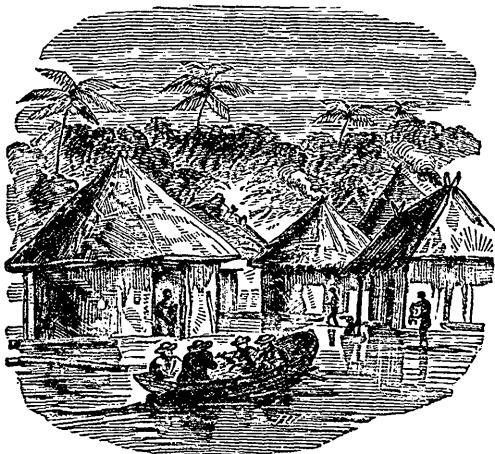


continent, stretched out under a hot sky, and inhaled by races, strange, dark, and savage in their life and aspect. A terrible mystery seems to hang over them and their land. Whole tracts have never yet been visited by a white man. In other parts where white men have penetrated, they have come sometimes on what seemed the very homes of desolation, and again on scenes lovely and radiant as the fairest this earth can shew. Only think what the history of Africa has been! In one corner, among the ruins of Egypt, the footmarks of one of the oldest and grandest races the world has seen—in other corners a vale of gloom flung over great regions, so thick and rayless, that, now travellers are a little raising it up, we can but feebly guess at the horrors and long solitude of the past.



Some believed that, after leaving the ocean shore and going inland, there was nothing but a wide sandy waste, glaring under a fierce and copper sun—others pictured howling forests shaken by the roar of wild beasts—others told of far-spread marshes, sending up black heavy mists that poisoned the air with disease and death. Traders in human blood, too, made the coasts and river-banks of the land desolate. Slaves, poor helpless beings, torn from their desert homes, filled every ship,