

PROVIDENTIAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE SPREAD OF THE GOSPEL.—COMMER-
MERCIAL IMPORTANCE OF WESTERN AFRICA.

[FOR THE CANADIAN CHRISTIAN EXAMINER, BY A CORRESPONDENT.]

The traces of wisdom in the works of God, are as numerous as are the indications of Divine agency itself. The believer, as he muses on creation and providence, will adore and exclaim, "O Lord, how manifest are thy works, in wisdom hast thou made them all." We have often thought that those marks of design are particularly beautiful and impressive where departments of the Divine works that are in themselves distinct, and in a sense independent, are yet connected with each other, and subordinate to the production of some important result. As for example, the formation of particular localities of our globe in connection with those events of distant occurrence in the arrangements of Providence, by which particular tribes of the family of man have been settled in those localities. Thus, the fate of the world in many important interests, has been bound up with the British nation. Yet, who will say, that the greatness of that nation is to be referred to any excellency of the Anglo-Saxon stock, from which it has chiefly sprung, or to any moral causes alone, without reference to the insular situation, the mineral riches, and other physical advantages of the British Islands. The all-surrounding ocean, however, was left to encircle it when God called off the Diluvial waters to the great deep, then too, its estuaries, bays and harbours were scooped out; or, the processes by which they have been formed, were originated. And in ages long anterior, even when the foundations of the earth were laid, valleys and plains were under-laid with beds of coal and iron, and its rocks and mountain veined with lead and tin.

A manifestation of Divine wisdom of a similar kind, may be seen in the subordination of the secular arrangements of Providence for the advancement of the Kingdom of Christ. For example, the publication of the Gospel, and the planting of Churches in particular parts of the world, have often been determined, in a sense, by the access obtained to nations through commerce, and even war itself. Look to the course of the gospel in the early ages of the church; and it will be found that it was in many cases in the tract of the colonies, and even of the victorious legions of Rome. Thus it was

that the doctrines of the cross were preached in the colonies, or subjugated provinces along the Rhine and the Danube, or on the coast of Africa. And thus in our own favored age it is that the more wide-spread colonies and commerce of Britain, her voyages of discovery, and even her expeditions for conquest, are made subordinate to a spread of the gospel more extended—though as yet less rapid—than that which took place in the apostolic age. The history of all the principal missions of the present day, illustrate this remark. Who could have thought that the islands in the Southern Pacific Ocean, which Captain Cook discovered, and which were for the time the wonder of the civilised world, for the cannibalism of their inhabitants, were in the course of half a century to be not merely civilised, but christianised? Is it unreasonable to think, that in a period even less remote, the numerous communities of Central Africa, of whose existence the civilised world has only recently been informed—for our Parkes and Clappertons who visited them, perished amongst them—shall afford illustrations of the transforming power of the gospel, so much the more glorious as these communities are more populous?

We have been led into these remarks by the following account of the Western Coast of Africa. It is taken from a work on the Slave Trade, by T. F. Buxton, Esq., M. P., though we are due to the *Boston Missionary Herald* for it:—

"The number and situation of the navigable rivers on the western coast of Africa have often been the subject of remark by those who have visited them, and particularly as affording the noblest means for extending the commerce of this country to the millions who dwell on their banks, or occupy the cities and towns in the interior. Along the coast, commencing at the southern point of the Bight of Biafra, and embracing the coast of Calabar, the Slave coast, the Gold Coast, the Ivory Coast, the Grain Coast, the Pepper Coast, the coast of Sierra Leone, and thence northward to the Senegal, there cannot be less than 90 or 100 rivers, many of them navigable, and two of them rivalling in their volume of water and extent the splendid rivers of North America. It is reported that a French steam vessel plies more than seven hundred miles up the Senegal, and that the Faleme which flows into it eight leagues below Galam, is navigable in the rainy season to vessels of 60 tons burden. the Faleme runs through