

TIPPA'S supposed to be the IN-TAS
a formidable people Crootoochontou

Bogudo

AYOES
or
EYOES perhaps GAGOES
a warlike people to the Northward of this

KINGDOM OF DAHOMY

Whose King Guadja Trudo, Conquered the Kingdoms of Ardrah and Whydah in 1727.

MAHEES

Fouin or Foy the ancient Country
of the Dahomians then called Fays

Zacca

Abomey

the Capital of Dahomy
Dahwee, the Capital of Foy
Calmina
where the King often resides



Wintow
Little Haven
Great Haven

Ardrah or Alladah
a great Town with a Palace

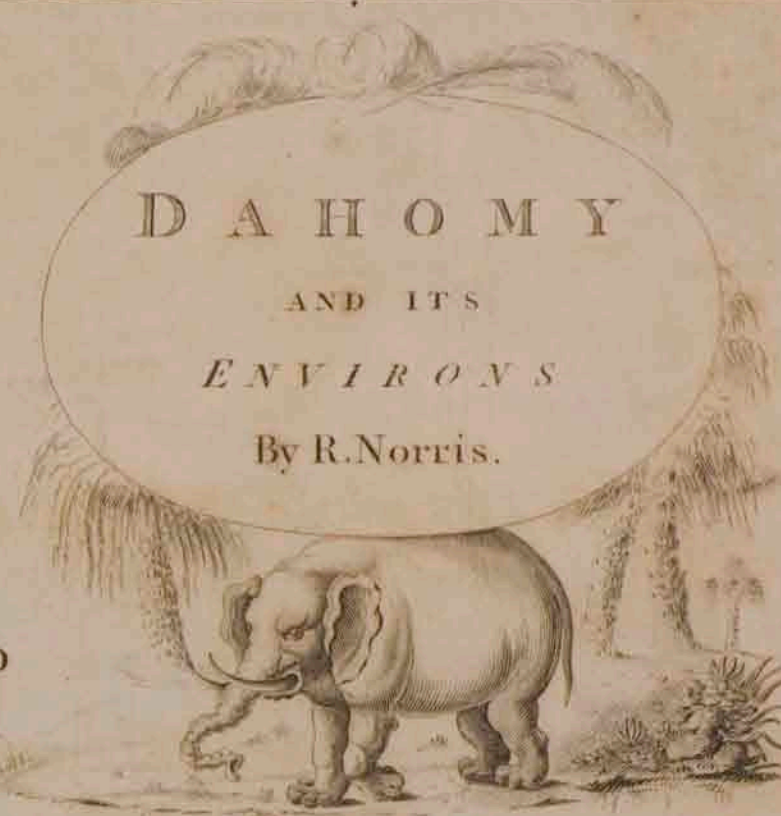
ARDRAH

WHYDAH

Alsem or Great
Ardrah the Capital of Ardrah &
a Place of Great Trade

Kingdom of Lagos
which is tributary to Benin

JABOO



DAHOMY

AND ITS

ENVIRONS

By R. Norris.

KINGDOM OF BENIN

BENIN

BIGHT of BENIN

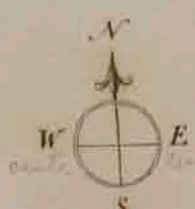
WAREE

From the Mouth of the River Volta
is called by the Portuguese
Rio da Volta mouth of the River Volta

Fuffo, lies 60 Miles
West of the Mouth of
the River Volta

Acquid
A bare sandy Shore
with a few straggling
Bushes

Creek open only
in the Rain



Scale of 60 Miles to a Degree

The tremendous breakers at
the mouth of the R. Volta have prevented
Vessels from entering till very lately,
when an American brig made good
her passage and found 10 or 12 feet
water on the Bar

THE
H I S T O R Y
OF
D A H O M Y,
AN INLAND KINGDOM OF AFRICA;

COMPILED FROM
AUTHENTIC MEMOIRS;

WITH
AN INTRODUCTION AND NOTES.

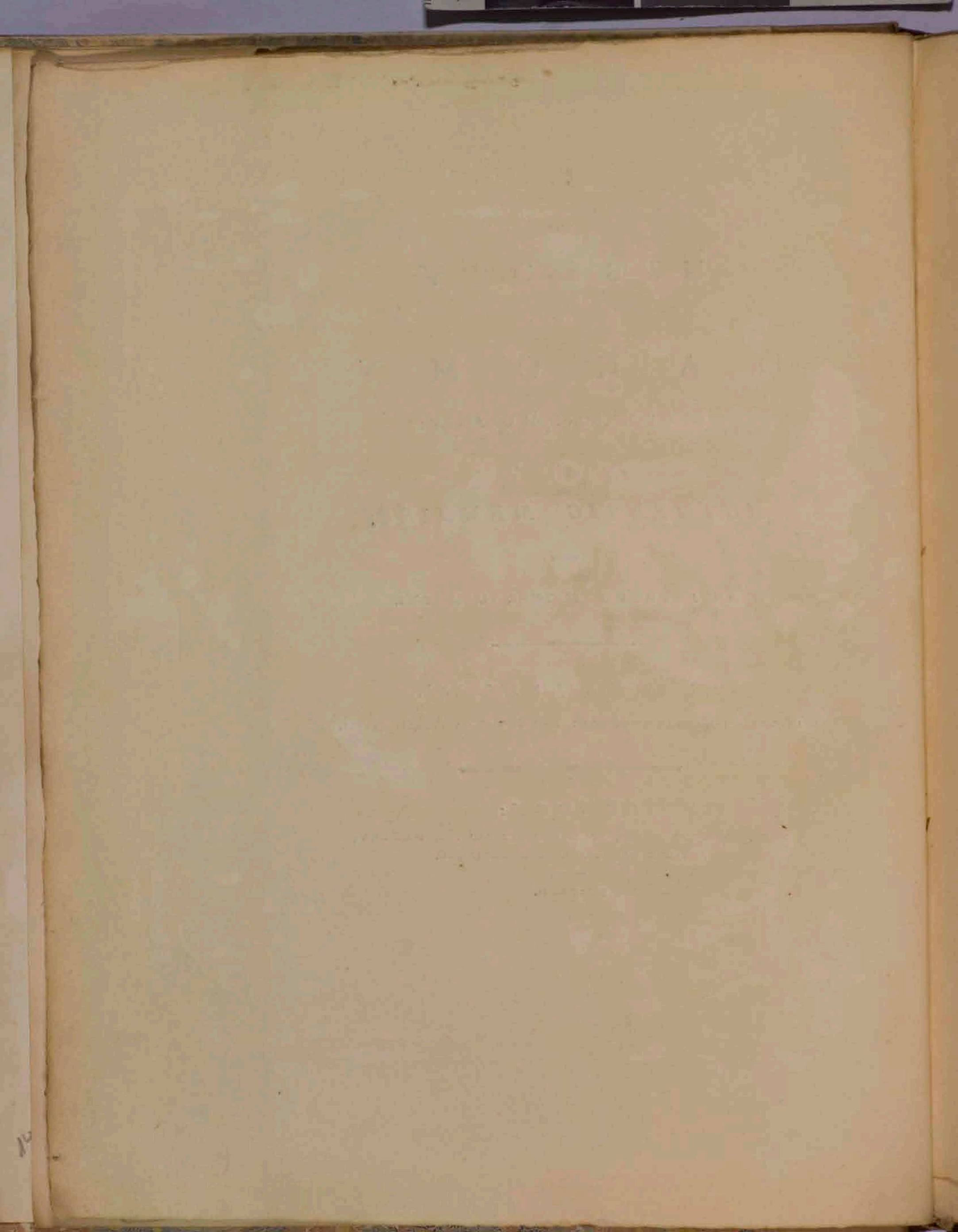
BY ARCHIBALD DALZEL,
FORMERLY GOVERNOR AT WHYDAH, AND NOW AT CAPE-COAST-CASTLE.

L O N D O N :
PRINTED FOR THE EDITOR, BY T. SPILSBURY AND SON, SNOW-HILL ;
AND SOLD BY J. EVANS, PATER-NOSTER-ROW.

M.DCC.XCIII.

1465

North Latitude



TO
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
CHARLES LORD HAWKESBURY,
P R E S I D E N T
OF
THE LORDS OF THE COMMITTEE OF COUNCIL,
OF TRADE AND PLANTATIONS, &c. &c. &c.

MY LORD,

I DO myself the honour, in consequence of Your Lordship's permission, to dedicate this *History of Dahomy* to Your Lordship, as the only proof which, at this distance, I can give of my gratitude for your uncommon attentions; and as a sincere testimony of the many advantages which I daily see result to the British Commerce and Shipping, from Your Lordship's Commercial Legislation.

[iv]

Permit me only to add, that I shall in every
situation endeavour to prove myself worthy of
being considered as,

MY LORD,

Your Lordship's

Most faithful,

And most devoted Servant,

Archibald Dalzel,

*Cape-Coast-Castle, Africa,
26 June, 1793.*

P R E F A C E.

THE contemplation of man, in the various situations and under the different circumstances in which he from time to time presents himself to our view, is one of the noblest employments of the philosophic mind, as it immediately leads to that self-knowledge which deservedly holds the pre-eminence over all others, and which cannot be obtained without it.

To arrive at a just knowledge of human nature, a progress through the history of the ruder nations is essentially necessary. It is from the actions of mankind, when seen under little other controul than that of their own will, that the tendency and effects of the passions appear more clearly and truly, than when under the influence and restraint of the laws of refinement: nor is there any other way to judge of the value of cultivation, in the estimate of human happiness, than by this kind of comparison.

But the history of savage nations is very difficult to be obtained. Themselves have no records; nor, without other incitement, will travellers more cultivated remain long enough among them, to become acquainted with their language, customs, manners, and opinions, to form a true picture of a people. Scraps
hastily

hastily picked up and ill understood, put into form by a fertile imagination, constitute most of those works that are offered under such name: whence arise the many strange notions and prejudices that we are apt to entertain of those people, and to refute which nothing is wanted, but a residence for a due time amongst them. It therefore becomes necessary to say something concerning the following Work, in order to shew the ground of credibility it stands on, and to give the reader a sufficient confidence in the truth and candour with which the facts are represented. For this purpose, the names of the Authors alone would be sufficient to those acquainted with them: to others it will be necessary to mention, that the late Mr. *Robert Norris*, of Liverpool, whose death, since the writing of this book, is justly regretted by all who knew him, was eighteen years in the African trade, was well acquainted with the language and customs of the people, and was indefatigable in obtaining, from both blacks and whites, the memoirs from which his part of the work was written. Besides, his own observation furnished many curious and interesting facts, as will be found in his history of Ahadee, and his journey to Abomey in 1772, which are here a second time printed, with many corrections and emendations, finished during his last illness.

The life of Adahoonzon II. and the beginning of the reign of Wheenoohew, the present king of Dahomy, are collected from the communications of *Lionel Abson*, Esq. the present British Governor at Whydah; of whom we need only say, that he has been seven and twenty years resident on the coast, and upwards of twenty in the present government; where, from his situation, and a thorough acquaintance with the people and their language,

guage, he has been enabled to obtain every information he could desire, or they afford; and this the more readily, as his great knowledge is found no less useful to them, than to his employers.

Mr. *Dalzel* had collected these, and written the Introduction, when, his duty calling him to Cape Coast, he was obliged to leave the care of the press to a friend; a circumstance the more to be regretted, as his great intelligence in the subject, had he been present, might have afforded it a higher degree of perfection than it has now to boast of: his competence to such a task cannot be doubted, after reading the Introduction just mentioned, the result of near thirty years observation, seven of which he was resident in Guinea, and four of these Governor at Whydah, in which government he was succeeded by Mr. *Abson*.

Before leaving England, in 1792, he conceived that the addition of the preceding reigns would render the work more complete, and so, more worthy the liberal encouragement of his numerous friends. This part therefore is supplied, from all the authors that could be found who had treated of the subject; but principally from *Snelgrave*, whose style carries with it the irresistible evidences of truth, which are simplicity and candour. How it is executed, is submitted to the judgment of the reader. If it does not disgrace the rest of the Work, the writer is satisfied; and whilst he declares that he has used his utmost pains to prevent censure, he does not offer himself as a candidate for praise, nor wishes to lay claim to any part of the book but its errors.

This

This Work, considered as a collection from several writers, will doubtless require much indulgence for the inequality of the style, for a few repetitions that might otherwise have been avoided, and for some errors of the press, which great care has not been able to obviate. But Candour is the bosom-friend of Judgment; and the Editor, pleading a desire to please, need not fear pardon where he has failed, when assisted by such an advocate. Even the title might have appeared more suitable to the Work, had it been Memoirs, rather than History: to which last it can claim no other right, but that of containing every thing historical that its collectors could find relating to Dahomy. The Notes generally show the authorities from which they are taken; those marked with R. N. were given by Mr. Norris; those with A. D. by Mr. Dalzel; and the few with J. F. were those added after his departure: when they are without these marks, they belong to the writer of the text referring to them.

