European mode of dividing the year into spring, summer, autumn, and winter, is not applicable to the climate of Africa. Were we to consider the general heat of the climate, always equal or superior to the mean summer heat of Europe, we should be tempted to call it a perpetual summer; but the fall of rain during one period of the year, which tempers the excessive heat, and wonderfully excites the activity of vegetation, gives it a title to the name of spring. The natives however adopt a more natural division, and all along the coast, the year is divided into the rainy and dry seasons, the former the Timmanys call Lokko a-liss, bad time; the latter Lokko feenoo, good time. It is further subdivided into lunar months or moons, as they term them, twelve of which constitute the year. Some of these are distinguished by appropriate names expressive of their qualities; thus the moon which occurs in the height of the rainy season is called by the

Bullems, Bulla-kont or sweep bush, from the violence of the rain. The moon in which the rice becomes ripe is called Pol-pol, and that in which the harvest is reaped is named Shakoo-monnee, 'of one family.' The moon in the height of the dry season, when the excessive heat renders it unpleasant to walk in the open path, is called Bop-po-roong 'or shun path.' The time of day is marked by pointing to the situation of the sun in the heavens; or they say, the sun is 'gone into the water,' to denote the time from sun set to midnight; or, 'he lives in the bush,' from midnight to sunrise. The greater divisions of time are generally marked by the rice harvests, but these do not extend far back, and serve chiefly to indicate the age of children. More commonly they associate circumstances which they wish to recollect with some remarkable event, such as a town being burnt down or plundered, or a war being begun or ended. The Soosos likewise distinguish all the months by appropriate names.

The rainy season does not occur on all parts of the coast at the same time, but seems to move in progression along the whole line of it from south to north. It begins and is nearly over on the Gold Coast before it commences at Sierra Leone, and it has continued there six or eight weeks before it begins at Senegal*. Although it be called the rainy season, it must be observed that it does not rain incessantly at this time. A fall of continued

* The tornados begin in the river Gambia about the beginning of June, and the rainy season about the beginning of August.

rain for thirty hours happens but a few times during the season; more frequently twelve hours of heavy rain are followed by twenty-four or thirty hours, or even a longer period, of clear and remarkably pleasant weather*. This part of the year, from its coolness, is most agreeable to Europeans, but at the same time it is the most unhealthy. *The rains*, as they are called on the coast, continue about four months; at Sierra Leone they set in about the end of May, and terminate about the end of September. According to Dr. Lind, the quantity of rain which fell during one rainy season, or four months, at Senegal, amounted to 115 inches perpendicular depth. During the year 1793, according to my own observation, there fell at Sierra Leone 86,28 inches, and in the following year somewhat more than 82 inches †. The rainy season is ushered in

* The rainbow, which is frequently remarkably distinct and vivid, is called by the Bulloms Kerráy-bay, *the King's Bow*.

† The Meteorological Journal, which had been continued with much care and attention, was interrupted in September, 1794, by the arrival of a French squadron, a part of the observations was lost, and the instruments were destroyed. For want of an apparatus the Journal was not resumed until the following year, in the month of July.

In the year 1794 there fell in the month of

May 5,347 inches of rain

June 8,739

July 21,522

Aug. 29,351

Sept. 17,275

In the year 1795, the quantity of rain which fell during the months of July, August, and September, amounted to 60,108 inches; from the end of September until the 31st of December there fell 2,836. Mr. de Pauw must certainly be mistaken when he asserts

and carried off by tornados*, or as they are sometimes called travados †, “*Africae procellæ.*” These are violent gusts of wind, which come from the east, attended by thunder, lightning, and in general heavy rain. The violence of the wind seldom continues longer than twenty minutes or half an hour, but the scene, during the time it continues, may be considered as one of the most awfully sublime in nature. The genius of the storm is thus personified by Dr. Darwin with tolerable accuracy and with much poetic merit :

—Seize tornado by his locks of mist,
 Burst his dense clouds, his wheeling spires untwist.
 Wide o’er the west, when borne on headlong gales,
 Dark as meridian night, the monster sails,
 Howls high in air, and shakes his curled brow,
 Lashing with serpent train the waves below,
 Whirls his black arm, the forked lightning flings,
 And showers a deluge from his demon wings ‡.

The suddenness and violence of the wind are so great, as often to endanger the safety of vessels unprepared for it; and in the year 1794, the *Porcupine* of Liverpool, a ship of considerable size, which had just arrived upon the coast from

that in America, within the tropics, it rains ‘*a peu-pres huit fois d’avantage que dans l’Afrique.*’ *Recherches Philosoph.* Vol. I. According to Mr. Edwards, the quantity of rain which fell in one year in Barbadoes was equal to 67 inches. At Calcutta, the rain which fell during the year 1784 amounted to 81,0 inches; in the year 1785, it amounted only to 77,5 inches.

* Probably so called from the Portuguese word *Tornáda*, which signifies a return.

† From the Portuguese word *Trova*, thunder.

‡ Botanic Garden.

England, was overset between Sierra Leone and the islands of Bananas by a tornado, and some of the people on board perished. A tornado, however, is never so instantaneous in its onset as not to afford sufficient warning. Its approach is foretold by certain appearances, which enable people to be upon their guard. A dark cloud, not larger than "a man's hand," is first observed on the verge of the eastern horizon. Faint flashes of lightning, attended sometimes by very distant thunder, are then seen to vibrate in quick succession. The clouds in that quarter become gradually more dense and black; they also increase in bulk, and appear as if heaped upon each other. The thunder, which at first was scarcely noticed, or heard only at long intervals, draws nearer by degrees, and becomes more frequent and tremendous. The blackness of the clouds increases to its utmost intensity, until a great part of the heavens seems wrapped in the darkness of midnight*; and it is rendered still more awful by being contrasted with a gleam of light, which generally appears in the western horizon. Immediately before the attack of a tornado, there is either a light breeze scarcely perceptible from the westward, or, as is more common, the air is

* Præterea, modò quom fuerit liquidissima cæli
 Tempestas, perquam subito fit turbida fœdè
 Undique, uti tenebras omneis Acherunta rearis
 Liquisse, & magnas cæli complesse cavernas
 Usque adeo tetra nimborum nocte coorta,
 Impendent atræ formidinis ora superne.

LUCRET.

perfectly calm, and unusually still. Men and animals fly for shelter ; and “ while expectation stands in horror,” the thundering storm in an instant bursts from the clouds.

————— Since I was man,
Such sheets of fire, such bursts of horrid thunder,
Such groans of roaring wind and rain, I never
Remember to have heard. KING LEAR.

It is impossible for language to convey a more just idea of the uproar of the elements, which then takes place, than is contained in the following beautiful lines of Thompson :

————— A faint deceitful calm,
A fluttering gale, the demon sends before
To tempt the spreading sail ; then down at once,
Precipitant, descends a mingled mass
Of roaring winds, and flame, and rushing floods.

A tornado at sea is foretold by the same presages as on shore, but, as may be supposed, the scene is rendered more grand and more terrific upon that unstable element. It is one of those displays of elemental war which astonishes and fills the mind with the most elevated ideas of the power of the great Author of nature*. When a few repetitions have diminished the alarm and dread of instant destruction, attendant on its first appearance, it may be contemplated with a con-

* Præterea, persæpe niger quoque per mare nimbus,
Ut picis e caelo demissum flumen, in undas
Sic cadit, & fertur tenebris procul, & trahit atram
Fulminibus grandam tempestatem, atque procellis,
Ignibus, ac ventis cumprimis ipse repletus:
In terra quoque ut horrescant, ac tecta requirant.

LUCRET.

siderable degree of pleasure. Just before the storm has reached the vessel, the sea is covered with a white foam, which marks the rapid advance of the wind, sweeping with the fury of a whirlwind over the surface of the water. The sea almost immediately loses its glassy smoothness, and is changed into the most turbulent billows. It is usually called a *white tornado*, when, at sea, no rain accompanies or follows the wind; and this is in general more violent than when rain falls. The temperature of the air is greatly affected by a tornado; and it is not unusual for the thermometer to suffer a depression of 8 or 10 degrees within two or three minutes after the storm has come on. After a tornado, the body feels invigorated and more active, and the mind recovers much of that elasticity which long continued heat tends greatly to impair.

The months of April, May, June, October, and November, are those in which tornados most frequently occur. They appear very rarely in any of the other months. There is no reason to think that tornados produce any bad effects upon the human constitution. During their occurrence, no instance appeared at Free Town of any one being taken ill in consequence; nor did they seem to have any influence upon the course of the remittent fever of the country.

The heat of the climate, though much greater than an European has been accustomed to for any length of time, is not so intolerable as might be supposed. The facility with which the perspira-

tion flows, on using the slightest exercise, obviates the oppressive effects of heat so common in colder climates; and the evaporation from the surface of the skin, which in health is constantly proceeding, produces a refreshing degree of coolness. The atmosphere is in general tempered by a cooling breeze, which in the dry season blows during the day very regularly from the west and north west quarters, hence called the sea breeze; this is replaced at night by the land breeze, which blows from the east or south-east. During the rainy season, the wind blows chiefly between the south and south-west points, whence also the rain comes:

——— unde nigerrimus auster
Nascitur, & pluvio contristat frigore cælum.

GEORG. III. 279.

At this season, also a heavy surf beats upon the shore, the sky is often obscured with mist and murky clouds, and the wind is frequently boisterous, particularly at sea, where it merits the epithet bestowed upon it by the poet, "*Creber procellis Africus**." During the dry season, there

* Milton likewise notices the fury of these winds, which

——— rend the woods, and seas upturn;
With adverse blast upturns them from the south,
Notus and Afer black with thund'rous clouds
From Serrationa.

This turbulent state is agreeably contrasted during the dry season, when the sea may be compared to a polished mirror, and often appears scarcely ruffled by the breeze which sports upon its surface. The poet says with truth—

S'al soffiâr d'austro nemboso
Crolla in mar gli scogli alteri

is generally a haziness in the air at Sierra Leone, which abates in some measure the heat of the sun's rays, and often obscures distant objects so much as to prevent the eye from extending above five or six miles. This gives the sky a very uniform appearance, and prevents the clouds from assuming that variety of gay and distinct forms so common in England. Immediately after a tornado, indeed, the atmosphere is very clear, and remote objects appear to be brought within half their former distance. At this time

The groves, the mountain tops, the headland heights
Stand all apparent, not a vapour streaks
The boundless blue.

COWPER'S TRANSLATION OF HOMER.

Those rich and beautiful tints, which appear in more temperate climates,

When in the western sky the downward sun
Looks out effulgent from amid the flush
Of broken clouds, gay shifting to his beams,

are seldom seen in Africa. The setting sun on the verge of the horizon resembles a large globe of fire, and may be viewed without exciting the least sensation of pain. The rising sun, which is rarely visible until it be a few degrees above the horizon, appears, commonly, in like manner, "shorn of his beams," and incapable of affecting the sight.

L'onda torbida spumante ;
Dolce increspa il tergo ondosso,
Sciolti i Nembi oscuri e feri,
Aura tremula e vagante.

L'EURIDICE DI RINUCCINI.

Twilight, here is of very short duration. Almost immediately after the disappearance of the sun, night begins to spread her mantle over the earth. This is foretold by a concert of crickets*, lizards, &c. which continue their stridulous notes through the night. Sometimes, as if by mutual consent, a solemn pause is made for a few moments; after which the vocal band proceed with redoubled ardour. Upon the falling of a few drops of rain, the concert is instantly joined by the deep bass of the frogs, and may be heard above half a mile from the shore.

The longest day, at Sierra Leone, consists of 12h. 29' and 45"; the shortest is only 11h. 30' 14". The difference of time between London and Free Town is 54' and 52". The moon is sometimes seen within twenty four hours of the change; but it is when her orb is full, that she appears transcendently beautiful in that region of the

* Ligon, in his entertaining History of Barbadoes, gives the following curious account of these animals:—"They lye all day in holes and hollow trees; and as soon as the sun is downe, they begin their tunes, which are neither singing nor crying, but the shrillest voyces that ever I heard: nothing can be so neerely resembled to it as the mouths of a pack of small beagles at a distance; and so lively and chirping the noyse is, as nothing can be more delightful to the eares, if there were not too much of it; for the musick hath no intermission till morning, and then all is husht." One species of cricket, *Grylla Talpa*, makes a noise more acute and piercing to the ears than the filing of a saw; it is difficult to discover where the animal is concealed, as sometimes the noise appears to come from one corner of the house, when it immediately changes to the roof, or seems to come through one of the walls. In this manner does this tormenting insect continue through the night to harass the sick, and prevent the approach of sleep.

world. Nor will it seem strange to one who has experienced the charms of a clear moon-light night succeeding the blaze of a vertical sun, heightened by the solitude and picturesque beauty of the surrounding scenery, that a rude people should pay divine honours to this luminary.

When a heavy shower of rain has ceased, and the sun breaks out through the fog, a thick steam is raised from the surface of the earth, which often rests for some time upon the sides of the hills, and covers their summits as with a cap. Upon some parts of the coast, these appearances are called smokes, and are supposed to be peculiarly noxious: they frequently are of a reddish hue, and are then thought to have acquired the highest degree of malignancy; this, however, is not the case, as it depends merely upon the refraction of the rays of light; nor does it appear that they possess any hurtful qualities, independent of moisture.

The air upon the sea coast is in general so humid, that salt and sugar can scarcely be preserved in a dry and hard state. Iron is so speedily corroded by rust, that a thick bar of that metal, which has lain on the ground five or six years, may be broken in pieces with little difficulty; and leather soon becomes mouldy, and rots. This moist state of the atmosphere is not experienced at some distance from the sea; and in the interior parts of the country it is said to be common for a man to leave to his son, in good condition and well polished, the musket which he has used for forty

years. In the earlier part of the dry season, and in calm weather, the vapours exhaled from the ground by the heat of the sun are returned to it during the night in very copious dews.

The river of Sierra Leone, owing to its breadth, its vicinity to the sea, and the breeze which pretty constantly passes over it, is seldom covered with fogs, except during the rainy season; but in some of the rivers at a distance from the sea coast, fogs are very dense, and continue to brood upon the surface of the water for two or three hours after the sun has risen. As the heat of the water continues at all times pretty equable, the evaporation from the surface of the smaller rivers goes on during the whole night, but as the heat of the atmosphere gradually diminishes, until near sun-rise, when it has reached its minimum; the vapour is precipitated in a very copious dew, which is astonishingly chilling to the body. I have often observed this at sea, at a distance from the coast, where the deck and sails were as wet in the morning as if a heavy rain had fallen in the night.

The mean degree of heat at Sierra Leone may be fixed at 84° of Fahrenheit's thermometer; this is, however, to be understood of Free Town, where my observations were made, which is situated upon an elevated piece of ground, open to the sea, and cleared from surrounding wood. In the villages of the natives, the thermometer usually stands some degrees higher at noon than it does at Free Town. Upon the whole of the

sea coast also, the range of the thermometer is not so great as it is in the inland parts. Mr. Watt and Mr. Winterbottom* observed the thermometer as high as 103° in the shade, in a village of the Soosoo country ; and in their route through the districts of Tamiso and Benna, when returning from the Foola country, it rose frequently to 100° , and more than once to 102° , in the shade. In the Rio Nunez they observed the thermometer as low as 60° , attended with copious and chilling dews ; and in the Foola country they saw it as low as 51° .

* These gentlemen were sent by the Governor and Council of Sierra Leone on an embassy to Teembo, the capital of the Foola kingdom, from whence they returned by a different route, after having performed, on foot, a journey of 450 miles in a country hitherto untrod by Europeans ;

But the fair guerdon when we hope to find,
Comes the blind fury with th' abhorred sheers,
And slits the thin spun life.

I have now to lament the loss of these two friends, in whose happiness I was deeply interested: the one, an affectionate brother, not more endeared to me by the ties of blood than by those of esteem and love ; the other, a man of strict integrity and of unblemished character, whose active zeal in the cause to which he had dedicated the last years of his life had acquired the confidence of those whose benevolent views it was his constant study to promote.

Mr. Winterbottom was unfortunately lost by the upsetting of a boat, July 7th, 1794, about two months after his return from the Foola country, whilst going on shore at the Fort of Dix Cove, on the Gold Coast.

Mr. Watt died at Sierra Leone, June 1, 1795, while preparing, under the auspices of the Sierra Leone Company, for the arduous attempt of penetrating to Tombuctoo, and from thence, if practicable, to cross to the Mediterranean ; an undertaking which his prudence and perseverance had flattered his friends he would have been able to accomplish.

The following table contains the result of these gentlemen's observations with the thermometer during their journey in the Foola country, that is, from February 1st to April 29th, 1794.

Hours of Observation.	Lowest.	Highest.	Number of Observations.	Average.
6 A. M.	51	75	39	66
8 Do.	68	84	40	78
9 Do.	80	83	3	$81\frac{2}{3}$
12 Noon	85	97	49	93
1 P. M.	91	94	3	$92\frac{1}{3}$
2 Do.	81	103	21	96
3 Do.	86	101	10	$96\frac{4}{5}$
4 Do.	85	100	37	$92\frac{3}{4}$
6 Do.	70	86	12	$79\frac{1}{4}$
8 Do.	68	92	40	82

About 60 miles up the Rio Pongas I observed the thermometer rise to 101° in the shade; and when laid upon the ground in the sun, the mercury rose to 138° . The lowest degree of heat I remember to have observed in Africa, was at Port Logo, about 60 miles above Free Town, where the thermometer, about sun-rise, stood at 68° . The least degree of heat which I observed at Free Town, during a residence of near four years, was $71^{\circ} 5'$. This occurred during a tornado, which sunk the mercury 8° in less than two minutes: at the same place the thermometer did not rise higher than $98^{\circ}\dagger$.

† Two pretty smart shocks of an earthquake were felt at Sierra Leone during my residence there: the first happened on the 21st of May, 1795, about ten o'clock at night; the second occurred

It is an opinion received by many, that in tropical countries the mercury in the barometer is nearly stationary at all times, and of course is not affected by changes of the atmosphere, as in more northern countries. This opinion, however, is not drawn from experience. An attentive observation of the barometer at Sierra Leone, four times a day, for the space of two years, has fully convinced me, that though the range of this instrument be more confined, yet the mercury within certain limits is as sensible of any atmospheric change as in Europe. Some observers have fixed the range of the barometer within the tropics at $\frac{1}{16}$ of an inch; but at Sierra Leone it has rather exceeded one quarter of an inch. These observations on the barometer gave me also an opportunity of being fully convinced that a regular diurnal change actually takes place, and that the mercury invariably rises in the forenoon, and falls

on the 19th of June, at noon, in the same year. I experienced a third, March 28, 1796, at 10 P. M. though in a slighter degree, when travelling in the Soosoo country, in company with my friend, Dr. Afzelius. A Foola man, whom I met the day after the earthquake at Berrerie, having asked me the cause of it, and not being satisfied with my explanation, gave me one, which he said his book taught him. "The earth (said he) stands between the horns of a bull, and when this animal is sick, it causes the earth to shake, and when it breathes, the changes of the tide are occasioned." This account differs from that of the King of Laby, as related in my brother's journal, who, having asked what the earth stood upon, was answered it stood upon nothing, which the King said he did not believe. Being asked his opinion, he replied, "his book told him that the earth stood upon a rock, the rock stood upon a spirit, the spirit upon the back of a fish, the fish stood upon the water, the water on the wind, and that God Almighty knew what the wind stood upon."

in the afternoon. This circumstance has been noticed by several travellers and others, but more particularly by Pere Cotte, in France*, and has since been confirmed by Dr. Balfour, in some observations on the barometer, which he made at Calcutta, with uncommon accuracy and attention†.

* Analyt. Review, Nov. 1791.

† He imposed on himself the task of observing the state of that instrument every half hour, for an entire lunation, from the new moon on the 31st of March to that of the 29th of April, 1794. The result was, the discovery of a periodical variation in the barometer, consisting of *two* oscillations, which it performs regularly every twenty-four hours.

1. On every day that Dr. Balfour observed, with scarce any exception, the barometer constantly fell between ten at night and six in the morning, and this it did progressively, without any intermediate rising but in one instance.

2. Between six and ten in the morning the barometer constantly rose; it also did so progressively, and rarely with any intermediate falling.

3. Between ten in the morning and six at night, the barometer fell progressively, without a single exception.

4. Lastly, between six and ten at night the barometer rose progressively, without any intermediate falling, except in one instance.

These are Dr. Balfour's general conclusions; and accordingly, on casting an eye over the table, in which he has reduced his observations, one is immediately struck with the appearance of *two* maxima, viz. at ten at night and ten in the morning; and again, *two* minima, also diametrically opposite to one another, at six in the morning and six at night.

The quantity of these diurnal variations is not very considerable, but sufficient, at the same time, to leave no doubt of their reality. The difference between the contiguous maximum and minimum is sometimes $\frac{1}{10}$ of an inch, though in general it is less than half that quantity.

It does not appear that the above variations have any relation to the heat and cold of the atmosphere, or to the changes of the temperature of the mercury in the barometer, though, with respect to this last, we are not furnished with sufficient information.

Dews have always been considered as inimical to the human constitution; and in tropical countries, where the heated earth is constantly exhaling vapour, they have been thought more peculiarly noxious. Because dew is said to leave a greater residuum in distillation than rain water, it has been supposed to be more laden with heterogeneous particles than any other precipitation from the atmosphere. Where it arises immediately from swamps, it may be easily conceived that some of the particles or miasmata, which render these places so insalubrious, may be also carried up with it; but as the malignant vapour of marshes, when carried by winds, is deprived of its baneful influence at some distance from its source, either by dilution or precipitation, the same effect may be, and probably is produced upon it, by being raised to a certain height in the air, and by the change which it undergoes in quitting the aeriform state. It appears therefore more probable, that the pernicious effects of dew in warm climates arise from no heterogeneous mixture, but from the great degree of cold produced by it, owing to its falling in minute drops, which expose a large surface, and are therefore favourable to evaporation.

The rain of tropical countries has likewise been supposed to contain something extremely preju-

It seems not improbable, that they are connected with the reciprocations of the sea and land winds, during the day and night, or with the heating and cooling of the superincumbent atmosphere †.

† *Transac. of the Roy. Soc. of Ed. vol. iv.*

dicial to health, and with as little foundation. The natives upon the windward, and also on the Gold Coast, though they consider the rainy season as the most unhealthy, are not apprehensive of any bad effects from rain, when accidentally exposed to it. The women and children never wear any covering upon their head, and expose themselves with as little dread to heavy rain as they do to a scorching sun. Mr. Adanson says, the natives of Senegal are extremely apprehensive of the ill effects of being wet with rain, insomuch that if caught in a shower at sea, they will leap overboard to avoid it. "My negroes (says he), seeing there was no place of shelter for them, threw off their paans (or cloths, which they wear round the waist), and plunged into a little river, which passed close by the spot. This is their custom whenever caught in a storm, to jump into the water rather than run the risk of being wet by the rain, dreading its bad effects." It is easy to explain this, however, without being under the necessity of supposing any thing noxious in the tropical rains. A shower of rain, by its sudden fall, will sometimes sink the thermometer 8 or 10° in a very short time: so sudden a diminution of heat must be very sensibly felt in a climate where the temperature continues for several months very uniform, and always high, and where any diminution of it produces a sensation of chilliness. This is likely to be more severely felt after a long continued state of dry weather, which has rendered the body irritable, and hence the first showers which fall

have been considered as more peculiarly noxious*. At Sierra Leone, Europeans, who were *careful* in using those precautions which would be expedient in any country, have been frequently exposed to violent rain without experiencing any ill effects.

It has been said that the air on the coast of Africa is always in a moist state; this, however, admits of an exception during the prevalence of a peculiar, parching wind, called by the natives of the Gold Coast harmattan, and which is occasionally felt along the whole coast of Guinea, though it appears to be less frequent on the windward than upon the leeward coast. At Sierra Leone it had been only experienced a few times, and for a few hours each time, from the year 1792 to the year 1795, and was discovered merely by the peculiarly unpleasant parching effects which it produced on the skin. About the end of

* "The first rains which fall in Guinea are commonly supposed to be the most unhealthy; they have been known, in forty-eight hours, to render the leather of shoes quite mouldy and rotten; they stain clothes more than any other rain; and, soon after their commencement, the ground, even in places formerly dry and parched, swarms with frogs. At this time skins, part of the traffic at Senegal, quickly generate large worms; and it is remarked that the fowls, which greedily prey on other insects, refuse to feed on these. It has been farther observed, that woollen cloths, wet in those rains, and afterwards hung up to dry in the sun, have sometimes become full of maggots in a few hours." *Dr. Lind on the Diseases of Europeans, &c.*—This, however, proves no more than that some insect had considered the woollen cloth as a favourable nidus wherein to deposit its ova, or that they had been washed by the rain from the branches of trees, &c. Besides, it is well known that rain water is preserved for economical purposes, in large cisterns or tanks, in many of the West India Islands, and in most of the forts on the Gold Coast.

the year 1795, it continued to blow for ten successive days with considerable strength, from the same quarter as the land breeze; indeed it is to be observed, that wherever it blows, it is a land wind*. Although, during the time of its continuance, the thermometer was seldom or never below 78°, the wind was cold and chilling, its extreme dryness evaporating the perspiration, and thus producing cold. The body felt irritable, rather languid and uncomfortable, and the skin harsh and dry; the lips were chapped and painful, and the eyes sore, as if filled with fine dust, and appeared to be kept open with difficulty. The atmosphere was at the same time unusually dull and hazy. Notwithstanding the unpleasant sensations produced by this wind, it did not appear insalubrious; some few people laboured under slight colds, which could scarcely be attributed to the harmattan: in other respects, the colony was in a healthy state. It is a very curious circumstance, and hitherto unexplained, that the harmattan, which blows nearly from the same quarter as the usual land breeze, should possess qualities so essentially different. Nor does it appear probable that these can be derived, from blowing over any sandy desert, which deprives it of moisture. We are not acquainted with any

* The harmattan has been experienced at Sierra Leone every year since 1795. The time of its recurrence has generally been in the months of December or January. The usual length of its continuance, with some slight intermissions, has been from eight to fifteen days.

deserts within some hundred miles of Sierra Leone, in the direction of this wind, of sufficient extent for such an effect. Besides, a tract of land constantly and excessively heated, ought rather to occasion an uniform current of air towards itself.

Dr. Schotte speaks of this wind as blowing very frequently at Senegal, from the east, and adds, "that it blows sometimes very strong, and is always excessively *hot*, drying up the lakes and pools." "When it happens in April," it makes the weather "excessively hot, the sun being then in and about the zenith of Senegal, heating the vast plains of sand over which this wind is to pass before its arrival there, which, reverberating the received heat, may contribute to increase it; for I have observed, that this wind in the same month in the river Gambia was not hotter than any other wind, owing in all appearance to the difference of the soil of the country, which is not sandy like that of Senegal. I think it is the dust of the sand raised by this wind, which makes the atmosphere look hazy. I myself saw, in the year 1775, in the month of April, in a morning preceded by an easterly wind, such a dust imitating a fog in the air, that one could not see above twenty yards." "This wind is in general not reckoned unwholesome, either by the inhabitants or Europeans, though it feels very disagreeable." "When it sets in sooner or later in the month of October, it is considered by the inhabitants as producing a cessation of the sickly weather, and the beginning of healthier. In the months of December and Ja-

nuary, when the sun is at its greatest distance, it makes the weather feel very cold in the nights and mornings." On reading the above account, we may rather suspect that Dr. Schotte has mistaken the land breeze for an harmattan, from its being said so frequently to occur. There is no doubt but the situation of Senegal, in a sandy soil, must occasion some difference in the temperature of the breeze, and render it different from what it is in neighbouring rivers. At the same time it is probable that it chiefly occurs during the months of December and January, when it is said to feel cold, and that its appearance at other times is but of short duration, and therefore scarcely noticed. An accurate account of this extraordinary wind, taken from Mr. Norris, and agreeing in general with the phenomena observed at Sierra Leone, is given in a note below*.

* "On that part of the coast of Africa, which extends from Cape Verd to Cape Lopez, there are, in the months of December, January, and February, frequent returns of a wind from the north-east, which is known by the name of the harmattan wind. It probably may be felt further to the southward than Cape Lopez, but I cannot speak of what occurs in countries which I have not visited. It comes on indiscriminately at any hour of the day or night; at any time of the tide, or at any period of the moon's age, and continues a day or two, sometimes five or six; once I knew it to continue a fortnight; and there are generally three or four returns of it every season. It never rains in an harmattan; but it sometimes immediately succeeds a shower. It blows with moderate force, not quite so strong as the sea breeze which in the fair or dry season sets from the west, west-south-west, and south-west; but something stronger than the land-wind, which blows at night from the north, and north-north-west.

"This wind is always accompanied with an unusual gloominess, and haziness of the atmosphere; very few stars can be seen

through the fog; and the sun, concealed the greatest part of the day, appears only for a few hours about noon, and then of a mild red, exciting no painful sensation in the eye. No dew is perceived during the continuance of this wind; nor is there the least appearance of any moisture in the atmosphere. *Salt of tartar*, dissolved in water, so as to run upon a tile, and exposed to the harmattan, even in the night, becomes perfectly dry again in a few hours. Vegetables of every kind suffer considerably from it. All tender plants, and seeds just sprouting above the earth, are killed by it. The most flourishing ever-greens feel its baneful influence; the branches of the lemon, orange, and lime trees, droop; the leaves become flaccid and wither; and their fruits, robbed of their usual nourishment, are cramped in their growth, and ripen, or rather appear yellow, and become dry, before they have arrived at half their usual size. Every thing appears dull and faded; the grass withers, and dries like hay, of which circumstance the natives avail themselves, to burn it down in the vicinity of the roads, as well to keep them open, as to destroy the shelter which it affords to wild beasts, or even to enemies that might lurk concealed in it. The covers of books, shut up closely in a trunk, and protected by lying among clothes, bend back as if they had been exposed to a fire; the pannels of doors, window shutters, &c. split; and the joints of a well laid floor of seasoned wood will gape so wide that one may lay his finger in them. The sides and decks of ships become quite open and leaky; and veneered work flies to pieces from the contraction of the wood in different directions. If casks containing liquor, as wine or spirits, are not frequently wetted on the outside, they generally lose their contents.

“The air becomes considerably cooler in an harmattan; and the thermometer (Fahrenheit’s) is generally ten or twelve degrees below the common standard. The *natives* complain much of the severity of the weather on these occasions, and clothe themselves in their warmest apparel, to guard against it; though that alteration is highly grateful to the *Europeans* resident in the country, yet *they* also feel many inconveniencies, in common with the *blacks*; for the eyes, nostrils, lips, and palate, become disagreeably dry and uneasy: there is a necessity and inclination to drink often; not so much to quench the thirst, as to remove a painful aridity in the fauces: the lips and nose become chapped and sore; and though the air is cool, there is a disagreeable sensation of prickling heat upon the skin, as if it had been washed with spirits of hartshorn or strong lye. If this wind continues

five or six days, the scarf skin generally peels off from the hands and face, and even from the rest of the body if the harmattan continues a few days longer. Perspiration is considerably suppressed; but when sweat is excited by exercise, I have found it peculiarly acrid, tasting like spirits of wine diluted with water*.

“ So far its effects on the animal and vegetable world are very disagreeable, but it is also productive of some good. The state of the air is extremely conducive to health: it contributes surprisingly to the cure of old ulcers and cutaneous eruptions. Persons labouring under fluxes and intermitting fevers generally recover in an harmattan; and they who have been weakened and relaxed by fevers, and sinking under evacuations for the cure of them, particularly bleeding (which is often injudiciously repeated) have their lives saved, in spite of the Doctor. It stops the progress of epidemic diseases: the small pox, fluxes, and remittent fevers, not only disappear, but they who are labouring under these disorders, when an harmattan comes on, are almost sure of a speedy recovery. Infection is not then easily communicated. In the year 1770, I had above three hundred slaves on board a ship in Whydah Road, when the small pox appeared among them; the greater part of these were inoculated before an *harmattan* came on, and about seventy of them underwent that operation a few days after it set in: the former got very well through the disorder; none of the latter had either any sickness or eruption; we thought we had got clear of the disorder, but in a very few weeks it began to appear among these seventy; about fifty of them were inoculated the *second* time; the others had it in the natural way: an *harmattan* came on, and they *all* recovered, except one girl, who had a malignant ulcer on the inoculated spot, and died some time afterwards of a locked jaw. These salutary effects may probably be not universal, especially where the harmattan may come laden with the noisome effluvia of a putrid swamp, which is not the case in *this* part of the country.

