

REVIEWS.

Travels in Western Africa in 1845 and 1846. By John Duncan. 2 vols. London : Richard Bentley.

MR. DUNCAN is one of those bold, adventurous spirits who, reckless of danger, are fond of braving the moving accidents by flood and field which are sure to await the traveller in uncivilised regions. Sixteen years' hard service in the First Life Guards one would have supposed to have afforded sufficient adventure, and taxed the powers of endurance of any ordinary man; but our author does not seem to be of the ordinary class, for seeking, as he tells us, fields of greater enterprise, he no sooner obtains his discharge under a good conduct warrant, in 1839, than he solicits and obtains the appointment of Master-at-Arms in the unfortunate Niger Expedition, whose disastrous proceedings we recorded in the early volumes of the *Colonial Magazine*.

After recruiting his impaired health, he volunteered his services to the Royal Geographical Society to proceed again to Africa and penetrate to the Kong Mountains from the west coast. The country he has traversed he tells us has been hitherto untrodden by any European traveller, since he reached as far as $13^{\circ} 6'$ north latitude, and $1^{\circ} 3'$ east longitude.

Mr. Duncan having been furnished with a scanty outfit and a few instruments, &c., by the joint assistance of the Geographical Society and some private individuals, was granted a free passage by the Government, and embarked in the "Prometheus," steamer, for the Gambia and Cape Coast Castle, touching at Tangier, Gibraltar, Sierra Leone, &c. We will pass over the description of these places, and the manners and customs of the inhabitants of the African coast, which have so frequently been described in our pages.

On the 22nd of July, 1844, he landed at Cape Coast. After suffering severely from fever, and losing his servant by death, it was not till the 23rd November, that he made his first exploring excursion to visit a town of considerable trade on the coast named Annamaboe, distant thirteen miles from the Castle. He was accompanied by Mr. T. Hutton, one of the chief British merchants. Subsequently they visit together all the principal settlements along the coast as far as Whydah.

On June 7 Mr. Duncan finally sets out for Abomey, on his journey to the Kong Mountains, and on the 10th entered the town, where he was well received by the King of Dahomay.

The King then, in honour of his visitor, puts his regiments of female warriors through their military evolutions, and about eight thousand women, well armed and clothed, were passed in review before him.

After being fêted and feasted in his Majesty's palace, and having made himself thoroughly acquainted with the habits and tactics of the people, Mr. Duncan left the Dahoman capital to pursue his journey, on the 9th July, with a guard furnished him by the King.

Our space will not allow us to follow, as we had intended, the author through his various peregrinations, and we must be content to refer our readers to the book itself, where they will find much both to amuse and inform, in notices of the animal and vegetable productions, the peculiar traits of African character, and graphic descriptions of tropical climate and scenery.

On the 1st of August he reached his farthest point, the important town of Adafoodia, where, singularly enough, he met with two friends—one a merchant whom he had encountered at Egga during the Niger expedition, and the other a slave who had been head-cook to the firm of Boothby and Johnston, of Liverpool, and who spoke English well. He here learned the correct particulars attending the death of Mungo Park.

In September, 1845, Mr. Duncan arrived again on the coast, and embarked at Whydah on board the "Jane," Captain Lee, her commander having offered him a