The curious fruit mentioned in the Introduction, and to which I have given the name of *oxyglycus*, I find was known to Des Marchais, who describes it* as a little red fruit, which, being chewed, gives a sweet taste to the most sour or bitter things. But he mistakes, where he says that the seed is much like pear-kernels; for some of the natives of Cape Coast, with whom I have lately conversed, affirm, with Mr. Dalzel, that it is a stone-fruit; that it is called *assabab* on that part of the coast; and that it grows on a tall shrub, not on a tree, the fruit hanging down in clusters, like the cherries of the laurel. This must be distinguished from
the

* Tom. II. p. 203; & vide Prevost, Tom. IV. p. 350.

the *kola*, or *boesi*, mentioned by several authors, as giving a relish to water or palm wine; which grows on lofty trees, as this was said to do; but which, to Bosman, seemed to be a species of the *areka*, or *beetle**.

Similar to our account of the ceremony used in dooming the King of Eyeo to death†, and of its consequences, is that related by Diodorus Siculus, in his description of the Ethiopians. It is not, says this historian, the custom of the kings of Ethiopia, to put their subjects, though condemned, to death. They send to the criminal, by the proper messenger, a *token* of his doom; which he respectfully receives, and, retiring to his own house, kills himself. To which we may add, that there were some cases where this mode was practised in other countries; but that which most applies to our instance, is what follows. In like manner, continues he, did the priests at Meroë act towards the king himself; for when they wished to be rid of him, they had only to acquaint him, that the oracle of the Gods, whose will, they told him, no mortal ought to dispute, had decreed, that he should put himself to death: a summons which never met with resistance till the time of the second Ptolemy; when *Ergamenes*, one of their kings, whose mind had been improved by the learning and philosophy of the Greeks, on receiving such an imperious and dreadful message, instead of compliance, led his army to the city of Arata, the residence of the priests, and the seat of their golden temple, where he destroyed the whole knot of them and their adherents, and for ever abolished the custom.

b

This

* Bosman, p. 287.

† Vide Hist. p. 12, 156.

This message was no doubt accompanied with the same formalities as in other instances; and some token sent to the king, to confirm the sentence, as well as to give it authenticity; which token, though it might not be the same with that used at Eyeo, still produces a coincidence in a very extraordinary custom, that for countries so distant, and times so remote, must appear very remarkable. Nay, so many instances of this kind are found, between the customs and ceremonies of different and distant parts of Africa, that we are often led to conclude there must, at an early period, have been an intercourse between them. Time has erased the æra from the page of history; but the vestiges of such an intercourse may still be perceived in facts of this striking nature.

Moreover, when we consider that the best historians affirm the Nigritians to have been the first inhabitants of Africa, and that the tawny people were interlopers; we may as reasonably suppose those customs to have originated amongst the inhabitants, as amongst their invaders, and to have travelled *towards* the North, rather than from it. There is no more reason to suppose Nigritia to have been always in its present state of ignorance and barbarity, than Ethiopia, Egypt, and Greece; only that the period of its grandeur is farther removed. The fall of refinement into barbarism, we well know, is much more rapid than its rise; and this, because when refinement is carried beyond a certain pitch, it evaporates the metal as well as the dross; enervates the body, so as to unfit it for the hardy resistance of violence; and renders the mind so light, that it becomes the plaything of every plausible wind that may be directed against it.

On

On the other hand, we have no more reason to suppose the Phœnicians or Ethiopians to have been always the same cultivated people that they were in the times of Solomon, Alexander, and Ptolemy, than to suppose the same of Britain from its present state; when we know, that scarce 2000 years are elapsed, since the chief ornament of our politeſt ladies, was the length of their hair, and the blue tattooing of their bodies.

I would not here be understood as intimating, that all the ſimilar cuſtoms of Guinea, and the northern or eastern nations of Africa, took their riſe in the ſouth; becauſe many of them ſhew the contrary, having an immediate relation to Mahomedaniſm, and ſuch as have evidently been introduced ſince the Hegira; partly by the incurſions of the Arabs, and other nations, partly by commercial intercourſe: it is only to thoſe of ſuch a nature as this juſt mentioned, that we would apply our hypotheſis.

The map is that of Mr. Norris, with a few additions; which, for the places on the coaſt, and the poſition of Abomey, is near enough to the truth; but in the internal parts is far from being diſcriminate: the ſituations, much more the boundaries, of many of the kingdoms mentioned in our hiſtory, being very imperfectly known to the Europeans, or even to the Dahomans themſelves, as I have had occaſion to obſerve in ſeveral of the Notes. Even the diſtance between the ſame two places is differently ſtated by thoſe who have travelled over it. For inſtance, from Whydah beach to Abomey, which is perhaps the moſt beaten track, by Europeans, of any in Africa, the di-

stance is reckoned, by Mr. Lambe to be 200 miles; whilst Mr. Norris makes it 112, and Mr. Dalzel only 96. Nor is this all; the very names of the same place are as discordant as the positions or distances. *Whydab*, as it is pronounced by the natives, who found the *w* of it strong, like that in *whip*, the French write *Juida*; the Dutch, *Fida*, &c. *Eyeo* is written many different ways, as may be seen in the Notes; but not in that which I presume is the right one, viz. *Gago*. Snelgrave mistakes *Mahee* for *Eyeo*, which he calls *Yahoo*; very near to the Arabian sound of *Gago*. *Gago*, so called by *Leo*, is written *Kuku*, by the translators of the Nubian Geographer, and *Gugoo* by the African discoverers. *Affiante*, founded *Ashantee*, is by some called *Inta*; which country I conjecture to be our *Tappah*: and many other synonyma are to be found, much more dissimilar in their appearance than these. So that under such considerations it proves oftentimes very difficult to ascertain, either from books or travellers, the identity of many towns and countries: as I have experienced, in common with others who have undertaken that labour; and of which more hereafter. This being the case, we must be indebted to circumstances, and sometimes to conjecture, for the probable, when we cannot obtain the actual, situation of places: and from these helps we have been led to conclude the identity of *Dauma* and *Dahomy*; of *Gago* and *Eyeo*; of *In-Ta* and *Ta-pah*; and to give a position of these from *Abomey*, and from each other, different in the Notes from those found in the body of the Work; as I did not think proper to alter that without greater certainty. There is one error, however, that should be corrected; I mean the latitude of *Abomey*, which, in the second page of the Introduction, is said to lie in 9 degrees 50 minutes north, agreeable
to

to its place in former maps ; but which should have been 7 degrees 59 minutes north, in conformity to our own.

I shall now account for the reasons that induced me to adopt these different names, as synonyma, that this liberty may not appear the mere effect of imagination, and in hopes that I may thereby save some trouble to future enquirers: the difficulty attending on almost every investigation relative to the interior African geography being such, that to travel through Nigritia on paper, is almost as dreary and devious as through the country itself.

The identity of Dauma and Dahomy, is clearly proved from their situation, which on all the maps is the same, viz. on the eastern side of, and adjacent to, the river Volta ; though it is not easy to trace by what means the ancient geographers obtained the knowledge of its position so truly. It must be observed, that the name of Dauma does not occur in any author, nor in any map that I have seen, till after the appearance of Leo's Description of Africa ; for in 1561 it is not to be found in the maps of Ruscelli ; though even the Latin translation of Leo, which must have been subsequent to the author's edition, had then been published six years: yet it is in the Planisphere of P. Plancius, dated 1594, and in the Atlas of G. Mercator, who died in that year: so that it was probably introduced by *Sanutus*, who is styled the exactest divider of Africa, and whose Geography was published at Venice in 1588. If so, for I have not the book, this author seems to have had further information than that afforded by Leo; for he has not only placed the kingdom of Dauma in the very situation it is now found to occupy, but even the capital of the same name in about nine degrees

degrees north, in which he has been followed by most of the subsequent geographers, and which answers near enough to the latitude of Abomey: whereas Leo* only makes a general mention of this, with several other kingdoms, which he says are on the south of Nigritia.

There is a circumstance that, though perhaps it may only be the engraver's error, is too remarkable to be passed over; which is, that the town Dauma is in Plancius's map† spelt *Dauina*. If this be intentional, the near coincidence of this found with Dawhee, the former capital, is still more extraordinary.

In the maps belonging to Sir Jonas Moore's Mathematics, published in 1681, which were revised and prepared for the press by Dr. Halley, and said to be taken from the *newest* geographers extant, we still find both the kingdom and town of Dauma preserving their former position; and it is not till after the publication of the Doctor's own map, in 1700, that they are supplanted by Ardra and other places; which, as they were found by himself or other navigators to lie along the coasts, were too hastily supposed to run far inland: but the conquest of Ardra and Whydah, by the Dahomans, in 1727, once more brought to light this ancient and warlike people; and replaced their kingdom in its former situation, with the slight alteration of the name from Dauma to Dahomy, as it was given by Captain Snelgrave.

In

* Leo, Book I. Chap. i.

† This map is in one sheet, and is probably a contraction of his larger one, published in 1592, which I have not.

In many maps there is another kingdom of Dauma, considerably to the eastward of this, of which no account has hitherto, I believe, been given. Sanutus himself places the second Dauma with the other kingdoms of Gothan and Medra, between Gaogo, Borno, and a country as little known as either of those it bounds, called *Judæorum terra*. But the inconstant position of this latter Dauma in the maps, and the determinate one of ours, renders such ambiguity worth no more than the mere mention.

As to the name of Fouin, or Foy, which the natives say was formerly that of Dahomy, it might be another appellation of the same country, like that of England for Britain, &c. with the consideration of which I shall neither tire myself nor the reader.

The position of Dahomy, or Dauma, once determined, it will not be difficult, I think, to investigate that of Eyeo. The Dahomans say, it is to the N. E. of Assen, or Great Ardra; but whether to the N. E. or N. W. thus much is certain, that it is to the northward, and that it must be a nation immediately adjoining to Dahomy; since there is no mention throughout our History of any intermediate one, which must have been the case, had it existed, from its interference in some of the many transactions that have passed between the two kingdoms. It is the common opinion, that the mutual boundary of Eyeo and Dahomy, is part of that chain of mountains which forms a line of separation between a great part of Nigritia and Guinea. Now the only country adjoining to Dahomy on the north, and bearing any affinity to Haiho, or Eyeo, is Gago; which preserved its vicinity to the river Volta, and consequently to Dahomy, till
within

* Vide Magini Geographiæ Pars secunda, Ed. 1617, p. 187.

within a few years; when new names induced geographers, perhaps too hastily, to disturb the former position of places. From Plancius to the time of Senex, Gago is the N. W. boundary of Dahomy. In D'Anville, Gago is changed to Gogo, and removed further to the northward; as it is, under the name of Gugoo, in the late map of Major Rennel, added to the discoveries of the African Association. Before these authors, I believe, there is no intermediate country found between Gago and Dahomy; nor perhaps would there yet, if our late information had been more accurate.

As to the difference in form between the two words, it may have arisen from the different manners of representing Arabic words in Roman characters, or of different nations representing the same sound. In the former case, it is very easy to make such a mistake, as these three sounds, viz. G, soft*, Hh, and Ch, are represented in Arabic by the same character, with the help only of a single point;† and that the latter is often the fact, I have already shewn in several instances.

But Snelgrave says, from the information of the Portuguese Mulatto found at the court of Trudo, that Eyeo is “many days journey off, beyond a great and famous lake, which is the fountain of several large rivers, that empty themselves into the Bay of Guinea.” Let us consider this description. Assen, or Ardra, where our Author then was, is distant from
Gago,

* This is nearly the English sound of E aspirated, or He. Moore says, the kingdom called Ghana, by the Nubian Geographer, is founded Yany by the natives. Travels, p. 15; et v. Appendix, p. 6, 66.

† Walton. Introduc. ad Lection. Linguar. Orientalium.

Gago, in Senex's map,* twelve or fourteen days journey, at about twenty miles per day: but then it is considerably to the south-west of the lake alluded to, if by such lake be meant that called by some writers Guarda, or Sigefmes: which lake also has had several names and places, till at last it has vanished; for the small lake found near Ghanah, in Major Rennel's map, differs too much in situation to be considered as its remains: it might rather be taken for those of Ptolemy's lake Lybia.

The middle of the lake Sigefmes, according to Senex, lies in about 13 degrees north and 5 degrees east of London; consequently, it is something to the eastward of Ardra; but it does not seem to hold a place in the ancient maps. Ptolemy has no one that corresponds to this situation; though some have placed it near his lake Lybia, and others, to that which he calls Nigrites: to this last, one part of Snelgrave's description best answers, as they generally make it the source of many rivers.

Ptolemy places the lake Nigrites at the north-west extremity of the river Niger, close to the Mandrian mountains; on the other side of which is the head of the Massa; which river nearly answers in position to that of the river Senegal.