“ The fog which accompanies the harmattan is occasioned by an infinite number of small particles floating in the air. They are so minute as to escape the touch, and elude every investigation that I could devise. I could not succeed in attempting to examine them by the microscope, though a part of them are deposited upon the grass, leaves of trees, and even upon the skin of

* Probably spirit of hartshorn is meant. The skin is at all times as salt as if sea water had been poured upon it, but is now rendered peculiarly purgent and acrid.

the negroes, which makes them appear whitish, or rather greyish. These particles do not fly far over the surface of the sea: the fog is not so thick on board the ships in Whydah Road, at two or three miles distance from the shore, as it is on the beach; and in proportion to the distance from the shore, the fog decreases: at four or five leagues distance from it the fog is entirely lost, though the wind is felt ten or twelve leagues off.

“ Upon a careful inquiry concerning the face of the country, I learn, that except a few rivers, and some swamps and lakes of no considerable extent, the country behind Whydah, for four hundred miles back, is covered with verdure, open plains of grass, with some clumps of trees, and some woods or forests. It rises with a gentle and gradual ascent, for about an hundred and fifty miles from the sea, before there is the appearance of a hill; and behind these hills I do not hear of any remarkable ranges of mountains. The surface is generally a loose sandy soil, below that a rich reddish earth, and not a stone to be found in it of the size of a walnut. I hear of no barren tracks of arid sand from whence those particles are likely to be detached by the harmattan. Dr. Lind writes, that “ the harmattan is said to arise from the conflux of several rivers about Benin;” but here, at *Abomey*, I felt it blowing from the north-east, stronger than I usually have elsewhere, and Benin bore from the south-east; therefore the harmattan was not likely to originate there. On the *Gold Coast*, it generally blows from the south-east; at the *Isles de Los*, a little to the northward of Sierra Leone, from the east-south-east; and at the river Gabon, near Cape Lopez, from the north-north-east. The intersection of these points, or (what I would prefer) an *east* line drawn from *Cape Verd*, cut by a north-east one from the centre of the *Gold Coast*; and a north line from Cape Lopez, would, I think, point out a probable source for this extraordinary wind: but this is mere conjecture of my own.”

CHAP. III.

AGRICULTURE. CLEARING THE GROUND. CULTIVATION OF RICE, &c. THE ARTICLES OF FOOD. FRUITS. VARIOUS USES OF THE PALM TREE.

THE quickness and luxuriance of vegetation in this country is such, that, without much exaggeration, the plants may be said visibly to grow. As the trees are not despoiled of their leaves at once, but have a constant succession, they always retain the appearance of summer: but although a considerable degree of verdure continues through the whole year, especially in such parts as are shaded by woods from the scorching heat of the sun, yet its brilliancy is remarkably increased on the falling of rain.

Agriculture, though in a rude and infant state, is practised along the whole extent of the western coast of Africa. As the natives in general, have no farther solicitude than to provide for the necessities of the present moment, they take little care to guard against contingencies, so that the failure of a single crop would be apt to produce a famine. They first chuse a spot of ground large enough for the purpose of a plantation or lugar*, as they term it. This is generally at a small distance from their town, and is propor-

* From the Portuguese word lugar, a place.

tioned to the number of its inhabitants. The greatest fatigue they undergo is in clearing the ground, which is done by merely cutting down the trees, the small ones close to the surface, and the larger ones a few feet above it. No care is taken to remove the stumps, nor even the trunks of the larger trees, but where each falls, there it is suffered to remain*. This labour is performed

* If nature had not wisely provided for the destruction of vegetables as rapidly as they are produced, sufficient space would not be left for them to grow in; but no sooner is a tree deprived of life, than myriads of white ants, called termites, commence their destructive attacks; so that it is very common to see the trunk of a tree lying upon the ground, which retains its form, but so scooped out by these insects, that it crumbles to pieces the moment the foot is placed upon it. For a very exact account of these wonderful animals, see the ingenious Mr. Smeathman's description of them in the 71st vol. of the Phil. Trans. The following curious and just account of their habitations is contained in C. Clusii *Curis posterioribus*, Antwerp, 1611, extracted from the journal of a Dutch admiral Van der Hagen.

“Cum dictus Navauha Var. der Hagen primo suo itinere, nempe anno 1598, rediret e Sabo versus Moutre in Guinea, conspicatus est in latissimis campis, et vasta ac paucissimis arboribus consita sterilique planitie, multos tumulos *e rubra terra* aggestos, haud secus ac in Belgio fanorum acervi per demissos campos sparsim conspici consueverunt fanificii tempore. Ad quos tumulos cum accedens, eosdem penitus adspicerit, animadvertit eos undiquaque pervios ac foratos esse, contextos a quibusdam exilibus vermiculis; quos ibidem affluenter circumrepentes ac vagantes contemplarierat, us apes apud nos alvearia sua circumcursare solent. Hi tumuli quantumvis trium orgyiarum altitudinem, aut circiter quindecim et sedecim pedum mensuram superarent, a minutulis hisce animalculis, ut Æthiopes inquilini affirmabant, triginta aut quadraginta dierum spatio conasi fuerant & aggesti. Quæ res profecto miranda est aspectu & dignissima notatu*.” Neither are animal substances left to be destroyed by the slow process
of

* Wigt magaz. der Phys. & Naturgeschichte.

during the dry season; and a short time before the rains are expected, the whole is set on fire, and the ground is thus rendered as clear as the flames can make it, the unburnt wood being left strewed over the field. The proper time for preparing the plantations is shewn by the particular situation in which the Pleiades, called by the Bulloms a-warrang; the only stars which they observe or distinguish by peculiar names, are to be seen at sunset. At this time of the year, columns of smoke may be seen rising all round the horizon, and at night a fiery tinge is communicated to the clouds. The grass, which grows here to the height of six or eight feet, and which a long continuance of dry weather has rendered very combustible, burns with great violence and rapidity, and in those parts where the country is more free from wood than around Sierra Leone, it is not safe to travel at this time of the year without being provided with materials for striking fire. When a traveller sees a torrent of flame rushing towards him, he can only hope to escape by making an-

of putrefaction, but are speedily devoured by those innumerable swarms of ants, (*formica*) which, as Ligon justly observes, are to be found "everywhere, under ground, where any hollow or loose earth is; amongst the roots of trees, upon the bodies, branches, leaves, and fruit of all trees, in all places without the houses, and within; upon the sides, walls, windows, and roofs without; and on the floors, side walls, ceilings, and windows within; tables, cupboards, beds, stools, all are covered with them." It is curious to observe how expeditiously they dissect a dead cockroach, and remove it piecemeal; though it be bigger than an hundred of them, "yet they will find the means to take hold of him, and lift him up; and having him above ground, away they carry him."

other fire, and following its progress until he secures a place for retreat.

It was probably towards the conclusion of the dry season, when Hanno reached the bounds of his navigation, as he takes notice in his *Periplus* of this custom of burning the grounds, the novel appearance of which created in him and his companions no small alarm. "Sailing quickly away thence," he says, "we passed by a country burning with fires and perfumes; and the streams of fire supplied thence fell into the sea. The country was impassable on account of the heat. We sailed quickly thence, being much terrified; and passing on for four days, we discovered, at night, a country full of fire; in the middle was a lofty fire, larger than the rest, which seemed to touch the stars. When day came, we discovered it to be a large hill, called the Chariot of the Gods. On the third day after our departure thence, having sailed by those streams of fire, we arrived at a bay called the Southern Horn *."

* Falconer's Voyage of Hanno.—The description which remains of this voyage is too brief and inaccurate to allow the real situation of the places to be assigned with certainty. Harduin supposes that Cape Palmas is meant by the Chariot of the Gods, or *Theon Ochema*; but Cape Mount appears more likely to be intended, as it answers better to the description there given of it, than Cape Palmas. The former is a lofty round hill, whose peculiar appearance might well impress their minds; this also agrees with the description of Pliny, if we suppose that by the *Flumen Bambotum Crocodilis et Hippopotamis refertum*, is intended the river Mitombo, or Sierra Leone, which appears probable from what immediately follows: *Ab eo montes perpetuos usque ad eum, quem Theon Ochema dicemus. Inde ad*

Having burnt as much of the wood as the fire will consume, as soon as a few showers of rain have fallen, and softened the dry and parched ground, the natives prepare to sow their rice or other grain. About Sierra Leone, the whole agricultural process consists in throwing the rice upon the ground, and slightly scratching it into the earth with a kind of hoe; it is very rare that any further care is bestowed upon it until nearly ripe. As soon as the grain is in the ear, some old people and children are sent to reside in a serry hut or hovel*, built in the middle of the

ad promontorium hesperium navigatione dierum ac noctium decem—as there is frequently a strong current here, the voyage from Cape Mount to Cape Palmas (promont. hesperium) might very probably be so long retarded. The peculiar appearance of the former mountain is thus noticed by an old writer: “Cabo Monte, qui est une montagne fort haute, and qui paroît de loïn aux mariniers qui viennent de devers l’ouest, comme si c’etoit une casque; mais quand on l’aborde de plus pres, on voit qu’il est de figure ovale & qu’il a une eminence au milieu qui ressemble a une selle de cheval.” *Dapper, Description de l’Afrique*. The facility with which such coasting voyages as that of Hanno’s may be continued for several days, in small open vessels, without landing, is shewn by the practice of the natives of Sierra Leone. When at sea in a canoe, they boil their rice with as much convenience as on shore. A large shallow basket filled with sand, and having three flat triangular stones stuck in it, with the sharp points placed uppermost for the pot to rest on, serves for the hearth; fire is procured by means of a gun lock, a little powder, and oakum, or dry moss, &c.: they appear to be unacquainted with the mode of procuring it by rubbing two dry sticks together. The salt water along-side is used to boil the rice, so that as long as wood for fuel and rice abound, together with sufficient fresh water to quench their thirst, they have no need to approach the shore.

* ——— domus, non ullo robore fulta,

Sed sterili junco, canaque interta palustri.

LUC. PHARS. v. 517.

lugar, in order to drive away the prodigious flocks of rice birds, *emberiza oryzivora*, which now appear, and which are continually on the watch to commit their depredations. The harvest, of which there is only one in the year, is generally completed within four months from the time of sowing. Their method of reaping is to cut off the spikes very close with a common knife, and after tying them up into sheaves about as large as the hand will conveniently grasp, to stick them upon the burnt stumps, which are plentifully scattered over the field. They never lay the sheaves up in granaries, but as soon as the harvest is cut, they thrash out the grain, by beating the ears, which are laid upon the ground, with two small sticks, one held in each hand. The grain is winnowed by means of a piece of mat, having a stick for a handle, not unlike an English hand fire-skreen. One person pours the grain from some height, and three or four standing round keep up a constant current of air with these fans or mats. In order to separate the husks more easily from the grain, the rice is steeped in hot water, and afterwards spread out on mats to dry in the sun. Sometimes the rice is dried in the sun, without having been previously moistened; in this state it is longer in drying, and the husks are with more difficulty separated; but the grain is much whiter than when it has been previously wet. The grain is afterwards preserved in large baskets, which will hold half a ton or more. In some parts of the

country these baskets are made in the form of a pitcher, narrow at the mouth, and bulging out below: when they stand exposed to the air, as is frequently the case, they are plastered on the outside with clay baked hard in the sun, and are then placed on a kind of tripod about three feet high, and covered with a thatched roof.

As the natives on the coast are ignorant of the advantages of manure, and probably are too idle to hoe the ground, they never raise two successive crops from the same plantation *: a new one is made every year, and the old one remains uncultivated for four, five, six, or seven years, according to the quantity of land conveniently situated for rice plantations, which may be possessed by them. The plantation is cultivated by all the inhabitants of the village, in common, and the produce is divided to every family in proportion to its numbers. The *head man* of the village claims from the general stock as much rice as, when poured over his head, standing erect, will reach to his mouth. This quantity is scarcely adequate to the expence which he incurs by ex-

* The unappropriated land belonging to a village is in general at the disposal of the head man, who, during his own life time, may alienate it at pleasure; but disputes are very apt to arise respecting the right of occupancy, however large the sum which may have been paid for it. It is most prudent for Europeans to make purchases on the condition of paying an annual rent, and if it has been stipulated in due form at a meeting of the head men of the country, and be afterwards punctually paid, the land may be transmitted to their heirs, provided they are at the same time strong enough to defend their acknowledged right.

exercising that hospitality to strangers and others, which is expected from him as a duty attached to his office.

Though each village and town has its public plantation, individuals are allowed to cultivate others for their own private use, and this they frequently do, employing sometimes their own labour, but generally slaves for that purpose. This custom is very prevalent among the Foolas, where land, in consequence, begins to be considered not as public but private property, and is subdivided into particular plantations, some of which are so extensive as to merit the appellation of farms. The Foolas have likewise made such considerable progress in the science of agriculture, as to raise successive crops from the same ground. Every year, before sowing time, they collect the weeds, &c. into heaps, and burn them, and then they hoe into the ground the ashes, after having mixed them with the dung of cattle, which they have in abundance *. The Foola na-

* Notwithstanding the comparatively improved state of agriculture among the Foolas, they still remain ignorant of the use of the plough, and are obliged to till the ground by mere strength of arm. Their country, however, being well cleared of wood, appears to be in a very favourable state for the introduction of this useful implement. There is scarce a doubt that they might easily be taught to apply the labour of the cattle, which they raise in great numbers, to the cultivation of the ground. As a proof that the Africans are not averse to the introduction of improvements into their country, during my residence at Sierra Leone, a chief of considerable importance, named Cuddy, came there from the river Gambia, attracted by curiosity, and a desire of information. This man, whose appearance instantly announced a mind of no
common

tion is the only one on this part of the coast to whom the title "Armentarius Afer" can be justly applied: cattle are indeed met with on many parts of the coast, but not in such numbers as in the Foola country. Mr. Winterbottom, my brother, in his Journal, speaks of "charming meadows with cattle grazing in them," and several times mentions herds consisting of above an hundred head, in good condition. These cattle are in size between the largest and smallest English breed. They are in general lean, and not well flavoured, but when fattened with better food than the coarse grass of the savannahs, their flesh is scarcely inferior to English beef. The common method of killing them is thus described in the journal just alluded to: "We were surprised at the dexterity with which a man threw a rope over a cow's head, whilst running full speed from some other men, who were in pursuit of her: having got the rope round the neck, they threw the beast upon its back, and tied its feet, and the old chief having first said the prayer of Bismillah, 'in the name of God,' without which no Mahomedan would touch the flesh, cuts its throat. They are very unskilful butchers. After skinning the animal, they cut off the quarters, and *afterwards* took the

common cast, was so much struck with what he saw there, that before he went away he engaged in his service two of the most ingenious mechanics in the colony, one of whom, a carpenter, among other things, was to make a plough, and the other was to teach his people the art of training oxen for the draught, and fixing them to the yoke. *For a further account of this person, see the Report of the Directors of the Sierra Leone Company, London, 1795.*

bowels out." In another place it is said, "they killed a bull for us this morning, which they butchered in a shocking manner, for they quartered it without skinning it, or cutting its throat."

From the Gambia downwards, as far as the Gold Coast, rice constitutes the chief support of the natives. In its stead, on the Gold Coast, they chiefly cultivate maize, or Indian corn^a, millet^b, and yams^c, though in the interior country rice is the general food. In the neighbourhood of Sierra Leone, they also cultivate beside rice^d, the plantain^e, the rival of the bread fruit, and occasionally raise maize, Guinea corn^f, ground nuts^g, sweet potatoes^h, millet, cassada, &c. This latter root, from which tapioca is obtained, is of two kinds, one called the sweet cassadaⁱ, which is perfectly innocent in every form; the other,

^a *Zea mays.* ^b *Holcus.* ^c *Dioscorea bulbifera.*

^d It is said, though, I apprehend, not very correctly, that one acre of rice yields more food than five acres of wheat*. The rice raised around Sierra Leone grows in dry grounds, and even upon the sides of hills, and is accounted much more nutritious than the Carolina rice. It grows so luxuriantly, particularly on the grain coast, that a very intelligent writer observes, "a supply might be drawn from thence sufficient for all the markets of Europe." He moreover adds, "it is extraordinary, that this rice should be finer in flavour, of a greater substance, more wholesome, and capable of preservation, than the rice of any other country whatever, and that in every point of view it should be superior to the rest." *Clarkson on the Impolicy of the Slave Trade.*

^e *Musa sapientum.*

^f *Panicum.*

^g *Arachis hypogea.*

^h *Convolvulus patatas.*

ⁱ *Jatropha janipha.*

* Lord Kaim's Sketches.

or bitter cassada*, when eaten raw or unprepared, is possessed of such deleterious powers as speedily to prove fatal to all animals who eat of it †.

When the root of the former is grated small, it is baked into bread, with no other preparation than pressing out the juice. It is uncertain whether the bitter cassada is to be found in Africa; it is distinguished from the sweet cassada by wanting the fibrous substance or pith which the latter contains. A variety of excellent fruits grow upon the coast, but no more attention is paid by the natives to their cultivation than to that of crabs

* *Jatropha manihot*.

† The pernicious effects of this root reside entirely in the milky juice with which it abounds, and which must first be carefully expressed before it be made into bread. Notwithstanding the fatal effects which are so speedily produced by this fluid when taken raw, it is frequently used by the inhabitants of Guinea to boil their meat in, and is then considered as a delicacy, and esteemed very wholesome. Dr. Clark, of Dominica, considers it "as the most powerful narcotic vegetable poison that we are acquainted with at present, not excepting even the cherry-laurel water. The Indians of South America, and the Caribs of these islands (West Indies) who appear to be the same race of men, boil this juice with cayenne pepper and salt, which they use as a sauce to their fish, and soak their cassada bread in it before eating it*." It appears that heat alone is insufficient to destroy its noxious qualities, this effect is produced by the capsicum or cayenne pepper, with which they season it, and which is found to be the most effectual antidote against its bad effects. Piso, speaking of the pine apple, says, the fresh juice of the fruit, or the wine in which it has been infused, is of service in suppression of urine and nephritic pains, and adds, that it is also of service against poisons, especially the juice of the manioc.

* *Med. Facts*, Vol. vii.

or blackberries in England. Ananas*, or pine apples and oranges†, are met with in great perfection. Grapes grow in great abundance also, but for want of cultivation they are too acerb to eat. Those introduced by the Sierra Leone Company from the island of St. Thomas are productive and well flavoured. The company have also introduced, with equal success, the granadillo, and in a little time, probably, the Africans will receive, through the same liberal source, the other delicious fruits of the West India islands‡. They have

* Bromelia ananas. † Aurantium dulcissimum.

‡ Mr. Park informs us, that in the course of his travels he did not see either the sugar cane, the coffee, or the cacao trees, and it appeared to him that the natives of those parts did not know them. He further adds, that the pine apple is unknown there, and that he only saw a few orange and banana trees near the mouth of the Gambia, which inclined him to doubt whether they were indigenous, or were planted there by white traders, or were originally introduced by the Portuguese. This is also noticed in the *Encyclopedie Methodique*, where it is said, "Il paroît que les arbres fruitiers, & en particulier les orangers, les citronniers, and les limons, sont, depuis la cote de Guinea, jusqu'a celle d'Angola, beaucoup plus communs, au moins vers les cotes, qu'ils ne le sont dans le reste du pays." *A l'article Medecine*, tom. i. p. 326. These observations render it probable that the above-mentioned fruits are not indigenous upon any part of the coast, though in some places they are to be found in great profusion, but have been introduced, probably by the Portuguese, as the Africans have no tradition on the subject, and regard them now as natives of their own country. Lemons and Seville oranges are also found at Sierra Leone, though in small quantities, as they are not esteemed by the natives; and they spring, no doubt, from the same source. Cacao trees are unknown upon the Windward Coast. Upon the Gold Coast cocoa trees are found in great abundance; they are also found in some of the rivers near Sierra Leone, but they did not grow in the latter place until planted there since the establishment of the colony.

also bananas^a, cocoa nuts^b, guayavas^c, water melons^d, papaws, several species of plumbs, and many wild fruits, unknown in other parts, some of which are very excellent.

Among all their vegetable productions, however, there is none for which they ought to be more grateful than for the palm tree, one of the most useful inhabitants of the forest, as well as one of its greatest ornaments. The leaves of the palm tree afford an excellent thatch for houses, and a kind of hemp of which fishing lines, &c. are made. The inner bark is manufactured into a thick kind of cloth, on various parts of the coast; and from the outer bark of the young tree are frequently manufactured baskets, mats, &c. This tree has been not unaptly compared to the mast of a large vessel, having its summit crowned with verdure. Its fruit^f, which is nearly as large as a hen's egg, when roasted is esteemed a great delicacy, and yields the palm oil, which they hold in much esteem, and use in all their dishes instead of butter. To procure the oil, the

^a *Musa paradisaica*

^b *Cocos nucifera*.

^c *Guayava psidium*.

^d *Anguria trilobata*.

^e *Carica papaya*.

^f The fruit of the palm tree is thus described by Froger, who visited this coast in the year 1695. "The negroes made a present to us, as a choice banquet, of certain large fruits that resemble small gourds, but, under the skin, is only a kind of substance like dressed flax: they cause them to be roasted under embers, and afterwards chew them to suck out the juice, which is as yellow as saffron: this fruit has a stone as large as an egg, and as hard as iron."

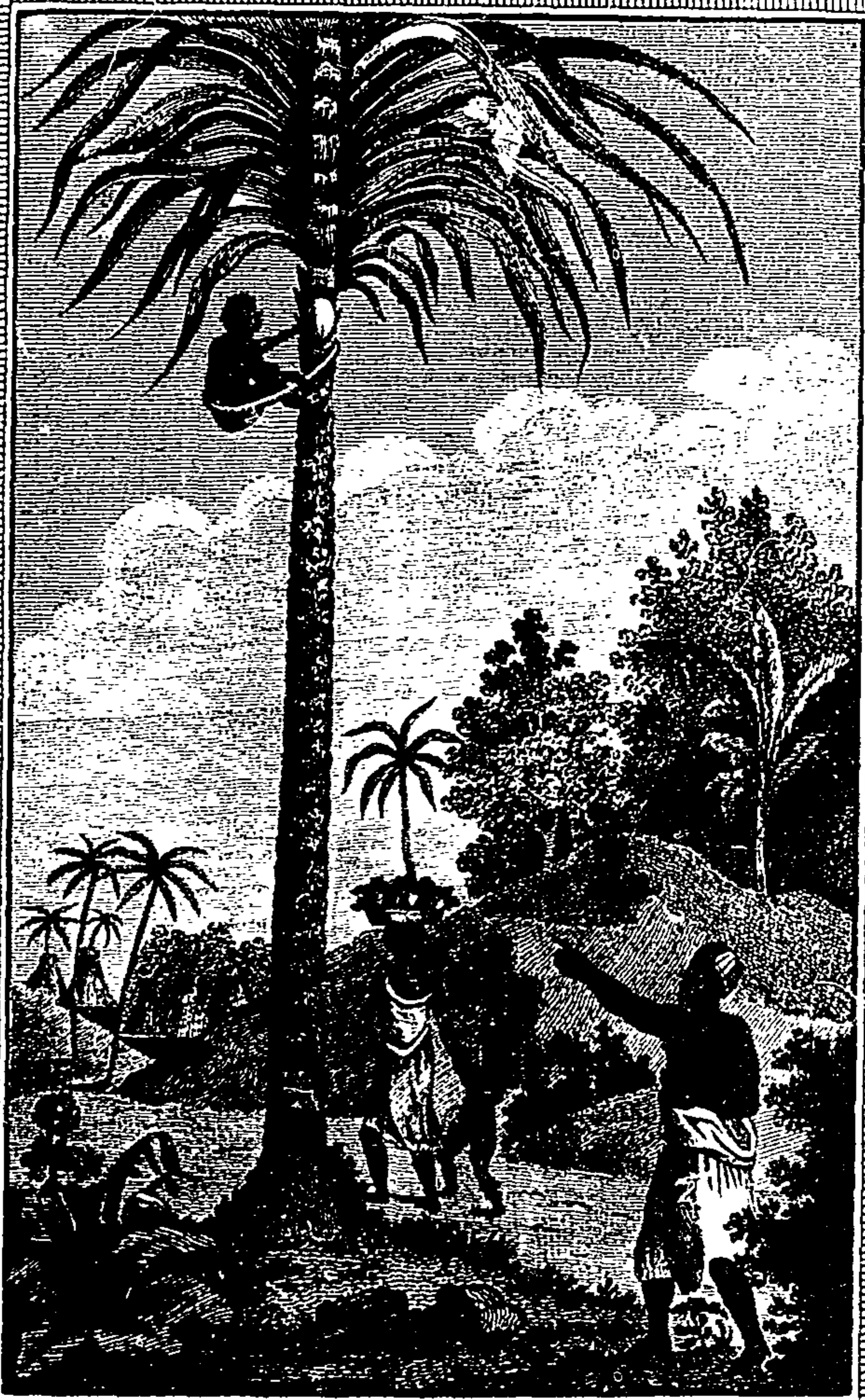
palm nuts are gathered when ripe, which is known by their fine red colour, and beaten in a mortar until the pulp is completely separated from the nucleus. A quantity of water is then added, and the whole mass is poured upon a kind of sieve, formed of split bamboo. The water, together with the pulpy part of the nut, passes through, and is received into a large iron pot, leaving behind the fibrous part and the stones; the former is thrown away, but the latter are reserved. The pot, with its contents, is placed upon the fire to boil, and as the oil, which is of a crimson colour, rises, they skim it off for use. When no more oil can be extracted by boiling, the contents of the iron pot are poured into a hole dug in the ground, and when the water has drained off, the solid part is taken out, and exposed to the sun to dry. To this is added, in order to form a soap; a quantity of the small unripe fruit of the papaw sliced, together with a certain proportion of an alkaline lixivium obtained by burning the leaves and stems of the plantain and banana trees, and the capsules of the wild cotton or pullom tree. The ashes are put into a kind of basket composed of bamboo, and water is poured upon them so as to obtain a saturated solution; the ingredients, to which this ley is added, are frequently stirred, and boiled until they become stiff. An oil is also extracted from the kernels of the palm nuts, the shells of which are broken between two stones, and the kernels picked out. The latter are then parched in an iron pot, and afterwards pounded

in a large mortar; they are next boiled in water, and the oil skimmed off as it floats on the surface. This is used for the same purposes as palm oil, but more nearly resembles butter, as it has no peculiar smell. This oil is mentioned by Cada Mosto, who made a voyage to Senegal, in the year 1455. He says, "they make use of a certain oil in the preparation of their victuals, though I could not learn whence they drew it, which possesses a three-fold property, that of smelling like violets, of tasting like oil of olives, and of tinging victuals like saffron, with a colour still finer*." Herodotus appears to describe the same kind of oil, when he says the Ethiopians wash themselves in a certain *fountain*, which renders their skins as shining as oil, and imparts to them a smell like violets †. To this cause he attributes their attaining so great an age, that of 120 years, hence called *Macrobia*, or long lived. As this tree does not grow in the Foola country, or at least not in sufficient abundance, the Foolas are obliged to purchase the oil, of which they are extremely fond, from their neighbours ‡.

* Voyages of the Portuguese during the 15th and 16th centuries.

† Herodot. *Thalia*, 23.

‡ The oil obtained from the fruit of a plant called *silicyprion* by Herodotus, possessed some of the properties of that of the palm nut, and was perhaps somewhat of the same nature. The Egyptians procured it in the same manner in which the Africans obtain their palm oil, and they used it to burn in their lamps, as well as to anoint their bodies, notwithstanding its unpleasant odour.



The palm tree, moreover, affords the natives for drink

“ Its freshning wine,
More bounteous far than all the frantic juice
Which Bacchus pours.”

To procure the palm wine requires no small degree of agility and address. As the trunk of the tree is too rough to allow the hands and knees to be applied in climbing to its summit, the natives use a kind of hoop of an elliptical form, made of bamboo, and open at one side. The person about to ascend, first passes the hoop round the stem of the tree, including himself also, he then fastens the hoop by twisting its two ends into a kind of knot. The hands are applied to the sides of the hoop, while the feet are firmly pressed against the tree, and the lower part of the back supported by the opposite end of the hoop. In order to advance, the person thus prepared draws his body a little forwards, keeping his feet steady, and at the same moment slips the hoop a little higher up the tree, after which he advances a step or two with his feet. In this manner he alternately raises the hoop and his feet, and thus advancing, he gains at length the upper part of the stem, just below where the branches are thrown off. Here, at the height of 50 or 60 feet, with no other support than the pressure of his feet against the tree, and of his back against the hoop, he sits with perfect composure. In a small bag hung round his neck or arm he carries an auger to bore the tree, and a gourd or calabash

to receive the wine. A hole is bored, about half an inch deep, below the crown of the tree, and into this is inserted a leaf rolled up like a funnel, the other end of it being put into the mouth of a calabash capable of containing several quarts, which is filled in the course of a single night. The liquor is discharged more abundantly during the coolness of the night and morning than in the heat of the day. About a quart of wine may thus be procured twice a day, for the space of a month, from each tree, without any injury to it, as it will yield the same quantity for many succeeding years. If, however, wine be taken from it for a longer time than about a month, the tree either dies, or requires a much longer respite to recover. When the palm wine has been drawn off, the hole is carefully filled up with mud, to prevent insects from depositing their eggs in it, the larvæ of which would destroy the tree. Upon the Kroo coast it is the custom to cut the tree down, and to burn or scorch the outside before they tap it, probably to excite a degree of fermentation. Palm wine, when fresh drawn, is sweet, remarkably cool and pleasant, and very much resembles whey in appearance, and somewhat in taste. In this state it is not in the least degree intoxicating; but after standing twenty-four hours it enters into the vinous fermentation, and becomes very inebriating, and on that account is preferred by the natives. In order to increase the intoxicating effects of palm wine, they infuse in it a little of the bark of a species

of plumb, called by the Bulloms rot; they also render the natural fermentation more brisk by adding the lees of a former brewing*. When drunk to excess, it is said to produce a violent head-ache, though perhaps only in those who are not much accustomed to it. Palm trees sometimes grow in sandy places, but are in general indicative of a good soil, and it is further remarked, that "wherever palm trees grow, however arid the soil, there is always water to be found, by opening the ground to the depth of ten to fifteen feet †." This has not escaped the observation of the Africans.

* Herodotus informs us, that the palm wine was procured in great quantity in the province of Babylon. From the same tree, (*phenix dactylifera*?) he says, was obtained bread, wine, and honey¹. This latter practice is explained by Dr. Shaw, who says, "in the East, they, on great occasions of festivity, cut off the branches of a strong tree, and scoop out the crown or top of the trunk into the form of a bason; in this collects every day, for the space of a fortnight or three weeks, about three quarts or a gallon of fluid, sweeter than, and of the consistence of, a thin syrup, which soon, however, thickens, ferments, and becomes intoxicating. This quantity of fluid daily diminishes, and in about six weeks or two months the tree is totally exhausted, and is only to be burnt²." It is probable that the African palm tree will not yield a similar produce, as the natives do not practise this method. They make use of the medullary part found in the crown of the tree as an article of food. This has been called the palm cabbage, from its resemblance to the vegetable of that name, both in appearance and taste.

† Vincent's Voyage of Nearchus.

¹ Clio, 193.

² Travels in the Levant.

CHAP. IV.

DIET. ART OF COOKERY. BREAD. ANIMAL FOOD.
MILK AND BUTTER. SPIRITUOUS LIQUORS. TO-
BACCO. KOLA.

