

the lake Tchad, where a number of oases are sprinkled like islands in this sandy ocean, nearly in a straight line, and thus form places of refreshment to the travelling caravans. Unhappily for the negroes, the Moors have obtained either the actual possession, or at least an arbitrary influence, over that belt of the country which forms the southern border of the Desert. They also hold the western coast from Morocco to the river Senegal. These men are as cruel as they are fierce, and as treacherous as they are enterprising. Being bigoted Mussulmans, they take advantage of their sanguinary creed to pillage and enslave the negroes, and all who are not of the same religion; and by keeping the country in a constant state of war and distraction, they have utterly impeded the improvement of Central Africa, and have been the oppressors and murderers of some of the most enterprising travellers.

From the latitude of the Senegal to the mountains of Kong and of the Moon, is a vast region of fertile country, watered by noble rivers, intersected by large forests, and capable of producing any of the fruits of a tropical climate. In the midst of this flows the princely Niger; and on the western coast are the Senegal, Gambia, Rio Grande, &c. The coast of Guinea lies to the south of the above-named mountains. It will thus appear that the Gambia is situated nearly in the middle of what may be called "the north-western plains of Africa." It is a noble river, being navigated by small ships of war as high as McCarthy's Island, about two hundred and fifty miles from its mouth; whilst merchant vessels proceed nearly to the falls or rapids of Barraconda, a distance of about two hundred and fifty miles farther. The tide rises three feet at these falls; a circumstance which shows the very level nature of the country, which is full of the most luxuriant vegetation. The water of the Gambia partakes of the saltiness of the ocean for about one hundred and eighty miles from the sea; and thus far the banks of the river are lined with mangrove forests. These trees only grow where they are reached by brackish water, in which situation they afford a constant aspect of rich foliage; for their roots and branches intermingle with each other; and some of the latter, bending down, take root in the marshy soil, and produce new trees and branches, so as to form an impenetrable and lasting grove of wood. From various parts of the river, large branches, called creeks, penetrate into the country. Some of these natural canals are of great width, and are said to extend a hundred miles in length; and as the tide rises in all of them, means are thus afforded of a considerable inland navigation, by which mahogany and other produce are brought down to the sea. Many of these creeks are also lined with mangrove trees; and it is in these that so many European seamen have lost their lives during the unhealthy season. The insufferable heat of a vertical sun by day, succeeded by a profuse exhalation of *marsh miasma* in the evening, cause raging fevers to prevail. This fatal disorder is aggravated by the want of proper ventilation, owing to the surrounding woods, the attacks of countless myriads of mosquitoes and the absence of proper care and remedies. Humanity would suggest and demand the passing of a local law to prevent British sailors being sent up the river in the rainy season.

The mouth of the Gambia is crowded with sharks, whilst higher up it is infested by the alligator and hippopotamus. The alligators may be seen lying in great numbers on the bank during the heat of the day. The river-horses (or rather elephants) show themselves by night, snorting and rearing their monstrous heads above the water. These animals are most ferocious when attacked, and will break a boat in pieces with one bite of their enormous jaws. The forests are infested by wild animals of different species, amongst which are the lion, tiger, elephant, wolf, and hyæna. The latter are very ferocious, and

pass over the water by night to dig up the buried bodies of the dead. Many of the villages and towns are literally beset at night by the voracious monsters of the forest, which prowl about for their prey, and can scarcely be restrained from making an assault by the rude stockade raised up for a defence. Many kinds of serpents, some of which are very venomous, lurk about the environs, or infest the out-houses and neglected dwellings of the inhabitants.

But the deadliest foes of the negro are those of his own species. The accursed slave trade is seen in Africa in all its desolating horrors. The evils caused by slavery in the West Indies and other places to which the unhappy Africans have been transported, are small compared with those wholesale murders and national calamities which it produces in the parent country, where it has unhinged the whole state of society, incited kingdom to rise up against kingdom, village against village, and man against man. Urged by the prize which Europeans hold out to the man-stealer, the uncivilized African becomes a ruthless savage, and the enemy of his own kindred. The inhabitants of a village have retired to rest, perhaps after enjoying themselves with music and dancing, which have been prolonged to a late hour, and they slumber in fancied security. But suddenly the shouts of enemies are heard as they rush through the stockade, and set fire to the thatched roofing of the negro huts. Awakened by the noise and the flames, the men seize their weapons to encounter the foe, but only meet with instant death, which is the portion of all who resist. Every one that appears either suspiciously strong or uselessly weak is also murdered. The women and children are collected into groups, shared amongst the spoilers, and then driven off with the cattle to the nearest market for sale. And next day, nothing remains of the former town but a few burnt or demolished ruins. The march of the slaves to market is often very tedious and severe; and many of the weak faint and perish, the prey of the wild beasts which follow in their track. Towards the south of Calabar, there are tribes of cannibals, whose unnatural feasts add to the horrors of such marauding scenes. A boy who was captured in the above manner described how he saw his father killed, and his mother murdered and devoured, with attending circumstances of an appalling description. This account was corroborated by a companion, whose father was Chief of the same town, (Bream,) and was made a slave. Such scenes of violence are of daily occurrence in Africa, and one lately took place within a few miles of McCarthy's Island.

On these occasions all the neighbouring towns and villages are deserted, the people flying in all directions from the marauding foe. Some Chiefs and their followers live entirely on the gains of such violent robberies. As the natural consequence of this unsettled state of society, the lands are not cultivated farther than is requisite for the immediate sustenance of the population, who are also comparatively indifferent to the acquisition of property which may be thus suddenly snatched from them. There is also a consequent estrangement of affection among themselves. Kings sometimes sell their subjects, husbands their wives, brothers their sisters, and even parents their children, if pressed by necessity. The most effectual way of abolishing the accursed slave-trade is by Christianizing the coast of Western Africa, so that the slave-mart may exist no longer, and neither Europeans nor Americans be able to purchase any more slaves.

But to return to the Gambia. St. Mary's lies near the mouth, being formed into an island by the river, which washes it on two sides, and by creeks which separate it from the Combo country on the other parts. It is about five miles in length, and less than a mile in breadth. The lower of the creeks which divides it from Cape St. Mary is called Oyster-Creek, from the great quantity of shell-fish (here