Who first discovered this lake, or who gave it the name of Sigefmes, or Guarda, I know not. It is neither in Edrifi nor
c
Leo;

* I shall here use Senex's map of Africa, engraved in 1740 for Pofflethwaite's Dictionary, as a very good one for the time, and better adapted for our purpose than those of more modern date, from its correspondence with former writers: in which point of view the old map of H. Moll will also be found very useful.

Leo; yet it was known before Sanutus, as I find it in Rufcelli's modern maps, annexed to his edition of Ptolemy's Geography, which was printed at Venice in 1567. He also lays down the Niger lake, which he describes as the source of two rivers: that running to the northward he calls Rio de l'Oro, which opens into the Atlantic Ocean in about the latitude of 19 degrees North; the other, with a south-west course, joins the same ocean in about 8 degrees North.

Barbot, who wrote in the latter end of the last century, gives the fullest account of this lake, that I have met with in any author. He says, the ablest geographers of this age, after much contesting about it, agree, that the Niger runs in a body from the lake Sigefmes, or of Guarda, which extends about 100 leagues from east to west, and about 50 from north to south; and lies in about twelve and a half degrees of North latitude from London, and between the 4th and 9th degrees of East longitude. This lake, pursues he, some say, waters Mandingo, Guber, and Gago, on the south; and Agadez and Cano on the north; and from it runs to the westward the continuation of the Niger, that is then called the Iça, or Sanaga, and which, at Cantorfi, or Cantozi, divides into seven branches. These he enumerates: two, he says, are the rivers Senegal and Gambia; the others are, Rio St. Joao, Rio St. Domingo, Rio Grande, and its two branches, the Guinala and Biguba. Though, he observes, that this division is disputed by others, who hold, that none of these proceed from the Niger*; which seems to be the present opinion.

* *Barbot's Description of the Coasts of North and South Guines.*—*Churchill's Voyages, Vol. V.*

Be that as it may, this position and general description is near enough to that assigned by Snelgrave; for by calculation I find the middle of the Sigismes lake bears from Ardra about N.N.E. distance 374 miles; which, at twenty miles per day, is nineteen or twenty days journey, and so far agrees with the Dahoman account.

As to the flowing of the rivers arising from this lake into the Gulph of Guinea, it is perhaps a mixed idea. In Ruscelli, the Volta, and several other rivers that run to the south, seem to have their sources near this lake; and perhaps a sight of his map, or of the information from whence it was drawn, may have led to such expression. Certain it is, the old geographers have described the Niger to abound in lakes; though this seems to be a doubt with the moderns. Perhaps both may be right. The overflowing of the Niger may in time have produced strange changes in the country; especially as its course has had no interruption from human industry: and we might instance the environs of the Caspian Sea, and several places within the limits of our own enquiry, where great changes have been made in the face of the country from rapid waters frequently overflowing their banks. Major Rennel has explained this in a very ingenious way, in a paper on the Ganges and Burrampooter rivers, published in the 71st volume of the Philosophical Transactions. And Mr. Beaufoy, in his account of the African Discoveries, mentions a river near Tessouwa, to the eastward of Mourzouk, that was overwhelmed by the moving sands; which the person who, in 1789, gave this information, remembered a deep and rapid stream.

From all which it appears, that the former, if not the present, existence of such a lake is established; that it is many days journey from Ardra, is the source of many great rivers, and that Gago is in its neighbourhood; all which, answering to the position and description that are assigned to Eyeo, by Snelgrave and the Dahomans, prove the identity of these two places, as exactly as can be expected from information so dark and confused as is every part of that relating to the geography of the interior Africa.

The only powerful neighbour to Gago, is Assiante, or Inta; which is particularly described, about the year 1700, by Bosman and Barbot*, as a country then but lately known to the Europeans; abounding in gold, and bordering on Gago, N. E. by N. and as an instance of its greatness, Bosman tells us, that in two battles with the Dinkirans, its neighbours, there were slain on both sides upwards of an hundred thousand men; that Dinkira was destroyed by them, and lay then in ruins. This induced me to think, that In-Ta and Ta-pah, as well as Assiante, might mean the same place, as we find of Mahee and Yahou, &c. especially as none other can be found in the neighbourhood of Gago able to stand in competition with it.

I have dwelt perhaps too long on so barren a subject; but was fearful, by the assertion of what was merely hypothetical, that I might justly incur censure, if I did not shew the reasons for my opinion; therefore I have gone into this detail, that the reader might the better judge for himself. The investigation has been
attended

* Bosman, 56, 57. Barbot, 451.

attended with much more labour than recompence; but I think those who pretend to inform others, should take great care that themselves are not deceived; not only because by such inattention they propagate error, but because they most deceive those who place the greatest confidence in them.

The principal impediment to the improvement of the geography of Africa, seems rather to arise from the jealousy of the inhabitants of the sea-coasts, in permitting white men to travel through their country, than from the danger or difficulty attending the penetration: though it must be confessed that it cannot be entirely safe to venture through regions, where the people are often as savage as the beasts of prey. This jealousy originates in their fears, lest either the advantages of their trade with Europe should be lessened, or perhaps transferred, from them to their neighbours; or that the inland kingdoms, already very powerful, by obtaining European arms might rule them at their pleasure. There are many instances in former writers, of their care and cunning, in concealing from travellers the names and nature of the adjacent countries, and even of the remote parts of their own; nor do we find that the same propensity is abated at the present hour. As to their apprehensions relative to the inland countries, our very history owes its rise to them: the opposition of Ardra and Whydah to the interference of the Dahomans with their trade, caused them to hazard and lose their political existence.

Perhaps a better map of the internal parts here spoken of, might have been afforded by Mr. Abson, had we entertained an idea, that there would have been time enough before the Work
had

had been printed off, to have availed ourselves of the communication; though, from what has been said, this may appear problematical.

Indeed, I am of opinion, that the Northern trading Moors, or *Mallays*, as they are called, will be the only instruments whereby the geography of Nigritia, and the southern provinces, will ever be completely obtained; as they come through the interior parts, travel every where, are well received, and consequently want only an intelligent and attentive mind, to render them every way competent to the undertaking. No doubt but our consuls and merchants, situated along the northern coasts, may be able to find men of this description, who, for a certain advantage, would be glad to collect all the information necessary for our purpose.

The Mallays, so called, seem to answer to the description of the Julapes, or Jalabs, mentioned in the Lords Report, and by Mr. Lediard, as travelling merchants, and as the sources of great information; though perhaps they may be only stragglers from the caravans, slaves, delinquents, or anomalous beings, who prefer a vagabond life; for they do not seem, from any of our accounts, to have a settled plan of revisiting the same place, at regular periods, like merchants, though they sometimes wear a mercantile appearance. Perhaps they are of the same kind with those Arabian teachers mentioned by Mr. Penny, in the report just now alluded to, concerning the slave trade, as coming down from the Mahometan state of Fula, to Sierra Leone, with their transcripts of the Alcoran to sell, probably as charms, and at the same time to propagate Mahomedanism, as far as their personal

sonal safety might allow. Certain it is, they possess not only the art of writing, but other useful arts unknown to the savages whom they visit, and for which they are held, by great and small, in very high esteem.

What they really are, may easily be known by our governors at the different forts in Guinea, if the knowledge be thought worth obtaining: especially if it should attract the attention of that laudable Association lately instituted for the purpose of discovering the internal parts of Africa; whose success, we heartily wish, may remove the opprobrium with which our ignorance of that country justly reproaches this age of enquiry. The caravans pursuing always the same route, can do but little towards it; nor is the information of a single traveller, however reputable and diligent, sufficiently secure from error, to be entirely depended upon. Therefore such of our African governors as understand Arabic, should be directed to make the necessary enquiries of these people; and where they have not this language, Moors, acquainted with that and the English tongue, may be retained, with small expence, at the factories where those Mal-lays are most usually found, who might interrogate them concerning the countries they have passed through, their situations, &c. which liberty of conversation, I think, might be obtained from the kings or caboceers, without much difficulty, notwithstanding what was suggested to Snelgrave.

Some of these people are found as prisoners in different States; and some few instances have been known, where they have been sold as slaves: one is mentioned by Barbot, and there are two others of which I have received authentic information: but the
first

first case is, when they have been taken in a country at the time of its conquest; the second, probably for delinquency; for in general they seem to be perfectly at liberty to go and come, when and where they please.

The subject of the *Slave-Trade* has purposely been avoided. Not only because it has been a topic of public discussion, but even of controversy; which may well render any thing that might have been said about it here unnecessary. Yet as the zeal for the abolition of this trade is held out, and I hope truly, as proceeding from philanthropy, I could not avoid the opportunity of directing that valuable principle to its proper object, in Chap. V. and VII. of the reign of Trudo; where I hope I shall not be blamed for bringing into review things somewhat remote from the Dahoman History, seeing that general propositions of this nature require more than a single proof in their demonstration. And there is a peculiar degree of propriety in instancing Mexico, when we speak of the fate of prisoners of war, not only as it was the most polished of all the savage nations which the Europeans have discovered, but also the most cruel to its captives. Besides which, it furnishes instances of wars, where the sole object was that of obtaining victims for sacrifice, the very thought of which is too shocking to endure for a moment. These demonstrate, beyond the power of contradiction, the propensity of mankind to war and cruelty; which principles, as human wisdom can never eradicate, it should employ itself, when it has power, in so far counteracting, as to make their evil effects the least possible: and this will never be done, but by making mercy the *interest* of the conqueror. Whatever evils the slave-trade may be attended with (and there

is no good without some mixture of evil) this we are sure of, it is mercy to the unfortunate brave; and not less to poor wretches, who, for a small degree of guilt, would otherwise suffer from the butcher's knife; too many instances of which have fallen under the consideration of travellers, and of which more than one occurs in this History*. If it were advanced, that the desire of gain tempts one nation in Africa, or any where else, to make depredations on another; we might justly answer, that should this desire be obviated, some other would excite to the same violence. I have already mentioned a war, on a private quarrel between two of these countries, wherein there were slain, in only two battles, one hundred thousand persons; and Bosman relates, that the people of Akim, who came to the assistance of the Dinkirans in that war, lost thirty thousand men†. Nay, look but at the occasion of all the wars in Europe, the world of refinement, for so many centuries back; and then examine the tendency of nations to peace and philanthropy. Compare the cause of these wars with their effects, and wonder, if you can, at a second ever taking place, after mankind has beheld the folly of the first. Nothing less than the all-seeing eye of a Gallic Philosopher can unravel such a mystery; and to him we leave to display, whilst he is whetting his knife, the natural propensity of the human mind to harmony and brotherly
d
love;

* Bosman tells us, that at Benin, on account of a chain of factitious coral, not worth two-pence, five persons were put to death. The chain was a royal present, which it seems it was a capital crime to lose; so that the unfortunate owner shared the same fate with the thief,—as did three other persons, for only being privy to the transaction. Bosman, p. 406.

† Bosman, p. 67.

love; and the ease with which universal peace might be established over all the world—a proposition scarce controvertible throughout all the dominions of *Chimera*.

The delay in the publication of this Volume, though it demands an apology, has neither proceeded from the remissness of the Editor, nor that of the Printer. Part has arisen from the avocations of business; part, from those unavoidable accidents to which every human undertaking is liable; but the greater part, from the time necessarily employed on the improvements of the book: and when it is considered, how much is now afforded to our generous Subscribers more than at first was promised, not only in the addition of the early reigns, but of the copper-plates, and many anecdotes and explanations pertinent to the Work, it is hoped their curiosity will be more than compensated for the obstacles to its earlier gratification.

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DIRECTIONS FOR PLACING THE CUTS.

Place the Map opposite the Title-Page.

Plate I. The Levée of the King of Dahomy—opposite page viii. of the Introduction.

Plate II. The King marching out at the head of his Armed Women—opposite page 54 of the History.

Plate III. Human and other Victims devoted for Sacrifice, opposite p. 135.

Plate IV. The Grand Procession of the King's Daughters, and others of his Women—opposite p. 136.

Plate V. The Last Day of the Customs—opposite p. 146.

Plate VI. The Heads of One Hundred and Twenty-seven Prisoners of War cut off, to complete the Ornament of the King's Wall—opposite p. 190.

ERRATA.

Introduction—p. ii. l. 7, for 9 degrees 50 minutes, read 7 degrees, 59 minutes.
 —p. xxiv. bottom, for *boil*, read *sons*.
 History—p. 5, l. 1, place the * at Whydah.
 Id. Notes, l. 2, for *outs*, read *ware*.
 p. 7, l. 3, for *rebre*, read *reben*.
 p. 12, l. 12, for *of*, read *off*.
 p. 16, l. 11, for *prejant*, read *reprejant*.
 p. 27, l. 4, for *two thousand*, read *twenty thousand*.
 p. 42, l. 3, for *400 hundred*, read *4 l. x. red*.
 p. 44, l. 1, for *on*, read *long*.
 p. 66, l. 13, after *surveys*, del. *as it*.