THE diet of the Africans is simple, and consists chiefly of boiled rice and palm oil, to which is occasionally added, a small proportion of animal food. Their art of cookery is confined to boiling or stewing, and the soup, which is always made strong, is poured over the rice. Baking or roasting is seldom used, except by those who have much intercourse with Europeans*. They eat in general only twice a day, about ten o'clock in the forenoon, and again about sunset. The natives on the Gold Coast are remarkable for seasoning their

* Roast meat is called by the Bulloms, *eewees eetoia*, and by the Timmanees, *oshemina toi*, *i. e.* burnt meat. They preserve fish for a few days by drying it in the smoke. When going a journey, they sometimes fry it in palm oil until quite dry; and then pack it close in an earthen jar, previously well heated, and having its mouth closely covered over with plantain leaves. In this manner the fish may be preserved for three months, or longer. They use as a kind of sauce to their meat, the boiled leaf of a plant somewhat resembling spinage; the Bulloms call it *oopóm*, and the Timmanees *sikka*; the whites call it *palaver sauce*, a name which the natives have also adopted. The okra, *hibiscus esculentus*, which enters into the composition of the celebrated pepper pot of the West Indies, is often used for the same purpose by the natives. Eddoes, *arum sagittæ folium*, have been introduced by the Nova Scotia settlers.

food very high with capsicum, in what they call black soup, a very favourite dish there; they also substitute the yam for rice, and eat oftener in the day than the Timmanees. It has been remarked, that the fondness for high seasonings increases with the heat of the climate. The natives also around Sierra Leone use a great quantity of the red pepper* in their food; and if we may judge from its general use in warm climates, we must conclude it to be very wholesome. Dr. Bancroft gives it as his opinion, that the quantity of pepper which the natives of Guiana use, preserves them from the intermittents, which are endemial to the other inhabitants of Guiana, who do not follow their example. He further adds, that they are not afflicted with the gout, though it is particularly troublesome to the white inhabitants. The use of bread is not known upon the Windward Coast, except by those who have learned it from Europeans, as they do not commonly practise the art of reducing rice or maize into flour; but the plantain and yam make excellent substitutes for it. When the natives make bread, it is generally with flour imported from Europe; and by way of leaven they use palm wine in a state of fermentation, which raises bread as well or better than

* *Capsicum frutescens*, bird pepper. The general term for the different species of pepper is bengbay; the largest kind is distinguished in Bullom by the word bengbay pootoo; in Timmanee, by kik bengbay pootoo; and in Soosoo, by foorootoo bengbay, or white man's pepper: the reason alledged for this is, that it has a whitish appearance before it becomes ripe.

yeast. Upon the Gold Coast they use a kind of bread made from maize, which they call kankee bread. The women reduce the corn into a fine powder or dough, by rubbing it between two stones, and occasionally moistening it with water; it is left all night to turn sour, and is baked next day, and has somewhat the taste of rye bread*. Where nations use farinaceous substances as food, we generally find a want of these sooner complained of than that of other kinds of provisions, and accordingly a scarcity of bread is always felt before a scarcity of animal food. This is the case among the natives of Africa. An African, who has been feasted with every delicacy which an European table can afford, yet if rice has not constituted a part of his entertainment, will say, he has had *no meat* for so long a time, and on his return home will recur to his beloved food with redoubled ardour.

The animals which these nations use for food, are deer, buffaloes, sheep, goats, oxen, wild hogs, and fowls† The Guinea fowl, *numida meleagris*, is found abundantly in a wild state in the neighbourhood of the river Gambia, and other parts, but not so frequently near Sierra Leone. Those who live on the sea coast, or near the banks of the

* Isart Reise nach Guinea.

† Fowls, like those in Europe, are raised in prodigious numbers, and are excellent food. In the Foola country, Messrs. Watt and Winterbottom bought a common fowl for two beads, of the kind called in trade arrango's; and for two strings, each containing twenty beads, they purchased a sheep or goat.

river, use fish *, particularly oysters †, in a large proportion. In addition to the above articles of food, some nations eat monkeys, rats, and snakes. Upon the Kroo Coast, a dog is esteemed a singular delicacy, and in the kingdoms of Dahomy and Whidaw, the flesh of dogs is exposed in the public market for sale. A large worm, about the size of a man's thumb, is frequently found in the crown of the palm tree, when beginning to decay, and is considered as a great delicacy by the natives, when fried with palm oil ‡. These worms are said, in taste, "to partake of all the

* The title Ichthyophagi, or Fish-eaters, so frequently occurring in Herodotus and other ancient authors, was applied to such nations as lived partly on fish, and was probably intended as a mark of contempt, or to express their wretched mode of subsistence. Menelaus, relating his adventures in Egypt, seems to consider the living upon fish as not the least of his hardships. Of his companions he says,

— they around the isle, with hooks

The fishes snaring, roamed, by *famine urged*.

COWPER'S TRANSLATION OF HOMER.

† In the Bullom language, the same word, ee-way, signifies a *bird* and *oysters*; the latter has no singular. To distinguish which is meant, they either say ee-way 'n-tink-ay, mangrove oysters; or ee-way ee-toó-fay, a *forest bird*; or ee-way 'n-feé-lay, a *flying bird*.

‡ The sago tree, in the East Indies, has "like all the trees of the palm kind, a cabbage, which is eaten by the natives, though it is not so good or wholesome as that of the *aneebong*, or proper cabbage palm. When rotten, a sort of very fat white worms, called *sago worms*, with brown heads, are found in it, which the Indians roast, and think a great delicacy." *Stavorinus's Voyage to the East Indies*. These worms are much esteemed in the West Indies, where they are called groo-groo worms. They resemble marrow in taste, and are eaten roasted, and well seasoned with Guinea pepper, salt, and lime juice.

spices of India, as mace, cinnamon, cloves, nutmegs, &c. *” This was a very favourite dish of the late Mr. Smeathman, who resided several years on the island of Bananas. The natives still retain a pleasing remembrance of this ingenious man, whom they speak of by the title of the “Fly Catcher,” and relate many interesting anecdotes concerning him.

The Mahomedan nations, like the Jews, eat only those animals which chew the cud. A Foola being asked what was the greatest crime he could commit? answered, “The eating of pork, especially if it happened to be the flesh of a boar.” They are also very particular in adhering to the Jewish precept, “Flesh with the blood thereof ye shall not eat;” and they never eat meat unless it has been killed by one of their own religion, which is always done by cutting the throat of the animal, pronouncing at the same time the prayer Bismillah, In the name of God. They are equally scrupulous in avoiding to eat “of any thing that dieth of itself †”, a command

* Stedman’s History of Surinam.

† In the Koran it is also said, “Verily, he hath forbidden you to eat that which dieth of itself, and blood, and swine’s flesh, and that on which any other name but God’s hath been invocated. But he who is forced by necessity, not lusting, not returning to transgress, it shall be no crime in him if he eat of those things.” *Sale Ed.* c. ii. Before they begin to eat, this prayer Bismillah elrohman elrahim, In the name of God clement and merciful, is pronounced with much devotion; afterwards they return thanks with equal fervor by repeating Alhamdillah, God be praised, which is also done when they have met with extraordinary success.

which to a delicate European may appear unnecessary, as being of itself sufficiently disgusting. The necessity of the law, however, is pointed out by the little scruple with which the Timmanees, Bulloms, &c. eat animals by whatever means they may have been deprived of life, and even when tainted with putrefaction. The same is practised by gipsies in England, and by the negro slaves in the West Indies. Although they have several species of lizards, they use only one as an article of diet, the *guana*, *lacerta iguana*, which they esteem delicate food. The rivers abound with a great variety of fine fish, and they have several of the species found in the West Indies, such as old wives, different kinds of eels*, snappers, mullets, cavallies, barracootas, ten pounders, sword fish, sucking fish, &c. &c. The manatee, or hippopotamos, is frequently met with in the rivers, and is eagerly sought after by the natives to feast upon.

Milk and butter also constitute a large part of the diet of the Mahomedan nations: they use, however, only the milk of cows, for though they eat the flesh, they abhor the milk of goats. They never boil the milk, for fear of causing the cow to become dry, nor will they sell milk to any one who should practise it. The Bulloms entertain a similar prejudice respecting oranges, and will not sell

* “Barbararum gentium lautissimus cibus, & qui divites a plebe discernat.” *Plin. Hist. Nat.* 28. 35.

them to those who throw the skins into the fire, "lest it occasion the unripe fruit to fall off." When the milk is fresh drawn, a little salt is added to it before they drink it; this they reckon a great delicacy, probably because their own country does not produce it, and they are obliged to send to a great distance, and purchase it at a dear rate; in general, however, they do not drink the milk until it has turned sour. They make butter by putting the cream into a large gourd, and use a stick to churn with. To preserve butter, when new made, they boil it, and skim off the oily part, which is reserved for use; to this are added the leaves of a plant which impart to it a strong and rather disagreeable taste*. They make a kind of sauce,

* The Bulloms and Soosoos call butter made from cows milk, foolá-ya, probably because the art of making it was first taught them by the Foolas. Butter brought from Europe is called by the Bulloms mantinka. From the butter tree, called in Bullom chok, and in Timmanee 'ngut, they procure a substance which they use instead of butter. The fruit of this tree is large, and contains three or four seeds about the size of a walnut; these are first dried until the outer skin begins to crack, after which they are placed for a longer or shorter time over the smoke of the fire. The seeds are then parched in an iron pot, and bruised in a mortar; they are afterwards boiled in water, and as the oil rises to the surface it is skimmed off, and poured into a hole dug in the ground, and lined with a clean cotton cloth. Through this the water passes, and the butter acquires nearly the firmness and consistency of cheese, it is almost as white as chalk, which it much resembles; and is pleasant to the taste. It appears probable, that this is what Mr. Matthews has mistaken for a kind of clay; he says, "a saponaceous white earth is found in several parts of the country, which is of so very unctuous a nature, that the natives frequently eat it with their rice, as it dissolves like butter." The Bulloms call this butter n-chok, the Timmanees moot, and the Soosoos lamee.

or condiment, which they use to their food, called by the Foolas ken-da, and by the Soosos and Mandingos cim-bar-ra. It is composed of the seeds of the locust tree, *mimosa edulis*, called by the Timmanees to-boy, and by the Bulloms bay. The sweetish pulpy substance in which the seeds are involved is set to ferment, and afterwards spread out in the sun to dry; it is then beaten into a powder, and mixed with a certain proportion of ground nuts and pepper. They make a kind of gingerbread, which they highly esteem, composed of parched ground nuts powdered, to which is added honey and the flour of Guinea corn. The ground nuts form a very fine meal, which readily mixes with water, and is convenient for travellers; but it is oily, and rather difficult of digestion*. They also make cakes of rice and honey, which are not unpalatable †. All

* The ground nuts have this peculiarity, that when once planted, they will yield successively three annual crops without trouble; the two first are equally abundant, but the third much less so. Ground nuts are inclosed in a shell like an almond, which they a little resemble in taste. Before they are planted, the kernels are removed from the shell, and infused in water until they begin to germinate. The nuts grow in the earth, at the extremity of the root, and have a leaf resembling clover.

† Honey is obtained in some parts in great quantities, particularly in the neighbourhood of the river Gambia, from whence they export much wax. The Bulloms and Timmaness do not attend much to the rearing of bees, though they sometimes have hives in their villages, which they form from the trunk of the palm tree, having previously burnt the inside, and filled the ends up with wood. Of the wax they make candles, by rolling a cotton thread in a piece of wax. This appears to have been taught them by Europeans, from the similarity of the name. The Bulloms call a
candle

these nations drink chiefly water to their victuals. The Foolas and Mandingos very strictly abstain from fermented liquors, and from spirits, which they hold in such abhorrence, that if a single drop were to fall upon a clean garment, it would be rendered unfit to wear until washed. They frequently make a kind of mead, which they are fond of, and also drink an infusion of a berry in water, which has a sweetish taste, and is mixed with milk; but it is said to be remarkably flatulent, in consequence of which young persons are forbidden to drink it. Those nations, which are not Mahommedan, drink spirits to great excess, preferring it to the wine of the palm tree. The Soosos make a tolerably palatable liquor, having, however, a smoky taste, from the root of a plant called yin-ying. It is first burnt for a certain time, and the ashes are afterwards infused in water; a fermentation is thus produced, which renders it intoxicating when taken in large quantity. Upon most parts of the Gold Coast, a kind of beer, called pitto, is obtained from the Indian corn or maize, previously made into malt. The process is exactly the same as in Europe, only no hops are added to it. It is a pleasant drink, somewhat resembling small beer when a few days old, but has this inconvenience, that owing to its so

candle oo-kandir, the Timmanees kandir'r, and the Soosos kandáyree. The natives never place hives near lime bushes, because they say the bees dislike the smell; they feed upon every flower, except that of kola, and even on the blossoms of the red water tree. The natives think they are fond of red colours.

readily fermenting, it cannot be preserved in bottles*. Bosman says, at Whidah they brew a kind of beer so strong, that it does not yield to the strong beers in Holland, and adds, "all people here, the slaves not excepted, drink only beer; for water they will not drink, because it is drawn out of wells twenty or thirty fathoms † deep, and but six or eight feet wide, so that no sun can reach it, which renders it raw and cold as ice, and, consequently, very unwholesome in this hot country; for drinking it but a few days only brings an unavoidable fever, and the good beer being too hot, an European cannot do better than mix them in equal quantities, whereby he will have a pleasant and wholesome drink." The Bulloms make a kind of wine from a species of plumb called 'ng-bal, which they infuse in water, and set to ferment, when it becomes intoxicating. The natives of Bambouc make an inebriating liquor from honey, called besdon, of which they are extremely fond. For this purpose a little millet is infused in a large vessel full of water, called canary, resembling one of our earthen jars. Then they mix with it a certain quantity of honey. This liquor is exposed to the sun for eight or ten days: during this time it ferments, and becomes very strong and intoxicating. The Bulloms make a similar liquor called 'n-sookeea, which they prepare nearly in the same way as above. Sometimes a beer, or

* Isert.

† Mr. Park speaks of wells in the kingdom of Bondou, twenty-eight fathoms deep.

rather wine, is made from the ripe plantains. This fruit, when deprived of its skin, is bruised, and mixed with a certain quantity of water previously heated; after standing from 12 to 24 hours it is strained, and kept close in bottles for a week, when it becomes fit to drink. Ligon remarks, that this is a "strong and pleasant drinke, but it is to be drunk *sparingly*, for it is much stronger than sack, and is apt to mount up into the head."

The ingenuity of mankind shews itself perhaps in no instance more conspicuously than in the variety of means made use of to obtain intoxicating liquors. It is not difficult to imagine how, in those countries where the vine is indigenous, accident may have discovered to the inhabitants that the juice of grapes, placed in certain circumstances, will undergo a peculiar change, and be converted into a liquor possessing a pleasant taste, and other still more seducing qualities. It does not however appear so clear, how people in a rude and uncivilized state should attain the knowledge of a beverage similar in its effects to wine, and produced from a great variety of substances apparently so dissimilar to each other. Be this as it may, there are few nations, however barbarous in other respects, who are ignorant of the mode of exhilarating the spirits, and of producing a temporary delirium and agitation of mind*. The

* According to Herodotus, the Egyptians were the first who discovered the use of ale or beer, called zythum, which they procured from barley. It is said, that the inhabitants of the Marian

Kamschatdale feels himself enlivened by a liquor obtained from putrid fish; and the Tartar procures from the fermented milk of mares his favourite koumiss*.

The Mahomedan nations very religiously abstain from the use of spirits and fermented liquors of every kind; but they, as well as the other Africans, are universally enslaved by the charms of tobacco. This plant is not now cultivated by any of the natives in the neighbourhood of Sierra Leone, notwithstanding its indispensable necessity to them; but it appears to have been raised by them in considerable quantities two centuries ago. It is still found wild in many places, but is wholly disregarded. Tobacco is chiefly used in the form of

or Ladrone islands were ignorant of the use of fire before they were visited by the Spaniards; but even then they were acquainted with the mode of producing intoxication by means of the wine of the cocoa nut tree.

* The root of the *ara*, piper methysticum, chewed with the saliva, and spit into water, or into the liquor of the cocoa nut, ferments and forms a delicious draught to the South Sea islanders. It is curious to observe, that this disgusting practice is common to nations separated from each other by immense tracts of land and ocean. The natives of Guiana, Capt. Stedman informs us, obtain an inebriating liquor, called *pievorree*, by chewing cassava bread and spitting it out mixed with the saliva into a certain quantity of water; a fermentation is thus excited in the mixture, which has somewhat the taste of ale. The filthiness of the practice may be thought somewhat lessened, by the chewing process being confined to the females. The same prevails among the inhabitants of Chili¹ and Brazil, in the preparation of *chica*, an intoxicating drink, which has the colour and taste of sourish milk. This is produced from maize, first ground into flour and made into a mass like bread, which is chewed by old women until it becomes almost as thin as water gruel; it is then mixed with a certain proportion of water, and allowed to ferment.

¹ Marcgravii Tractat. de Chili Regione & Indigenis.

snuff, made by simply toasting the leaves of the plant before the fire until rendered friable, and then rubbing them in a small mortar, with which almost every one is provided. The Foolas have no idea of using it in any other way than snuff, and often use it as a dentifrice in this form; but those who live upon the coast frequently smoke this herb, a custom which they have probably copied from Europeans. A more innocent luxury in which they indulge, and which ranks in their esteem next to tobacco, is the chewing of kola. This is the fruit of a large and beautiful tree, which grows in abundance upon the coast, and is in as high esteem, and as much used by the natives of this part of Africa, as is the areca nut in the East Indies. The kola, seven or eight kernels of which, of the size and shape of a chesnut, are included in a thick green capsule, is a very pleasant bitter and astringent. It is much esteemed for its stomachic powers, and is generally washed down with a draught of cold water, to which it imparts a remarkably pleasant sweetish taste*. The Foolas and Mandingos generally eat a few grains of Malaguetta pepper †, with the kola, which they call gorra, to give it an agreeable pungency. It is also a frequent practice among them to chew with the kola the bark of a tree called by the Bulloms loonee, by the Timmanees alloop, and

* Jobson, who was at Gambia in 1618, speaking of the kola, says, "the taste is very bitter, yet causes that which is taken next after it to taste very sweet; for so I found it made water taste like white wine and sugar: fifty of them will buy a wife."

† *Amomum grana paradisi*.

by the Soosoos lazzar. This, when cut, exudes a milky juice, resembling, after it has been dried, the caoutchouc or elastic gum; the bark is gently astringent, cleans the mouth from sordes, and produces a copious flow of saliva. As a substitute for kola, the bark of a tree, called by the Bulloms and Timmanees *sá-pea*, is frequently used; it is a pretty strong astringent, possesses a considerable degree of bitterness, and is celebrated for its tonic powers.

The kola is either white, or of a dark red or purple colour, and tinges the saliva yellow. The Portuguese esteem it highly, and use it as a yellow dye; they send from Bissao as far as the river Scarcies, where it grows in great abundance, to procure it, and draw a considerable advantage by selling it to the inhabitants of those parts where it is scarce. Kola is always presented to the guests, in visits of ceremony or of friendship, and is looked upon as a mark of great politeness. It generally forms a part of every considerable present, and at public meetings, or palavers between different nations, it is a substitute for the olive branch. Two *white* kola presented by one party to the other betoken peace and a continuance of friendship, while two *red* ones are considered as an indication of war*.

* According to Niebuhr¹, in some parts of Arabia a practice prevails similar to that of chewing kola: "Nous trouvames chez les gens distingués des montagnes de l'Yemen, pendant les mois de Mai, Juin, & Juillet, des petites bottes de *káad*: ce sont les bourgeons d'un certain arbre, qu'on mange par amusement comme nous prenons du tabac, mais cette friandise ne nous accommodoit point."

¹ Description de l'Arabie.

CHAP. V.

SITUATION OF AFRICAN TOWNS. HOUSES. PALAVER
HOUSE. TOWNS OF THE MAHOMMEDANS.

IN the choice of a spot of ground whereon to build a town, security is the primary object of the Africans. This is owing to the barbarous custom, which has too long prevailed in that country, of seizing the unsuspecting inhabitants of villages, and hurrying them away into slavery. To guard against this danger they generally choose the bank of some small river or creek, lined with thick mangroves, and thus rendered difficult of access: or where such a situation cannot be conveniently procured, a small piece of ground is cleared, barely sufficient for the houses to stand upon, which is surrounded by, and as it were buried in the bosom of a thick impenetrable wood. The only approach to the town is by one or more narrow foot-paths, sometimes scarcely perceptible, which are carried in a winding direction round the place, so that a traveller wandering through these gloomy forests may suppose himself, even when arrived within a few yards of a town, to be many miles from any human habitation, until he is undeceived by the noise of the inhabitants within. This circumstance renders their towns for the most part unhealthy to Europeans, the breeze which comes to them through the woods being in general

laden with moisture, which makes the mornings and nights unpleasantly cool; while, during the middle of the day the breeze dying away, the heat reflected from the ground renders the air insupportably hot. The native inhabitants also suffer in their health from the same cause, though in a less degree. Having, however, no idea that their illness can have this origin, or proceed from the vicinity of swamps; whenever any extraordinary sickness or mortality occurs, they impute it to the effects of witchcraft, and remove to another spot, in hopes of thereby breaking the power of the incantation. Owing to this prejudice it is not uncommon to see a village, which has been many years inhabited, abandoned, and another formed at no great distance from it.

Their houses, being so entirely encircled by trees and bushes, are greatly infested, particularly in the rainy season, with sandflies and musquitos, whose bites are almost intolerable*. We might be led to imagine, from an observation made by Dr. Rush, that the situation of a town similar to that described above, was not unhealthy. "It is a well known fact," Dr. Rush observes, "that intermittents and bilious fevers have increased in Pennsylvania in proportion as the country has been

* Herodotus describes the methods used by the Egyptians to avoid the musquitos, which greatly infested that low and marshy country. They either slept in very lofty places or towers, whither these delicate insects could not ascend on account of the wind, or they made musquito curtains to their beds, by covering them with the fishing nets they had used in the day, as these flies will not pass through the meshes when tolerably small. II. 95.

cleared of its wood." He adds, however, that "it is equally certain that these fevers have lessened or disappeared in proportion as the country has been cultivated." It seems probable that these remarks only hold good where trees have been incautiously cut down in the neighbourhood of swamps; for experience has abundantly proved that towns which had been formerly sickly by having swamps near them, have become very healthy by having trees planted between them and the morass, the noxious parts of the vapour being thereby intercepted. The towns* or rather villages of the Bulloms and Timmanees, and the same may be said of most of the towns on the sea coast, are in general small, and seldom consist

* The names of their towns are generally descriptive of their situation, or of some remarkable occurrence which happened there, as in the following names of Bullom towns: Matcha, no path; Yella, surrounded with water; Tiama, close to great water; Pek-ken-tyeng, elephant broke wood there; Kak-billing, slap face; Fundoo, fall down; Woolpatie, old man; Makump, palm nut; Warryma, washed clean; Mabooga, nothing there; Patungwa, a town of slaves; Tumbo, begging town; Toolung, where they beat rice. Several towns are named after some tree growing near them, which is remarkable for its size or some other peculiarity, or for growing very abundantly there. Before these names the Bulloms place the Particle Kee as Kee-pul-lung, a town so called from a large pullom tree close to it; Kee-toónk, so called from a tree which bears a fruit resembling an almond; Kee 'k-bál, called after the rough brown plumb from which beer is made. The Timmanee towns, as has been already said, have Ro *in general* prefixed to them, as Ro-mak-baynee, a town where they finish things; Ro-yayma, want; Ro-sunt, in or upon the sand; Ro-payt-foo, new town; sometimes Ro is not used, as Muntée-matunk, cold water; Ro-bombo belonging to Bom-bo (a man's name). They frequently add Ro to the names of Bullom towns, as Ro-kec-pul-lung, Ro-kee-toonk, Ro-kee-'k-bal'.

of more than forty or fifty houses, but as we advance inland they become more populous. The villages are commonly built of a circular form, inclosing an area, in the midst of which is placed the palaver house, or town hall. The houses are placed so close to each other, that if one happens to catch fire, the whole town can hardly escape being burnt to the ground in a very short time. They are built either square, or more frequently of a circular form, and never consist of more than the ground floor. At Whidah the king alone enjoys the privilege of dwelling in a house of more than one story; and we are told that the tyrant Bossa Ahadee, desirous of letting the whole world see how much he honoured one of his favourite generals, "actually gave him leave to build *a house two stories high**." The buildings are composed of posts as thick as a man's thigh, one placed at each of the four corners, and sunk into the ground about a foot and a half; other smaller ones are placed between, at the distance of about two feet, and the intermediate spaces are filled up by plating with twigs or wattles. The walls, which are about six feet high, are plastered inside and outside with clay, which is left to harden in the sun: but to prevent their drying too quickly and cracking, they are frequently moistened with water, and allowed to stand for several days or weeks exposed, before the roof is put on. It is seldom that the house consists of more than one apartment, but

* Norris.

sometimes it is divided by a partition of wattles plastered with clay, reaching, however, only as high as the outside walls. Sometimes a kind of ceiling is made to the apartments, consisting of small spars of bamboo laid very close to each other, scarce strong enough to walk upon, and intended only as a store room to preserve their goods, &c.; but in general the space from the top of the walls upwards is left open, and then it somewhat resembles a large funnel. For the sake of coolness also, they leave the space of a foot open between the upper part of the wall and the roof. The roof, which is of thatch, composed of the branches of a species of bamboo, or of long grass, is generally of a conical form, which gives the town at a small distance the appearance of a collection of small hay stacks. The roof, by projecting a few feet beyond the outer walls, forms a kind of piazza, which affords shelter from the rain; and here, in the dry season, they spend much of their time, either swinging in a hammock, or reclined upon mats spread on a bank of earth raised about a foot and a half high, and two or three broad, called bunting, which runs round the outside of the house, except at the entrance.

The houses have seldom any other opening than the door, of which there are usually two, opposite to each other; these serve the purpose of keeping up a current of air; they also admit the light, and afford an exit to the smoke of the fire*, which is

* We should scarce suspect, from the present state of luxury in this country, that a very few centuries ago the convenience of a chimney was scarcely known in England. “Hollinshed, cotemporary
porary

made on the middle of the floor. The entrance of a house is seldom closed by any thing but a mat, which is occasionally let down, and is a sufficient barrier against all intruders. The most intimate friend will not presume to lift the mat and enter in, unless his salutation be returned*. Nay, when the door is thus slightly secured, a woman, by pronouncing the word moo-rádee, *I am busy*, can prevent her husband from entering, even though he be assured she is entertaining her gallant; his only remedy is to wait for their coming out. The Africans are not much burthened with household furniture: a few mats to sleep on, and cloths to guard them from the cold at night, an iron pot, a few calabashes, a copper kettle for water, a balay or basket, with a small box for the women's clothes, constitute the chief part of it.

It may be remarked in general, that the villages near the sea coast not only consist of fewer houses than those more inland, but they also shew less neatness and ingenuity in their construction, and in some places are not much superior, and

porary with Elizabeth of England, describes the rudeness of the preceding generation in the arts of life. "There were," he says, "very few chimnies, even in capital towns: the fire was laid to the wall, and the smoke issued out at the roof, or door, or window. The houses were wattled and plastered over with clay; and all the furniture and utensils were of wood. The people slept on straw pallets, with a log of wood for a pillow." *Kaim's Sketches*.

* In the Koran, ch. xxiv. it is said, "enter not any houses, besides your own houses, until ye have asked leave, and have saluted the family thereof." *Sale's Ed.*

probably differ only in form from the mapalia of the ancient Numidians. The town house, or palaver house, which they call búrree, differs in its construction from the others, being supported upon posts only, and for the sake of coolness having no walls. A number of strong posts are fixed in the ground at the distance of six or eight feet from each other, and placed in a circle, or square; upon the top of each of these posts, which are about six feet high, are placed circular pieces of wood about two feet in diameter, with a view of preventing rats and mice from climbing up and getting to the roof. A floor composed of bamboo sticks laid very close to each other is placed upon these circular plates of wood, and over all is the roof, which exactly resembles that of an ordinary house, except in not projecting so much beyond the sides. A bank of earth about a foot high, called by Europeans the mud bank, runs round the side of this building for the convenience of sitting or reclining upon. Some of these houses are large enough to contain two or three hundred people, and here they transact all public business between themselves and neighbours. The men pass much of their time here conversing with each other, and hearing the news of the town, and to this place strangers go, on their first entrance into a town, and sit down until an house be provided for their reception. This place being the chief resort of the inhabitants, may be considered as a kind of exchange, and it illustrates the ancient practice

of "sitting in the gate" of cities, where, as being the most public place, all business was transacted, justice was dispensed, and markets often held*. Similar motives induce the Africans to hold their meetings in the búree, or palaver house; for as they have no means of authenticating the principal transactions of civil life by written documents, they are very careful to affix to every engagement, whether public or private, such a degree of notoriety as shall insure its memorial. For this purpose every contract is made before respectable witnesses, and when these die, people still remain who recollect to have heard the relation of it from them. Children are allowed, and even required, to be present at these meetings, and by hearing the old people converse about past transactions, the facts become indelibly imprinted in their minds; and by this early and continued practice their memories acquire an extraordinary degree of strength. The upper part of the búree, or palaver house, serves as a granary to preserve their rice; the entrance is by a hole in the floor, shut by a sliding door, and they ascend to it by means of a post, in which notches are cut.

When we advance from the coast into the interior, particularly among the Mahomedan nations, we find the houses in general more lofty and spacious, and built with more neatness and

* Persons of rank used frequently to sit there to discharge the duty of hospitality to strangers, and to "all that went in at the gate."

solidity than among the Timmanees and Bulloms: they consist, however, only of the ground floor, which is not raised above the surface of the earth. The walls are ten or twelve feet high, mostly of a circular form, and from 20 to 30 feet in diameter: they are generally built of bricks, about four inches thick, eight inches broad, and a foot long, baked in the sun, and between each row of bricks is placed a thin layer of mud or clay softened with water. The roof is always of a conical form, and projects considerably beyond the walls, in order to preserve them from rain during the wet season. In thatching the house they begin from below, placing a number of bundles of dry grass as close together as possible, and fastening them to the rafters on the inside by withes; above is placed another layer of thatch, the ends of which reach within six or eight inches of the ends of the first layer, like the tiles of a house, and in this manner they proceed until it be completed. In order to carry off the water more easily, they give an acute angle to the roof. A thatch of this kind lasts about two or three years; but it is often necessary to secure it from the violence of the wind by tying split pieces of bamboo upon the sides. As they sit upon the mud bank in the day, and sleep upon it at night, a space, the length of a man, is made slightly concave all the way round, which raises the head and feet higher than the body. The floors, insides of the walls, and sleeping banks, are covered with a very smooth kind of plaster,

which soon becomes hard and compact ; it is composed of fresh cow dung and clay, beaten very well together. Their mosques are built in the same manner, except that they are of a square form, and loftier, and that the roof projects about fifteen feet beyond the top of the wall, and affords a very agreeable walk below. Their towns also are much larger than those round Sierra Leone, and are divided into narrow streets or lanes, and as each family inhabits a distinct inclosure, they cover a considerable space of ground. Teembo, the capital of the Foola kingdom, is computed to contain about 8000 inhabitants; Laby, the second in size, has about 5000; and several of those which I have visited in the Soosoo and Mandingo countries, contain from 1 to 2 or 3000 inhabitants. The towns of the Bulloms and Timmanees are not in general surrounded by walls or palisades, but defended merely by the intricacy of the path leading to them; but the towns of the Soosoos and Mandingos are surrounded either by a lofty palisade of bamboos, or by a wall built of bricks hardened in the sun, and defended from the weather in the rainy season by a kind of sloping thatched roof built over it. The entrance is generally through a gateway or porch, which is carefully shut at night. Sometimes the gate is secured by five or six heavy spars, which are perforated by the lintel, and swing upon it. During the day they are left free below, and are easily pushed forwards by people wishing to enter the town, but at night

they are secured by a bar, which runs across them at the bottom*.

