

the golden land of Bambouk, whence the French traders obtain considerable quantities of that precious metal. The Gambia is a noble river. It is about 11 miles wide at its mouth, and about 4 opposite Bathurst. How far it extends into the interior is unknown; it is said, however, that it has been ascended for some hundred miles. It is also asserted, that, from the upper part of this river the Senegal can be reached in three, and the Niger in four days, the Niger offers an uninterrupted passage to our steam boats for 560 miles inland; and there is every probability that, with the exception perhaps of one or two portages, water carriage might be gained to a length of 2,500 miles further; and also that the Techadda, which falls into the Niger, would open up a ready communication with all the nations inhabiting the unknown countries between the Niger and the Nile. It would be impossible to enumerate the wonderful kingdoms in central Africa, which can be reached by the Niger and its tributary streams; but they are represented by various travellers as easy of access, abounding with the elements of commerce, populous, and rich in grain, fruits, cattle and minerals.

"In addition to the mighty rivers above referred to, it has been ascertained that, from Rio Lagos to the river Elrei, no fewer than 20 streams enter the ocean, several of surprising magnitude, and navigable for ships (McQueen); and that all the streams which fall into the sea from Rio Pormosa to Old Calabar, inclusive, are connected together by intermediate streams, at no great distance from the sea, and so may be said to be the mouths of the Niger.—(Leoman, p. 20.)

"Its industrial resources is another feature, demanding serious attention. By these I mean not merely its extreme fertility, and capabilities for the most extended cultivation and commerce, but the activity and enterprise of its people. On the coast there is a belt of slave trading chiefs, who, at present, find it more profitable to supply the slave-market than to conduct a legitimate commerce.—Little business can be done when there are any slaves at their stations; indeed the fair traders are always compelled to wait until the human cargoes are completed. These chiefs not only obstruct the fair traders on the coast, but as much as possible prevent his access to the interior. Insecurity, demoralization and degradation are the results; but as you recede from the coast, and ascend the rivers, comparative civilization exists, industry becomes apparent, and no inconsiderable skill in many useful arts is conspicuous. All travellers have observed the superior cultivation, and comparatively dense population of the inland regions. Laird, in ascending the Niger, writes, 'Both banks of the river are thickly studded with towns and villages; I could count seven from where we lay aground; and between Eboc and the confluence of the rivers there cannot be less than 40, one generally occurring every two or three miles. The principal towns are Atta and Addakudda; and averaging the inhabitants at 1,000, will, I think, very nearly give the population of the banks. The general character of the people is much superior to those of the swampy country between them and the coast, they are shrewd, intelligent, and quick in their perceptions, milder in their disposition, and more peaceable in their habits.' Oldfield says (vol. i, p. 163,) that from the great number of towns they passed, he is inclined to suppose that the population must be very dense indeed. And (vol. ii, p. 17,) 'no sooner does the traveller approach one town, than he discovers three or four, and sometimes five others.' Parke speaks

(vol. ii, p. 30) of the 'hills cultivated to the very summit, and the surplus grain employed in purchasing luxuries from native traders.' Laing speaks, (p. 156) with delight of 'the extensive meadows, clothed in verdure, and the fields from which the springing rice and ground-nuts were sending forth their green shoots, not inferior in beauty and health to the corn-fields of England, interspersed here and there with a patch of ground studded with palm trees.' Tuckey reports (p. 342) a similar improvement in the face of the country at some distance up the Congo, where he found towns and villages following each other in rapid succession. Ashmun, writing from Liberia, says, 'An excursion of some of our people into the country, to the distance of about 130 miles, has led to the discovery of the populousness and comparative civilization of this district of Africa, never till within a few months even conjectured by myself. We are situated within 50 leagues of a country, in which a highly improved agriculture prevails; where the horse is a common domestic animal, where extensive tracts of land are cleared and enclosed, where every article absolutely necessary to comfortable life is produced by the skill and industry of the inhabitants; where Arabic is used as a written language in the ordinary commerce of life; where regular and abundant markets and fairs are kept, and where a degree of intelligence and practical refinement distinguishes the inhabitants, little compatible with the personal qualities attached, in the current notions of the age, to the people of Guinea.'

"The wants of the people of Africa must not, any more than their industry and enterprise, be judged by what is observable on the coast. The Moors who have preceded us in the interior, have imparted more knowledge than we may suppose of commercial transactions. Captain Clapperton told Mr. Hamilton that he could have negotiated a bill on the treasury of London at Socatoo. The Moors have introduced the use of Arabic in mercantile affairs; and that language is nearly as useful in Africa as the French language is in Europe. In 1812, Mr. Willis, formerly British consul for Senagambia; stated his belief that in the warehouses of Timbuctoo were accumulated the manufactures of India and Europe, and the immense population of the banks of the Niger are thence supplied. A Moorish Merchant reported to Mr. Jackson, that between Mungrelia and Houssa, there were more boats employed on the river than between Rosetta and Cairo; that the fields of that country enclosed and irrigated by water wheels—a demonstrative proof of the activity, industry, and civilization of the people.

"'Thirty years' experience,' says an African merchant, (Mr. Johnson,) 'of the natives, derived from living amongst them for the whole of that period, leaves a strong impression on my mind that, with due encouragement, they would readily be led to the cultivation of the soil, which I think in most places capable of growing anything.' Mr. Laird, in a letter to me, observes, 'As to the character of the inhabitants, I can only state that if there is one characteristic that distinguishes an African from other civilized people, it is his love of, and eagerness for, traffic: men, women, and children trade in all directions. They have regular market-places where they bring the produce of their fields, their manufactures, their ivory, and every thing they can sell. At the Ivory-market I have seen upwards of 100 large canoes, each holding from 10 to 40 men, all trading peaceably together. I was informed by the natives that it was considered neutral ground, and that towns at war with each other attended the same market amicably.' The industrious inhabitants of the Grain Coast supply Sierra Leone and Liberia with the greatest portion of their food.