—p. 81, l. 26, for *the Abads*, read *Abada*.
 p. 98, l. 5, del. *King's*.
 p. 106, l. 11, read *conduct of the others*.
 p. 118, l. 1, for *impossible*, read *impossib*.
 p. 129, l. 19, for *am*, read *and*.
 p. 166, l. 15, read *Badogree*.
 p. 169, l. 2, del. *them*.
 p. 173, Note—after *idem* read, *signifying in titles*.
 p. 178, l. 2, for *and probably*, read *and the body probably*.
 p. 229, l. 6, for *prince*, read *people*.

INTRODUCTION.

IN the beginning of the following history, the etymology of the name of the kingdom of which we are about to treat, is given according to the tradition of the country; which possibly may be right, though the transaction to which it alludes, may be much earlier than the natives have dated it. For thus much is certain; that the kingdom of *Dauma*, or *Douma*, mentioned by *Leo*, in the latter end of the 15th century, is placed by all the geographers, from that time to the beginning of the present century, in the very same position with the kingdom of *Dahomy*; that is, on the east side of, and nearly adjacent to, the river *Volta*; and extending northwards to the ridge of mountains that separate this kingdom from those of *Guber* and *Gago*.

Whatever may have been the importance of the Dahoman nation, history affords no marks of it previous to the conquest of the maritime kingdoms of *Ardrab* and *Whydab*, between the years 1724 and 1727, as the blacks have no records, but those traditional ones, the legends of their bards; which are so politically affected, that they are but little to be depended on:*

a

it

* We shall find the King frequently forbids transactions to be mentioned, that seem to reflect shame on him or his ministers, &c. Vide p. 182.

it is from the whites resident amongst them, or those who have traded a long time with them, that the true history of any of the countries on this part of the coast can be obtained.

Dahomy, as known at present, is supposed to reach from the sea coast, about 150, or 200 miles inland, though no European has penetrated above half that distance; the capital, Abomey, lies in about 9 degrees and 50 minutes of north latitude, and between the 3d and 4th degree of east longitude, reckoned from the meridian of Greenwich.

The face of the country has been thus described by *Bosman*, *Smith*, and other authors. "The vast number and variety of
" tall and spreading trees, seeming as if they had been planted
" for decoration; fields of the most lively verdure, almost wholly
" devoted to culture; plains, embellished with a multitude of
" towns and villages, placed in full view of the surrounding
" district; a gradual and almost imperceptible ascent, to the
" distance of forty or fifty miles from the sea, which terminates
" the prospect; formed the most picturesque scene imagi-
" nable, unobstructed by hill or mountain." This captivating picture of beauty and fertility, was, no doubt, a just one, before the conquest of *Whydah*; but since that period, the different genius of the conquerors has made a very considerable change.

The soil is a deep, rich clay, of a reddish colour, with a little sand on the surface, except about *Calmina*, where it is more light and gravelly: but there is not to be found a stone so big as an egg in the whole country, so far as it has been visited
by

by the Europeans; so that a pair of *canky-stones*,* weighing together about twelve or fourteen pounds, brought from the distance of one hundred miles or more, are sold at *Grigwbee* for five shillings sterling.

The country abounds with buffaloes, deer, sheep, goats, hogs, both wild and domestic, poultry, of various kinds, particularly *pintados*, or Guinea hens, and Muscovy ducks; and the lakes are stored with plenty of mullets, carp, and other fish. The markets are, therefore, well supplied with provisions, beef excepted, which is somewhat scarce, though produced in the country. The elephant, though its flesh be coarse, is made use of as food by the natives; and dogs are reared for the same purpose.

Of farinacious vegetables, the country yields a plentiful supply, proportionable to the quantum of culture; namely, maize, millet, or Guinea-corn, of different sorts; a kind of peas, or rather kidney-beans, called *callavances*; and also a species of beans, called ground-beans. The *Dabomans*, likewise, cultivate yams, potatoes of two sorts, the *cassada*, or *manioka*, † the plantain, and the banana. Pine-apples, melons,
a 2 oranges,

* Used for grinding corn, as we do chocolate; sometimes making it into meal, and sometimes adding a small quantity of water during the operation, in order to form a paste, or dough, for immediate use. *Canky* is their name for bread.

* The *manioka*, *cassada*, or *cassava*, is a plant well known in the West Indies, for the deleterious quality of its juice, which is fatal to hogs, or other animals, that drink it: yet the root is made into a coarse meal, and used for bread,

oranges, limes, guavas, and other tropical fruits, also abound in this fertile country.

Nor is it destitute of productions adapted for commerce and manufacture; such as indigo, cotton, the sugar-cane, tobacco, palm oil, together with a variety of spices, particularly, a species of pepper, very similar in flavour, and indeed scarcely distinguishable from the black pepper in the East Indies.

A very curious fruit, which is produced in Dahomy, as well as in some other parts of Africa, must not escape our notice; especially as neither it, nor the plant to which it belongs, have hitherto been examined scientifically; nor can we class it botanically, having seen no part of the plant when at its maturity, but the fruit. This resembles a small olive in every respect but the colour; being of a dusky, reddish hue, changing at the end next the stalk, to a faint yellow.* The pulp is firm, and almost insipid; the stone is hard, like that of the olive. After having chewed one or more of such berries, and spit out or swallowed the pulp at pleasure, a glass of vinegar will taste, to the person trying the experiment, like sweet wine; a lime will seem to have the flavour of a very ripe China orange; and the same
change

bread, by the Portuguese, as well as by the negroes, in Brazil, where it is called *farinha de pau*, meal of wood, or saw-dust. It is the cheapest and least nutritious of all the substitutes for bread, in the tropical climates; although it has lately been introduced into this country, and is now sold by the grocers and apothecaries, at a high price, as a pretended remedy for consumptions, under the name of *Tapioca*.

* The above description answers nearly to our common winter cherry; and perhaps it may not be improperly termed, *Cerasus oxyglycus*. J. F.

change is produced on other acids, the ordinary effects of which upon the palate is destroyed in a very unaccountable manner, without effervescence, or any sensible motion. Indeed, the effect is very different from neutralization, arising from the mixture of acid and alkali: such combination producing a neutral saline liquor; whilst this miraculous berry seems to convert acids to sweets. Food or drink, not containing any acid, suffer no change by the previous use of this fruit; its effect upon acids continues, even after a meal, though in a much smaller degree. The natives use it, to render palatable a kind of gruel, called *guddoe*, which is made of bread, after it becomes too stale for any other purpose. †

The Dahomans, like the other inhabitants of tropical climates, plant twice a year, viz. at the vernal and autumnal equinoxes; after which, the periodical rains prevail. Indeed they may be said to reap four, or rather two double crops; for soon after the *maize* comes above ground, they plant *callavances* in the interstices between the rows; which practice gives the fields a very beautiful appearance.

The language is that which the Portuguese call *lingua geral*, or general tongue, and is spoken not only in Dahomy-proper, but in Whydah, and the other dependent states; and likewise in Mahee, and several neighbouring places.

With

† The natives describe it as the fruit of a large tree. Plants of six or seven inches high were raised from this fruit, by Mr. Dalzel, who tried to carry them from *Angola* to the botanic garden at *St. Vincent's*; but they died on the passage. He preserved the berries in spirits, in syrup, and in a dry form; but they lost their singular quality in all those preparations. The plant is an evergreen, and the leaves in this infant state are like those of the olive. J. F.

With respect to the Dahoman religion, it will hardly be expected that we should be able to say much. Like that of many other countries, it consists of a jumble of superstitious nonsense, of which it is impossible to convey any satisfactory idea to the reader. The Portuguese word, *feitico*, or, as the English pronounce it, *fetish*, signifying witchcraft, has been adopted by most of the maritime natives of Africa, as well as by the Europeans who trade thither. This word at present is very comprehensive in its signification, meaning either the several objects of worship, whether ideal or corporal, the act of worship itself, or the various amulets, charms, and superstitious mummery of the priests, or *fetish-men*, who abound in this country. They observe no sabbath, unless their market-days, which are considered as days of recreation, may be so called. Most of the savage nations have some confused notion of a Supreme intellectual Being, the maker of the universe; but this idea not being easily understood among a people not much addicted to metaphysical reasoning, a variety of corporeal beings have been selected as objects of devotion, such as the sun, moon, living animals, trees, and other substances. The *tiger* is the *fetish* of Dahomy; the *snake*, that of Whydah. Among the *amulets*, or *charms*, the principal is, a scrap of parchment, containing a sentence of the *Koran*, which the natives purchase from the Moors who visit this country. This they hang up in their apartments, which are likewise decorated with crude, mis-shapen images, tinged with blood, besmeared with palm-oil, stuck with feathers, bedaubed with eggs, and other absurd applications, of which a particular account would be both tedious and unprofitable.

We

We shall not, therefore, dwell on the religion, but pass on to the government and manners of the Dahomans, which deserve more particularly to be considered. The former is the most perfect despotism that exists, perhaps, on the face of the earth. The policy of the country admits of no intermediate degree of subordination between king and slave; at least in the royal presence, where the prime minister is obliged to prostrate himself with as much abject submission as the meanest subject; all acknowledging the right of the Sovereign to dispose of their persons and property at pleasure. Beyond the precincts of the palace, indeed, the ministers enjoy very eminent privileges. It is true, they are forbid the wearing of sandals, and other ornaments peculiar to royalty; or to use such an umbrella as a white man; * yet their inferiors must salute them with bent knees, and clapping of hands: they may sit on high stools, ride on horseback, be carried in hammocks, wear silk, maintain a numerous retinue, with large umbrellas of their own kind, flags, drums, trumpets, and other musical instruments. But, on their entrance at the royal gate, all these insignia are laid aside. The silk garment is substituted by a tunic and a pair of drawers, † made of cotton, manufactured in the country; the neck is adorned with a valuable string of coral; a pair of broad, silver bracelets encircle the wrists; at the side hangs a silver-hilted scymitar, while the hand grasps an ivory club.

* See Life of Adahoonzou II. c. 1.

† The necessary prostrations before Majesty, unavoidably soil this garb. The minister must, therefore, shift at every visit. Indeed, the Dahomans are at all times very cleanly in their persons, and particularly so, with respect to their food, and the utensils used in the kitchen and at table. A very good soap is manufactured in the country, of palm oil and pot-ash.

club. Thus equipped, one of the ministers of state is always found in waiting at the palace gate; and in this garb only may he enter, which must be with the utmost caution and respect, and not till the monarch's permission be signified by one of the women. On his entrance, he crawls towards the apartment of audience, on his hands and knees, till he arrives in the royal presence, where he lays himself flat on his belly, rubbing his head in the dust, and uttering the most humiliating expressions. Being desired to advance, he receives the King's commands, or communicates any particular business, still continuing in a recumbent posture; for no person is permitted to sit, even on the floor, in the royal presence, except the women; and even they must kiss the earth, when they receive or deliver the King's message.

The King's sons, not excepting the heir apparent, have no rank; being obliged to salute the ministers with clapping of hands, in a kneeling attitude. On such occasions, however, those officers, out of respect to the blood-royal, hasten to take them by the hand, and raise them from such an humble posture.

The King, and all his subjects, receive strangers with the most remarkable courtesy. Ambassadors, from whatever state, are not put to the necessity of learning the Dahoman etiquette from the master of the ceremonies. Every one salutes the Sovereign, according to the fashion practised in his own country. Chairs are placed for European governors, or masters of ships, upon which they sit, covered, till the King makes his appearance, when they make a bow, standing, and uncovered; after
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The King of Dahomy's Love.



Plat. I

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which, they resume their seats, and put on their hats. Sometimes the Dahoman Monarch has been known to shake hands with an European; but this is a very uncommon mark of royal condescension, and bestowed only on some great favourite.

White visitors are always honoured with a glass of some cordial liquor, filled by the King's own hand; which if refused, is apt to give offence.* Favours of this kind are received with avidity by his own subjects, not so much for the sake of the liquor as the honour conferred on them. On such occasions the subject lies on his back, while the King holds the bottle to his mouth. In this posture he must drink, till the royal hand be withdrawn; which sometimes does not happen before the whole contents be emptied, especially when he has a mind to sport with the drinker.

So great is the veneration of the Dahomans for their Sovereign, that their history produces no instance of a deposition. The doctrine of passive obedience and non-resistance is universal amongst them, and the most oppressive mandates of the Monarch are submitted to without a murmur. The apparent abject humiliation of the ministers, on the days of public audience, contributes powerfully to keep the people in subjection. The

b

lower

* One of the European governors, on his first visit, being presented with a glass of geneva, declined it. Upon being informed that it was the custom of the country, on such an occasion, to drink whatever had been filled by the King himself, he still begged to be excused, giving for a reason, that he was indisposed. Upon which the minister in waiting drank it off; having first poured it out of the King's glass into a little calabash which he carried about him: as no subject must drink out of a glass in presence of the King.

lower class cannot think that homage unreasonable which is paid by the first officers of the state; whose only privilege, in the royal presence, is that of lying prostrate, nearest the King's person, and being the medium of communication between him and his inferior subjects. For none but high officers must converse immediately with the Sovereign, though near enough to be heard; it being beneath the King's dignity to be addressed by, or to speak to, the vulgar. But although this humiliation be rigidly kept up by the ministers of state, in public, they are allowed to converse more familiarly at private audiences, where all the public business, whether legislative or executive, is managed.