* Among the Foolas and Mandingos forts are often built to guard their towns from sudden assaults. In my brother's journal it is said, the walls are built with country bricks, six feet in thickness, and surrounded by a deep and wide ditch; they are generally of a square form, having a tower at each corner, and the walls, which are strengthened with beams of timber, have loop holes to fire through. The same journal says, that a large tower had been built at Teembo by the late king's father, though then going fast to decay, and used only as a storehouse by the reigning king. Mamadoojon, Ali Mamme's father, had been engaged frequently in wars "with nations lying towards the rising and setting sun," and had always proved victorious, but his enemies sometimes collecting their forces, and coming upon him by surprise, had burnt his town, which induced him to build this fort.

CHAP. VI.

ORDINARY EMPLOYMENTS. FISHING. MANUFACTURING LEATHER. BLACKSMITHS. MANUFACTURE OF MATS, NETS, EARTHEN VESSELS, COTTON. BLUE DYE. DRESS OF MEN AND WOMEN. MOURNING. MODE OF PAINTING AND ANOINTING THEIR BODIES. POINTING THEIR TEETH. TATTOWING. CIRCUMCISION.

THE division of labour and separation of trades is almost unknown, or at least not practised among the people who inhabit the sea coast; the most ingenious man in the village is usually the blacksmith, joiner, architect, and weaver, the chief trades which they require or exercise. The active employment of the men consists in general either in clearing a piece of ground for a rice plantation, building or repairing their houses, rowing in their canoes, fishing, or shooting; the other parts of domestic œconomy being left entirely to the women. They have various methods of catching fish; sometimes they go out to sea in their canoes, and fish with a hook and line, which is fastened to the thumb, while they paddle the canoe. Sometimes two men wade up to their breasts in the sea, having a net about twenty or thirty feet in length, and sufficiently broad, which is stretched at both

ends by poles; it is then let down, and sinks to the bottom by weights appended to it. The men then walk very gradually and gently towards the shore, forming a kind of semicircle. This is a very dangerous mode, as the people are sometimes bitten by sharks. During my residence at Sierra Leone, an instance of this kind happened on the Bullom shore, where a young man had his leg so much lacerated by a shark, that he died very soon after. Another method is by shutting up the mouth of a creek, which is done by letting fall, at high water, a strong mat made for the purpose, which permits only the small fry to escape. A plant called by the Bulloms sabbee, and by the Timmanees makoo, is also frequently used to poison the fish, or rather to intoxicate them, and cause them to swim on the surface of the water. The same method is followed in the West Indies, where the bark of the dogwood tree is beaten small, steeped in salt water, and the infusion, which is of a red colour, is poured into the creek, river, &c. The women have an ingenious mode of catching a species of fish somewhat resembling the miller's thumb, (*cottus gobio*) found in England. At low water they go into some creek, and roll a great number of large leaves into the form of funnels, which they stick in the mud, with the mouth upwards; the fish, which are continually leaping up to a small height, hence called jumping fish, fall into these leafy traps, and are caught. Much of the men's time is taken up by set-

ting disputes among themselves or neighbours, which they call talking palavers, and of which they are so fond, that Africa, at the present day, may well deserve the title formerly given to it, *Nutricula Causidicorum*. When unoccupied by these employments they while away the hours in listless indolence, reclined upon mats, or sleeping in the shade. Indolence is, without doubt, a distinguishing feature in the character of Africans, as of all uncivilized nations. In their endeavours, however, to attain their favourite luxuries of tobacco and rum, no toil is thought too severe.

Among the Foolas, however, and other nations beyond them, some progress has been made in forming distinct occupations or trades. One set of men, called garrankees or shoemakers, are exclusively employed in manufacturing leather, and converting it into a variety of useful articles, as sandals, quivers for arrows, bridles, saddles, &c. As soon as an animal is killed, they take off the skin and stretch it, with the hair downwards, upon the ground, where it is retained by wooden pegs until sufficiently dried by the sun: the hair is taken off by an infusion of the ashes of the plantain tree, or some other vegetable, in water. They afterwards tan the skins, by rubbing them with the hands in an infusion of the bark of the mangrove tree in water. By means of an infusion in water of a bark called tallee, they impart to the leather a red colour equal to that of morocco in beauty; and by steeping the leather in a watery infusion of a bark called sinnee, they obtain a beautiful

shining black. Another class of men are equally celebrated as blacksmiths * : besides making every kind of necessary utensil, they inlay the handles and chase the blades of swords, &c. with great neatness, and they make a variety of elegant fancy ornaments for the women out of pieces of gold and silver dollars. A considerable degree of ingenuity in the arts with which they are acquainted must be allowed to all these nations, and is evident in the construction of their houses, and the formation of a variety of domestic and agricultural utensils with the rudest instruments. They form canoes, from a single tree, capable of carrying eight or ten tons †. Their mats shew much neatness and ingenuity; they are composed

* The smithy of the blacksmith is not very complex in its construction. A small hemisphere, not unlike the upper part of a beehive in appearance, is formed of clay beat up with the fibrous part of the palm nut. This is fixed to the ground, and is solid, having only a small tubular passage leading through in a slanting direction. To the upper orifice is fixed the nozzle of the bellows, and the air finds an exit by the lower one, which, like the entrance to a hive, is upon the ground, and close to it the fuel is placed; this always consists of charcoal made from the *red water tree*, the wood of which is so hard as almost to resist the blows of an ax. The bellows are composed of two circular boxes, from the bottom of each of which proceeds a wooden tube about a foot long; these tubes unite before they enter the clay tube. A piece of goat's skin is fixed to the top of each box, which is left open. When the bellows are worked, the mouths of the goat's skins are contracted by the hands, which are alternately raised and depressed; at the same time a half turn of the wrist admits or excludes the air, which is thus driven forward by a very regular blast. The anvil consists of a large smooth stone, or a flat piece of iron.

† Piso speaks of trees in the Brazils, which, when formed into canoes, are capable of holding 150 men. The same is also said by Mr. Edwards, of trees in the West Indies.

of split bamboo or grass, and wove into a great variety of patterns, and are stained with very beautiful and indelible colours. The red die is produced by boiling the slips of bamboo, &c. with chips of camwood: the black die is obtained by boiling the leaves of a tree called kiss kiss, which bears berries somewhat resembling grapes. They obtain a fine bright yellow die from the bark of a tree called by the Bulloms bongheea. The Bulloms make four different kinds of mats, which they distinguish by peculiar names. The first kind, which they call pelléss, is the smallest, and worked with many colours. The second kind is called bik, it is as fine as the former, and variegated in like manner, but is larger. The third kind is plain, and is called kobbo; it is of a straw colour, like the bamboo itself. The fourth is a large coarse kind, upon which they dry rice, &c. and is called wérrik. The writer of the *Voyage au Pays de Bambouc* says, that the rice straw in that country is so tall as to be “six pieds de hauteur au-dessus d’un homme à cheval;” with this, he observes, the natives thatch their huts, and make mats, which are eight feet in breadth, and thirty or thirty-five in length.

They have various substitutes for hemp and flax, of which they make fishing lines and nets equal in strength and durability to those of Europeans. For this purpose the Bulloms and Timmanees use the green leaves of the young palm tree; the outer skin of these is peeled off and

thrown away, the pulp is then separated from the fibres, by rubbing between the fingers until they remain perfectly white, after which they are dried in the sun. They also use for the same purposes a species of grass or flag, which grows in great abundance, and is called by the Bulloms ipperboh. The leaves are laid upon a board, and scraped with a thin piece of wood until freed from the pulp, and then dried in the sun.

The nets made from this are neither so strong nor so durable as those made from the palm leaves, but they are much easier prepared. Upon the Gold Coast, the same produce is obtained from the ananas. The leaves of this plant are steeped for a few days in water, then dried, and afterwards beaten with wooden mallets until the fibrous part only remains, which is equal in fineness to flax, and of a whiter colour.

Although they are ignorant of the use of the potter's wheel, they make earthen pots fit for every domestic use. The Bulloms use a blue kind of clay. The pots are first baked in the sun, and afterwards burnt with grass or rice straw. While the vessel is still hot, a little gum copal finely powdered is thrown into it, and well rubbed on with a piece of cloth fastened to the end of a stick like a mop, which answers instead of glazing, and prevents the water passing through. In the river Gambia they make vessels for holding water of a beautiful red clay, so porous that the water, which is continually oozing, is kept

cool by the evaporation. It may be doubted whether the Europeans have not had some merit in instructing the natives in this art, as a pot for drinking out of is called by the Bulloms, Timmanees, and Soosoos, pottee; the two former nations sometimes call it kenká and kannika.

Upon the Gold Coast, the accuracy and dexterity of the people called *Goldtakers*, employed by Europeans to detect false gold, is wonderful. They also fuse the gold dust*, and work it into buckles, buttons, and a great variety of trinkets. Bosman mentions the fine gold and silver hatbands, which these people make, the thread and contexture of which are so fine that he adds, "I question whether our European artists would not be put to it to imitate them." They raise upon most parts of the coast a sufficient quantity of cotton † for their own use, or with more propriety it may be said, in the words of Herodotus, they have trees *growing wild*, which, instead of fruit, bear wool, surpassing in beauty and goodness the wool of the sheep, and from these trees they procure their garments ‡. Virgil also notices the ne-

* The gold is generally procured by washing the sand of rivers or mountain streams after very heavy rains, which now become a "Pactolus with golden sands"; they very seldom dig below the surface, at least not many feet, nor are they so fortunate as to possess the ants mentioned by Herodotus, "rather smaller than dogs, but larger than foxes," which are so filled with the "sacra auri fames" as to be constantly employed in digging this precious metal out of the bowels of the earth. The learned Busbequius, in his Travels into Turkey, speaking of the presents sent to the Sultan by the Sophi, mentions "some beasts of an unusual sort, as, an *Indian ant*, as big as an ordinary dog."

† Gossypium.

‡ Herod. III. 106.

mora *Æthiopum molli canentia lana**. As they pay so little attention to the cultivation of this useful plant, which grows as common, and almost as much neglected as the thistle in England, it is generally of two short *a staple*, as it is termed in trade, to be worth exporting. They spin the cotton in a very tedious manner, by twirling a spindle, one end of which is loaded with clay, in a large shell or wooden dish, passing the thread between the finger and thumb of one hand. They dye the threads, which are very fine and even, several colours, which are both vivid and permanent, especially blue, of a kind equal or superior to the finest blues of Europe †. Upon the Gold Coast ‡,

* Georg. II. 120.

† “The blue is so much more beautiful and permanent than that which is extracted from the same plant (indigo) in other parts, that many have been led to doubt whether the African cloths brought into this country were dyed with indigo or not.” Two or three of the balls which they use having been procured, were found to be “the leaves of indigo rolled up, and in a very simple state.” *Clarkson on the Impolicy of the Slave Trade*. There is now, however, no room to question that the blue dye most commonly used by the natives on the Windward Coast is not indigo, but is obtained from a very different plant. A few roots of it, I am informed, have been lately planted within the settlement, so that an accurate description of it may soon be hoped for. Mr. Park observes, that the women dye cloth “of a rich and lasting blue colour by the following simple process: the leaves of the indigo, when fresh gathered, are pounded in a wooden mortar, and mixed in a large earthen jar, with a strong ley of wood ashes; chamberley is sometimes added. The cloth is steeped in this mixture, and allowed to remain until it has acquired the proper shade.” “Where indigo is not plentiful, they collect the leaves, and dry them in the sun, and when they wish to use them, they reduce a sufficient quantity to powder, and mix it with the ley as before mentioned.” *Park's Travels*, 281.

‡ Isert. l. c.

this blue dye is obtained by infusing the leaves of a species of bignonia, and the root of a species of tabernæmontana, in a solution of the ashes of the palm nut in water; they are then allowed to stand a few days in the cold, and the dye is ready. Into this dye the cotton threads are dipped a few times; they are then dried and washed, and the process is complete. From this cotton they weave cloths of various degrees of fineness, and of a great variety of pleasing patterns. The looms resemble those used in England to weave shalloons, except in being much narrower: they are so simple that in fine weather they are brought out of doors, and placed under the shade of a tree, and in rainy weather are taken into the house. Four strong stakes, about four feet long, fixed in the ground, compose the frame of the loom; the comb or reed, which is not above six or eight inches broad, is supported by the warp, and is not fixed to the upper part of the frame as in England. The warp is not rolled upon a beam, but is stretched out at its full length, and kept extended by a large stone laid upon it; the shuttle is formed like a canoe*. The men are the weavers, and as the cloth is wove so very narrow, not more than six inches in breadth, seven such pieces, between four and five feet in length, must be joined to form a cloth for a woman; but they are so exact in the pattern, that at a small distance the junctures cannot be easily discovered.

* Herodotus says, the loom was managed in Egypt by the men.

The common dress of the men among the Timmanees and Bulloms consists in a shirt, trowsers, and a woollen cap or hat, which they buy of Europeans. When at work in their plantations, they seldom wear more than a piece of cloth wrapped round the waist. Those who can afford it are fond of indulging their vanity in imitating the European mode of dress, and of displaying all the finery they can procure. They love to deck themselves in tawdry embroidered silk clothes, with a profusion of gold and silver tinsel, which often give to the wearers a very ludicrous appearance. The inhabitants of the Kroo Coast very seldom wear more than a piece of cloth, not larger than a handkerchief, wrapped round the loins, which, when rowing in their canoes, they take off, and fasten on the head to keep it dry*. The dress of the Fcolas and Mahommedans in general is more decent and becoming: it consists of a large flowing robe, generally of white cotton, resembling a surplice, but sometimes composed of a blue kind of cotton called baft, imported from Europe. They wear very wide drawers, reaching a little below the knee, and as a piece of finery, a piece of red cloth is frequently patched upon them behind in the bend of the knee. The legs are always bare; but on their feet they wear sandals. They cover the head either with coarse red worsted caps, such as are worn by the lower classes of workmen in Eng-

* The natives round Sierra Leone, and those upon the coast, generally shave the upper lip and cheeks, sometimes leaving a tuft of hair upon the chin.

land, or they wear caps of blue or red cloth: some of the Foolas roll a cotton cloth round the bottom of the cap, which makes it resemble a turban; a dress which is very becoming, and adds much dignity to the wearer's appearance. It is amusing to observe with what an air of conscious superiority and stateliness of gait a person shews himself in this dress, when surrounded by those who are more meanly attired. . . . The dress of the pagan African is never thought complete unless a variety of gree-grees* or amulets be superadded; and as these are to guard against every possible accident, the wearer often appears much incumbered with the load, and when in real danger is sometimes glad to rid himself of them.

The women, although fond of dress, and eager to display their charms to the best advantage, do not render themselves so ridiculous as the men, by aping European fashions. A large cotton cloth wrapped round the waist, and reaching to the ankles like a petticoat, constitutes the chief part of their dress; the arms and upper part of the body are left exposed, though sometimes to guard against cold, or perhaps rather to display a little finery, a second cloth or large handkerchief is carelessly thrown over the shoulders. Their heads and

* Gree-gree is a word of European introduction, adopted by the natives through complaisance. The Soosos call them seb'-bay, the Bulloms call them 'nseb'bay, and the Timmanees using the same word, call them maseb'bay. Roemer derives the word feteesh from the Portuguese fides, but it more probably is derived from feiticeira, a witch, or feiticaria, witchcraft.

feet are always uncovered. M. Chenier observes, that the hat is common to men and women among the Moors who travel, and the custom of wearing it came from Africa to Europe. Many of them wear small bells attached to their ankles, and when dancing, iron rings are put round the legs, which being partly hollowed, and having small pellets within, produce a jingling noise. These probably resemble the “ tinkling ornaments about their feet” worn by the Jewish ladies, for which they were reprov'd by the prophet Isaiah. This practice is forbidden in the Koran, where, speaking of the behaviour of women, it is said, “let them not make a noise with their feet, that their ornaments, which they hide may *thereby* be discovered, ch. xxiv. *Sale's Ed.*—They are fond of ornaments, such as beads, coral, &c. which they wear in their ears, and round their neck, waist, and ankles. Those who can afford it, have likewise pieces of gold and silver round their necks, and upon their arms they wear large silver rings or bracelets, called manillas, to the number of eight or ten, or more, on each, which are not complete circles, a part being wanting for the convenience of putting the wrist into them. Women belonging to the great men have frequently more than the value of twenty guineas in trinkets upon their persons. The children go entirely naked until two or three years of age, but still they are not left without ornaments. The hair is neatly plaited, and a string of coral, beads, a dollar, or an English shilling, is hung round the neck, an-

kles, or wrists. Among the Bulloms of Sherbro, the most enviable and most esteemed ornament for a child is a leopard's tooth hung to the wrist. This being a badge of freedom, cannot be worn by the child of a slave. From two or three years of age, until thirteen or fourteen, or even older, the only dress worn by girls is a piece of narrow cloth, three or four inches broad, called a tuntungee, somewhat like the T bandage of surgeons: this passes between the thighs, and over a string fastened round the waist, the ends of the cloth hanging down before and behind nearly as low as the feet. The dress of the boys is nearly the same as the girls, only the ends of the cloth do not hang loose. The tuntungee* distinguishes the girl from the married woman, and it is very common, when speaking of their husband, to say, that "he gave them a cloth," to denote that he took them when girls. When mourning for the loss of relations, the dress of the women undergoes a very singular change; the cloth is again laid aside, and the tuntungee used; the head and face are so far covered with a white night cap, that the wearer can only see her feet, unless she throws her head very far back. To take off this cap would occasion a very serious palaver, which it would require some expence to settle, nor can it be taken off but by the head man of the village. A number of white cowries, of a large size, are hung round the neck in two or three rows, and in

* This is the Soosoo name; the Bulloms call it oorés; the Timmanees, ukkáta.

some parts it is the custom to whiten the legs with chalk as high as the knees, and also the face, and neck, and shoulders.

Both men and women spend much time in having their hair plaited and braided, which is done in a great variety of fashions, and with singular neatness. Before the men go from home upon a journey, it is customary with them to spend several hours in having their hair dressed by the women; this is done with so much closeness and exactness as to retain its form for two or three weeks. The women also, in addition to their natural charms, call in the assistance of paint: the chief colours they make use of are blue, red, and white; the two latter are species of clays, which they find in abundance, but the former is generally Prussian blue, which they obtain from Europeans. These substances are first ground very smooth with a little water between two stones, and then applied to the forehead with the tips of the fingers, or by means of a small piece of stick cut like a pencil; with this they form squares, parallelograms, triangles, &c. according to the taste of the wearer. The business of the toilet is of sufficient importance to require the aid of a looking glass, and where this is wanting, which is seldom, recourse is had to that which nature has furnished, and a little water in a convenient vessel supplies its place.

The women are remarkable for the attention they bestow upon the cleanliness of their persons; they wash several times a day, and to preserve

the velvet smoothness and softness of their skins, they anoint themselves every day with the oil of the palm*, which at the same time serves the purpose of checking excessive perspiration, and guarding against the effects of cold †. Ladies of rank frequently use the oil obtained from the tallow tree, which does not possess any peculiar smell like that of the palm, and is therefore preferred: with these oils also they generally mix a gummy substance, which possesses an agreeable musky odour. The peculiar smell complained of in the African, arises chiefly from the various substances which they mix in the oil they anoint themselves with to render it of a more agreeable smell ‡.

* In order to render it of a proper consistence, it is mixed with goat's suet, and melted over the fire, which takes away its high red colour, and makes it nearly white.

† Notwithstanding their fondness for anointing the skin in health, they have no notion of using it as a remedy in sickness.

‡ Juvenal seems to express his dislike to these perfumes of the Africans, when he says,

Propter quod Romæ cum boccare nemo lavatur;
Quod tutos etiam facit a serpentibus Afros¹.

A modern beau, perfumed with the most fashionable scents of the present day, might have proved perhaps equally offensive to his nostrils. The sense of smell seems to be as much under the tyrannic influence of caprice and fashion as any of the others; and those perfumes which have been thought exquisite in one age, have been considered as detestable by a succeeding one. This has been the case with musk, which now no longer retains in Europe its former celebrity; but the Mahomedans are taught by the Koran, that this odoriferous substance is to contribute to their sensual delights in paradise². Good Mussulmen are there to be gratified, as a recompence for their abstinence in this world, with

¹ Sat. v. 90.

² Ouseley's Persian Miscellany.

Ear-rings are very generally worn by the natives in much the same way as in Europe, but in some parts, especially the Rio Pongas, it is the fashion to bore a number of holes in the outer circle of the ear, each of which is large enough to contain six or eight small rings: when in an undress these holes are filled up with pegs of wood.

In the neighbourhood of this river also, the odious custom of bringing the fore or incisor teeth to a sharp point very generally prevails; it is practised by other nations likewise, especially upon the Gold Coast; the Bulloms and Timma-

copious draughts of a delicious wine, preserved in vessels sealed with this fragrant substance. Paradise is said to be watered by a number of "springs and fountains, whose pebbles are rubies and emeralds, their earth of camphire, their beds of musk, and their sides of saffron." *Sale's Koran*¹. The Mahomedans of Africa entertain nearly the same opinions, only they suppose that rum is the liquor with which they are to be solaced, probably because it is more familiar to them than wine. With regard to their favourite perfumes, though they are fond of the sweet scent of the orange flower, and other fragrant vegetables, yet the more powerful odour of "musk is still with them the favourite of the toilet." It is probably owing to its being mentioned in the Koran, that musk is indebted for a part of the estimation in which it is held by eastern nations. A Persian poet describing the approach of his mistress, celebrates her musky fragrance, a compliment which, to an English ear, conveys rather an equivocal meaning, in the following translation by Sir William Jones².

Suavisne aura ex hortulo proveniens spirat ?

An moscho onusta caterva ex via Khoteni redit ?

Another poet of the same nation celebrating the charms of a beautiful maid, adds, "Nullum esse moscho odorem, si illum olfacimus, præter odorem hujus puellæ."

¹ Ils boiront d'un vin exquis & scellè,
Le cachet sera de muse.

KORAN, c. 83.

² *Poeseos Asiaticæ Comment.*

nees practise the same, but less frequently. To do this, they place beneath the tooth a thin flat piece of iron; a sharp-edged knife is laid edgewise upon the upper surface of the tooth, and a pretty smart blow is given to it with a piece of wood, by which a part of the tooth is chipped off, this is repeated until the tooth is made perfectly sharp, in which consists the chief beauty. They do not complain of much pain from the operation, nor are they afterwards subject to any uneasy sensations in those teeth from drinking cold or hot liquors. The chief reason for this strange custom, is the idea they entertain of its being ornamental. They also assign another cause, which is, to allow a sufficient space for the teeth to grow in; but that there is no truth in this notion is proved by the fine and regular teeth which those people have who do not follow this practice. The Foolas, however, must be excepted, who destroy their teeth by the extreme care which they take to clean them*. This practice of pointing the teeth is followed both by men and women.

The men frequently have marks (stigmata) made upon the forehead and temples, by means of needles, and rubbed over with gunpowder, or

* There is an observation of Professor Campers, which, though it rather contradicts his opinion, may appear to place this notion in a less ridiculous point of view. "The irregular position of the teeth, he observes, among the northern nations, depends upon the small space which the two inferior canine teeth leave; they push as it were the incisors out of their places, because the inhabitants of the north have narrower jaws than the more southern nations, and even still narrower than the Africans and Asiatics."

the juice of a fruit tree which leaves an indelible stain. The women also sometimes ornament their faces with these marks; but there is a species of tatowing, which is peculiar to the sex, called sora, or soccalla; it is used upon the back, breast, abdomen, and arms, forming a variety of figures upon the skin, which appears as if embossed. The figures intended to be represented are first drawn upon the skin with a small piece of stick dipped in wood ashes, after which the line is divided by a sharp pointed knife. The wound is then healed as quickly as possible, by washing it with an infusion of bullanta. This operation is not performed by a particular set of people, but is practised by any one who possesses sufficient skill to make the attempt. This custom has prevailed very generally among rude nations, and is of very great antiquity; it was in use to denote their grief and lamentation for the dead, and also implied that they had devoted themselves to the service of some particular idol, whose image they had impressed upon their bodies*. For this cause it is strictly forbidden in scripture. "Ye shall not cut yourselves, nor make any baldness between

* Herodotus informs us, that the Thracians considered it as a mark of honour to have the skin marked with punctures, and to want them was accounted dishonourable. v. 6. Abbé Raynal gives a very curious, though unsubstantial, reason for the origin of this custom: "Un des inconvenientes de cette couleur noire, image de la nuit, qui confond tous les objets, c'est que'elle a, en quelque sorte, obligé ces peuples à se cizeler le visage & la poitrine, à marqueter leur peau de diverses couleurs, pour se reconnoitre de loin."

your eyes for the dead;" and again, "Ye shall not make any cuttings in your flesh for the dead, *not print any marks upon you**." Although the people who allow this custom do not attach to it any superstitious ideas, but practise it merely for ornament, yet it seems probable that the Mahomedan nations are influenced by this prohibition, and for the same reasons, as they say their book forbids them to practise it. These incisions or marks are generally made during childhood, and are very common on the Gold Coast, where each nation has its peculiar mode of ornamenting themselves, so that by the disposition of the marks it is easy to know which country the person belongs to : for the most part the females possess the greatest number of these painful ornaments.

Circumcision is practised along the greatest part, or the whole, of the western coast of Africa, by the Hottentots and Caffres; and from its general use in those parts at present known, we may conclude that the practice pervades the whole of this great continent.

* Levit. xiv. 1. xix. 28.

CHAP. VII.

AMUSEMENTS. SINGING AND DANCING. MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS. RIDING. MAHOMMEDAN LITERATURE. GAMES OF CHANCE. NEGRO TALES. SALUTATION.

AMONG the chief amusements of the Bulloms and Timmanees must be reckoned singing and dancing, in both which accomplishments they so much excel, as to excite a degree of jealousy in their northern neighbours. Among the Foolas there is a set of people called singing men, who, like the ancient bards, travel about the country singing the praises of those who chuse to purchase renown, or venting their sarcasms upon such as have offended them. In the towns of the Bulloms there is frequently a person who professes this art; he is called *kárramukko*, or *the master*, and composes songs for the inhabitants, into which he introduces any remarkable event which has lately happened in the country. These diversions they practise every moonlight night, and such is their fondness for them, that a great part of the night is often spent in the most violent exertions*. Hanno, in his *Periplus*, gives an account

* Their dances are not calculated to display elegance of movement; the men plume themselves upon their activity, and make the most laboured exertions. The women are slow, and affect in
the

of this custom among the Africans, which exactly corresponds with their present practice. "Having come to a large bay, called the Western Horn; in this," he observes, "was a large island, and in the island a salt water lake, and in this another island, where, when we had landed, we could discover nothing in the day time except trees; but in the night we saw many fires burning, and heard the sound of pipes, cymbals, drums, and confused shouts. We were then afraid, and our diviners ordered us to abandon the island." Pliny also takes notice of these customs on the coast of Africa, in speaking of the neighbourhood of Mount Atlas: "Incolarum neminem interdium cerni: silere omnia, haud alio, quam solitudinum horrore: subire tacitam religionem animos propius accedentium, præterque horrorem elati

the dance a degree of bashful prudery. Sometimes they all move round in a large circle, singing and clapping hands in exact unison, at other times one or more trip lightly into the centre of the dance, and after performing a few steps resume their former places. The Bulloms of Sherbro, besides the sundee, or public dancing girls, have itinerant dancing masters. These are dressed in the most extravagant and ludicrous manner; upon their heads they have a fabric of bamboo, the size of a buck basket, and adorned with feathers. They wear a kind of petticoat of grass, and have upon their legs a number of iron rings, which make a jingling noise whenever the wearer moves. When one of these men comes to a town, the young women assemble, and form a ring, inclosing the dancing master. His mode of dancing consists in throwing himself into a variety of the most fatiguing attitudes, which he continues, though exposed to the rays of a scorching sun, until rivulets of perspiration flow down his body, and he appears exhausted with fatigue. Sometimes he sings in a loud and shrill voice, the women occasionally joining in the chorus, and clapping hands all at the same instant.

(montis Atlantis) super nubila, atque in viciniam lunaris circuli. Eundem noctibus micare crebris ignibus, Ægipanum Satyrorumque lascivia impleri, tiliarum ac fistulæ cantu, *tympanorumque & cymbalorum* sonitu strepere. These descriptions though they appear dressed in the garb of fiction, are perfectly reconcileable with truth, and clearly evince that the lapse of so many intervening ages has not produced any material change in the customs of the natives of this country. During the heat of the day, an African village is often nearly deserted by its inhabitants. At a certain part of the year, the men and young people of both sexes are in the day time at work in their plantations, which probably was the case when Hanno visited the coast: those who remain at home are overwhelmed in the lethargy of sleep; or, oppressed by the enervating heat, pursue their occupations in the shade, in languid silence. No sooner, however, does the departing sun permit the air to cool, than fresh vigour seems to animate each breast, and the village resounds with the tumult of loud mirth. About the same time the young people return to enjoy, after the fatigue of the day, their evening repast: then, "welcome joy and feast, midnight shout and revelry." The surrounding woods, in which the village is embosomed, soon re-echo with the sound of drums, and shouts joined with the "clam'rous cymbals shrill toned bells," which are heard at a prodigious distance. No wonder then that the imagination of strangers, just landed upon an unknown

coast, aided by the power of superstition, should attribute these uncouth noises to invisible spirits, and they might justly say,

Hæc loca capripedes satyros nymphasque tenere,
 (*Finitimi fingunt*), & Faunos esse loquuntur;
 Quorum noctivago strepitu, ludoque jocanti
 Adfirmant volgo taciturna silentia rumpi.

LUCR. iv. 584.

The fatigue of dancing may appear incompatible with that state of indolence in which these people universally love to indulge: but even indolence, that fruitful source of ennui, requires some respite; and to avoid the languor and listlessness arising from sloth too far indulged, which is more insupportable than continued bodily labour, the mind is gratified in being roused by an amusement in which it participates without fatigue to itself. This reason, perhaps, gave origin to so frivolous an amusement as that of dancing, one which modern times, probably from similar causes, find it convenient to retain.

Music, if we may apply the name to sounds distinguished rather by their obstreperousness than by their harmony, is seldom listened to alone, but is generally used as an accompaniment to the dance. Drums are their most common instruments, and are of various kinds; some of these are six feet in length, and are composed of the trunk of a large tree hollowed, and covered at both ends with a sheep or goat's skin, upon which they beat with a stick somewhat resembling a hammer. Another kind of drum, called

ëekilling, consists of the trunk of a tree hollowed out, but having both ends closed with wood, and in the side a longitudinal slit, upon which they beat alternately with two sticks: it emits a lugubrious sound, which is heard at a great distance. They have also a smaller kind of drum, about two feet long, hollow at both ends, and covered with skins, but contracted in the middle like an hour glass. This is carried under the left arm, when walking, and is beaten upon with a stick; it probably was intended, in passing through the woods, to frighten snakes and wild beasts from the path; and this accounts also for the small bells, and other tinkling ornaments, which the natives are fond of wearing. Upon the Gold Coast they make a kind of drum by covering a large calabash with a skin; this is hung round the neck, and beat upon with the flat hand*. When rowing in canoes also, they generally sing during the whole time, and one of the passengers accompanies the song with a small drum. One of the rowers sings a couplet, somewhat in a recitative voice, which is closed by a chorus in which they all join. When there are several rowers the couplet is repeated by a second person, and concluded by a general chorus. The subject of the song is either a description of some love intrigue, the praise of some woman celebrated for her beauty, &c. or it is of a satirical cast, lashing

* *Tympana tenta tonant palmis, & cymbala circum
Concava, raucisonoque minantur cornua cantu.*

LUCRET. ii. 618.

the vices of the neighbouring *head men*, or lampooning the females in general. They are commonly impromptu, seldom the result of much study, and frequently describe the passengers in a strain either of praise or of the most pointed ridicule. Besides the above, they have the *banja* or *merrywang*, as it is called in the West Indies, and the *Dundo*. "The first is an imperfect kind of violoncello, except that it is played on by the finger like the guitar; producing a dismal monotony of four notes. The *dundo* is precisely a *tabor**." The tusks of young elephants, called *scrivellas*, are hollowed and made into a kind of flute with stops, which emit a very shrill sound. Upon the Gold Coast, these are used like bugle horns, to convey the orders of the general in the time of an engagement, and so skilful are they, that if any part of the army appears to give ground, the general, by ordering his trumpeter to blow a particular note †, which is immediately understood, generally succeeds in imparting fresh courage, and in restoring them to order. Besides the *tabor* or *tamborine*, which Europeans have borrowed from the Africans, they have also taken from them another instrument, frequently used in the British army, called a *triangle*, which is a piece of iron of that form beat upon by a rod of the same metal, and used with the drum. These sounds, though extremely harsh for the most part, and rendered still more so by the shouting and

* Edwards's History of the West Indies.

† Isert.

clapping of hands, with which they are accompanied, yet when softened by distance, and heard in a serene moonlight night, in the midst of a thick wood, where a deep silence reigns, their monotony ceases to offend, and a pleasing effect is produced by them.

The Foolas, and indeed all the Mahommedans, are of a more serious disposition, and affect to hold dancing*, and such like trifling amusements, in the greatest contempt. Riding on horseback † is their favourite and almost only exercise. Sedentary amusements, as reading and writing, which flatter the literary pride, with which they

* Notwithstanding this contempt of the Foolas for dancing, it used formerly to be occasionally practised among them, particularly after completing their rice harvests. But during the reign of the late king's father, an insurrection of the slaves having taken place, whilst their masters were busy dancing, the custom was abolished. Since that period, no person has ventured to dance in the king's presence, or even in the capital; but when at a distance in the country, dancing is sometimes practised, though probably only by the lower order of people.

† Their horses are of the Arabian breed, and very swift; they are seldom above twelve hands high, are very well formed, and tolerably strong and spirited. They generally walk or gallop, and stop at full speed. Their saddles are peaked in the Turkish fashion, and are very heavy and inconvenient. The stirrups very much resemble a small fire shovel, and consist of a flat piece of iron the length of the foot, raised at the sides, and suspended to the saddle by small leathern thongs fixed to an iron bow crossing the middle of the stirrup. The bridle is still more inconvenient. The bit consists of a triangular piece of iron, which lies flat in the horse's mouth so long as the rein is slack, but the slightest check causes the sharp point to run into the roof of the horse's mouth, which renders him very tender mouthed, and apt to rear. Notwithstanding the Foola country is mountainous, and the roads very rough, they never shoe their horses.

are greatly puffed up, are most congenial to their minds: collating manuscripts, which they perform with much accuracy and industry, takes up likewise much of their time. The fondness for praising times which are past, appears to be a passion inherent in the human breast, and the epithet, *Laudator temporis acti*, is as much applicable to the Foolas at this day, as it was to the Romans in the time of Horace. The king of Labby told our travellers, that knowledge was in a declining state among them, adding, that their ancestors were much wiser one hundred years ago than the present generation, though he did not give any good reasons to substantiate this opinion*.

The Timmanees and Bulloms have moreover a variety of games which they practise with great pleasure, and take vast interest in, even when they are playing for amusement, and not for any stake of value. One of the games which they play at is called *k'yungee poo*, or the game of bamboos. For this purpose a square is traced

* The Mahomedan literati display the extent of their acquirements to the eyes of the vulgar by the following devices. When a man thinks himself capable of answering a respectable number of theological questions, he allows the ends of his turban to hang down on one side of his head. When he becomes still more learned, he allows both ends of the turban to hang down, one on each side of the head; a higher degree of learning is denoted by one end of the turban being passed under his chin, and fastened on the crown of the head; but the highest degree, or that which supposes him able to solve every question that can be proposed, is indicated by both ends of the turban being passed under the chin, and fastened on the crown of the head.

upon the ground, in the centre of which, at the corners, and in the middle of each side, a hole is formed. Two lines are drawn through the centre, which intersect each other, and pass through and beyond the lateral holes: at each of their extremities a hole or town, as they call it, is placed, which makes the number of towns amount to thirteen. Each player has eleven pieces of bamboo, which are distinguished by one set being longer than the other. In order to play, a bamboo is put into one of the corner towns, and as the *moves* are alternate, the other party does the same at the opposite corner. The first bamboo is then moved to one of the lateral towns, in order to allow others to be introduced. It may at the next move be placed in the centre, end town, &c. The bamboos may be moved forwards or backwards at pleasure, but they must rest at the first town they meet *in the path*, and not pass it for another. If one party be in a town at the extremity of a line, or in the centre, and the other be in the middle (or side town) having the town behind it unguarded, the opponent may step over into the unoccupied town, and thus take a man as at draughts. The players may introduce as many bamboos upon the board as they chuse, but seldom above four or five are brought forward at once, and these can only be introduced at the corner town, which each occupied at first.

This game does not appear to admit of such variety, nor is it so generally practised as the following, which is called *k'yungee-bel*, or the game




of palm nuts. To play at this, they have a board about two feet in length, sharp pointed at each end, and placed for convenience upon a stand. There are fourteen shallow round holes formed in it, six of which are on each side, and opposite to each other; these they call towns. The two other holes are placed one at each end, for the players to deposit the counters which they win. Each player has twenty-four palm nuts or counters, four of which he places in each town on that side of the board which he keeps to himself. The game consists in moving these palm nuts all round the board from left to right, but so that the whole number contained in any one town must be taken up and deposited one by one in the following right hand towns, as far as they will reach. If the last palm nut falls into one of the adversary's towns, which contain but one or two counters, they are taken up and placed in the depot; but if there be already three in the town, as the addition of another nut forms a complete set, they cannot be taken, but remain there without doing good to either party. Thus, if in the furthest town towards the left hand, there happen to be eight palm nuts, the player may take them up, and leaving this town empty, he deposits a counter in each of his own towns in succession towards the right, in addition to those they already contain; the remainder are deposited singly in the three first towns of his adversary. If in the town in which the *last* palm nut is placed there be only one or two counters, he not only

takes them, but also those in the first and second town, provided with his addition the number of counters contained amount only to three in each, but this wholly depends upon the last palm nut. In this manner the game proceeds, until one party has won as many counters as he began with, which decides the game in his favour. Simple as this game may appear, it is sufficiently interesting to employ their whole attention, and is pursued with equal avidity by the boys and girls, by matrons and infirm old men.

Upon these occasions, a number of people collect around the players, mutually assisting them with their advice, and appearing highly gratified with their success. These games being forbidden by the Koran, are seldom or never practised by the Mahommedans*.

The boys have also their peculiar sports: at the game called wur'n keur, or throwing of shells, four boys play, each of whom has nine shells. A circle is made on the ground, and four lines are drawn at right angles to each other, on the outside of the circle, but touching the circumference

thus, 

The boys squat down upon the ground, each in the midst of his own quarter. The two which sit opposite then throw their shells, which they endeavour to make strike against each other,

* "They will ask thee concerning wine, and games of chance; say unto them, they are criminal, and more fatal than useful." *Koran*, ch. ii.

and afterwards attempt to catch them. If the shells chance to fall within the circle, a general scramble ensues, each striving to catch for himself; but if they fall into one of the divisions belonging to any of the players they become his property. In this manner they proceed, until two of the party have won so many shells as to decide the game.

Another game of shells is played by only two boys, in the following manner: twelve shells are placed upon the ground, about a foot apart, and at the distance of twelve feet a similar row is formed opposite the former. One of the players begins by throwing a shell at the line of his antagonist; if he miss, his shell is retained, and the other throws. If the latter strike a shell, it is given to him, and his own is also returned. He now has two shells to throw, and as often as he hits his adversary's shells they are given to him, together with his own, which entitle him to an equal number of throws. The game proceeds thus, until one side is reduced to a single *man*. This last resource becomes now dignified with the title of king, and it must be hit three times successively before the game can be won.

Another favourite diversion, which requires both activity and address, is whipping tops. The inside of a gourd is scooped out through a small hole formed in the side, and a round piece of wood, about three inches long, is fixed to the bottom. To play at this they have a piece of cord fastened to the end of a stick, like a whip; the cord is wrapped round the wooden peg, and the

top is thrown into the air so as to give it a rotatory motion. This is continued by constantly whipping it, and thus some are able to keep the top suspended in the air for two or three hours, emitting a sound which may be heard at a considerable distance.

The young men are universally fond of giving proofs of their great agility; and many of them are extremely expert in vaulting, tumbling, and performing a variety of somersets, &c.

The natives round Sierra Leone are fond of inventing little histories or fables, in relating which they often spend a great part of the night: in these, animals are usually the dramatis personæ; the stratagems of the leopard and alligator are occasionally introduced, and form as brilliant a part as those of the fox in the fables of Æsop.

The two following stories may serve as specimens of their mode of relating them: an elephant and a goat had once a dispute, which could eat most, and in order to decide it, they went into a meadow as "big as from here to white man's country." After having eaten some time, the goat lay down upon a rock to chew the cud; "What are you doing," said the elephant to him? "I am eating this rock," replied the goat, "and when I have done, I will eat you." The elephant, terrified at this unexpected threat, betook himself to flight, and *since that time has never dared to enter a town in which there is a goat.*

A man and his wife were travelling through a thick wood, and carried with them their spoiled and froward child. Seeing a gourd lying near

the path, the child cried for it, and the father took it up, and pursued his journey. Soon afterwards one of those spirits called min, to whom the gourd belonged, awaking from his sleep, and being thirsty, seeks for his gourd bottle. Not finding it, he sings a couplet, which he repeats once or twice in a plaintive tone of voice, "Where are you, my gourd? Why have you gone away, and left me thus alone?" In answer to this, the gourd instantly replies in the same tone, "I have not run away from you, oh Min, but have been carried off against my will." The man, alarmed at this strange occurrence, throws down the gourd, and, with his wife and child, endeavours to escape by flight. Min, pursuing the direction of the sound, arrives at the spot, and takes up his gourd. Provoked at the theft, he resolves to find the culprit, and sings as before. "Where is the wretch who stole my gourd? I'll wreak my vengeance on his guilty head." The child then accuses itself, and is dropped by the father and mother, who pursue their flight in the most agonizing state of distress. Min soon reaches the place, and destroys the child, but persists in his intention of knowing the offender; hereupon the woman accuses herself, and is stabbed by the man in a fit of despair. Min, whose revenge is not yet glutted, on finding the body, repeats his demand, and the man is obliged to confess himself guilty. He attempts, however, to elude the search of his dreadful adversary, by concealing himself in the bushes, but is soon discovered, and sacri-

ficed to the resentment of Min. The moral which they draw from this story is, that children ought not to have every thing given to them which they cry for, as it may not only cause their own destruction, but that also of those most intimately connected with them. These questions and answers being formed into stanzas and sung, contribute much to relieve the tediousness of the narration. M. Adanson also speaks of the amusement which he received “from the fables, dialogues, and witty stories with which the negroes entertained each other alternately, according to their custom.”

In saluting each other there is a great appearance of friendship and cordiality, the palms of the right hands are laid upon each other, and drawn downwards to the extremities of the fingers, which are snapped. To offer the left hand would be considered as an unpardonable insult; the right hand only is used to eat with, the left being reserved for less honourable purposes*. The Mahomedan nations salute each other by saying, *Salám alaikum*, “Peace be between us:” which is returned by *Alaikum salama*, “There is peace between us.” This is the most natural, and probably the most ancient form of salutation, and, no doubt, originated in the apprehension of danger. It is the mode used in scripture;

* Niebuhr says of the Arabs, “*Qu'ils ne mangent qu'avec la main droite, parceque la gauche leur sert à s'essuyer & se laver le corps.*” The Timmanees call the right hand *kitta-kadde'a*, or eating hand; the Soosous call it *bélikay fang-ee*, or good hand.

Jacob enquiring after Laban's welfare and health, says, "Is there peace to him?" Among the Soosos, even the wives of a great man, when speaking to him, bend their bodies, and place one hand upon each knee; this is done also when passing by. The common people generally squat down upon the ground before the great man, until they catch his eye, when they open their business.

A custom prevails upon this part of the coast, which resembles the ancient practice of pouring out a libation; they seldom or never drink spirits, wine, &c. without spilling a little of it upon the ground, and wetting the gree-gree, or fetish, hung round their neck: at the same time they mutter a kind of short prayer.

CHAP. VIII.

GOVERNMENT. ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE. OR-
DEALS. RED WATER. DIVINATION. THE PURRAH.

THE government in Africa is in general monarchical, at least in name; for it must be acknowledged that in most cases the power of the aristocracy considerably overbalances that of the king, whose office is not hereditary, except, perhaps, in the Foola kingdom; and even there the rights of primogeniture are not much attended to, unless other circumstances give weight to the succession. Among the Timmanées and Buloms, the crown remains in the same family, but the chief or head men of the country upon whom the election of a king depends, are at liberty to nominate a very distant branch of that family, should they think proper to do so. Indeed the honour of reigning, so much coveted in Europe, is very frequently rejected in Africa, on account of the expence attached to it, which sometimes greatly exceeds the revenues of the crown. The title of king, it must be confessed, is often too indiscriminately used. Europeans are apt to apply it even to such as enjoy little or no authority, except over the village in which they dwell; and many are called king, who do not possess above half a dozen small towns or villages.

Each town is generally under the jurisdiction

of some elderly person, distinguished for his good sense and acquaintance with the laws of the country, who is called the *head man**; he settles every dispute which may happen among the inhabitants, and acts on their behalf in any meeting of the heads of the country where the general interest is debated upon. They pay him such implicit obedience on every occasion, that it may justly be said, "their law his eye, their oracle his tongue." The veneration with which these old men are regarded by their family and immediate dependants, their respectable appearance,

* Very frequently, particularly in the Soosoo country, when a man has been prudent enough to save a little property, he buys a few slaves, and builds a town with them. By the fruits of their labour he purchases a few more, till at length he becomes a powerful chief. As the number of his slaves is seen to increase, free people seek protection from him, and reside in his town; which tends to add to his power and consequence. The following extract from a report of the Sierra Leone Company, to a committee of the House of Commons, will throw further light on this subject.

"The state of society in Africa affords to any individual of superior knowledge and activity, ready means of raising himself to a state of wealth and power. Whoever can possess himself of a few slaves, may become the head of a town. Success in the cultivation of rice, or in the trade between Europeans on the coast and the natives of the interior, will enable him to increase the number of his domestic slaves, and consequently his strength and influence. Many freemen then seek his protection, and put themselves under his government. In this way some of the most considerable towns in the neighbourhood of Sierra Leone have arisen in a single generation. A feeble minded or debauched successor, by selling, under a variety of pretexts (most of which the superstitions of his country supply) those whom in policy as well as in justice he ought to protect, destroys in a still shorter period the power which has been thus raised. The free people desert him, and possibly his town falls a prey to some enterprising chieftain in the neighbourhood."

rendered still more striking by their hoary heads and venerable white beards* present to our minds a lively picture of the patriarchal age. The whole village indeed looks to him as a father, and they universally give him that title. To this cause it is probably owing that the Africans have been accused of selling their own children. The truth in this case can only be discovered by asking in the plainest manner, if the person whom they call father *made them*. A parent indeed has been frequently known to leave his child as a pledge for a debt he has contracted, but this is generally, if not always, done in the expectation of being able to redeem it in proper time. Bosman, who, though an author of much credit, does not appear willing to relate any thing which can militate against the traffic he was engaged in, yet says on this subject, "Not a few in our country fondly imagine that parents here sell their children, men their wives, and one brother the other. But those who think so deceive themselves; for this never happens on any other account but that of necessity, or some great crime." Instances, however, have occurred within my knowledge, of Europeans residing in Africa, for some trifling offence, real or pretended, selling for slaves women with whom they had long cohabited, and by whom they had children.

* Macegrav de Incolis Brasilæ, says, "Multos hic vidi Æthiopes senes barba magna & totaliter cana, ut et capillis capitis canis. Lepidum spectaculum! atra barba quæ incanuit, in nigra cute videtur quasi farina esset aspersa."

The head men are generally accountable, in case of mal-administration, to some superior under whom they act as deputy, or to an assembly of all the neighbouring chiefs. Their domestics are in general treated by them with great humanity, and it is not uncommon to see the heir apparent of a head man sitting down to eat with the meanest of his father's people, and in nowise distinguished from them by his dress. This is more especially the case among the Timanees and Bulloms. No one can be sold as a slave, except such as have been first bought, without having some crime imputed, and being condemned by a public trial or palaver. The property of masters in the children of their slaves is very much circumscribed, and the power of selling them without a palaver is taken away by the custom of Africa.

Those cases in which the life or liberty of the accused are endangered, may be referred to three principal heads; which, to use the African mode of expressing them, are termed, sauce palaver; where impertinent language, "or cursing," has been used to a superior; witch palaver; and woman palaver, or adultery*. The African law authorises the creditor to seize the goods or person of his debtor, or even the goods or person of any one belonging to the debtor's town, without a

* The punishment of murder is usually left to the family of the deceased, the nearest of kin to whom may punish the murderer with death, or accept of a pecuniary satisfaction.

palaver. If he has no opportunity of doing this, he pursues the plan of calling his debtor to a palaver. The former, however, is the more customary mode. The creditor catches, as it is called, (that is, seizes some one belonging to the same town, or family, with the debtor) on which the debtor endeavours to procure a palaver to adjust the matter; if not, the persons seized may be sold as slaves.

Criminal causes are tried by a public palaver, or assembly of the head men of the country, and slavery is the usual punishment; a circumstance which holds out a strong temptation to prefer false accusations, particularly as the African mode of trial furnishes convenient means of promoting purposes of avarice and oppression.

In all cases where crimes are alledged, the accused, if he deny the charge, is obliged to prove his innocence by submitting to a certain ordeal*, which varies according to the nature of the complaint: either a hot iron is applied to the culprit's skin; or he must slip his arm into a vessel full of boiling palm oil, and take from thence a snake's head, a ring, or some other article which has been put in for the purpose. In either case, his being burnt is considered as a sufficient proof of his guilt. " Sometimes the priest strokes the pri-

* It is not, however, in every case, that the privilege of these ordeals is allowed to persons accused of crimes. The accused must have some chief to patronize him, or he cannot expect even this desperate alternative.

soner three times over the tongue with a red hot copper arm ring," which, if it produces no effect, proves his innocency. Bosman saw this kind of trial practised, but unfortunately it condemned the culprit. Upon the Gold Coast, the ordeal consists in chewing the bark of a tree, with a prayer that it may cause his death, if he be not innocent. In the neighbourhood of Sierra Leone, the most usual mode of trial resembles that by bitter water, formerly in use among the Jews, and is called *red water* by the Africans. A person accused of theft or of witchcraft endeavours, if innocent, to repel the charge by drinking red water. A palaver is first held among the old people of the town, to whom the accusation is made by one party, and protestations of innocence by the other; and if they determine that it shall be settled by a public trial, the accused fixes on some neighbouring town, to which he repairs, and informs the head man of his wish to drink red water there. A palaver is again held to determine whether his request shall be granted; if not, he must seek some other town. In case of the head man's acquiescence, the accused remains in the town concealed from strangers, sometimes for two or three months, before the day of trial is appointed. When that is fixed, notice is sent to the accuser three days before, that he may attend with as many of his friends as he chuses.

The red water is prepared by infusing the bark of a tree, called by the Bulloms *kwon*, by the

Timmanees okwon, and by the Soosoos millee*, in water, to which it imparts a powerfully emetic, and sometimes a purgative quality. In some instances it has proved immediately fatal, which leads to a suspicion that occasionally some other addition must be made to it, especially as it does not appear that the delicate are more liable to be thus violently affected by it than the robust. To prevent, however, any suspicion of improper conduct, the red water is always administered in the most public manner, in the open air, and in the midst of a large concourse of people, who upon these solemn occasions never fail to assemble from all quarters, particularly the women, to whom it affords as good an opportunity of displaying their finery and taste in dress, as a country wake in England does to the neighbouring females. The accused is placed upon a kind of stool about three feet high, one hand being held up and the other placed upon his thigh, and beneath the seat are spread a number of fresh plantain leaves. A circle of about seven or eight feet in diameter is formed round the prisoner, and no one is admitted within it but the person who prepares the red water. The bark is publicly exposed, to shew that it is genuine. The operator first washes his own hands and then the bark, as well as the mortar and pestle with which it is to be powdered, to prove that nothing improper is concealed there. When powdered, a calabash full

* This bark is the same which is stated above to be used as an ordeal on the Gold Coast,

is mixed in a large brass pan full of water, and is stirred quickly with a kind of whisk until covered with a froth like a lather of soap. A variety of ceremonies, prayers, &c. are performed at the same time, and the accused is repeatedly and solemnly desired to confess the crime with which he has been charged. A little before he begins to drink the infusion, he is obliged to wash his mouth and spit the water out, to shew that he has nothing concealed in it: a little rice or a piece of kola is then given him to eat, being the only substance he is allowed to take for twelve hours previous to the trial; and, in order to prevent his obtaining any thing else, he is narrowly watched during that space of time by a number of people, who are responsible for his conduct. After having repeated a prayer dictated to him, which contains an imprecation upon himself if he be guilty, the red water is administered to him in a calabash capable of holding about half a pint, which he empties eight, ten, or a dozen times successively, as quick as it can be filled. It probably now begins to exert its emetic powers, but he must notwithstanding persist in drinking until the rice or kola be brought up, which is easily seen upon the plantain leaves spread below. Should vomiting not be caused, and the medicine produce purgative effects, the person is condemned immediately; or if it be suspected that the whole of what he has eaten is not brought up, he is permitted to retire, but with this reserve, that if the medicine shall produce no effect upon his

bowels until next day at the same hour, he is then, and not before, pronounced innocent; otherwise he is accounted guilty. When the red water proves purgative, it is termed "spoiling the red water." The utmost quantity which may be swallowed is sixteen calabashes full; if these have not the desired effect, the prisoner is not allowed to take any more. When neither vomiting nor purging are produced, the red water causes violent pains in the bowels, which are considered as marks of guilt: in such cases they endeavour to recover the patient by exciting vomiting; and to sheathe the acrimony of the red water they give him raw eggs to swallow. In some instances the person has died after drinking the fourth calabash. If the rice or kola be long in coming up, it is common for some of the culprit's friends to come near, and accuse him with great violence of some trifling fault; for they suppose, if any thing prejudicial to his character were concealed, it would prevent the favourable operation of the red water. Women at such a time, when the trial is for witchcraft or some other crime and not for adultery, have an excellent opportunity of proving their chastity before the world, by publicly declaring that they have proved faithful to their husband, and wishing that they may be punished if they have spoken falsely: this is looked upon as a most irrefragable proof of fidelity. When the accused is permitted to leave the tripod upon which he is seated, he is ordered to move his arms and legs, to shew that he has not lost the use of them, and

immediately runs back into the town, followed by all the women and boys shouting and hallooing. People who have undergone this trial and have escaped, acquire from that circumstance additional consequence and respect. When acquitted, they dress, particularly the women, in their best clothes, and visit all their friends and acquaintances, who receive them with many tokens of affection and regard. When the accused dies upon the spot, which frequently happens; or when the red water is spoiled, and the party is too old to sell; one of his family, unless he can redeem himself by a slave, is taken and sold. Sometimes, for want of a proper opportunity, the affair remains unsettled for many years, and I knew an instance of a young man having actually been sold for a slave, because his *grand-mother* had spoiled red water many years before he was born.

The Africans are strongly impressed with that absurd propensity so inherent in the human breast, the desire of penetrating into the secrets of futurity. They practise various contrivances for gratifying it, but the most general and infallible method is by geomancy, or, as they term it, "casting the sand," which is reduced among them to a science. This practice is resorted to in a variety of cases, as in a dangerous illness, to discover whether the person will live or die; or in cases of witchcraft, to discover the town in which the witch resides. The answers thus obtained, never descend to minute particulars, but, like the

oracles of old, are very general, and usually wrapped up in obscurity.

The method pursued is as follows: the diviner takes a goat's skin upon which is spread very smoothly a quantity of fine dry sand, and mutters to himself certain words which express the object of his inquiries. He then shuts his eyes, and with the three first fingers of the right hand makes a variety of dots and lines, which are afterwards to be decyphered. This practice is undoubtedly of great antiquity, and it seems not improbable that the *Babylonios numeros* of Horace, or those of Thrasyllus noticed by Juvenal, allude rather to this simple and easy method of divination than to the complex and operose mode of calculating by the stars*.

They practise another mode of divination, called by the Bulloms ooló káberray, and by the Timmanees katuppus katik'barra, or "casting palm nuts." This is performed by placing a number of palm nuts in small heaps, of two, three, four,

* This method is taken notice of by Baptista Porta¹, who thus describes it: "Dopò il cielo seguono le divinationi de gli elementi, dal fuoco la piromantia, dall' aere l'aeromantia, dall' acqua l'idromantia, e dallaterra la geomantia, le quali con certe superstitioni, et incatamenti diabolici presumeuano preuedere le cose future, e scoprire le nascoste. V'è un'altra spetie di geomantia ritrouata da Heleno figlio di Priamo: questa imprime certi punti nell' arena (onde nasce il suo nome) et dallo accoppiamento di quelli ne forma una figura, con cui si crede giudicar le cose auenire: veramente cose da burla."

¹ La Fisonomia dell' Uomo, lib. i.

or five nuts, in a square form, upon a goat's skin: each side of the square is formed by three of these heaps, and one is placed in the centre. By shifting these in a particular manner, they imagine they gain an answer to the question proposed. This mode, as well as that of casting the sand, is generally performed by blind men, otherwise the eyes are closed. Casting the palm nuts is most frequently resorted to in trifling cases, the fee being sometimes only a fowl or a few kola, whereas for casting the sand the premium is expected to be at least a bar, equal in value to about three shillings and four-pence.

The Bulloms of Sherbro have an institution peculiar to themselves called *púrra*, which is partly of a religious, but chiefly of a political nature. It resembles free-masonry in excluding females, and in obliging every member by a solemn oath, which I believe is seldom violated, not to divulge the sacred mysteries, and to yield a prompt and implicit obedience to every order of their superiors. Boys of seven or eight years of age are admitted, or rather serve a novitiate until they arrive at a proper age; for it is difficult to procure exact information, and even somewhat dangerous to make many inquiries. Every person on entering the society lays aside his former name and assumes a new one; to call him by his old name would produce a dispute. They have a superior, or *head purra man*, assisted by a grand council, whose commands are received with the most profound reverence and absolute submission, both by the

subordinate councils and by individuals. Their meetings are held in the most retired spots, amid the gloom of night, and carried on with inquisitorial secrecy. When the purra comes into a town, which is always at night, it is accompanied with the most dreadful howlings, screams, and other horrid noises. The inhabitants, who are not members of the society, are obliged to secure themselves within doors; should any one be discovered without, or attempting to peep at what is going forward, he would inevitably be put to death. To restrain the curiosity of the females, they are ordered to continue within doors, clapping their hands incessantly, so long as the purra remains. Like the secret tribunal, which formerly existed in Germany, it takes cognizance of offences, particularly of witchcraft and murder, but above all of contumacy and disobedience in any of its own members, and punishes the guilty with death in so secret and sudden a manner, that the perpetrators are never known: indeed, such is the dread created by this institution, that they are never even inquired after. It is sometimes employed in putting a stop to wars between neighbouring nations, who are threatened, in case they will not desist from hostilities, with the vengeance of the purra; and also in composing family feuds. No one is admitted into this institution until such of his friends as already belong to it bind themselves by an oath to put him to death should he betray the secrets of the confederacy, or draw back during the progress of his initiation. In

every district comprised within the limits of this association, there is a grove set apart for the use of the purra, to which the candidate is brought, and where he is obliged to remain until fully initiated. Should any one, led by indiscreet curiosity, or even by ignorance, attempt to penetrate into this place, he would be sacrificed without the smallest hesitation, and would never more be heard of. The purra is chiefly confined to the vicinity of the Sherbro, and does not extend to the north of Sierra Leone, nor even to Sierra Leone itself. The natives of that river view it with great horror, and never speak of it but with evident marks of apprehension: they believe that all the purra men have constant intercourse with demons who are subject to their orders. The late Mr. Cleveland introduced the purra at the Bananas.

There is an institution among the Soosos called semo, which adds considerably to the importance of those who are initiated into it. With respect to the secrecy wherewith it is observed, it bears some resemblance to the purra: the natives who speak English call it African masonry. As the whole ceremonies are kept very private, it is difficult to discover in what they consist: but it is said that the novices are met in the woods by the old men, who cut marks on several parts of their bodies, but most commonly on the belly; they are also taught a language peculiar to the semo, and swear dreadful oaths never to divulge the secrets revealed to them. The young men are then made to live in the

woods for twelve months, and are supposed to be at liberty to kill any one who approaches and does not understand the language of the semo. Those who understand the sacred language may enter these recesses and converse with the young men. Interest appears capable of mitigating the punishment, which would be perhaps immediately inflicted upon an unfortunate intruder. The head man of a Soosoo town, named Boorámee, having inadvertently entered one of these consecrated retreats, without having been previously initiated, he was seized upon and suspended to the bough of a tree until he promised to give them a bullock and some country wine. The first man of his acquaintance, understanding the semo, who came to the place, was dispatched to bring the bullock and the wine: but, notwithstanding, Boorámee was not set at liberty immediately, but obliged to remain in the woods until the usual term of probation was completed. During their residence in the woods, the young men live upon what they can collect, and on victuals which are left by their relations in certain appointed places. When the time of their confinement expires, they go about begging and dancing from town to town; and, as their importance is increased by this initiation, they soon procure wives. It is said, when women are so unfortunate as to intrude upon the semo, they kill them, cut off their breasts, and hang them up by the side of the paths as a warning to others. This latter circumstance is perhaps less deserving of credit, because

the Soosos are fond of telling wonderful and horrid stories respecting this institution. They say, for instance, that when first initiated their throats are cut, and they continue dead for some time; at length they are reanimated and initiated into the mysteries of the institution, and are enabled to ramble about with much more vigour than they possessed before*.

Among the Timmanees there is an inquisitorial institution called boondoo, to which women only are amenable. An old woman, called boondoo-woman, has the entire superintendance of it, and to her care husbands and fathers consign their wives and daughters. The object of placing these in the boondoo, is to extract from them a full confession of every crime of which they may have been guilty themselves, or which they may have been privy to in others. On their admission, they are smeared over with a white clay, which gives them a frightful appearance, and some so-

* There is a kind of semo into which girls are introduced, and which is sometimes called humbé. A colungee, or great dance, is sometimes made before the girls are initiated, but they do not remain long in confinement. A man who has been taught the mysteries of the institution, and a few women, are shut up in a house with the girls, and are the only persons admitted. The girls on this occasion are instructed in such circumstances as most immediately concern women. They are forbidden to have intercourse with men for a certain time, fixed by the matrons who instruct them. If they transgress, something is given them to drink, which causes them to swell, and they are forbidden to repeat the offence for the space of a year. A similar punishment awaits another transgression. It is not known what means they use to extort a confession; but it is said the girls are afraid to deny lest some dreadful curse should fall upon them.

lemn adjurations are pronounced in case they should not make the desired confession. Being persuaded that speedy death will follow their refusal to make an ample disclosure of their guilt, they generally comply with the old woman's injunction, who makes known the substance of their declaration to the people assembled in the town where the boondoo is instituted. If the boondoo woman should be satisfied with the confession of any individual, she is dismissed from the boondoo, and an act of oblivion is passed with respect to her former conduct, excepting in the case of a confession of witchcraft, which is always followed by slavery. Those, however, whom she may have accused as partners of her guilt, are obliged either to undergo the red water ordeal, or to submit to be sold for slaves, or else to redeem themselves, if the crime be not witchcraft, by the substitution of two or more slaves. Should any of the women be hardy enough to refuse or hesitate to confess all she knows, she is invariably cut off by a sudden death, probably effected by the exhibition of poison. If, on the other hand, the boondoo-woman should chuse to be dissatisfied with the confessions which have been made, she causes the women to sit down, and, after rubbing some leaves between her hands, and infusing them in water, gives them the infusion to drink. Should they feel, as they are likely to do, some pain in their stomach or bowels after this draught, it is considered as denoting that some flagrant crime has been con-

cealed. The boondoo-woman immediately sets herself, by means of incantations, to discover what it is, and in proper time charges each of them with the crime which she may think right to allege against them. If they confess it, they are sold; if they obstinately persist in affirming their ignorance of the offence, the boondoo-woman pursues such measures as ensure their death in the course of the next night or the succeeding day.