The King of Dahomy maintains a considerable standing army, commanded by an * *Agaow*, or general, with several other subordinate military officers, who must hold themselves in readiness to take the field upon all occasions, at the command of the Sovereign. The payment of these troops chiefly depends on the success of the expeditions in which they are engaged. On extraordinary occasions, all the males able to bear arms, are obliged to repair to the general's standard; every *Caboccer* marching at the head of his own people. Sometimes the King takes the field, at the head of his troops; and, on very great emergencies, at the head of his women. †

Whatever might have been the prowess of the *Amazons* among the ancients, this is a novelty in modern history, which
ought.

* Perhaps, from the Turkish word, *Aga*.

† See Life of Trudo, chap. ix. Life of Adahoenzou, ch. v.

ought not to be slightly passed over. Within the walls of the different royal palaces in Dahomy, are immured not less than *three thousand women*. Several hundreds of these are trained to the use of arms, under a female general and subordinate officers, appointed by the King, in the same manner as those under the Agaow. These warriors are regularly exercised, and go through their evolutions with as much expertness as the male soldiers. They have their large umbrellas, their flags, their drums, trumpets, flutes,* and other musical instruments. In short, the singularity of this institution never fails to attract the particular attention of the Europeans, when, among other uncommon exhibitions, they are presented with the unusual spectacle of a *review* of female troops.

The chief part of the public revenue consists of voluntary gifts, paid by the subjects at the time of the † *Customs*, when the ‡ *Caboceers* and traders attend, bringing their contributions, according to their respective circumstances. Besides these, a duty is levied on commerce; and something arises from captives taken in war, of whom, all that are carried to market are sold

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for

* Little can be said in praise of any of their musical instruments, except the flute; which, though the most simple that can be imagined, being open at both extremities, with a little notch at the mouth end, where it is scraped thin, to divide the wind, produces very agreeable notes; and we can assert as a fact, however incredible it may seem to those modern *cognoscenti*, who deny that the ancients made use of harmony, that the King's women understand and practise the combination of the perfect concords, thirds and fifths; and their little airs are not inelegant.

† An annual ceremony, which will be explained in its proper place.

‡ From the Portugeeze word, *cabeceiro*, a head man.

for the King's account; but as he pays a certain sum to his troops for every prisoner* they bring in, and as the greatest part of the captives are put to death, a small proportion only being reserved for sale, the amount they produce must fall far short of the expence of procuring them.

The well-known shells called cowries, which come from the *Maldiva* islands, are the currency of the country, where one thousand are reckoned equal to half a crown. These circulate in the country, loose; but all disbursements from the King's house are made in branches of *strung* cowries, containing two thousand each, deducting one fortieth part, as a perquisite to the King's women for piercing and stringing them. †

When any public work is to be done, such as the erection or repairs of royal buildings, the King summons his Caboceers, and portions out the labour among them, paying their people for their trouble. Thus the work is performed with great dispatch. Besides such necessary disbursements, the King pays a considerable yearly tribute, in cowries and merchandise, to his formidable neighbour the King of *Eyco*: part of which is defrayed from the contributions levied upon those states which are tributary to Dahomy. The residue of the royal treasure is, upon various occasions, distributed with a liberal hand among
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* The King pays also for the heads of the slain.

† For a table of their value, &c. *vide* p. 135, and note. The terms there found, are likewise used in their other arithmetical computations; thus, when they express an army of 10,000 soldiers, they say, two cabefs and a half; or two cabefs and ten galinas.

the Dahoman grandees, and even among the inferior subjects, so that the receipts and expenditure are nearly equal; and the money which flows to the royal coffers, from the King's subjects and vassals, thus circulates again among the people.

The King of Dahomy has several palaces; each occupying a piece of ground, of nearly a mile square. The description of that at Calmina will serve for all the rest.

This palace, or *Simbomy*, which, in the language of the country, means a great house, is surrounded with a very substantial clay wall, of a quadrangular form, and about twenty feet high. In the middle of each side is a guard-house, with two centinels at the gate, and a guard of armed women and eunuchs within. On the thatched roofs of these guard-houses are ranged, on small wooden stakes, many *human skulls*. Such of the inner apartments as the Europeans have an opportunity of seeing, consist of large courts, communicating with each other, generally square or oblong, encompassed by clay walls. In each of them is a sort of piazza, or shed, formed of posts, about seven feet high, planted in the ground, at the distance of about twelve or fourteen feet from the wall. The intermediate space is covered with a slanting thatched roof, supported by bamboo rafters, resting upon the posts, and reaching to the top of the wall, which in this part is also about twenty feet, though only eight or ten feet on the other sides of the court. The areas of these courts are of the common soil of the country; but under the sheds, the ground is elevated a few inches, by a bed of clayey mortar, which forms the floor; and the wall is
in

in some parts white-washed with a species of pipe-clay, which the country produces. In the middle of the palace there stands a large building, of two stories, and about thirty or forty feet high; so that the top of it may be seen from without. This house seems to be intended more for show than use; for the King never dwells in it. The whole has somewhat the resemblance of an assemblage of farm-yards, with long, thatched barns, hovels for cattle and carts, and low mud walls, to separate them from each other. The interior of the palace is not so easily to be described. Its recesses are scarce ever entered by any human being of the male gender; and the female apartments are guarded from intrusion, with more than eastern jealousy.

The author* had once an occasion to pass the limits of the courts already described, when King *Abadee* was sick, and would see him in his bedchamber. This was a detached circular room, of about eighteen feet diameter. It had a thatched conical roof; the walls were of clay, and white-washed within. There was a small area before it, formed of a wall about three feet high, the top of which was stuck full of *human jaw-bones*; and the path leading to the door was paved with *human skulls*. The mattress and bed-sted were of European manufacture, the curtains of check. The furniture of the room consisted of a small table, a chest, and two or three chairs; and the clay floor was covered with a carpet, which the author had sold to him some months before. The apartments for the women, each of whom has a separate hut, occupy, it is supposed, the remainder
of

* A. Dalzel.

of the space within the palace-walls; except a small part, appropriated to the eunuchs, and to some necessary storehouses, for holding the provisions for the King's numerous family, his *cowries*, iron bars, clothes, arms, ammunition, and some articles of European furniture.

The late King was very desirous of buying any thing of this sort that he could procure; such as tables, chairs, bureaux, mahogany liquor-cases, walking-canes, cases of knives and forks, spoons, silver cups, and glass ware. The author once carried him a two handled silver cup and cover, of chased-work, weighing *two hundred and twenty-six ounces*.

The vulgar among the Dahomans affect to believe that their King does not eat. Indeed he does not eat in public, though he makes no scruple to drink. He entertains the Whites who visit him, with great hospitality. They often dine in his presence; sometimes in the piazzas, or sheds, before mentioned, and sometimes in the open area of one of the courts. On such occasions, the table and the guests are screened from the sun by large umbrellas, held up by attendants clothed in the country dress. The King has cooks who have been instructed in Europe, or at least at the different forts; so that he is able to treat his visitors with victuals dressed in the manner of their respective countries. There is no want of table apparatus: the table-cloth is commonly a piece of new linen, cut off for the purpose; the dishes are of pewter or earthen-ware; and the knives and forks silver-handled. The white men, on such occasions, are
seated

seated on chairs; the *Caboccers*, and heir apparent, are placed on the ground near the Europeans, who hand them some of the victuals: which they eat, as if by stealth, without knife or fork.

The dress of the men, in *Dahomy*, consists of a pair of striped or white cotton drawers, of the manufactory of the country, over which they wear a large square cloth of the same, or of European manufacture. This cloth is about the size of a common counterpane, for the middling class; but much larger for the *Grandeers*. It is wrapped about the loins, and tied on the left side by two of the corners, the others hanging down, and sometimes trailing on the ground. A piece of silk or velvet, of sixteen or eighteen yards, makes a cloth for a *Caboccer*.* The head is usually covered with a beaver or felt hat, according to the quality of the wearer. The King, as well as some of his ministers, often wears a gold or silver laced hat, and feather. The arms and upper part of the body remain naked, except when the party travels or performs some piece of work, when the large cloth is laid aside, and the body is covered with a sort of frock or tunic, without sleeves. The feet are always bare, none but the Sovereign being permitted to wear sandals. In the hand is usually carried either a cutlass or wooden club. For an officer of state, the club is of ivory, which is a very expensive ornament, on account of the great waste in making it; a whole elephant's tooth, and that not a
small

* One consisting of 25 English ells, of crimson velvet, was sent out lately, as a present to one of the Kings on the coast.

small one, being destroyed in the fabrication of this badge of dignity. Inferior *Caboceers* carry a sort of blunt sabre, with a broad blade and a wooden handle, serving rather for ornament than as an offensive weapon.

Warriors wear what is commonly called a grass cloth, made in the country, of the skin of palm-tree leaves, parted into small threads, knotted and wove. This is afterwards tinged with various dirty dyes, and wrapped round the loins. They also wear a cartouch-box of their own manufacture, a powder-flask of callabash, with many grotesque ornaments and fetishes, which, together with the uncouth devices painted on their faces and bodies, give them a very fiend-like appearance. Every *Dahoman* man also carries a *tobacco-pouch*, containing tobacco, a flint, steel, and tinder; together with one or two tobacco-pipes, in a neat wooden case.

The dress of the women, though simple, consists of a greater number of articles than that of the men. They use several cloths and handkerchiefs, some to wrap round the loins, and others to cover occasionally the breasts and upper part of the body. The neck, arms, and ankles, are adorned with beads and cowries; and rings of silver, or baser metal, encircle the fingers. The ears are pierced so as to admit the little-finger, and a coral bead of that size stuck into each, if the party be able to afford it; otherwise a portion of red sealing-wax, or a piece of oyster-shell polished, is applied in the same manner. Girls, before the age of puberty, wear nothing but a string of beads

or shells round the loins; and young women usually expose the breasts to view.

The *Dahomans* are less addicted to the practice of cutting or *tatowing* the body, than their neighbours; contenting themselves with a perpendicular incision, which leaves a mark between the eye-brows. The *Whydahs*, of both sexes, cut their foreheads and cheeks in such manner as to give them the appearance of being very much pitted with the small-pox. The women also mark the lower part of the body with various devices.

The inhabitants of the neighbouring states are likewise known by the scarifications on their bodies; every country making use of this custom in their own manner. The *Ardrabs* make an incision in each cheek, turning up a part of the flesh towards the ears, and healing it in that position. The *Mabees* are distinguished by three long oblique cuts on one cheek, and a cross on the other. Some bore the ears, others the nose, thrusting a bead or a cowrie into the aperture.

Circumcision is universally practised among the *Dahoman* subjects, but not at such an early age as among the Jews; the time of submitting to this operation being left to the boys themselves, whose caresses are not admitted of by the females till they have undergone this amputation. A certain operation, peculiar to this country, is likewise performed upon the women.*

The

* Prolongatio, videlicet, artificialis labiorum pudendi, capellæ mamillæ simillima.

The *Dahoman* woman do not admit the embraces of their husbands during pregnancy, nor at the time of suckling, which continues two or three years, nor while under the *catamenia*; during which they retire to a part of the town allotted for their reception. The prostitutes, who in this country are licensed by royal authority, are also obliged to confine themselves to a particular district, and are subject to an annual tax.

The general character of the Dahomans is marked by a mixture of ferocity and politeness. The former appears in the treatment of their enemies, and in the celebration of those *Customs* which have been sanctioned by the immemorial practice of past ages, under the idea of performing a grateful oblation to the deceased; the latter they possess far above all the African nations with whom we have hitherto had any intercourse: this being the country where strangers are least exposed to insults, and where it is easy to reside in security and tranquillity.

Of their bravery we shall have occasion to produce many conspicuous examples; and of their hospitality and generosity, every stranger who has resorted to the Dahoman coast can testify.

The nature of their government makes them very reserved with regard to every state transaction; but on occasions where this restraint is unnecessary, they are abundantly affable and communicative.

Having already mentioned the *annual customs*, and as we shall have occasion frequently to take notice of them in the course of

this History, we shall premise a short account of this singular festival.

At the approach of the *Customs*, which are usually celebrated soon after Christmas, the King leaves *Calmina*, where he generally resides during the rest of the year, and repairs to *Abomey*, his ancient capital, and the burial-place of the Royal Family. About this time, he dispatches his messengers extraordinary, called *half-heads*,* with his gold-headed cane and compliments to the European Governors at *Grigwee*, inviting them to witness the solemnization of this festival.