This institution it will be seen is an useful engine in the hands of chiefs for the execution of their avaricious and oppressive purposes, and they contrive to prevent the gloom which it seems calculated to produce, by giving to their towns during its continuance the air of festive gaiety. The great drum is its constant accompaniment, and is never intermitted day nor night; and the dance and song are only interrupted for the purpose of necessary rest. Add to this, that such is the implicit faith reposed in the infallibility of the boondoo-woman's greegrees, that when one of their number is struck, the others conclude that she must have been a guilty wretch who merited her punishment; and they console themselves with the consciousness of their own innocence until they also are made partakers of her fate. The death of one of their companions therefore does not even interrupt the music or the dance; and as for the sale of those who confess, it furnishes a fresh supply of rum to enliven their mirth. The following anecdote, which serves to illustrate this

“mystery of iniquity,” was related to me by a friend who was present at the time, and on whose accuracy I can rely:

In the year 1799 a woman, who, while in the boondoo, had been condemned to be sold, made her escape, and took refuge in Freetown. She related, that, having been affected with a pain in her stomach in consequence of drinking the infusion of leaves spoken of above, she was accused by the boondoo-woman of having by witchcraft killed Pa Bunky (a chief who had died four years before), and afterwards having taken up his body and eaten it*. The poor girl, well informed of the fate of all who deny the crime with which they are charged, and trembling between the dread of slavery on the one hand, and instant death on the other†, confessed herself guilty. At Freetown, however, she strenuously maintained her innocence, affirming, that “Pa Bunky’s blood did not live in her belly,” and that it was solely through fear she had been induced, while in the boondoo, to acknowledge her guilt. Being with child when she made the acknowledgment, she was not sold immediately on coming out of the boondoo; but after she had been delivered, expecting daily to be sent to Bance island, the neighbouring slave factory, she took the first opportunity of escaping to the colony. The above account was confirmed in all its parts by another woman, who accompa-

* This is said to be a frequent subject of accusation.

† She said that she was expressly threatened with death if she did not confess.

nied her in her flight; and they added, that not fewer than a hundred women had been sold out of the same boondoo since its first establishment*. Such, however, was the darkness of their minds, and so far were they from suspecting that any deceit and villany were practised, that the woman, though persuaded of her own innocence, said no more than that "the greegrees were bad," and that she only wished for an opportunity of "drinking red water," which she was sure would acquit her †.

* This number is not to be depended upon, as the natives have inaccurate conceptions of high numbers; yet it is by no means improbable, as the boondoo continued for two years. The number of women confined in it was indeed different at different periods, but at one time it appeared, from good authority, that there were ninety-seven women there, and there might be more at times when there were no means of information.

† I have already mentioned, that the mode of trial on the Gold Coast, which corresponds to the *red water* ordeal of Sierra Leone, consists in making the accused chew the bark of the red water tree. This unjust and superstitious practice, I am sorry to add, is so far countenanced by the governors of the British forts there, as to be frequently employed, under their immediate sanction, for the discovery of thefts and other crimes. This surely ought not to be the case.

CHAP. IX.

SITUATION OF WOMEN. MARRIAGES. POLYGAMY.
POPULATION. PERIOD OF CHILD BEARING. NAMES
OF MEN AND WOMEN.

THE female sex does not hold in Africa that distinguished rank in society which it happily enjoys in Europe; a circumstance which will not excite surprise, as it occurs among all rude and uncivilized nations. Montesquieu says, that the existence of a money medium is a certain mark of civilization; but it will probably be found a less fallible criterion, to judge by the degree of respect in which women are held. Among the Arabs and eastern nations in general, women are in a state of degradation; all the menial offices, and some of the most laborious kind, fall to their lot. The North American Indians also affect to hold them in the uttermost contempt. In Africa, women are regarded as beings of an inferior nature, and as born to be the slaves of man; they are not admitted to eat at the same table, but must wait till their lord has finished his repast, when they are allowed the scraps which he may have left. Upon them devolves all the drudgery of the family, they not only cook, and wash, beat rice*, and

* They beat the rice in wooden mortars, shaped somewhat like an hour glass, and called peloons; instead of a pestle they
use

clean it from the husk, but they cut down the underwood, assist in hoeing the ground, and they also carry the produce to market. The only labour from which they are excused, is felling the larger wood to make a plantation, and rowing in canoes. In places near the sea, they are also busied in making salt*, though this is generally the province of women who are advanced in years, and of old infirm men.

Polygamy is universally practised upon this coast, which tends still more to debase the female sex. Every man may have as many wives as his circumstances will allow him to maintain; his wealth is therefore estimated according to this criterion, and he rises in the esteem of his neighbours in proportion to the number of his wo-

use a stake five or six feet long. The rice is beaten night and morning, before each meal, not from idleness, but because it is better preserved from insects while in the husk. Similar to this was the custom of the eastern nations, who ground their corn every day in hand mills as they wanted it. It is common to see a dozen women and girls ranged in a line beating rice, and while one sings, the others keep exact time, and join in the chorus. They are extremely careful, in the preparation of this their favourite grain, to free it from the husk, and to wash it from dust and every impurity.

* For this purpose the water of a creek, or of the sea at spring tides, is received into large shallow ponds, where it is permitted to evaporate by the heat of the sun; the saline crust which remains is scraped up with a portion of earth, and again dissolved in warm salt water, to which a quantity of wood ashes is added. This solution is poured into a basket of a conical form, at the apex of which a little straw is placed, to prevent the earthy matter from passing through; the solution is finally evaporated to dryness in large round, shallow, brass pans, called Neptunes, which are sent out from Europe in the way of trade.

men*. The husband is at liberty, however, to employ his wives in the manner most advantageous to his own interest, and it is not uncommon to station some of them in different parts of the country as factors, an office which they execute with great fidelity. The ancient custom of purchasing the wife may be said in some measure to exist here, though the sum paid seldom amounts to more than a small present of cloth to the father or guardian, together with some tobacco and rum for an entertainment. The consent of the woman is scarcely necessary in making the contract, which is concluded by the husband and father with very little ceremony. Their marriages, however, are not indissoluble, as in case of ill usage from the husband, the woman, if free and of a powerful family, may call a palaver, and be separated from him. Polygamy, though the source of many evils, does not produce those violent commotions in families which husbands in Europe might be led to apprehend. The women, by habit and education, are so much accustomed to the practice, that a younger rival scarce excites in them any emotion of jealousy. A Foola woman of some consequence and much good sense, whose husband had four wives, being asked if she did not wish to reign alone, replied in the negative; for as she was not *company* for her husband, she would be quite at a loss for amusement, were it not for the conversation of his other

* If it be asked whether such a person be rich? the answer is, "Oh, he has too much woman."

wives*. The first wife a man takes, enjoys a greater share of respect than the others, and retains the title of head woman, with a degree of enviable authority, long after her personal charms have ceased to enslave her husband's affections.

Polygamy is not more adverse to the civilization of a country than to its population, and if we except China, those countries where this practice prevails will in general be found less populous than others. Many authors, however, are of a different opinion, which they support by alleging, that some men in tropical countries have fifty or sixty children; this, however, is not so common as it is for a man in Europe to have a dozen; and when we reflect that they are the offspring of nearly as many women, who might each have borne three or four children, had each had her own husband, the loss to society will appear very great. Some have argued, among whom may be reckoned Mr. Bruce, that as a greater number of

* Polygamy has been considered, though on very insufficient grounds, as an insurmountable obstacle to the introduction of the christian religion in Africa. The Mahomedans, in propagating their tenets, have had to contend with obstacles apparently as insuperable—the use of spirits, for instance; which they have overcome by their zeal and steady perseverance. These people, in gaining proselytes, direct their chief care to the children, whose education they superintend with unremitting attention; but as it is necessary to obtain the sanction of the old people, who are highly flattered in being thought either Mahomedans or Christians, they overlook in them those habits of intemperance which long custom has rendered inveterate. As a further proof that christianity may flourish in a warm climate, the people of Abyssinia and Nubia are christians, and do not practise polygamy. But the history of primitive christianity has already sufficiently proved the point.

females are born in eastern nations than males, polygamy becomes a matter of political expediency; but the fact is questioned. Niebuhr is of opinion, that in the east there are not more females born than males; and although in the lists of births which he gives, the balance is somewhat in favour of the females, he adds, "allowing that this trifling superiority actually exists, it cannot have determined the eastern nations to polygamy." He further observes, "it cannot be doubted that polygamy hurts population. If there be instances that a man has had a number of children by several women, it has also been observed, that monogamists have in general more children than polygamists." I do not doubt the truth of this observation. Whatever disproportion may arise in other countries between the sexes, it certainly does not prevail in any material degree about Sierra Leone, where the number of men and women seem pretty equally balanced. This natural equality of the sexes, however, is destroyed by the prevalence of polygamy; although its effect is counteracted by the siave trade, which carries annually from the coast a considerably greater number of men than women. It is no uncommon practice, in order to cement a friendship more strongly, for two men to promise to each other for wives their unborn infants if they should prove to be females. Notwithstanding this, it is rare to see a man without a wife, solely from not being able to find one.

Agreeably to what has been already said, the population of the Windward Coast of Africa is extremely small: it would be very difficult to determine what may be the proportion of inhabitants to a given extent of country; but probably it is not so much as in the least populous countries in Europe. Mr. Smeathman confirms this remark; he observes that this country is so thinly peopled, "that we rarely find a town containing two or three hundred inhabitants within ten or fifteen leagues of another of the same population. The finest rivers will not have towns upon them, where, perhaps, there are a hundred persons, within a long tide's distance of each other*."

The length of time women suckle their children, may be mentioned as another obstacle to population; as, during this period, which is generally two years, or until the child be able to bring to its mother a calabash full of water †, they are entirely separated from their husbands ‡.

* Wadstrom Append.

† This practice, though in itself bad, is founded upon prudential motives; for the mother, upon whom devolves the whole care of her children, is afraid of being burthened with a second offspring before the first can in some degree dispense with her continued care. It is very common for a woman who has a child, to procure another wife for her husband during the time she is nursing.

‡ During the period of mourning also for a friend or relation, the wife separates herself from her husband. The caprice or jealousy of the head woman, sometimes obliges a favourite rival to put on mourning upon some frivolous pretext, hoping at the same time to procure some presents from the husband to remove the restraint.

It is rather a rare occurrence to meet with women in Africa who have had more than three or four children. This is not occasioned by their leaving off child-bearing so very early in life, as is said to be the case in warm climates; for I have seen women have children, who certainly were not younger than thirty-five or forty*. Although the women are betrothed at a very early age, and as has been said, even before *they are born*, the marriage seldom, if ever, takes place before the

* There is no doubt that women in hot climates arrive somewhat sooner at maturity than in the more temperate and colder ones, and that child-bearing also sooner terminates. But we may doubt if this be so early, or so generally the case in these countries as authors assert, it being extremely difficult or impossible to ascertain ages, where a few revolutions of the moon is the greatest space of time they retain in their memories. This is a subject which affords scope for much curious investigation, it not being easy to explain why in some hot countries the period of child-bearing is confined within such narrow limits, as many authors have represented it to be. Perhaps the effect, if it really exist, will be found to be produced by particular situations, or confined to certain countries, in which case the discordant opinions of authors¹ upon the point might be reconciled. That these circumstances may have some share in producing such effects appears probable from the observations of a very accurate observer, who says, that "white females, born and constantly residing in the lower districts of the province of Georgia in America, have seldom been observed to live beyond the age of forty. Males, sometimes approach fifty; while Europeans, who have arrived at manhood before they come to the country, often attain a good old age." The same author gives us a still more surprising instance of the effects of certain situations in shortening the period of life. "There is not on record, I am credibly informed," he says, "an instance of a person born at Petersburg in Virginia, and constantly residing in the same place, who has lived to the age of twenty-one." *Jackson on Fevers.*

¹ Compare Bruce and Niebuhr with Piso and Ouseley.

fourteenth year; and, judging from appearances, no women in this part of Africa bear children before that age.

Another obstacle to the population of this country infinitely greater than any hitherto noticed, and more dreadful in its consequences than war, pestilence, and famine, is “that cruel trade which spoils unhappy Guinea of her sons,” and which annually sends from her shores many thousands of young people in the bloom of life.

It may perhaps appear to contradict the observation already made respecting the low rank which women hold in Africa, to state, that men generally are named after their mothers; thus, Fenda Modoo, is Modoo or Mahommed the son of Fenda; and Namina Modoo, Mahommed the son of Namina; and the same may be said of the females, Kalee Namina, for instance, signifies Namina the daughter of Kalee*. This arises probably from the practice of polygamy, which makes it easier among a number of children of the same family to distinguish them by their mothers' names, than if each had his father's pre-

* The most frequent names of men among the Mahomedans are Mamadoo, or Mahommed, Ali, Amarah, Brama, (Abraham); of the women, Amina, or as they pronounce it, Námina, Fatima, Maimoona, and Henda. Simba, Sillia, Yamba, Lorana, Tilla, Yellee, Kai, Boi, are the most common female names among the Soosoos, Bulloms, and Timmanees. The Foolas frequently use an affix, which, like the Italian diminutives, implies prettiness, tenderness, &c. as Fatimatta, Isatta, Aminetta, Sallematta. Nicknames are sometimes given expressive of the person's disposition, as Pa Cacadooga, *i. e.* great belly, or covetous; Pa Toffin, *i. e.* can't talk, or wont talk.

fixed. Among the Arabs it is usual for a man to add his father's name, and sometimes that of a favourite son to his own; but among the Turks it is not unfrequent to add that of the mother. The same custom is noticed by Herodotus*, as peculiar to the Lycians. Another reason for the general assumption of the mother's name may be found in the warmth of filial affection, which, where polygamy prevails, is usually in much more lively exercise towards mothers than towards fathers. I have been often gratified by observing the strength and tenderness of the attachment subsisting between mothers and their sons.

* Clio, clxxiii. à matribus nomina sibi induunt, non a patribus.

CHAP. X.

WARS. REVOLT OF THE MANDINGO SLAVES. IMPLEMENTS OF WAR. AFRICANS UNJUSTLY ACCUSED OF BEING ANTHROPOPHAGI.

WARS were not very frequent in the neighbourhood of Sierra Leone during my stay there; and when they did occur, they were rather the squabbles of two or three villages, occasioned by some of their inhabitants having been kidnapped, or laid hold of and sold for debt, or otherwise ill treated. Their military expeditions were generally limited to the burning of a town by not more than twenty or thirty assailants. This is always performed by a coup de main, and they chuse for it the time at which their enemies are supposed to be least upon their guard, usually the hour which precedes day-break, when the attack is executed with such silence, that, to use their own expression, not a leaf is heard to move*. Among the Foolas, armies of some thousand strong have been brought into the field under their late king Alimamee Sadoo, who was of a restless and enterprising spirit, and frequently engaged in war.

When they go to war, they endeavour to strike terror into their enemies by dressing them-

* Since the above was written, wars of a much more serious and extensive nature have been carried on in this neighbourhood.

selves in the most hideous manner they can devise. Some whiten their bodies with chalk, except the face, which they render still blacker by means of a vegetable pigment. Others paint the joints of the knees and elbows red. To this is superadded a load of greegrees, some of which are of very grotesque forms. They do not approve of European tactics, and laugh when they are told that men expose themselves to be shot at. When opposite parties meet, which is not often the case, they shelter themselves behind trees, and pursue the Indian mode of bush fighting.

About the year 1785, or 1786, a number of Mandingo slaves, availing themselves of the distractions which then prevailed in that country, revolted, and withdrew to a place called Yangheekurree, in the Soosoo territory. At this period the Mandingos and Soosos were engaged in war with each other; in consequence of which the latter were disposed to afford the slaves the asylum which they sought. The slaves, finding the situation of Yangheekurree convenient for them, induced the former inhabitants, partly by threats, and partly by fair speeches, to take them in, and thus they formed one community. Some of them also settled in three or four smaller towns at a little distance.

Not long after this revolt the Soosos and Mandingos concluded a peace, but no measures were taken for reducing the revolted slaves for the space of five or six years. They did not, how-

ever, remain unmolested; for the Mandingos, who were exceedingly inveterate, as might be supposed, in their enmity against them, were used to lie in wait for them in the neighbourhood of their rice plantations, and to catch and either kill or sell as many as they could find. This provoked the deserters to acts of retaliation, and they made several successful incursions into the Mandingo territory, and plundered several small towns. They also seized upon several people belonging to Berrierie, Kissee, and Mallakurree, towns of the Mandingos, whom they sold for slaves. The Mandingos, exasperated at this aggression, attempted to reduce them to subjection, and attacked their town; but they defended themselves so well, that, after losing several people, the Mandingos were obliged to make a precipitate retreat. This unsuccessful attempt was followed by slight skirmishes and predatory expeditions, without any material advantage accruing to either side. All this time the Soosos observed a careless neutrality, or rather, as was said, privately assisted the slaves, and allowed them to procure supplies of ammunition through their country. At length some disturbance arising among their own slaves, and a fear being entertained of their joining the deserters, the Soosos determined to assist the Mandingos, and accordingly joined them immediately after the conclusion of the rainy season of 1795, and they laid siege in concert to Yangheeakurree.

This town was most delightfully situated upon a piece of gently rising ground, near the foot

of a range of lofty wood-crowned hills running in a north and west direction; a distant range of hills being also seen stretching towards the south and south-west, and the intermediate country being charmingly diversified by easy undulations. The soil was very rich, consisting chiefly of a deep black mould, and abounding with springs of excellent water. The town was enclosed by a strong mud wall about twelve feet high, built in the form of an oblong square. On each side three circular bastions projected, for the better security of the wall. The slaves possessed four or five smaller towns, which were taken without much difficulty, and burnt by the assailants; two of these only, named Kania and Funkoo, were surrounded with walls, and made a slight resistance. The people taken in them were either slain or sold.

During the two first months of the siege of Yangheekurree the allies were very active, and made several attempts to force the wall, but were repelled with so much loss, that their chiefs resolved to change the siege into a blockade. For that purpose a strong palisade, about ten feet high, was carried round the town, about twenty yards distant from the walls. Before this was done, the slaves had the side of the town next the mountains quite open, and could go out to hunt and procure provisions and vegetables; but when I visited it in March 1796, it had been completely invested near two months. In order to annoy the besieged, stages about twenty

feet high were erected behind the palisades, like the *turres contabulatæ* of the Romans, but of much ruder construction. These stages formed only two sides of a square, and were composed of four strong spars fixed in the ground, the intermediate spaces being filled up with small stakes secured by withes. They were prevented from falling forwards by the long shoots of the mangrove tree, which were fixed to the upper part of the stage on the inside, and fastened to strong stakes driven into the ground. Before the erection of these stages the inhabitants had used to pass a great part of the moonlight nights in dancing and making merry in the open air, but afterwards they did not dare to move out, except during the gloom of night, for fear of being shot at. From one of these stages I had a complete view of the inside of the town. The thatch of the houses nearest the walls had been set on fire by the besiegers, by firing from their muskets pieces of iron made red hot in a smith's forge; and, to prevent the others sharing the same fate, the inhabitants had pulled off the thatch. A melancholy silence reigned in the town; nothing was to be seen but the bare walls of the houses, which appeared deserted; not a blade of grass could be observed, but the narrow footpath which ran through the town and divided it into streets was still perceptible. The inhabitants kept themselves concealed in the houses, while a strong guard lay at the foot of the wall, but never fired unless an attempt was made to break

through it, or unless they were certain of hitting their mark. For this purpose loop-holes were made in a slanting direction through the wall; about two feet from the ground, and the men lay upon their faces to fire.

About a fortnight before I reached the camp the Soosos had cut down a large pullom tree, which grew just within the line of their intrenchment, and causing it to fall towards the town, it broke down about twenty or thirty feet of the wall. During the confusion which succeeded; two of the besiegers entered the town by the tree, which served them for a bridge, and brought away the war drum as a trophy. No further attempts were made to penetrate by this breach, nor did the besieged endeavour to rebuild it. The approach of the rainy season rendered it at length necessary for the besiegers to take more active measures, and with infinite labour they brought, from a distance of twenty miles, two or three pieces of old rusty cannon, carrying one and two pound balls, slung by means of poles upon men's shoulders. Pieces of iron bars, about six inches long, were fired from these guns, and, after having beat down a great portion of the walls, they rushed in, and, as I was afterwards informed, cut the throats of the wretched inhabitants who survived.

The following instance of generosity in an enemy has not often been surpassed by more civilized nations. Some years ago the Foolas and Mandingos united their forces against Sambo,

king of Bambouc, and attempted, as they term it, to break his capital, Ferbanna, situated on the banks of the Gambia. The siege was carried on with uncommon vigour, and they even attempted to undermine the walls. The besieged, however, behaved with so much firmness and activity, that the assailants, foiled in every attempt, were obliged to withdraw. They remained at a small distance inactive, owing to the want of powder. Sambo hearing this, sent them a supply, desiring them to make use of it. Soon afterwards they became distressed for provisions, and were immediately supplied by the king of Bambouc; after which they broke up their camp, and returned to their own countries.

Upon the whole of the sea coast, and for a considerable distance inland, the natives are very dextrous in the use of fire-arms, and it is very rare to meet one of them at any distance from home, though already sufficiently laden with other articles, without his musket. The Foolas, indeed, use indifferently bows and muskets, and they often carry a bow, and quiver loaded with poisoned arrows*, instead of a musket. In many

* *Spicula nec solo spargunt fidentia ferro;*

Stridula sed multo saturantur tela veneno.

Volnera parva nocent fatumque in sanguine summo est.

Luc. Phars. viii. 303.

The Foolas poison their arrows with the milky juice of a plant called gang-gang, and consider its effects as fatal. It is uncertain whether this be the same with the shrub called roena (a species of echites) mentioned by Mr. Park. He says, "the leaves of this shrub, when boiled with a small quantity of water, yield
a thick

cases they go armed merely because it is ornamental, but the prevalence of the practice is doubtless to be attributed to the insecurity not only of property but of person throughout the whole of this continent. Their bow is made of bamboo, and is very elastic and strong, and, in defiance of the old English proverb, they keep it constantly bent. The cord is composed of a thin piece of bamboo split lengthwise*. Upon the Gold Coast, and for at least three hundred miles inland, the natives at present use fire-arms, but in Bosman's time the people of Aquambo used only the bow, with which they were "so nicely dextrous in shooting, that in hare hunting," this author observes, "they will lodge their small fine arrows in what part of the hare's body † is desired. These arrows have feathers at their head (in this they differ from those of the Foolas, which are not feathered),

a thick black juice, into which the negroes dip a cotton thread; this thread they fasten round the iron of the arrow, in such a manner that it is almost impossible to extract it when it has sunk beyond the barbs, without leaving the iron point and the poisoned thread in the wound." *Park's Travels.*

* This may perhaps explain a passage of Edrisius, where, speaking of the produce of Nigritia, he says, "Ad Nili Ripam, qui terram Nigrorum ab oriente ad occidentem alluit, producuntur arundines scheraci." This word his editor suspects ought to be sacchari; but it will be evident that the bamboo is meant by the following passage, in which he describes the arms of the same people: "Utuntur arcu, sagittis (artificiose una cum arcuum chordis ex arundine scheraci paratis), quibus maxime freti. *EDRISI Africa, cur. J. M. Hartmann.*

† It is customary in many parts, among the Soosóos and Mandingos, for people to sit by the river's side watching the fish approach the shore, and then shoot them with arrows.

and are pointed with iron. The negroes of Awinee usually poison them; but on the coast that pernicious custom is not practised, nor do they so much as know what poison is."

The Africans have been very unjustly branded with the title of anthropophagists:

———Quorum non sufficit iræ
Occidisse aliquem; sed pectora, brachia, vultum
Crediderint genus esse cibi———

JUV. Sat. xv. 170.

This practice is said to have existed formerly both on the western and eastern coasts of Africa, and Mr. Bruce informs us, that "there is still alive a man of the name of Matthews who was present at one of these bloody banquets, on the west coast of Africa, to the northward of Senegal." Travellers very gravely tell us, that in the *interior parts* of Africa "human flesh is frequently exposed for sale in wooden shambles." Snelgrave asserts, that human flesh is eaten in the kingdom of Dahomy, and Mr. Norris corroborates the assertion; but notwithstanding both these authors are highly respectable, and worthy of the utmost credit in every instance where they describe what they have themselves seen, yet in the present instance, where ocular demonstration alone, not vague report, is to be depended on, we have reason to suspect that they were imposed upon, as they no where affirm that they were eye witnesses of the transaction. Snelgrave appears to have been so much affected by what he saw at the great annual festival celebrated by the

king of Dahomy, that he readily gave credit to whatever was told him respecting the conclusion of the horrid spectacle. Mr. Norris's account is by no means satisfactory, and is besides not strictly consistent. "I do not think," he observes, "the Dahomans are *anthropophagists*, in the full sense of that word; though they scruple not to eat a devoted victim at the public festivals; and yet reproach their own countrymen, the natives of Toree, with cannibalism, of which, I own, I am not inclined to believe them guilty. But, that other African nations are addicted to that unnatural practice I have not the smallest doubt; because, from the concurrent and creditable testimony of those who have been at Bonny, it is well known that a Bonny man kills and eats an Audony man, and an Audony man treats a Bonny man in the same way, whenever he has an opportunity: I mean, as a familiar repast, and not merely in savage triumph after a victory." The manner in which the devoted victim above alluded to is treated, the same author thus describes: "As some *cruelty* must accompany all their exhibitions, a man tied neck and heels, an alligator muzzled, and a couple of pigeons with their wings clipped, are thrown off the stage among the crowd, where a confusion, greater if possible than what has preceded, ensues, in scrambling for the heads of each, to the great amusement of the king: and whoever are lucky enough to carry off the prizes, which consist of the heads of the victims, are each rewarded with a handsome pre-

sent. This is the last human sacrifice at the *customs*, and is a part of the ceremony which the *whites* never stay to see performed; but, *if report may be credited*, the carcass of the human victim is almost wholly devoured, as all the mob below will have a taste of it." This is the only instance adduced by Mr. Norris to prove that the Dahomans are cannibals, and it must be allowed to be very defective in point of evidence. Dr. Isert, an author of equal credit with those above mentioned, and whose testimony upon this point deserves greater weight than theirs, as he was more accustomed to the sight of dead bodies, positively asserts that they do not eat human flesh, and that it never was sold in the market. During the celebration of the "annual customs," as they are called, when the king of Dahomy waters the graves of his ancestors with the blood of human victims, forty or fifty wretched slaves are sacrificed; a cup full of their blood is presented to the king, who dips the tip of his little finger in it, and applies it to his tongue; the bodies are then thrown upon the royal graves, and the heads fixed upon stakes surrounding the burying place.

An ingenious and interesting traveller, describing the natives of Surinam, appears fully convinced of the existence of this depraved appetite among them, and also among their African countrymen. "I should not forget," he observes, "to mention, that the Gango negroes are *supposed to be antropophagi*, or cannibals, like the

Caribbee Indians, instigated by habitual and implacable revenge. Amongst the rebels of this tribe, after the taking of Boucou, some pots were found on the fire with human flesh, which one of the officers had the curiosity to taste, and declared it was not inferior to some kinds of beef or pork. I have been since assured, by a Mr. Vangills, an American, that, having travelled for a great number of miles inland in Africa, he at length came to a place where human legs, arms, and thighs, hung upon wooden shambles, and were exposed to sale, like butchers' meat in Leadenhall market. And Captain John Keene, formerly of the Dolphin cutter, but late of the Naimbanna schooner, in the Sierra Leone company's service, positively assured me, that when he, a few years since, was on the coast of Africa, in the brig Fame, from Bristol, Mr. Samuel Biggs, owner, trading for wood, iron, and gold-dust, a Captain Dunningen, with his whole crew, belonging to the Nassau schooner, which acted as a tender to the Fame, were cut in pieces, *salted*, and *eaten* by the negroes of Great Drowin, about thirty miles north of the river St. Andrew's, who, having torn the copper off her bottom, burned the vessel*."

In reply to these assertions it may be alleged, that it would not be an easy matter for a common spectator to distinguish human *flesh* from beef or pork, and the bustle and confusion which must have attended the storming an enemy's

* Stedman's Narrative.

camp, where this banquet was discovered, could not be favourable to such an investigation. Besides, as we are all too much disposed, in order to exculpate ourselves, to blacken the character of our enemies, and accuse them of vices which they never thought of practising, it is not improbable that a similar prejudice operated upon the officer alluded to, and caused him to mistake some *ordinary* article of diet for human flesh. Mr. Vangill's evidence is so very defective in every point, that no reliance can be placed upon it: if he alluded to the kingdom of Dahomy, we have the testimony of Mr. Norris, and the positive assurance of Dr. Isert, that human flesh is not publicly sold there. With respect to the inhabitants of Drevin it must be confessed, that their character has been of late greatly stigmatized, owing to their having cut off, or seized upon, the crews of such boats and vessels as fell into their power; not to sate their appetites with human flesh, but allured by plunder, or perhaps as a retaliation for injuries they had formerly suffered. The story of their eating the crew of a vessel, though probably not invented by the narrator, but the offspring of *common report*, and considered as a proper conclusion to the fatal catastrophe, is rendered still more suspicious by their being said to have *salted* the flesh, a practice seldom or never used by the Africans. An honest Dutchman, named John Snoek, who visited this part of the coast in 1702, describes the

inhabitants of *Drewin* as cannibals, for which he gives the following curious reason: "Their teeth, with which they eat human flesh, when they can come at it, were as sharp as awls*", wherefore I should not advise any to set foot on land here, who is not fond of being buried in their bellies †. ‡

That this horrid practice does not exist in the neighbourhood of *Sierra Leone*, nor for many hundred leagues along the coast to the northward and southward of that place, may be asserted with the utmost confidence; nor is there any tradition among the natives which can prove that it ever was the custom: on the contrary, they appear struck with horror when they are questioned individually on the subject; though at the same

* A peculiarity, as I have already observed, which is entirely the effect of art, being considered as ornamental.

† *Bosman*.

‡ Most of these stories are upon an equal footing with those of hobgoblins and spectres, used in England to terrify children, and which, by being frequently repeated, acquire a degree of credit among the vulgar. Posterity may, from such ill-grounded reports as those above mentioned, have reason to class our neighbours the French among the anthropophagists, as in a late periodical work it is said, though without giving any credit to the tale, that "the good people of France, if we may credit report, indulged some of their numerous prisoners, in the early periods of their blessed revolution, with soup made out of the limbs of those human victims whom they sacrificed at the altar of liberty¹." *Strabo* says of the Irish, that they were large of stature, savage, and ate human flesh; that they looked upon it as honourable to devour the bodies of their fathers and mothers: he accuses them also of very gross indecencies, and even of habitual incest.

¹ *Gentleman's Magazine*, September 1798.

time they make no scruple of accusing other nations at a distance, and whom they barely know by name, of cannibalism*.

* Mr. Park is disposed to consider the inhabitants of Maniana, a nation in Africa, as cannibals, because the epithet *ma dummulo*, man eaters, is bestowed upon them by all their neighbours. But still this is mere report, for, as Mr. Park justly observes, "the accounts which the negroes give of their enemies ought to be received with great caution."

CHAP. XI.

TRADE. MANDINGO MERCHANTS. TRADE WITH FOOLAS. BAR TRADE. MONEY MEDIUM. MODES OF CALCULATION. SINGULAR MODE OF TRADING ON THE BANKS OF THE NIGER.

THE Africans carry on a commerce with Europeans in the same manner in which it has ever been carried on in the early ages of mankind, by barter. To procure to themselves the fascinating luxuries of Europe, they usually give in return, not their own superfluous productions, an exchange which, by exciting a moderate and useful degree of industry, might prove highly beneficial to them, but, unfortunately, the innocent labourer, who is more frequently sold than the produce of his fields.