Each of the Governors carries an annual present to the King, consisting of a piece of rich silk for a dress, together with some brandy and other articles, amounting in the whole to about 50*l.* sterling. These are received, not as the consideration by which they hold their respective forts, but as a token of friendship and good correspondence; for the King takes care to make them sensible, that he does not accept such presents for the sake of their value, as he always returns more than is equivalent: such as a young female slave, which he presents to each under the denomination of a washerwoman; and one fine cotton cloth, at least, for a counterpane. Besides this, he entertains them during their stay at Dahomy with the greatest liberality and kindness; giving them from time to time,

sheep,

* So called from having the half of their heads shaved. They have each several strings of human teeth, slung like a soldier's belt, which give them an odd appearance.

sheep, poultry, and other articles, and allowing an abundance of *pitto* * and meal for their attendants.

The *Yavougab*, or Viceroy of *Whydah*, is charged to furnish the white men with a sufficient number of porters and hammock men, together with an armed guard; which last is seldom accepted of, not from motives of economy, these men getting no pay from the Europeans, except about the value of two-pence halfpenny each in cowries, for their daily subsistence; but because the journey is always made in perfect safety, and travellers accommodated with Eastern hospitality. For there are a kind of caravanseras, in the towns through which they pass, allotted for their reception; on their arrival at any of which, they are received by the *Caboceer* of the place, who presents them with such refreshments and necessaries as the country affords, and kindly presses them to make known their wants, which he readily supplies.

On their arrival at *Abomey* they are received with a salute of cannon, and lodged, during their stay, in apartments belonging to the master of the ceremonies. They are liberally supplied, as I have already observed, with mutton, poultry, and other articles for their own tables, and those of their attendants; which are sent from time to time by the King or his *caboceers*.

The celebration of the *Customs* usually continues about a month, during which there is some public exhibition every fourth

* A kind of small beer, made of maize or millet, which is not an unpleasant drink.

fourth, or market, day; the intermediate days being employed in preparations. The whole would afford a very amusing spectacle, if it were not for the human sacrifices which are annually made for the purpose of *watering*, according to the country expression, the graves of the deceased royal family.

One of the market-days is set apart for singing and dancing. There are professed singers who perform, by the hour, before the King. The songs are mostly extemporary, in praise of the Monarch and his exploits; and the performers are rewarded upon the spot, according to the merit of their compositions.

Besides these extempore songs, their bards, on solemn occasions, rehearse over the whole history of their country, sitting at the King's gate. This recital takes up several days; and they are attended by young men of the best memories, who endeavour to qualify themselves to become their successors, when there shall be a necessity for their services.

Another day is allotted for feasting in the market-place, where a large camp is made for the purpose, and many tents pitched for the accommodation of the King, *Caboceers*, white visitors, and ambassadors from foreign states. Here a very large quantity of victuals, previously dressed, and carried in procession by the King's women in their best clothes, is distributed, not only among the more distinguished guests, but even without the camp, where the vulgar partake plentifully. *Pitto*, brewed by the ladies of the palace, is likewise dealt out with a liberal hand upon the same occasion; nor is there any want of brandy
and

and other liquors from Europe. In short, the whole resembles what is sometimes seen at a general election, with this difference, that it is more orderly.

Various other scenes are exhibited during this carnival, some of which being described in the following pages, we shall not anticipate; but close this account with the detail of an extraordinary spectacle which commonly concludes the ceremony.

Contiguous to the palace, a large stage, of about 100 feet by 40, is erected; * this is supported by a vast number of piles, 10 feet long, driven into the ground, upon which are laid joists, and then branches and straw. The wall of the palace forms the boundary behind; the front and sides are railed. The floor, as well as the railing, is covered with carpets and country cloths; and the front and sides are adorned with a multitude of flags, streamers, and large umbrellas of various colours, some of which are made of gold and silver tissue. At a little distance, a fence of thorns keeps off the rabble. On this stage are piled a great quantity of cowries, strung in branches of two thousand each, pieces of brocade, and other silks, strings of coral, European and country cloths, Brazil tobacco, pipes, bottled liquors, and a variety of other articles. At an appointed time, the King, with all his *Caboceers* and vassals, repairs to the stage, where the Europeans also are present. Here each officer is allowed to choose a cloth for himself, the Prime Minister making the first election, and the rest following his example, according to their rank. Sometimes, also, a string of coral is given to each. After this, the King takes up a bunch of cowries, and throws it
over

* Vide Plate V.

over the fence among the multitude. All the *Caboccers*, and the Europeans if they please, follow his example, and toss over all the goods, except a few bunches of cowries, which are reserved for some of the favoured servants, who are permitted to take their stand between the stage and the fence, and which are handed to them by their masters. The rabble come prepared for this sport; being all stark naked, except that a strong bag, girt round the loins, hangs before, for the reception of the cowries. Some associate themselves in parties, in order to be able to carry off a piece of silk or cloth. Such prize becomes frequently the object of competition between two parties, and a violent struggle ensues; but as no kind of weapon is allowed to be carried by the people assembled on this occasion, no fatal accident follows. The effusion of blood, however, commonly making part of a *Daboman* exhibition, this also is closed with the death of at least one human victim, who, together with several other animals, is thrown, bound, from the stage, to be murdered below.

The specimens of art produced by the *Dabomans* discover a degree of perfection little to be expected from the rude simplicity of their tools. Their looms are the most awkward machines imaginable, yet they manufacture very pretty and durable cloths of cotton, which are held in great estimation among themselves, and are often purchased by the Europeans for counterpanes, at a high price. Their dyes stand washing very well, especially their blues, which are inferior to none. They likewise weave cloths of the palm-tree leaves, which they sometimes dye, but oftener wear in the natural colour, which is
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other articles

somewhat higher than that of nankeen. They likewise make neat mats of the same substance.

The implements of the forge are very simple. The bellows consists of two bags of rough goats skin, with a stick of about three feet in length, fixed perpendicularly to each, and also a horizontal tube (an old gun-barrel) to convey the air from the bag, through a little clay party-wall, to the fire. While the smith is at work, a boy holds a stick in each hand, blowing the fire with alternate puffs, so that the air is expelled and drawn in by turns through the two pipes, there being no other communication with the bags. In this way they contrive to make a welding heat, and fabricate not only the necessary implements of husbandry, but carpenter's tools, cutlasses, spears, and other weapons. The anvil is of stone, or an old iron cannon; and the hammer is a thick piece of rounded iron, of about a foot in length, which they hold by one end. Besides blacksmiths, there are a sort of braziers or silversmiths, who make manillas or bracelets, handles to cutlasses, rings for the fingers, and other trinkets of brass or silver, which they melt in crucibles * of their own making.

The cookery of the *Dabomans* ought not to escape our notice. Their dishes are few, but excellent: of those, black-soup is the chief. It is made either of flesh or fish, with a variety of mucilaginous vegetables, well seasoned with pepper and salt, and
d enriched

* They make likewise earthen pots for boiling provisions, water-jars, and other utensils, of the same materials.

enriched with palm-oil. † This dish is likewise seasoned with an ingredient which is made of the seeds of a tree called, in the country, wild tamarind, somewhat resembling those of the cucumber. These are prepared by fermentation, and formed into a mass of as high a relish as assafœtida, but of which a small quantity dissolved in the soup, gives it an exquisite flavour. Their bread is of maize or millet, sometimes boiled into a stiff pudding, and sometimes baked, either with or without leaven: they make also a very light white and delicate fermented bread of calavauses, first stripped of the husks, and a kind of paste or slummary of fermented Indian corn, not unlike blanc-mange, though not so adhesive.

So much was thought necessary, to give the reader some idea of this singular people, previous to the entering upon the reigns of their Kings; where many other particulars, no less curious, will be found, and from which we shall detain our readers no longer.

† The butter of the country; as different from that in an apothecary's shop as new butter from that which by age has become rancid and of different colours.

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HISTORY OF DAHOMY.

PART THE FIRST.

CHAP. I.

THE Dahomans were formerly called Foys, and inhabited a small territory, on the north-east part of their present kingdom, whose capital, *Dawbee*, lay between the towns of Calmina and Abomey, at about 90 miles from the sea-coast.

Early in the last century, Tacoodonou, chief of the Foys, having, at the time of his festivals, murdered a neighbouring prince, who was with him on a friendly visit, seized on his chief town, Calmina, and soon after made himself master of his kingdom.

Thus strengthened, he dared to wage war against a more powerful state, to the northward of Foy, and laid siege to Abomey, its capital; but meeting here with more resistance than he expected, he made a vow, if he should prove successful,

B

that

that he would sacrifice Da, its prince, to the Fetische, or deity, whose succour he then implored.

At length, having reduced the town, and captured the unfortunate prince, he built a large palace at Abomey, in memory of his victory. And now it was that he fulfilled his vow, by ripping open the belly of his royal captive: after which he displayed the body on the foundation of the palace he was building; and carrying on the wall over it, he named the structure, when finished, Da-homy, or the house in Da's belly*.

The conquest of Abomey happened about the year 1625; after which, Tacoodonou fixed his residence in that town, assuming the title of King of Dahomy. His subjects changed the name of Foyes for that of Dahomans; and at the present hour, their former appellation, except amongst a few of the inland people, seems quite forgot.

Nothing further is related of Tacoodonou; nor, indeed, of his two immediate successors, Adahoonzou, and Weebaigah, except that the former ascended the throne about the year 1650, and the latter thirty years after.

It is not till the reign of Guadja Trudo, who succeeded Weebaigah in 1708, that any thing is precisely known about this extraordinary people. All before this time stands on the ground of tradition, which is ever more or less precarious, in proportion to the number of relators, and the frequency of the narration. Among the Dahomans, for reasons assigned in the

* The belly, in the Dahoman tongue, is *Homy*.

the Introduction, subjects of this nature are little known, and less discussed.

But when the active spirit of Trudo began to threaten the maritime states, his neighbours, it quickly attracted the attention of the Europeans, whom commerce had brought and settled amongst them. It was then that, by the assistance of writing, each transient fact was fixed, and scattered information collected into a body; it was then that tradition gave place to record, and legend to history.

Before we enter upon the memoirs of this enterprising and warlike Prince, it will not be improper to take a slight political view of the states around him, as they stood about the beginning of his reign, the better to form a judgment of the several transactions that are to pass in review before us.

In doing this, let us begin on the coast, with Coto or Quitta, to the west; which is a small kingdom, whose prince, about Bosman's time, resided at the village of Quitta, called also Coto and Verbun, and was at continual war with its neighbours, the Popoes, with various success.

Little Popo joins Quitta to the eastward. This is a small but very warlike kingdom, the remains of the Acras, who were driven out of their own territories on the Gold Coast, by the Aquamboes, in 1680. They were in alliance, at times, with Ardra, and fought her battles against Offra, and even Whydah itself. They were at continual war with the Quittas, which was fomented by the King of Aquamboe, for the purpose of directing the attention of both from his gold mines;

and he managed this contention so cunningly, that he suffered neither nation to prevail too much over the other. Indeed, during the dissensions at Aquamboe, in 1700, Popo prevailed, and drove the Quittas out of their country; but they were, somehow, reinstated not long after.

Both these countries are flat, the soil poor and sandy, with few trees, except palms and wild cocoas. They have, indeed, some cattle and fish, but most at Quitta;* so that this and Great Popo were then frequently obliged to the Whydahs for subsistence; from whom, though their enemies, they always found means to smuggle as much as they were in need of.

Great Popo joins to Little Popo. The country is more fertile; and the city, which is very large, is situated in a marshy lake at the mouth of the river Torcee. This city is, from its situation, very strong; as a proof of which, when besieged by the Ardras, assisted by the French shipping, it was able to repulse them both with great loss. In 1682, this people was at war with both Quitta and Whydah; but, from prudential motives, they made a temporary peace with the latter, and obtained its assistance against the former. Some writers consider Quitta, Popo, and Whydah, as dismemberments of Ardra, with which kingdom, however, they are not more often at war, than they are with one another.

Whydah.

* At present, provision is more plentiful; they bring a number of fine cattle from the inland parts of Quitta.

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Whydah and Ardra were the two greatest maritime states in the neighbourhood of Dahomy*; rivals in trade, and consequently ever jealous of each other. The people of Whydah, at that time, are described as the most polite and civilized of any on the whole coast†; those of Ardra being much more insolent and mercenary.

The country of Whydah is the very reverse of those already mentioned, being, for beauty and fertility, almost beyond description; and, before the invasion of the Dahomans, was so populous, that one village contained as many inhabitants as a whole kingdom on the Gold Coast‡. It was reputed, that the Whydahs were able to bring into the field, two hundred thousand effective men.

The country of Ardra is no less beautiful than that of its neighbour; but this abounds with hill and dale, whereas the former is one uniform surface, one great park. Nor was this kingdom less formidable than Whydah, before the incursions of the Eyeos in the year 1698. Even at the time in question her power was very considerable; for we find, when invaded by Dahomy, her army consisted of more than fifty thousand men.