The Mandingos are the greatest merchants in Africa, and conduct the chief part of the trade carried on to the northward of Sierra Leone. Some of these people have made their appearance at Cape Coast Castle, and other forts on the Gold Coast, after having traversed a considerable part of Africa. It is said, by an author of respectability, that the news of the defeat of the Spaniards before Gibraltar was brought to the Rio Pongas by some of these people within forty days after the action*. Snelgrave mentions some merchants,

* Matthews's Letters from Sierra Leone.

probably of this nation, whom he calls “Malayes*,” and who had come from a country far inland, bordering on the Moors;” they had been taken prisoners, while travelling from one country to another, by the king of Dahomy, who treated them very kindly, “for they had the art of dying goat and sheep skins with divers colours;” they also understood writing. Merchants of this kind occasionally visit the factories not far distant from Sierra Leone. When in the Rio Pongas, I was informed by a slave trader there, that he daily expected a man who had paid him a visit about four years before, and who came from a great distance inland. This person, by the description, appeared to be an Arab or Moor, possessed of much acuteness, and uncommonly well skilled in the Arabic language. In

* The same, probably, who are at present known by the name of 'Nyamalas. These 'Nyamalas (Mr. Watt called them 'Nyalas, which is probably a contraction of the word) are described as coming a considerable way from the interior, and as being in the habit of travelling through the different Mahomedan countries, where they exercise the trade of shoemakers (garengays), and of iron and silver smiths. Their persons are held sacred from violence, and on this account they are much employed as merchants: they are also sometimes attached to embassies, being great orators, and being allowed unbounded freedom of speech even to kings. If two opposing armies are on the point of engaging, they are obliged to listen to the mediation of these 'Nyamalas, should any interfere; and their interposition is often effectual for producing peace. This is plainly a very partial account of this extraordinary race, and yet it is worthy of remark, that every particular of it, which was procured from a respectable chief in the Gambia, was confirmed by my brother and Mr. Watt, who had met with some of these people during their journey to the Foola country.

his former visit he brought with him seventeen slaves, whom, contrary to the custom of the Foolas, he sold in one lot, receiving in exchange tea, sugar, coffee, very fine silks, &c. He played remarkably well at draughts, of which he was very fond.

When the Foolas come down to the sea side to trade, they travel in larger or smaller parties, each subject to the controul of a head man, who regulates their march, has the disposal of all their goods, and settles every dispute which may happen *in the path*, not unfrequently inflicting stripes upon the offender. When they have reached the end of their journey, they build for themselves small huts, composed of boughs of trees sufficient to shelter them from the heat of the sun, which is all that is necessary in the dry season, when their trading expeditions are generally undertaken. The head man of the party expects to be accommodated by the factor, though it is of no consequence how small his room be, provided it is furnished with a door, or a mat in its stead. Before they enter upon their business, the factor gives to the head man his boonyar, or present, which consists of kola, Malagetta pepper, tobacco, rice, and palm oil; the two first articles are of the most consequence, and without these the others, in however large a quantity, would scarce be thought worth acceptance. If they do not agree in their bargain the boonyar is returned, but if they eat of the kola it is a sign that they do not intend to go away. When the present is

agreed upon, the head man makes his speech, which is always very long, shewing the great difficulties he has had to encounter, and the great distance he has come. The intercourse is not carried on directly between the principals, but by means of interpreters, for the head man's speech is translated by means of his interpreter, and this speech is again translated by the factor's interpreter, though they both very often understand it as well as the interpreters. The trade for rice is soon settled, as an equal measure of salt is usually given for it; but every tooth of ivory requires a fresh palaver, or bargain, in which every formality is repeated as at first; for as the Foolas have no idea of the value of time, they would sit a whole day with inexhaustible patience to gain half a bar more. When they have settled their trade, and received payment for it, they expect a second boonyar on going away, which is more or less considerable in proportion to the quantity of goods they brought. If pleased with the present, they return sounding the factor's praise as they go, and telling every party they meet how well they have been treated. The salt which they carry away is packed up in round masses of about fifty pounds weight. It is astonishing to see what prodigious loads these people carry to such a distance. The goods are packed in a kind of basket, about seven feet long and a foot and half or two feet broad, and sometimes weigh from one hundred and fifty to two hundred pounds. The load is then placed be-

tween the shoulders, so as to project about four feet above the head, and to preserve it in its proper place. A bow is fixed to one of the upper corners of the load, and a string to the other, both which are retained in one hand. In the other hand they carry a forked stick, upon which the load is placed when they want to rest. Boys of eleven years of age, or even younger, are frequently seen carrying very heavy loads. The chief articles which they bring for sale are slaves, elephants' teeth, rice, soap, cattle; and in return they receive salt, kola, gunpowder, guns, cloth, tobacco, beads, &c. Upon the Gold Coast a very important step is taken towards a more improved state of trade, in the establishment of regular markets once or twice a week, on fixed days, which are very numerously attended: this is unknown on the Windward Coast. The inhabitants of the Gold Coast, being more accustomed to trade with Europeans, are less tedious in transacting business than the northern nations.

The Africans are nearly unacquainted with the use of coin as a medium of commerce, though they have formed to themselves an ideal standard by which they determine the value of commodities bought or sold. This is however a very fluctuating measure, and differs greatly upon various parts of the coast. From Senegal to Cape Mesurado, or the Windward Coast as it is called, the medium of computation is termed a bar, hence the trade is named the *bar trade*; thence to the eastward of Cape Palmas their mea-

sure of value is called rounds; but still further eastward, and on the Gold Coast, they compute by ounces and ackies of gold, the acky being the sixteenth part of an ounce. The bar, which is the current medium round Sierra Leone, is, like our pound sterling, merely nominal, but much less precise in its value, and subject to great irregularities; moreover, the quantity of an article contained in a bar differs, not only on various parts of the coast*, but often in neighbouring rivers. A gun, valued at twenty shillings, is sold for six bars; but the same number of bars of tobacco will only be equal in value to four or five shillings. Twenty leaves of tobacco are a bar; and a gallon of rum or a fathom of chintz pass for no more. A piece of cloth, which in one place passes for six bars, passes in others for eight, and in others for ten. Hence the trader, in disposing of his goods, forms to himself a standard to which, upon the average, he reduces all his bars, the number of cheap bars which he sells serving to diminish the value of the dearer kind. It would tend greatly to facilitate commercial intercourse, and prove more advantageous to both parties, were this fluctuating medium of bars abolished, and in their

* Four pieces of twenty-four sous make a bar at Senegal. At Goree the bar consists of four pieces of twenty-four sous, and one of six. At Senegal the dollar passes only for a bar. At Goree six sous are added to the dollar to make up a bar. The French crown there, as well as at Senegal, is worth a bar and a fifth; but in the river Salum a bar is only equal to a dollar. SAUGNIER'S Voyage to the Coast of Africa,

stead an article introduced of an established though arbitrary value, which might serve as the representative sign of the worth of every article of commerce. To this, however, a late writer* objects, as he supposes the African idea of bars to be “founded on an article (iron) which is of primary and indispensable necessity to the negroes; whereas dollars,” he adds, “are founded upon an article (silver) which is necessary only to those who deal with those negroes.” This opinion, however, does not appear to be well founded; for although iron bars are articles of the same indispensable necessity to the natives along the whole coast, yet the term bar, used in trade, supposing it to imply a bar of iron, is confined within certain limits. On the Gold Coast the ounce (of gold) becomes the medium of calculation, but we cannot suppose from thence that gold is a more necessary article to the Africans than silver. The same author gives it as his opinion, that the introduction of coined money among the Africans would be more productive of confusion, disputes, and frauds, than their old method of computing by bars, “especially when it is considered that those simple nations are not nearly so expert in fine mercantile calculations as the Europeans.” This reasoning, though ingenious, has been already proved by experience to be fallacious; and it has been decidedly shewn at Sierra Leone, that the natives are not only as

* Wadstrom.

capable of computing by dollars, and probably by any other European coin, as by their usual mode of bars, but also that they have not the least objection to receive coin in exchange for their produce. When the Sierra Leone company established at Free Town a silver currency of dollars, half dollars, shillings and sixpences, or as they were called, *twenty* and *ten cent* pieces, and a copper currency of cents or the hundredth parts of dollars, no difficulty occurred in their introduction and use. Before this event happened, it was a matter of great difficulty to procure a small supply of vegetables, fruit, &c.: the seller had probably fixed his eye upon some article of dress or household furniture as an equivalent for his merchandise, which greatly exceeded the value of the articles to be purchased, and which at the same time, perhaps, the owner could not conveniently part with. Afterwards it became customary to affix a certain value upon their goods when brought to market, as one, two, three coppers, sixpence, a shilling, &c. without an instance occurring of confusion, dispute, or fraud, occasioned by misconception. Their willingness to adopt this plan is further evinced by what happened after the colony was plundered by the French. A large sum of silver having been carried away, it was necessary to introduce in its stead a paper currency of dollars, half dollars, and shillings, which were received by the natives in exchange for labour, provisions, &c. with the same confidence as they had before

taken silver. Such also was their faith in this measure, that although there were at that time no goods to purchase with these notes, they received them with the greatest cheerfulness, and waited until goods were received from England.

As they are strangers to the use of figures, they carry on their numerical calculations by the aid of counters, which are either small pebbles, gun flints, or the kernel of the palm nut. These they dispose in heaps of five or ten, and by referring to them, they recount every article which they have to receive from the factor; and on their return home, by the same association, they account to their employers for their purchases*. In affairs of less consequence they reckon by their fingers; for this purpose they bend the little finger of the right hand close to the palm, and the other fingers and thumb in succession: if the number be more than five, they bend the little finger of the left hand, and proceed as before. When it is necessary to proceed further, they shut both hands at once, and begin again as at first. We see here a very striking similarity of manners, in every age and climate, among nations in their early states, though widely differing in feature and complexion, and it affords us a good example of the first efforts of a limited

* In expressing numbers, they make use of the pentenary method instead of the decimal mode practised in Europe: thus their integers reach only to five, after which they are compounded. The number six is expressed by five and one; seven, by five and two, &c.

numeration gradually advancing with civilization to a more perfect arithmetic. The word calculation, it is well known, is derived from *calculus*, a pebble, with which the ancient Romans were accustomed to compute; and the same word in Greek originates from *psephos*, a little stone. Even the mode of performing these calculations is wonderfully alike: the word *pempazein* in Greek signifies to count by fives, either with the fingers or pebbles; and Homer represents Proteus, "the old prophet of the sea," as numbering his flock of phocæ, sea calves or seals, in this manner:

The sum

Of all his phocæ numbring duly first,
He will pass through them, and when all *by fives*
He counted hath, will in the midst repose
Content, as sleeps the shepherd with his flock*.

The strangest and most curious kind of commercial intercourse is that which is practised by a nation inhabiting the banks of the Niger. They trade with Moorish merchants, who annually pay them a visit, without the parties seeing each other, or practising any fraud. The merchants repair every year, at a stated period of the moon, to a certain place, where they find in the evening the articles they are in want of, consisting chiefly of gold dust, disposed in small heaps at a little distance from each other. Opposite to these heaps the merchants place the value they intend to give for each, consisting of coral, beads,

* Odyss. iv. 412.

bracelets, and other trinkets, which they leave there and retire: next day the negroes return, and if they approve of the bargain they take away the trinkets, or, if not, they diminish the quantity of gold*. This very curious account was averred as a fact to Mr. Wadstrom when at Goree, by the Chevalier de la Touch, who was vice-governor of that place in 1788, and by several other gentlemen at Goree who had visited the interior. This serves to corroborate a passage in Pliny, where, speaking of a nation called Seres, and of their manner of trading with strangers, he says, “*Fluminis ulteriore ripa merces positas*

* In the relation of Commodore Stewart's embassy to Mequinez, in 1721, is contained a similar account of this mode of carrying on trade. “They also send (from Morocco) caravans to Guinea: the places they trade to there bear several names, as Tombatton (probably Tombuctoo), Niger, or the Black River, &c.—They trade into Guinea with salt, cowreys, wrought silk, about five hundred pieces of British cloth, and the woollen manufactures of Barbary. The salt, I have been informed, is the chief commodity, which they keep *to rub their lips with*, being apt to corrupt and rot for want of it; and they covet to be rich in having great quantities by them. Cowreys are little shells brought from the East Indies, and pass for money of the most value, as *bitter almonds* do for the least.—From thence they return richly laden with gold dust, ostrich feathers, elephants' teeth, and negroes, who are the emperor's property. This journey is performed in six or seven months.

“The method of trading in some of those parts is very extraordinary; for they do not see the persons they trade with, but, passing over a little river, leave their salt (at the accustomed place) in a pot or jar, and retire; then the people take the salt, and put into the same pot as much gold as they judge it worth, which, if the Moors approve of, they take it away; otherwise they set the pot on edge, and retire again, and afterwards find either more gold or their salt returned.”

juxta venalia tolli ab his, si placeat permutatio.*" It is worthy of remark also, that a similar practice prevailed formerly among the Indians of Newfoundland. "Formerly a very beneficial barter was carried on in the neighbourhood of Bonavista, by some of the inhabitants of that harbour. They used to lay a variety of goods at a certain place, to which the Indians resorted, who took what they were in want of, and left furs in return. One day a villain hid himself near the deposite, and shot a woman dead, as she was furnishing herself with what pleased her best. Since that time they have been always hostile to Europeans †."

* Lib. vi. 24. Herodotus mentions the same method of trading between the Carthaginians and Africans on the western coast; and also takes notice of the practice of making a smoke as a signal for trade. iv. 196.

† Cartwright's Voyage to Labrador.

CHAP. XII.

PERSONS OF THE NATIVES. SUPPOSED CAUSES OF THEIR BLACK COLOUR. WOOLLY HAIR. FEATURES AND FORM OF THE NEGROES. THEIR RANK IN THE CREATION.

THE natives of Guinea* are in general described by travellers as well formed in their limbs, and remarkably free from natural deformity. Their skins are always cool, at least more so than those of Europeans in the same climate, and they are also remarkable for their sleekness and velvet-like softness †. The inhabitants of the river Sierra Leone, particularly the females, are said to be the handsomest people upon the coast ‡.

* The Africans are called by Herodotus Kallistoi and Megistoi.

† This smoothness and softness of the skin has also been noticed in the Caraim, the inhabitant of Otaheite, and even among the Turks. This is variously accounted for by authors: some refer it to a thicker cuticle, while others, among whom is Professor Blumenbach, refer it to a thinner state of the cuticle, or to a thicker layer of the mucus malpighianus. *Cutis Nolosericæ*, LIN.

Mr. de Pauw has committed a gross error in asserting that the pulse of the African is always quick, and their skin hot to the touch.

‡ Writers are apt to be partial, and to give the preference to those nations among whom they have longest resided. Mr. Adanson says the natives of Senegal are the handsomest and finest looking people in Nigritia; and the same character is given of several other nations upon the coast. The same observation holds good with respect to the salubrity of the climate; every European who has lived a length of time in Africa calls all parts of the coast unhealthy except the place where he happened to dwell.

Both men and women are in general above the middle size, well proportioned, sprightly, and of an open countenance. Although the palm of elegance may be denied to them, yet they possess a great degree of ease in all their actions. The manners of the females, particularly the younger part, are not devoid of grace, and are free from every appearance of constraint. The estimation of female beauty among the natives in this country is the same as in most others*. The young women are in general remarkable for the beautiful contour of their limbs, and for an ingenuous open countenance. Their eyes are often large and well formed; their ears small and neat. Their necks and bosoms are well turned, scarcely indeed to be surpassed by "the bending statue which enchants the world." The frankness of their manners is tempered with an agreeable timidity towards strangers, which renders them still more interesting.

The great variety of complexion observable in mankind is too striking to have passed unnoticed†, and accordingly it has exercised the ingenuity of observers, and given birth to many hypotheses without having clearly and satisfactorily accounted for its probable immediate and

* They have no other mode of expressing that an object is beautiful, than by saying it is good: thus a pretty woman is no lak'an kelleng, *i. e.* a good woman; a pretty child, no pom'mo kelleng, *i. e.* a good child.

† Quis enim Æthiopas, antequam cerneret, credidit? PLIN. Hist. Nat. vii. 1.

secondary cause. The diversity of complexion which we observe in our own country scarce excites our attention, and appears perfectly consistent with the causes assigned to it, a greater or less exposure to the action of the sun and air. Even when we compare the skins of the different nations of Europe together, climate is considered as a sufficient cause for the variety of tints which we remark; but when the skin of the European is contrasted with that of the negro, the dissimilitude appears so great, that recourse is had to the unscriptural, and, I may add, unphilosophical idea, of different races of men having been originally created. Yet these two extremes of colour are approximated by such a variety of tints, and so exquisitely blended, that we pass from one to the other by almost imperceptible gradations. The ancients attributed the black colour of the skin to its being burnt by too great a vicinity to the sun. Pliny says, “*Æthiopas vicini sideris vapore torreri, adustisque similes gigni, barba et capillo vibrato, non est dubium* *; and according to Ovid’s elegant and ingenious account, the Æthiopians acquired their black colour during the conflagration excited by the rash attempt of Phaeton to govern his father’s chariot. It excites no small degree of surprise when we find some modern authors having recourse to a similar idea, without their reflecting that a degree of heat capable of altering the colour of the blood in the vessels on the surface of

* ii. 80.

the body must inevitably have destroyed the vital principle. Every permanent and characteristic variety in human nature is effected by slow and almost imperceptible gradations. Great and sudden changes are too violent for the delicate constitution of man, and always tend to destroy the system.

The powerful effects of heat in changing the colour of the European skin are very evident, but they differ in different people: in some, an uniform brownness is produced; in others, discoloured spots called freckles, which, when of long continuance, are indelible. Freckles, however, are not peculiar to a fair skin, they occur even in brown complexions in Europe, and sometimes even in mulattos. Discolorations, apparently of the same nature with freckles, are often seen in the black skin, and are also occasionally seen in negro women when pregnant. The Saracens and Moors, who in the seventh century settled themselves in the north-east parts of Africa, and were then of a brown complexion, have, since their nearer approach to the equator, suffered such a change of colour as scarcely to be distinguishable at present from negroes. According to Demánet, they have made a change in this part of Africa, by introducing their language, customs, and religion; and in their turn they have suffered a similar change from the climate. The Portuguese also, who settled during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries in the islands of Bissao, St. Thomas, Prince, Fernando Po, &c. where they still

remain, are said to have so far acquired the colour of the natives, as scarcely to be distinguished from them by complexion; though this also is doubtless owing in part to intermarriages with the aborigines.

In all warm climates we see the skin has a tendency to a darker colour: the French are browner than the Swedes, Danes, English, and Germans; the inhabitants of the southern parts of Spain are darker than the French; and the Portuguese, in complexion, differ but a few shades from the mulatto. As we approach the equator the skin assumes in general a darker colour, and the complexion of the inhabitants for the most part bears a relative proportion to the heat of the climate*. Exceptions, however, occur; local circumstances, such as the elevation of the land, its vicinity to the sea, the nature of the soil, the state of cultivation and civilization, the course of winds, &c. † have a great power in counteracting climate, and we even find that the skin assumes a darker hue in the high latitudes, as is shewn in the Laplander and Esquimaux.

It has been remarked ‡, that people who reside near the sea coast are in general darker coloured than those who live more inland; and in

* “Immediately below the arctic circle a high and sanguine colour prevails. From this you descend to the mixture of red in white; afterwards succeed the brown, the olive, the tawny, and at length the black, as you proceed to the line.” SMITH on Variety of Complexion.

† Zimmerman.

‡ Smith on Complexion and Figure of the Human Species.

support of this opinion it may be observed, that the Foolas are for the most part of a lighter complexion than their neighbours on the coast. But though less black than some of their neighbours, the Foola complexion can only be regarded as an intermediate shade between the darkest African and the Moor. Major Rennel, in his valuable additions to Mr. Park's interesting account of his travels, is of opinion that the Foolas are the Leucæthiopes of Ptolemy and Pliny. But the propriety of the term, white negro, applied to a people of a dark mahogany colour, does not appear very striking. The idea of a nation of white negroes in Africa most probably arose in consequence of that curious variety the Albino having been accidentally discovered; and from a similar cause perhaps the learned Haller held the same opinion: he says, "sunt in æstuosis illis terris integræ nationes albæ." Elem Physiol. vol. v c. 12. But as a further proof that the Foolas are not so white as the term Leucæthiopes would suppose, Mr. Watt and my brother found that a Mulatto had resided some years at Teembo before they arrived, and had pretended to the Foolas that he was a *white man*.

An alteration of complexion also often follows a change in the habit of body, and thin people of a dark complexion appear to turn fairer on becoming more plump*. Professor Zimmerman

* Raynal, who attributes the dark colour of the African chiefly to the effects of climate, adds, "Ce qui paroît confirmer que le coloris des negres est l'effet du climat, de l'air de l'eau, des ali-

supposes*, that if a certain number of generations be requisite to change an European into a negro, a much greater number will be necessary to change the African into a white; for he adds, "A dark coloured spot is easily produced upon the skin by burning, but a long time is required to efface it, and porous bodies receive a tinge more readily than they part with it. In order to know," he continues, "how long a time and how many generations would be required to change a race of Senegal negroes as white as the northern nations of Europe, they ought to be placed, not in Pennsylvania, nor even in France, but in Denmark or in Sweden. There they should be exposed as much as possible to the open air, prevented from having any communication with whites, and be nourished with food adapted to such a northern climate." Were this done, the change, he thinks, would certainly be brought about, though perhaps slowly. From this cause

mens de la Guinée, c'est qu'il change lorsqu'on les conduit dans d'autres nations. Les enfans qu'ils procréent en Amérique sont moins noirs que ceux dont ils ont reçu le jour. Après chaque lignée, la différence est plus sensible. Il se pourroit, qu'après nombreuses generations, on ne distinguat pas les hommes sortis de l'Afrique de ceux des pays on ils auroient été transplantés." Hist. Philos. et Polit. vol. vi. These observations are for the present rather premature, as we are still in want of facts to prove the probable assertion above made, that climate is equivalent to produce this change in the black complexion. In America we cannot trace black families unmixed with white above four or five generations back, a period much too short to produce any important change. The lapse of a few centuries will probably shew the Abbé's opinion to be just.

* Geographische Geschichte des Menschen.

negroes carried from their own hot country into other warm climates suffer no change.

If, as an intelligent writer observes, the human race be divided into species merely from their colour, it must necessarily follow, that if the negroes form a specific class because they are black, those of an olive and tawny complexion must form another class, because they are not white; and, from the same cause, the Spaniards and Swedes would form two distinct species of men.

The most striking example we have of the influence of climate is to be found among that persecuted race of people the Jews; dispersed over the chief parts of the civilized globe, but prevented by religious motives from mixing with the rest of mankind, they still retain their characteristic features, though they have assumed the complexion of every country they inhabit. Thus they are "fair*" in Britain and Germany, brown in France and in Turkey, swarthy in Portugal and in Spain, olive in Syria and in Chaldea, tawny or copper-coloured in Arabia and Egypt," and nearly black in Abyssinia †.

Children of the same family, in Europe, very frequently are of different complexions, some being fair, and others brown; the same variety occurs in Africa, independently of any admixture of white blood, and while some are of a jet black, others are sometimes only a dark brown. In a family of six persons whom I knew, one

* Smith.

† Zimmerman.

half was almost as light coloured as mulattos, while the other was jet black. The father of these people was of a deep black, but the mother was a mulatto. The offspring of the darkest coloured African and fairest European, successively intermarrying with Europeans, become white in the fourth generation, and in the West India islands are allowed by law to enjoy the same privileges as whites; the reverse takes place in intermarriages with blacks. The child of an European and African is called a mulatto; the European and mulatto produce a quadroon; this last with the European produces the mestee, which in the succeeding generation becomes white. The offspring of the black and mulatto is called a sambo, which is the only gradation marked between them, though there appears to be as much reason to distinguish a shade between the sambo and black as between the quadroon and white. A distinction of this kind is probably used by the Dutch, as Captain Stedman places the mongroo, as it is called, between the black and sambo. These gradations of colour are chiefly characterized by the hair, which retains more or less of its woolly nature; for some mulattos are nearly as fair as brown people in Europe, and it is well known that some of the mestees in the West Indies have as fine complexions as many even fair people in England.

The very striking difference of colour between the African and European is merely superficial, and resides in a part so extremely delicate as to

require the skill of the anatomist to detect it. The skin, or that part which corresponds to the hide of animals, is covered by two thin membranes or skins; the outermost is called the cuticle or scarf skin, which we daily see broken by accidents, raised by blisters, and renewed without any trouble: it is devoid of sensibility, and in the African as well as European is nearly colourless and transparent. Immediately below the cuticle, or between it and the true skin, lies a delicate membrane called the rete mucosum, in which the whole distinction of colour exists: in the European it is white or brown, according to his complexion; in the African it is of a firmer texture than in fair people, and is of various shades of blackness. When this middle membrane is destroyed by extensive wounds, burns, &c. it is never reproduced, and the cicatrix or scar remains white through life. It is worthy of observation that negro children are nearly as fair as Europeans at birth, and do not acquire their colour until several days have elapsed. The eyes of new-born negro children are also of a light colour, and preserve somewhat of a bluish tinge for several days after birth, or, as Ligon expresses it, "not unlike the eyes of a young kitling." The palms of the hands and soles of the feet are nearly as white as in Europeans, and continue so through life, a circumstance not sufficiently attended to by painters. Among the various theories formed to account for the black complexion, it has been supposed that

the blood and other fluids secreted from it are darker coloured in the African than in the European, and communicate the same tinge to the skin. This is asserted by Herodotus *, but is contradicted by Aristotle. The bile has been noticed as another cause ; but, according to my experience, it is not darker coloured in the African than in the European. Bile has no power in producing a permanent change in the colour of the skin ; and sickness, which in hot climates causes the skins of Europeans to assume a yellow hue, changes that of the African to a lighter colour †.

* Thalia, cī.

† Mr. de Pauw likewise imagines he has discovered the cause of the black colour of the negro in the dark hue with which he supposes their fluids are tinged ; from these he supposes there is constantly separated “ *une matiere acre qu'on nomme Æthiops animal,*” and which is deposited in the *rete mucosum*. He says, “ *Ils ont la substance moëlleuse du cerveau noiratre, la glande pinéale presque'entierement noire, l'entrelas des nerfs optiques brunatre, le sang d'un rouge beaucoup plus foncé que le notre,*” &c. If these observations were just, this ingenious writer's hypothesis might receive some support ; but there is such disagreement among anatomists on this head, that we may conclude the difference in the colour of the brain, &c. in an African and European cannot be very striking. Professor Meckel, from whom de Pauw quotes the remark, imagined the brain of the African to be darker coloured than in the European, from which he deduced the black colour of their skin : Professor Walter is of a contrary opinion, in which he is supported by Professor Soemmering, who positively asserts, that he could not observe the smallest difference in colour, either in the cineritious or medullary parts of the brain of an African and European. Professor Walter thinks the blood of negroes is darker coloured than that of Europeans ; and Professor Soemmering inclines to the same opinion, but adds, that he agrees with Professor Camper, who asserts, that he has found the blood of Europeans equally dark coloured. If

I may

Next to the black colour of the skin, the hair constitutes the most striking peculiarity in the African. Its cause remains still unexplained, and affords to the naturalist as well as to the physiologist matter for curious speculation. Professor Soemmering* remarks, that the hair of the African differs from that of the European not merely in being woolly; it is also much shorter, of a finer texture, more elastic, blacker, more shining and crisp. It does not decline so gradually towards the forehead, temples, and neck, as in

I may be allowed to give an opinion after men so deservedly eminent, I would assert that there is no perceptible difference in the colour of the blood of an African and European. Much stress has also been laid upon the colour of the bile; but Professor Soemmering asserts¹, that he has not found this fluid darker coloured in the African than it is in the European. Two other theories, founded upon chemical combinations, have been brought forward to solve this problem. The first² supposes that iron abounds in the blood of the negroes, and is precipitated into the rete mucosum by the phosphorous acid. The other, which is proposed by Professor Blumenbach³, supposes, that the carbon which abounds in the body is thrown off by the *cutis vera* united with hydrogen, but is decomposed by the access of the oxygen of the atmosphere, and the carbon remains fixed in the mucus Malpighianus. But as the cuticle is impervious to the external air, except what may be absorbed by vessels, the precipitation could only happen on the outside of the epidermis; and as oxygen has a stronger attraction for carbon than for hydrogen, if the elective attraction took place, only carbonic acid would be formed, at the same time the hydrogen uniting with azote might form ammoniac. From what has been said we may infer, that the immediate cause of the black colour of the African remains still a problem for future observers to solve.

* Ueber die Koerperl. Verschiedenh. des Negers, &c.

¹ Ueber die Koerperliche Verschiedenheit des Negers, &c.

² Kant. in Engels Philosoph. fur die Welt.

³ De Generis Humani Varietate nativa, p. 125.

whites, but appears placed on the head like a wig.

Professor Zimmerman* considers the hair of negroes as more deserving of attention than either their nose or lips.

Dr. Foster makes a distinction between woolly and curly hair; the latter we frequently see in Europeans of a dark complexion and rigid fibre. The wool of negroes is not merely curled; each hair is of a finer texture also. According to Dr. Foster's idea, this fineness of the hair arises from too abundant perspiration, which carries off the fluids destined for its nourishment and growth. Where the perspiration is not so copious, the hair curls and becomes black, but is not woolly: the inhabitants of Otaheite, the Society, Marquesa, and Friendly Islands, he observes, have a similar climate with the inhabitants of the New Hebrides, but we do not observe woolly hair among the former, owing to the custom of anointing themselves with cocoa-nut oil, which restrains excessive perspiration. Were this opinion of Dr. Foster's well founded, the Africans ought also to have long hair, as the custom of anointing with oil is universal among them. The hair, as well as the colour of the skin, is affected by extremes of heat or cold: in high and low latitudes it is short, crisp, and woolly; in mean latitudes it is long and straight. The reverse of this happens in animals; in the cold climates of the north

* Geograph. Geschichte des Mensch.

they become white, and sheep carried from temperate regions towards the equator soon change their wool to hair. Although woolly hair appears to be more permanently characteristic of the negro, and less apt to be affected by extraneous causes than colour or feature, yet even in this respect very striking varieties occur. When the head has been much exposed during the dry season to a hot sun, the ends of the hair in negroes frequently acquire a reddish or burnt appearance; sometimes this is the natural colour of the hair, independent of exposure to the sun. In a family at Free Town, the children had red or copper coloured skins, and woolly hair of a dirty red or singed colour: at the same place I saw a mulatto man, belonging to the Kroo Coast, whose hair was a pale red, such as occurs in England, and disposed in very small curls over his head; his skin was very much freckled, his eyes were black, and not affected by the glare of sun light. Marcgraf saw in the Brazils an African woman whose skin and hair were red. Professor Blumenbach, in his excellent work *De Generis humani Varietate nativa*, makes the following important remarks on the varieties of the hair of negroes: —“ neque crispitudo *Æthiopum* capillis, neque nigredo ternis quas postremo loco dixi varietatibus communis et propria est. Dantur siquidem *Æthiopum* stemmata proluxa coma; dantur contra gentes cuprei coloris attamen crispe, qualis *Æthiopum* esse solet, capillo; dantur alii, v. c. *Novo-Hollandi*, quorum cæsaries, ut ex

speciminibus video quæ mihi ad manus sunt, tam perfecte medium tenet locum inter Æthiopum crispitudinem et concinnos hominum qui Maris Pacifici insulas inhabitant, ut mirus inde dissensus natus sit in itinerum relationibus à primis inde seculi præteriti Batavorum ad nuperrimas usque Anglorum, num scilicet potius ad unam numve rectius ad alteram varietatem pilorum referenda sit*.”

The length of the hair also varies much; some of the Africans, especially the women, by much care, have hair six or eight inches long, which the men are fond of wearing en queue. In my brother's journal people are frequently mentioned who had hair as long as Europeans, though they may possibly have been of Moorish extraction.

Climate has a great effect in rendering the fleeces of sheep of a finer or coarser texture; whether it can produce a corresponding change upon the woolly hair of negroes has not been noticed: it has a considerable influence upon hair, for, in trade, hair the growth of England bears a higher value than that of the southern parts of France, and Spain.

* The learned author above mentioned quotes the following writers on the subject of the hair: “Plerosque Wotjakos, sibi visos, rufos fuisse, J. G. Gmelin, Reise durch Sibirien.

“Flavi Capilli Eskimotas memorat Charlevoix in Histoire de la Nouvelle France.