Yet

* The trade here was very considerable, this being the principal part of all the Guinea Coast for slaves. In its flourishing state, there was above 20,000 negroes yearly exported, from this and the neighbouring places, to the several European plantations. Vide *Snelgrave's Account of Guinea*, p. 2.

† Snelgrave complains of the thievery of the common people, which it was hardly possible to guard against, so bold and dexterous were they at it; though they knew that, if taken in the fact, they became the slaves of those they had plundered. *Snelg.* p. 3.

‡ *Bosman's Description of the Coast of Guinea*, p. 315.

Yet both these nations are branded by Bosman with pusillanimity, who tells us, they employed mercenary soldiers, such as the Aquamboes, or other Gold Coast negroes, to fight their battles*: which we shall find to be true.

The capital of Whydah was then Xavier or Sabee, seven or eight miles † from the beach; that of Ardra was a town of the same name, about twenty miles from the sea. This must be distinguished from another Ardra, or Alladah, which is also a great town on the road from Whydah to Calmina. As both these countries are particularly described in other parts of this work, it will be unnecessary to enlarge on the subject here. And with respect to the several small and independent states, interspersed amongst those we have already mentioned, such as Toree, Weemey, Offra, or Little Ardra, &c. it will be sufficient, in this place, to refer our readers to the map, for their respective situations; reserving their political connexions till they become of sufficient consequence to be taken notice of in our history.

Of the inland kingdoms, that to the west of Dahomy is called Mahee; that to the north-east, Eyeo. Snelgrave calls the former of these Yahoo; but as there was little of either of these known before the reign of Trudo, their description properly belongs to the History. The Tappahs, to the north-east of Eyeo, were unknown in his time; and indeed till very lately, when they made themselves as formidable to the Eyeos, as these to all the southern nations.

Such

* Bosman, 315.

† About seven miles.—Snelg. 2. The English fort was then about a league from the shore, and Sabee about five miles to the north of it. Smith's New Voyage to Guinea, pages 166, 169.

Such were the states around Dahomy, and such their jarring and divided interests, about the time of the accession of Trudo; where a new scene opens, that displays to wiser nations, how soon a small state may become too formidable, and how necessary to their own preservation are those alliances, that maintain in equilibrio the balance of power.

C H A P. II.

Trudo begins to reign—His early conquests—Embassy to the maritime states—Attacks and conquers Ardra.

GUADJA Trudo, sometimes called Trudo Audati, ascended the throne of Dahomy in the year 1708, being then about nineteen years of age. The history of the early part of his life has not reached us; but if we consider his inland conquests, previous to the turning his arms against the nations along the coast, we must confess he had already merited the name of a great commander. Many of these are mentioned by the natives, and amongst others Didouma and Povey, lying to the north-west of Dahomy; the latter of which must have been very considerable, since he assigned it as a patrimony to the heir-apparent.*

A very little experience must have taught such a mind as that of Trudo, how much more effective in war were the European weapons,

* The King's eldest son is the heir apparent; though, for reasons of state, the Ministers, after the King's death, may alter the order of succession.

weapons, than those used by the inland people of Africa; and this must have suggested to him the advantage of a sea-coast, where only those weapons were to be obtained. For, as to the supply, that might be procured through the hands of the maritime nations, it was at best precarious. Their jealousy might wish to keep from others the means of becoming as formidable as they supposed themselves to be; and so they might either refuse to furnish him at all, or they might set so high a price upon them, as would amount to a prohibition. This made him determine to possess himself of a part of the coast; but, previous to this undertaking, the event of which was uncertain, he endeavoured to obtain his principal end by negotiation. He sent ambassadors to Ardra and Whydah, to whose very borders he had already extended his conquests, requesting an open traffic to the sea-side, offering at the same time to pay the customary duties. This, as he probably expected, was peremptorily refused; which furnished him with a pretence for obtaining his desire by force, when he should find a proper opportunity. Nor was it long before such an opportunity offered, as served not only to conceal his real motive, but even to make it appear highly laudable and disinterested.

The European traffic had long increased the riches and arrogance of the maritime states, so that both whites and blacks alike experienced the insolence and oppression of their Kings and Caboceers. In Ardra, particularly, the duties had been considerably raised, and several impositions practised: the King had seized on a white factor, sent to him from the English governor at Whydah, and had now detained him as a slave, two years, under pretence of a debt due to him by the

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the African Company; but at length his ill-treatment of his own brother excited a resentment which quickly put an end to his oppression.

This injured Prince, whose name was Hussar, applied to Trudo, pointing out the many wrongs he had suffered from the King of Ardra, his brother, and offering him a large sum of money to revenge them. This proposal was too agreeable to be rejected. Trudo was then settling his new conquests; but laying aside all other thoughts, he immediately raised a considerable army, which he sent off, under his general, to Ardra, with no less secrecy than expedition.

The King of Ardra, however, by some means obtained intelligence of his design; and without delay dispatched ambassadors to Whydah, representing this intended invasion as the common cause, and intreating immediate assistance. Whydah, abandoned to faction, and devoid of council, could only consider Ardra as a powerful rival, that often interrupted her trade, and whose destruction was rather to be wished for than prevented. She therefore refused the ambassador's request; and, by conniving at her neighbour's destruction, added force to the victor's arm, which soon after was directed against herself.

Ardra, disappointed, but not dismayed, prepared to meet the enemy with a determined resolution. Her army consisted of about fifty thousand men. The conflict was as obstinate as it was sharp and terrible. They opposed the Dahomans three days; and it was not till their king was killed, or taken
 C prisoner,

prisoner*, that victory declared against them. They then gave way. In the rout the conquerors made a most terrible carnage, and took upwards of eight thousand prisoners; whilst those who could escape, fled, with the utmost precipitation, to the woods and other places where they could find shelter.

Amongst the prisoners was the white man, formerly mentioned, whose name was Bulfinch Lambe. He was treated very kindly by the Dahomans; but detained prisoner, and sent up to Abomey, where Trudo, though he would not part with him for a long time, gave him a house and servants to attend him, with every other accommodation in his power. From Lambe we have accounts of the riches and prowess of this great prince; that he abounded in plate, wrought gold, and other sumptuous articles; that he had five and twenty pieces of cannon, some of which weighed upwards of a thousand weight †, which he took great delight in firing twice round every market-day; that he was very liberal, but withal vain and proud, and considered the having white men about him as a great addition to his grandeur; on which account he had formerly bought of the Popoes an old Mulatto Portuguese, at the rate of near five hundred pounds, who together with Lambe were always seated beside him, when he made his public appearance. It was from this Portuguese, probably, that Capt. Snelgrave obtained the
account

* Smith says, he was killed before his palace-gate; Snelgrave that he was taken prisoner, and beheaded. *Smith's Voyage*, p. 170; *Snelgrave*, p. 7.

† It does not appear whence these cannon were brought, nor how they were obtained. They were, probably, the spoils of the forts at Ardra. If so, it shows the vigour of the Dahomans, in having already transported so many heavy weights to such a distance, Lambe's letter being dated Nov. 27, 1724. Vide *Smith's Voyage*, p. 171.

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account of the Eyeo invasion, mentioned in the next Chapter*; for, at the time the Captain was at Trudo's camp, at Ardra, which was in 1727, Lambe had been gone about a year. The King had sent him to England with rich presents, in order to bring white men to settle in Dahomy; but he never returned.

The land of Jaquin, which formed part of the sea-coast of Ardra, had an hereditary governor, tributary to the King of Ardra, to whom he annually paid a certain number of loaves of salt, of which great quantities are made here. On the conquest of Ardra, the lord of Jaquin sent his submission to Trudo, offering him the same tribute he had usually paid to the conquered king. This the King of Dahomy readily accepted, thinking, as he was now in possession of a free passage to the sea-coast, the Jaquins might be useful, from their knowledge of trade, in furnishing him with a constant supply of arms and gunpowder to carry on his intended conquests. Besides, as these people were enemies to the Whydahs, whom they considered as rivals in their trade, he thought they would be no less useful in his designs upon that kingdom.†

And here again the policy of Trudo is displayed; who, though in other instances he had endeavoured to secure his conquests by a terrible destruction of the nations he had subdued, knew his interests too well, to treat the people of this country in like manner; at least till he should have no further need of them.

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* Snelgrave says, the Portuguese Mulatto, who informed him of this transaction, was taken in the Ardra war; but it is most probable that Lambe's account is right. *V. Smith*, p. 176, 177.

† *Snelgrave*, p. 20.

C H A P. III.

Account of the Eyeos—The tenure under which their King holds his government—Their former invasion of Ardra—Invade Dahomy—Are defeated by stratagem—Terrible to the Dahomans—Trudo's intention, if they should return.

THE kingdom of Eyeo* lies many days journey to the north-east of Abomey, beyond a great and famous lake, the fountain of several large rivers that empty themselves into the Bay of Guinea.† The people are numerous and warlike, and, what is here singular, their armies totally consist of cavalry; and as every savage nation has some cruel method of rendering themselves dreadful to their enemies, this people were said to have a custom of cutting of the privities of those they have slain in battle; and that no one dared, on pain of death, to take an enemy prisoner, that was not furnished with a hundred of these trophies.‡

The Eyeos are governed by a king, no less absolute than the King of Dahomy, yet subject to a regulation of state, at once humiliating and extraordinary. When the people have conceived an opinion of his ill government, which is sometimes insidiously infused into them, by the artifice of his discontented ministers, they send a deputation to him, with a present of
parrots

* Called Oyeo, Okyou.—*Barbot, &c.* Probably this may be the kingdom of Gago, which lies to the northward of Dahomy, eight or ten days journey. The Moorish aspirated sound of G being nearly like a hard H, as in the word *George*, spelt *Jorje* by the Spaniards, and pronounced *Horké*, or *Horché*; whence Gago may have been sounded Haho, Haiho, or Haiko.

† *Snelgrave*, p. 55.

‡ *Bosman*, p. 374.

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parrots eggs, as a mark of its authenticity, to represent to him that the burden of government must have so far fatigued him, that they consider it full time for him to repose from his cares, and indulge himself with a little sleep. He thanks his subjects for their attention to his ease; retires to his apartment, as if to sleep; and there gives directions to his women to strangle him. This is immediately executed; and his son quietly ascends the throne, upon the usual terms, of holding the reins of government no longer than whilst he merits the approbation of the people.*

This seems to have been the first inland nation in this part of Africa, of which the Europeans had any intimation. Bosman speaks of an invasion of Ardra, in 1698, by a potent inland people, which could, from his description, be no other than the Eyeos. From him we learn, that some of the Ardras, who had been ill treated by their king, or his caboccers, flying to this inland prince for redress, he sent an ambassador to remonstrate with the King of Ardra on the subject, and to inform him, if his viceroys and other deputies did not govern the people more justly and tenderly, he should be obliged, however unwilling, to interfere. Ardra treated the monition with contempt, and put the ambassador to death; but the King of Eyeo took a dreadful revenge: his troops poured like a torrent † into Ardra; destroyed almost half the kingdom; and, what marks at once his severity and his justice, notwithstanding his general had obtained so signal a victory, he caused him to be hanged, on his return, because he had

* Mr. Norris.

† The Whydahs, say the Eyeos, invaded Ardra with ten hundred thousand horse; from which, without taking it literally, we may suppose the number must have been immense. We shall see, further on, the idea of the Dahomans about the number of an Eyeo army.

had not brought with him the King of Ardra, who was the author of all this evil.

It was this nation that, shortly after the conquest of Ardra, made war on Trudo, at the instigation of several fugitive princes, whose fathers had been conquered and slain by the Dahomans. They entered Dahomy with an immense body of horse, amounting to many thousands. Trudo immediately left Ardra; and, though he had none but infantry*, yet, these having fire-arms, as well as swords, he had some hopes that he might at least make a stand against them. He knew, however, that they were well mounted, and armed with bows, javelins, and cutting swords; that they were, besides, courageous, and had spread terror through the adjacent countries; he also knew, that he had to contest in an open country, where horse would have every advantage; yet all this could not damp his daring spirit. He marched boldly to face the enemy; and, on meeting them, supported such a fire from his musquetry as effectually affrighted the horses, so that their riders could never make a regular charge on the Dahomans. Notwithstanding this, their numbers were so great, and the dispute so obstinate, that, after fighting for four days, the troops of Dahomy were greatly fatigued, and all was in danger of being lost: at this critical moment a stratagem entered the mind of the king, worthy of the most enlightened general, and which has been several times practised, with equal success, in times both ancient and modern.

Trudo had in his camp great quantities of brandy, at that time one of the principal articles of the French trade to Guinea.

This,

* There are few or no horses in Dahomy. Such as they have are very small; which indeed was the case with the inland countries, in Leo's time (about 1492), when good horses, from the north of Africa, were bought up at Gago, at a high price; perhaps with intention to improve the breed, and establish a numerous cavalry.