“De Æthiopibus rufis v. Lopez, Relazione del Reame di Congo.

“Mulatum rufo capillo ipse vidi, et pilorum specimen seryo. Idem de Mulatis à se in Sierra Liona visis notat Von der Gröben, Guineische Reise beschreibung.”

Moderate heat is favourable to the growth of the hair. The natives of Africa think it grows quickest during the cool or rainy season; their hair turns white sooner in them than in Europeans, but even the old people among them are rarely bald. In hot climates the skins of Europeans become very hairy where exposed, especially on the backs of the hands: this is a rare occurrence among the Africans, except in old people.

The eye-brows differ from the hair of the head in not being curled and woolly. In warm climates we commonly find the eye-brows remarkably large and black, to guard the eye against the too great influx of light; but in the African they are very seldom so long and bushy as in Europe. The same office appears to be performed by the eye-lashes, which in the negro are remarkably long, dense, and finely curved.

Professor Soemmering observes, that the opening formed by the eye-lids is smaller in the negro than in the European, and therefore less of the globe of the eye is visible in the former. The tunica adnata, or white of the eye, he adds, is not so resplendently white in the African as in whites, but is of a yellowish brown. These remarks are in some instances just; but a great variety occurs in the eye, except in its colour, which is invariably dark: some are small, but we occasionally see them well formed, large, and brilliant, particularly in the women. Mr. Adanson, speaking of the women of Senegal, says, "Leur visage est d'une douceur extreme. Elles ont les yeux noirs

bien fondus, la bouche et les levres petites, et les traits du visage bien proportionnés. Il s'en trouve plusieurs d'une beauté parfait. Elles ont beaucoup de vivacité, et surtout un air aisé de liberté qui fait plaisir." In men the white of the eye frequently appears to have a slight yellowish suffusion, not so clear or bright as in jaundice in white people; but this is not constant, and in consumptive cases the eye frequently gets the pearly whiteness so commonly attendant on that complaint in England.

The lips of the Africans are in general dark coloured, sometimes differing but little from the colour of the face. Sometimes a considerable tinge of red is seen in them, and in a few instances I have seen them nearly as red as the lips of Europeans, but they never have that beautiful rose colour which occurs in the delicate scrofulous habit in England. This redness of the lips has probably given occasion to the absurd story, already quoted, of a nation, living in the interior parts of Africa, whose lips are constantly bleeding, and, in order to prevent their mortifying, they are obliged to rub them with salt.

Professor Zimmerman* considers the thick lips, flat nose, and particularly the woolly hair of negroes, circumstances upon which the advocates for distinct races of mankind lay so much stress, as of no great moment. Thick lips are every where to be met with; they occur in the Eskimau

* In his excellent work, *Geograph. Geschichte des Menschen*,

and Kalmuck, and among Europeans many families may be pointed out which have thick lips. Moreover there are nations of negroes, he adds, which have neither thick lips nor flat noses; the Joloffs, a negro nation between the Gambia and Senegal rivers, are very black, but, according to the testimony of Moore, they have handsome features, and neither broad noses nor thick lips. Pigafetta* expressly says, that the Congo negroes have black, curly, and frequently red hair. He observes, they resembled the Portuguese pretty much, except in colour; the iris was in some black, but in others of a bluish green, and they had not the thick lips of the Nubians. Dampier, in his description of the country of Natal, on the east coast of Africa, says, that the inhabitants were black, and had curly hair, but that they had rather a long face, well proportioned nose, white teeth, and an agreeable countenance.

As great a variety of features † occurs among these people as is to be met with in the nations of Europe: the sloping contracted forehead, small eyes, depressed nose, thick lips, and projecting jaw, with which the African is usually caricatured, are by no means constant ‡ traits: on

* *Relatione del Reame di Congo.*

† In Professor Voigt's *Magazin für das neueste aus der Physik und Naturgeschichte* are contained some ingenious and excellent observations of Professor Blumenbach respecting the negroes, and controverting Professor Camper's opinions concerning them.

‡ "Les habitans ont tous," says Abbé Raynal, "après le Niger. la tête oblongue; le nez large, écrasé, épaté; de grosses levres; une chevelure crépue comme la laine de nos moutons." Mons. Buffon

the contrary, almost every gradation of countenance may be met with, from the disgusting picture too commonly drawn of them, to the finest set of European features. Want of animation does not characterize them, and faces are often met with which express the various emotions of the mind with great energy. Professor Camper remarks that painters, in sketching the heads of Africans, give only black coloured Europeans: more frequent opportunities of observing them would have shewn him the fallacy of this opinion. In drawing the characteristic features of any nation the maximum ought not to be taken, as is most frequently done, following the example of the Grecian artists, who formed to themselves an ideal beauty, which perhaps never existed in any one human form, and in which expression of countenance is nearly annihilated.

That wonderful diversity of feature, observable in men and animals, is referred by Professor Camper to the different angles formed by what he terms the facial line taken *en profile*. This is a line drawn from the projecting part of the forehead above the nose, to the extremity of the supe-

Buffon says, on the contrary, with more justice, " Il paroît d'abord en rassemblant les témoignages des voyageurs, qu'il y a autant de variété dans la race des noirs, que dans celle des blancs; les noirs ont, comme les blancs, leurs Tartares and leurs Circassiens—" And again he adds, " Ensuite en examinant en particulier les differens peuples qui composent chacune de ces races noires, nous y verrons autant de variétés que dans les races blanches, et nous y trouverons toutes les nuances du brun au noir, comme nous avons trouvé dans les races blanches toutes les nuances du brun au blanc." Hist. Nat. de l'Homme.

rior maxillary bone, between the two front incisor teeth; which is intersected by another line drawn through the centre of the meatus auditorius externus and the lower part of the nostrils. The angle formed by these lines is most acute in birds, and becomes greater in animals as they approach nearer to the human species: in one species of ape it is 42° ; in another, the *simia sciurea* Linn. it is 50° ; in the negro 70° ; in the European 80° ; and in the most beautiful antique it forms an angle of 100° . This idea, though extremely ingenious, will probably not be found to stand the test of experience. Professor Blumenbach observes, that the skulls of very different nations, and which vary greatly in appearance from each other, possess the same facial line; and, on the contrary, skulls belonging to the same nation, which bear upon the whole a striking resemblance to each other, have a very different facial line. Thus in two skulls belonging to the professor, one of which belonged to a Congo negro, and the other to a Lithuanian, the facial line is nearly the same; but in two other skulls belonging to negroes, the facial line differs very remarkably. He further adds, that Camper has varied so much in his drawings from the rule he lays down, as to shew that there is much uncertainty in its use. Besides, the human features are altered by such a variety of circumstances, that they never can be reduced to any exact standard. When a rude and ill-featured nation migrates from a cold to a temperate climate, their features are softened, and

assume a more elegant form. The Hungarians, originally sprung from the Laplanders, but placed in a temperate climate, and in the neighbourhood of Greece and Turkey, have acquired more handsome features. The Creoles in the West Indies resemble the native Americans in their high cheek bones and deep-seated eyes*. Among the Nova Scotia settlers at Sierra Leone the facial line is so much diversified that no conclusion can be drawn from it. Nations who live in barren countries, and experience a scarcity of food, are usually of a diminutive size: the Bedouin Arabs are of small stature, and are remarked for the smallness of their hands and feet. A fuller diet produces a corresponding change; and it is a well known fact, that the slaves in the West Indies, who are humanely treated and well fed, are better made than the others, and acquire more of the European cast of features. Civilization has also a considerable effect upon the countenance, and perhaps to this it may be owing that the Foolas have in general more regular and delicate features than are to be found upon the sea coast. Among those of them whom either curiosity or commerce had attracted to the settlement at Sierra Leone, I saw a youth whose features were exactly of the Grecian mold, and whose person might have afforded to the statuary a model of the Apollo Belvidere. Many of the children also of the

* Blumenbach de Gener. Hum. Variet. nativa.

Nova Scotian settlers, who are born at Free Town, Sierra Leone, are distinguishable from those of Europeans only by their complexion. An opinion has very generally prevailed, that the flat nose of the African is occasioned by the mother pressing it down after birth; this is just as false as the notion that the curvature of the thigh bone is occasioned by the weight of the child resting on the nurse's arm: both these are original formations, as they are seen in the fœtus. "Should we not deem it very ridiculous, if a travelling or philosophic negro, or Calmuck, in describing the particular forms of our features, were gravely to assert, that our midwives, mothers, or nurses, pulled us by the nose during our infant days, in order to give it the requisite length*?"

Various opinions have been formed respecting the rank which the African holds in the scale of creation, and many attempts have been made to depreciate his claim to the dignity of man. Owing to the resemblance which the oran outang is said to bear to the human species, and perhaps from a wish to overturn the only rational and satisfactory account we have of the creation, some writers of eminence have asserted that man originally walked upon four feet, and was in fact the same with the oran outang. There is reason, however, to suspect the accuracy of the figures which we possess of the oran outang; and it

* Camper's Works, by Cogan.

seems probable that it is indebted for much of its human appearance to the complaisance of painters. Professor Ludwig, in his excellent work*, asserts, that the representations of the oran outang, by Tyson, Edwards, Daubenton, and Allemand, are defective and even imaginary. Baron von Wurmb† also positively declares, since the time that Bontius resided at Batavia, about the middle of the last century, an oran outang, such as is represented by him, has never been seen there, or in any of the neighbouring countries. The oldest and most experienced Javanese, he continues, know no other oran outang but such as are perfect apes; and in the Malay language they distinguish only two species of apes without tails, which Buffon has classed under the titles pongos and jockos. These circumstances appear to have misled naturalists, who have been led still further astray by their anxiety to trace every link of the chain with which nature is supposed to connect her works. In support of this strange opinion, and agreeable to the spirit of systematizing which generally prevails, the African has been pointed out as the connecting link between the homo sapiens, and his supposed progenitor the oran outang. The learned and accurate Professor Soemmering has, with much anatomical

* (Ludwig) Grundriss der Naturgeschichte der Menschenspecies.

† Beschreibung des grossen Orangutangs der Insel Borneo, contained in Lichtenbergs Magazin für das neueste aus der Physik, 1 B. 4to. St.

skill, compared the organization of the African with that of the European, and has pointed out several circumstances in which they differ; though some of these are of so trifling a nature, that they would probably have escaped a less accurate and intelligent observer. At the same time it must be remarked, that the observations have been drawn from too few subjects, and many of the deviations, upon which much stress is laid, are such as occur occasionally in the dissection of European bodies. In justice to Professor Soemmering it ought to be observed, that in prosecuting this comparative inquiry he attended solely to the appearances as they presented themselves, without having been biassed on instituting his observations by any preconceived theory. He therefore does not hesitate to consider them as brethren entitled to an interchange of good offices, and moreover adds, that many of the blacks surpass their brothers the whites, as well in understanding as in the fineness of their shape. It is curious to observe into what a variety of forms authors have endeavoured to diversify the human species, supposing no doubt that Nature loved to indulge her fondness for variety in producing races of men according to their distorted fancies. Thus Pliny, in his learned and invaluable History, says, "in quadam convalle magna Imai Montis, regio est, quæ vocatur Abarimon, in qua silvestres vivunt homines, aversis post crura plantis, eximiæ velocitatis, passim cum feris vagantes, vii. 2. For some further amusing caricatures see

the same chapter. A modern author retails this same fable, and speaks of a nation in Guiana “ qui naissaient avec le devant des pieds en arriere, de sorte qu’en marchant sur leurs traces on s’eloignait d’eux.” Voyage a la Guiane. All these opinions may be finally answered in the words of an elegant author, who observes, that “ of all animals, the differences between mankind are the smallest. Of the lower races of creatures the changes are so great as often entirely to disguise the natural animal, and to distort or to disfigure its shape. But the chief differences in man are rather taken from the tincture of his skin than the variety of his figure; and in all climates he presents his erect deportment and the marked superiority of his form*.”

* Goldsmith’s Animated Nature.

CHAP. XIII.

GENERAL CHARACTER OF THE AFRICANS AS GIVEN BY
DIFFERENT AUTHORS. THEIR PRIDE. SENSIBILITY.
DEFERENCE TO OLD AGE. HOSPITALITY. GENIUS.
ORATORY. SCHOOLS. FONDNESS FOR LITERATURE.

ALTHOUGH Europeans have carried on a trade with the natives of the western coast of Africa for near three centuries, the latter have no cause to rejoice in the intercourse. Instead of introducing amongst them what they pride themselves in possessing, the boasted arts of civilized life; to say nothing of the slave trade, the natural effects of which in degrading and brutalizing the human character are sufficiently apparent; Europeans have taught them only the vices of their own countries. But these are not the only injuries of which the Africans have reason to complain. In delineating their moral character, prejudice or interest has too commonly been allowed to guide the pencil, and it would appear that, in forming the sketch, the words of the celebrated Montesquieu had been understood literally and not ironically. "These creatures," says the learned president, "are all over black, and with such a flat nose, that they can scarcely be pitied. It is hardly to be believed that God, who is a wise being, should place

a soul, especially a good soul, in such a black ugly body."

The Africans may be divided into two classes; those who dwell in the interior parts at a distance from the sea, and those who inhabit the sea coast. These differ from each other in disposition, as much as the manners of the people who dwell in large and populous towns in Europe differ from the more simple and ingenuous manners of those who inhabit the country. The Africans on the sea coast are chiefly engaged in commerce, and are in general shrewd and artful, sometimes malevolent and perfidious. Their long connection with European slave traders has tutored them in the arts of deceit, so that false weights and measures, damaged goods, and all the various cheats which the ingenuity of the more enlightened European has strained itself to invent, are now detected almost as soon as they are attempted to be put in practice. It is in a great measure owing to this cause that traders who visit the coast of Africa in hopes of becoming suddenly rich, disappointed in finding the natives better acquainted with the value of their country's produce than they at first supposed, and too well instructed by dear bought experience to be so grossly imposed upon as formerly, have drawn of them as foul a picture as they could invent. In short, the Africans may quote *Æsop's* fable of the Man and the Lion, and reply to their calumniators, "We lions tell the story differently." In proportion as we advance into the country the natives are found to

be more simple in their manners, more devoid of art, and more free from suspicion.

But erroneous opinions respecting the African character are not confined to the interested and ignorant observer; prejudice has biassed the minds of men celebrated for their learning and acuteness, as will appear from the following extract: “* Of all the various races of mankind, there are none who have a stronger attachment to life implanted in them, and a greater horror at the thoughts of death, than the negroes on the western coast of Africa, from Senegal down to Loango. They are more insensible than others towards pain and natural evils, as well as towards injurious and unjust treatment. In short, there are none so well adapted to be the slaves of others, and who therefore have been armed with so much passive obedience.” The fear which the Africans entertain of dissolution, if it really exists, would rather indicate excessive sensibility, and seems incompatible with the stoical apathy which this writer affirms they possess. These traits are certainly not observable in the natives round Sierra Leone, nor in any others whom I have seen. With more truth it may be said, that in sickness and pain they shew a becoming fortitude, and they certainly meet the approach of death with at least as much indifference as is usually seen in Europe. It is indeed said by some travellers, that amongst the nations of Whidah to mention death is accounted rude, and if it be done before

* Meiners vermischte Philosoph. Schriften. See Soemmering.

a great man, it is deemed a capital crime. But even allowing this to be true, it does not imply any extraordinary fear of death, because *fashion* may introduce into a country customs which are no fair indication of natural disposition. Many instances of this kind occur in the writings of antiquity: Joseph does not ask of Pharaoh permission to go and bury his father, but sends to request it, as it was not lawful for him to appear before the king in a mourning habit; and in the book of Esther it is said, "None might enter into the king's gate clothed with sackcloth." If they were thus strict in prohibiting a certain dress, we may presume they might be equally careful to avoid certain subjects of conversation. It may further be remarked, that nearly the same ideas were prevalent among the Romans, who never were accused of any slavish fear of death; witness their circumlocutory mode of expressing themselves upon this subject.

Another learned author has remarked*, "that the strong backs of the Africans seem to shew that these people are designed by nature to bear the yoke of slavery." The converse of this proposition must therefore be true; and nature has undoubtedly intended that the Eskimaux, the most pigmy race of men existing, should become lords of the universe.

An author, who resided some time among the natives round Sierra Leone, though he does not

* Wunsch Rosmologische Unterhaltungen. Vide Soemmering.

give the most favourable account of their dispositions in general, yet he allows them the praise of being hospitable and kind to those whose conduct is marked with propriety; and at the same time he shews that they possess sufficient penetration to distinguish men of merit from the common herd of traders who infest that part. "The Mandingos," he observes, "from religious motives, hate a Christian, and vilify those Europeans who reside among them, and whom they *frequently* see drinking and rioting, with the appellation of dog. But when I formerly resided among them, by pursuing a *contrary conduct*, and being able to converse with them on the tenets of their religion, I received such treatment from them, in the time of the utmost distress, when I was dangerously ill, as I could have expected only from my best and dearest friends*." Though the Mandingos and Foolas are very rigidly tenacious of the dogmas of their religion, yet they are highly gratified by having passages in the Bible pointed out which bear a relation to parts of the Koran. I have seen many of them listen, with deep attention and extreme pleasure, to various passages of our scriptures, which were translated to them by an interpreter. They never speak disrespectfully of our religion, nor do they call its professors vilifying names, as far as my experience reaches; though certainly they can draw no favourable opinion of it from the conduct of

* Matthews's Letters from Sierra Leone.

the *Christians* who reside in Africa*. The baseness and depravity of manners, which too generally prevail among Europeans settled upon this coast, are so great, that the words of a learned author unhappily, apply to them with literal exactness: “ Vita et moribus suis in contrarium potius videantur conspirasse ad avertendos *Turcarum* animos a fide christiana. Fraudes nomine christiano indignæ, vita dissoluta, mores pravi, consortia turpissima, mendacia quibus ob leve lucrum sæpissime aliis imponunt, proverbium dedere Turcis, quod æterno nobis erit opprobrium, nisi novis moribus, facta priora deleamus †.”

In describing the disposition of nations who have scarcely emerged from what is termed a state of barbarism, observers are too apt to be led astray by individual acts of kindness or of injury, and, yielding to a momentary impulse, decide upon their character with too little diffidence as well as discrimination. Thus to one people they attribute virtues too sublime to be consistent with human frailty and depravity, while others they accuse of vices altogether inconsistent with their small progress in civilization. As mankind, however, though they may differ in complexion or in feature, are precisely alike in that immortal part which alone ought to characterize the human species, so long as they are unrestrained by education, the same motives will

* It is only by the very lowest class, when irritated, that an European will be reproached with the title of *kaafr*, infidel.

† Relandus in Præfatione.

always impel to similar modes of action. If my testimony can avail ought in placing the character of the Africans in a more just and proper point of view, it will be only a grateful though inadequate return for many acts of kindness received at their hands. In performing this office, however, it is my earnest wish to divest myself of partiality, and neither to "extenuate nor set down aught in malice." They are in general of mild external manners; but they possess a great share of pride, and are easily affected by an insult: they cannot hear even a harsh expression, or a raised tone of voice, without shewing that they feel it. As a proof that they are not deficient in natural affection, one of the severest insults which can be offered to an African is to speak disrespectfully of his mother, which is called "cursing her;" that they do not feel so very acutely an insult offered to their father is a natural consequence of polygamy. The respect which they pay to old people is very great, and perhaps was not exceeded at Lacedæmon; indeed such is their deference towards age, that we may apply to them the words of the poet:

Credebant hoc grande nefas, et morte piandum,
 Si juvenis vetulo non assurrexerat, et si
 Barbato cuicunque puer. JUV. Sat. xiii.

After a certain age the title of pa, or father, is prefixed to the names of the men, as a token of respect, as Pa Roonee, Pa Sayba, &c.: the title of ma, or mother, is also added to the names of the

women, as Ma Shella, Ma Coomba*. This is also practised among the slaves in the West Indies; and it is worthy of remark, that those unfortunate people who have gone to the West Indies in the same vessel, ever after retain for each other a strong and tender affection: with them the term *ship-mate* is almost equivalent to that of brother and sister, and it is rarely that matrimonial connections take place between them†.

* Among the Bulloms, an old man who is become grey headed is styled yome, and a woman laam. A young person would not dare to call one of these titled old people by any other name than yome or laam; if necessary to distinguish him from some other old person he would say, for example, Yome Pa Sóberra, or if a woman, Laam Ya Doora. Appa is used among the Bulloms, and pa by the Timmanees. The Soosos use fa, or fafay. Children speaking to their father say papa. When a Soosoo man speaks to a person older than himself, to whom he wishes to pay some respect, he styles him kammay fooree, old man; if he intends to mark a greater degree of respect, he says fa-fay fooree, old father: but the most honourable appellation is tannum fooree, old grandfather. The same degrees of courtesy are used to the women; thus, n'yakkalay fooree is old woman; gaa fooree, old mother; and mama fooree, old grandmother. A boy, speaking to a woman about thirty years of age, called her Gaa Fooree Bondee; to which she indignantly replied, that being older than his mother, she thought herself entitled to be called Mama Fooree Bondee, or old grandmother Bondee.

† An intimate friend of mine, who resided several years in Jamaica, where he had the management of a large sugar plantation, returning home late in the evening, met a negro belonging to it carrying a box upon his head. He insisted on knowing its contents: the negro said it was the heart of a *ship-mate*, which he was carrying to an estate a few miles off, where a number of the friends of the deceased lived, in order that they might cry over it. He said he had already cried over the body the night before in committing it to the ground, and now he meant to join his friends, who were more remote, in the same ceremony. Their

The hospitality of the Africans has been noticed by almost every traveller who has been much among them. When the colony of Sierra Leone was destroyed by those who styled themselves the friends of liberty, and the inhabitants were stripped in the most wanton manner of the comforts they were enjoying, when their houses* were burnt, their provisions and even medicines *destroyed*, and they themselves reduced by this cruel treatment to the prospect of disease, famine, and misery, *quæque ipse miserrima vidi*; they were all, whites as well as blacks, most hospitably received by the natives, into whose villages they were obliged to fly for shelter. In travelling through many parts of their country, when overpowered with heat, fatigue, and hunger, I have ever met with a welcome and hospitable reception on arriving at their villages; mats have been brought out for myself and friends to repose on; and if it happened to be meal-time, we have been at liberty to join them without ceremony, or to wait till something better could be provided. If we intended to spend the night there, a house has been set apart for us, and, on taking leave in the morning, a guide has generally offered to shew us on our way. Indeed, so far does this spirit of hos-

eries consist of music, dancing, and crying, as in Africa, and differ only in name, being called plays in the West Indies.

* It must be acknowledged, however, that the French left the bare walls of the huts belonging to the Nova Scotian settlers uninjured, after having plundered them of their contents, even the wearing apparel of the women and children, and destroyed those articles of furniture which they could not carry away.

pitality prevail, that a traveller or stranger, as they call him, is scarcely accountable for any faults which he may commit, whether through inadvertency or design, the host being considered as responsible for the actions of "his stranger." The entrance into a Bullom or Timmanee town, and in general into the small towns or villages of all the other nations, affords a gratifying picture of African manners. As soon as a stranger is observed, all the inhabitants quit their occupations, and hasten to shake him by the hand, repeating several times the word *senno*, welcome. Even the children, who can barely lisp a welcome, when a little custom has diminished the dread attending a white face, are eager to discharge this duty of hospitality, and with a smile hold out their little hands, and seem delighted if he deigns but to notice them. Upon entering into a Bullom house, particularly those in the river Sherbro and on the Bananas, the usual salutation is *moi-éc*, are you come? They express in a civil manner their dislike to any person's visits by saying *pa-nec-móo*, you have not been long away. After all, it must be acknowledged, that in uncivilized countries hospitality is so necessary, and so much required by the mutual convenience of all parties, as to detract greatly from its merit as a moral quality. It must also be acknowledged that this virtue is by no means so generally practised among the Bulloms and Timmanees, partly no doubt from their poverty, as it is said to be by nations further removed from the sea coast.

Extremes of heat and cold have been supposed to be equally unfavourable to the growth of genius. It is in temperate climates that the mind as well as the body attains its greatest power; and an elegant author observes, that “the shade of the barren oak and the pine are more favourable to the genius of mankind than that of the palm or the tamarind.” This opinion, however, rational as it may appear to us at present, may be shewn by succeeding ages to be ill founded. The annals of history clearly prove to us, that genius and empire have been constantly changing their seats, and that no people or country have been favoured hitherto with the exclusive enjoyment of them. Lucretius very justly observes,

*Augescunt aliæ gentes, aliæ minuuntur,
Inque brevi spatio mutantur sæcla animantum.*

Who, during the Augustan age of Rome, would have presumed to predict that science would one day remove to the impenetrable forests of Germany and Gaul, or, still more improbable, to the distant shores of Britain? The sciences, which were cultivated in Egypt* at a time when Europe was almost desert and uncultivated, were said to have been carried thither from Ethiopia, so that it would be as absurd to deny that the arts could flourish in Africa, from viewing the present state of the country and of its inhabitants, as it would be to assert that Athens, mutilated and in ruins, never enjoyed the celebrity

* Herodotus. Diodorus Siculus.

which historians have attributed to it, or that Britons were not once numbered among the greatest barbarians. Had the Carthaginian empire withstood the attacks of the Romans, we might at this time have possessed much important knowledge, which was lost to its then unlettered conquerors; and it is not improbable that Africa would have risen to a height of grandeur beyond what we can now conceive.

Authors have remarked a circumstance respecting the intellectual faculties, which, it is asserted, is peculiar to the natives of all hot climates, and which, if founded on fact, is certainly not unworthy of attention. That is the early appearance of genius and understanding said to be observable in children, and their equally sudden and rapid decay. Heat, it is well known, is the most active agent in nature, and its powerful effects are daily seen in accelerating the growth of vegetables: the same effects are supposed to be produced in the animal kingdom; and, according to this analogy, by increasing the sensibility of the body it hastens the evolution of its organs. The faculties, therefore, in consequence of this early evolution, are exerted before they have acquired sufficient energy; and the mind is exposed to the allurements of vice before the judgment is sufficiently matured to withstand its mischievous attacks. It is asserted also, that the baneful effects of this premature manhood are peculiarly felt in South America, where the moral character has in consequence thereof greatly suf-

ferred *. This early evolution and rapid decline of the mental faculties, if they exist in nature, certainly do not form traits in the African character. I have frequently observed, with great pleasure, the facility with which the children of the native Africans, as well as those of the Nova Scotian settlers brought from America, receive instruction in the different schools established at Free Town, but it is not such as to lead to an idea of precocity. Neither is there any reason to suppose that the judgment decays with age, if we consider the soundness of intellect and strength of memory frequently observable in their old people. So far indeed does the opinion quoted above differ from the result of my observations, that I should be disposed to say that African children are no more inferior to English children than men in Africa are below men of the same age in England. Their orators are in general men who have passed the prime of life, but they are often very successful in exciting the passions by their bold and figurative language, which flows in torrents, and is sometimes such as would not disgrace the page of an eastern poet. Their discourses are delivered with force and energy, and sometimes with considerable violence of tone and gesticulation, even when the discourse itself is vapid and full of tiresome repetitions. Those who have visited the schools instituted by the Mahommedans, for the instruction of children in Arabic literature, must

* Falconer on the Influence of Climate.

have admired the industry and perseverance of the scholars, at the same time that he lamented the great loss of time spent in acquiring a knowledge of the Arabic, which would have been so much more profitably employed in learning to read their own or some European language*. In these schools the boys read, or rather shout, their lessons as loud as possible: the same is observed by Dr. Russell, speaking of the Mahomedan schools at Aleppo: "as they read aloud all together, the noise they make in getting their lessons may be heard at some distance." *This noise is rendered*

* I am happy to say, that, since the above was written, much has been done to remedy the disadvantage here complained of. The Soosoo language has been reduced to fixed principles through the assiduous labours of the Rev. Mr. Brunton, and several tracts have been translated into it, and printed, at the expense of the Society for Missions to Africa and the East. As the Soosoo is the language not only of a considerable space near the sea coast, but of the extensive country which Mr. Park distinguishes by the name of Jallonkadoo, and as it is also very frequently spoken by the Timmanees, Bulloms, and Mandingos, its reduction to writing appears to be an event of no small importance. No book had ever before been printed, or even written, in any of the languages of western Africa. The greater ease, however, with which knowledge may be introduced through the medium of their own language, which they perfectly understand, than it can by means of the Arabic, which is a foreign language, and consequently of itself a difficult acquirement, is obvious. The books already printed in Soosoo are as follows, viz. 1. A Grammar and Vocabulary; 2. A Spelling-book and Church Catechism; 3. An easy First Catechism; 4. A Second Catechism; 5. An Historical Catechism; 6. Three Dialogues on the Advantage of Letters, the Absurdity of the religious Notions of the Soosoo, and the comparative Value of the Christian and Mahomedan Religion; 7. Christian Instructions, being an Abridgment of the Scripture History and Doctrine.

still more grating to the ear by their harsh and guttural pronunciation. Such, however, is their quickness of perception, that, amidst this confused clamour, if a word be wrong pronounced, or falsely accented, it is immediately noticed by the master, or corrected by one of the scholars, among whom a strong spirit of emulation prevails. The boys begin their studies at least an hour before daylight in the morning, and protract them till late at night, taking some respite during the middle of the day. In the dry season, before sun-rise and after sun-set, they generally sit in the open air round a large fire*, which affords them light, and for its support each scholar brings a bundle of faggots. Their lessons are written with ink which washes out, by means of a reed cut in form of a pen, upon thin smooth pieces of wood of a close grain like beech; the letters are first written, then the combinations of letters, and lastly passages of the Koran. When they can read and write with facility, the master receives as his reward, for each scholar, a slave, or the value of one; but if he fails in this point, he receives no recompence for his trouble. † As writing con-

* The same method prevails also in Morocco. M. Chenier says, "In the evening, when they return from their day's labour, all the children of the douhar (encampment) assemble in a common tent, where the Iman, who himself can scarcely spell, teaches them to read some lessons in the Koran, transcribed on boards, and instructs them in their religion by the light of a fire made of straw, underwood, and cow-dung dried in the sun."

† According to Mr. Park, where the parents are unable to pay the stipulated reward, the boy remains as a slave to the school-master, until he be redeemed by his friends, or by his own industry.

stitutes one of their chief amusements, they are anxious to excel in it, and many of them write with great expedition and a tolerable degree of elegance. They procure paper from Europeans, but use a reed instead of a pen. They procure a very excellent ink by boiling the leaves of a tree called bullanta in water: this is generally done in an iron pot, containing some scoriæ of iron from a smith's forge. After it has boiled for a considerable time, the liquor is set aside to cool, and is then strained for use: it is of a dark purple colour, and is extremely durable. They generally make use of a large snail-shell to keep it in, to which a little cotton is added to absorb the ink. A similar receptacle is also used for their ointments:

—Funde capacibus
Unguenta de conchis*.

They set a high value upon some of their manuscripts: an old man, who had a small duodecimó book of a quarto form, containing extracts from the Koran very neatly written, and ornamented with views of the Caaba, &c. at Mecca, refused to sell it for eight slaves, as it had been at Mecca, or, as he expressed it, "had walked to Mecca."

The Mandingos and Foolas are passionate admirers of Arabic literature, in which they are tole-

dustry. Whether this be the case among the Soosos and Mandingos I am uncertain; but all the time the boys are at school, during a certain portion of the day, they are obliged to work as slaves to the master, and not only bring his wood and water, but even cultivate the ground for him.

* Horace, Carm. ii. 7.

rably proficient; and it is to be ascribed partly to the shackles imposed by their religion, and partly to the debasing effects of the slave trade and the obstructions it presents to improvement, rather than to a want of genius, that they have made so little progress in other sciences.

Niebuhr observes, that he has often shewn to the Arabs books printed in their own language which they could scarce read. I have, however, more than once seen the Africans read Arabic books; one in particular read several chapters of the New Testament in Arabic, and of which he appeared to have a just comprehension. Several others explained passages in Arabic books, particularly Richardson's Arabic Dictionary, giving the sound of the words very nearly as they are there written, and in general explaining the meaning of them very exactly*.

* This circumstance is corroborated by Mr. Park.