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This, with many valuable goods, he contrived to leave in a town, adjacent to his camp, and under favour of the night withdrew to a convenient distance. In the morning the Eyeos, seeing the enemy fled, secure of victory, began to burn and plunder the town, and to indulge themselves very freely with the treacherous liquor: this soon intoxicated, and spread the ground with the major part of their army. At this juncture, the Dahomans, who had timely intimation of the enemy's disorder, fell upon them with redoubled fury, destroyed a great number, completely routed the rest; and those that escaped, owed their safety to their horses.*

In this manner did Trudo happily clear his country of a very formidable enemy; but however he might consider himself victorious in the present instance, he knew there was every thing to be feared from the inroads of such a numerous nation, and that too a nation of horsemen. He, therefore, with a foresight that did him much honour, sent ambassadors with many presents to the King of Eyeo, to avert his further anger; but, without depending too much on their success, he laid his plans, in case of another invasion. He knew that the Fetische of the Eyeos was the sea; and that themselves, and their king, were threatened with death, by the priests, if they ever dared to look on it: he therefore resolved, in case he should be defeated by them in a future battle, to repair with his people to the sea-coast for security, and leave the upland towns and country to their disposal; in which he knew they could not remain after they had destroyed the forage; and that all the damage they might otherwise do, to thatched houses and mud walls, would easily be repaired.

CHAP.

* The Dahomans pretend, that in their flight, the terror and precipitation of the Eyeos was so violent, that great numbers tumbled into, and filled up part of the deep moat which surrounds Abomey, the rest making themselves a bridge of their bodies, to effect their escape. *Capt. Fayer.*

C H A P. IV.

*Trudo's Design against Whydah—Its Government at that time—
Attacks and takes the northern part—surprises the rest—An-
thropophagi.*

EVERY thing seems to have remained in quiet during the stay of Mr. Lambe in Dahomy, which he quitted about April, 1726*: for though the King's mind was intent on the chastisement and conquest of Whydah, he had been hitherto prevented from carrying his design into execution, partly by the persuasions of Lambe, partly by the difficulty of the enterprise. On the one hand, Lambe presented the number of Whydahs that were used to fire-arms, and the great assistance they would derive from the forts, as well as from the skill of the white people settled among them; on the other, the King was sensible that the enemy, being surrounded with rivers and swamps, would, if too hard pressed, easily take to the islands and fastnesses, whither the troops of Dahomy, for want of canoes, and skill to manage them, could not follow: in which case not only his conquest would be incomplete, but he would be subject to perpetual harassment from such troublesome neighbours.

At this time Whydah was governed by a weak and indolent prince, who, having ascended the throne at the age of 14, soon became

* Snelgrave was at Ardra in April, 1727; when the King told him, Lambe had been gone twelve moons. *Snel. Voyage*, p. 67.

became the tool of a train of designing ministers. They flattered his natural disposition for dissipation and effeminacy, as the surest means of sharing his power; and now, at the age of thirty, he was neither qualified for the council, nor the field. His indolence and indulgence had swoln him to an enormous size; and, constantly shut up in his seraglio, amongst thousands of women, over whom he asserted the most despotic sway, he vainly imagined his bulk to be the type of his real greatness. Mean while the ministers and caboceers around him, intent on their own private interests, divided the state into a thousand different factions, which, added to the natural timidity of the people, the result of plenty, long ease, and inaction, exposed it as a ready prey to any invader.

When threatened with the Dahoman invasion, this vain creature made so light of both the people and their king, that, though it is the constant custom of these nations to destroy princes and great men taken in war, lest their power and knowledge should excite the conquered nation to rebellion; yet, in bravado, he told Snelgrave, he would not even cut off the King of Dahomy's head, when taken; but would keep him alive as a slave in one of the most contemptible situations about his person.* This foolish speech, which, no doubt, reached the ears of Trudo, probably helped to exasperate him. Accordingly, when he had made the necessary preparations, he first attacked the northern part of the kingdom, which was under the hereditary government of a great lord, then called Appragah, who forthwith sent to the King of Whydah for assistance; but, through the interest of his enemies at court, was, most strangely, refused. Whereupon, after a slight resistance, Appragah submitted to

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and

* Snelgrave, p. 6.

and was kindly received by the King of Dahomy, who afterwards reinstated him in his possessions.

The conqueror immediately prepared to penetrate into the heart of the country. For which purpose he encamped on the banks of a river that runs about half a mile to the northward of Sabee or Xavier, the capital of Whydah.* Here he expected a vigorous opposition: for, having neither boats nor boatmen, his army could only pass the river by fording; and even this was not practicable, except at one place, which 500 resolute men could easily have defended against the efforts of his whole army. But he was deceived; for instead of using the necessary precaution to prevent the incursions of so dreadful an enemy, the Whydahs left the pass to the care of the Snake, their Fetische or God: to whom they sacrificed night and morning, praying him to prevent the enemy from crossing the river. And satisfied with this, they even omitted, which is scarcely credible, to keep so much as a guard there.

Trudo, probably supposing his whole force might be necessary for this enterprize, had left the conduct of this part of his army to his general, and was gone to bring down the other part, which was encamped at his head-quarters at Ardra; having first sent an intimation to the European factors, as he had formerly done to those at Ardra, that he expected them to remain neuter, under pain of his resentment. The general, observing the enemies neglect, ordered 200 men to try the ford; which having done unmolested, they, being resolute fellows, immediately proceeded on to the town, without waiting for further orders, shouting and sounding their war music all the way. This happening
about

* See *Snigra*, p. 10.

about three o'clock in the afternoon, the out-guards of the town were almost all fast asleep; but being awakened by the noise, they fled into the town, crying out, that all the Dahoman army had passed the river. This no sooner was announced, than king and people began to decamp; and in a very short time the fields were covered with men, women, and children, flying from all parts towards the sea-side. The King, and many of his train, by the help of canoes, got safe to the islands near Popo; but numbers, who could not obtain that conveyance, were, in their hurry, drowned, in attempting to swim over to them. Those slain and made prisoners were innumerable; and thousands, who sheltered themselves up and down the country among the bushes, afterwards perished by sword and famine.

The Dahoman general could not believe the reports that were brought him of his good fortune; nor scarce trust to the evidence of his own senses, when, after having conducted over the remainder of his army, which he did the same evening, he saw the truth confirmed, "that two hundred soldiers had put
"to flight a nation, capable of opposing them with a thousand
"men to one:" so wretched a creature is man, when enervated by luxury, indolence, and servile passions!

There is no other way of accounting for this imbecility of mind, this panic fear with which the whole of so great a nation must have been struck, on such a trifling alarm. Though they pretended afterwards, when some of those who had escaped, were upbraided with the cowardly manner in which they had deserted their country, that it was "for fear of being
"eaten; that the Dahomans were cannibals, whom no-

“ thing could resist; and that the thought of being devoured by
 “ their own species, was far more terrible to them than their
 “ apprehensions about being killed.” *

Snelgrave strongly inclines to believe that the Dahomans were indeed *anthropophagi*; † and this idea is as strongly combated by Atkins. ‡ The former supports his opinion not only on the reports of credible witnesses, but from a very natural induction, “ That those who could so cruelly sacrifice their
 “ fellow-creatures as the Dahomans do, might probably carry
 “ their barbarity a degree farther.” The other founds his objections merely on the opinion, that such practice is unnatural; but late voyages have shewn the eating of the flesh of enemies to be very common. Besides, Atkins himself allows, that amongst savages “ single instances may have been, as their
 “ way to express an intense malice against a particular enemy,
 “ and *in terrorem*, &c.” which is enough for Snelgrave’s purpose, as he only lays a stress on enemies eaten solemnly at their sacrifices, which has an equal justification. Though it is to be noted, that he mentions the sale of human flesh in the market, on the evidence of a Mr. More, surgeon of a ship in that trade: which Atkins, not knowing how to get rid of it, would turn into a miserable pun, viz. that it meant the sale of living flesh, or slaves.

But whether this idea were true or false, it could plead nothing in excuse for the flight of several thousand men from so
 small

* *Snel.* p. 42. † *Id.* p. 51. et seq. ‡ *Atkins’s Voy. to Guinea*, p. 122, et seq.

Numberless instances are found, in voyages, of this seemingly unnatural custom; though even the probability of it has been contested by Dampier and others, as well as Atkins. Vide Dampier, *Voyage round the World*, 4th edit. p. 484, 5. But this is opinion against testimony.

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small a number; and there is nothing but our sympathy for the imbecility of human nature, and our pity for the misery in which it involved this people, that can make us look with patience on the cowardice which occasioned it.

C H A P. V.

Trudo's joy for his victory.—Sacrifices a great number of captives.—Reflections on this barbarity—and on the means of preventing it.—The Dahomans have no genius for trade.—Wars not begun for the purpose of taking slaves.

THE Dahoman Prince received the news of this victory with every possible demonstration of joy. He not only gave largesses to his officers and caboceers; but, according to the savage custom of the country, he floated the altars of his Gods, and the tombs of his deceased ancestors, with the blood of his unfortunate captives.

This scene, which was transacted at Ardra, was followed, or rather accompanied, by one yet more dreadful, at the camp. The general, probably by his master's command, gave orders that the remaining prisoners, who through age, wounds, or infirmities, had not been able to march with their fellows to head-quarters, should be put to death on the spot. And to heighten this bloody act with accumulated horrors, he committed

mitted the execution of them to the boys of his army, whom he thereby meant early to enure to deeds of cruelty, and furnishing them with swords, ordered them to cut off the prisoners heads. As some of these boys were only seven or eight years of age, and hardly able to manage such a weapon, the tortures these unhappy wretches must have suffered, from the weakness and incompetency of their executioners, are easier to be conceived than described. *

The inhuman treatment of enemies taken in war, has stained the annals of all nations. There seems to have been amongst mankind an emulation to excel in this species of cruelty. Nor has this vice been confined to savage nations; Greece and Rome have afforded examples more than sufficient to justify these practices in Africa and America, † if custom could give
 sanction

* Smith, p. 192, says, the general ordered all those to be murdered that were unmerchantable; but this is every way wrong: for there was no market for them at that time; and we shall find that those would serve for victims, in solemn sacrifices, that were by no means fit for labour. See Chapter vii.

This manner of torturing victims is not peculiar to Dahomy. It seems to be a hard feature in the complexion of savage nations, to train up their children to blood. Bosman saw eleven ancient persons tortured to death at the funeral of a king on the Gold Coast; one of whom, after having endured the most exquisite torments, was committed to a child of six years of age to be beheaded; which he was near an hour in performing, not having strength enough to wield a sabre. V. Bosman, p. 223. Some of the Americans used to commit their prisoners of war to boys to be slain: five or six of whom beat out their brains with clubs. V. Purchas's Pilgrims, 1033.

† Witness the sacrifice of 300 Lacedemonians and their king, by Aristomenes, the Messenian. V. *Ensb. Evang. Prep.* l. 4. c. 7. edit. 1534, and of as
 many

sanction to error, or such nations were desirous of precedents for their justification.

Prisoners of war, by the right of conquest, are undoubtedly the property of the victor. He considers them as such, and will always dispose of them as best suits with his own interests, and those of his country. When viewed in the light of men who have disturbed the nation's peace, invaded its rights, murdered its protectors, levelled at the lives of the conquerors; and whose bosoms are still actuated by the same spirit, though now overawed by power; here self-preservation pleads against mercy. Man, uninfluenced by passion, may feel, even in a savage state, for the sufferings of his fellow-creature, and shudder at the idea of depriving him of life; but under continual apprehension for his own safety, he will not hesitate to remove the object of his fear, in whatever manner may appear the most effectual. Hence the exercise of the power which conquest has given, when self-preservation is the motive, cannot be called cruelty: which name only belongs to a wanton abuse of that power, in adding torture to death; or by having recourse to death, or any rigid expedient, when gentle ones may be employed with equal security. *

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many of the principal citizens of Perugia, by Augustus, to the manes of his uncle Julius. V. *Suetonius* in vita August. Xenophon says, the Lacedaemonians put to death more Athenians in eight months peace, than their enemies had slain in thirty years war. V. *Xenop.* de Reb. gest. Græc. lib. 2. p. 278. and many others.

* Vide Puffendorff's Duty of Man, b. 2. c. 4; and Law of Nations, folio, p. 490; Grotius de Jure, &c. lib. 11, c. 5.

The two most general ways of disposing of such captives, have been by death or transportation. Ransom, exchange, or liberty on parole, are the effects of a system that involves a greater variety of considerations, and a higher degree of civilization, than can be expected in such nations as Dahomy. People like them would laugh at the idea of giving their foes the opportunity of assaulting them a second time; and for ransom, the warrior nations seem to despise it. Therefore, after they have preserved, as their own slaves, so many of their prisoners as they want for state or drudgery, they either sell the remainder to those who will remove them away into a distant country; or, when there is no such demand for them, they put them to death.

In this light, Asiatic pomp, and European necessity for labourers enured to a tropical sun, appear to have been the only effectual instruments of mercy, the only means whereby the lives of many of those unfortunate people have been saved. And their effect would have been much greater, had not the horrid fiend, Superstition, who at times has tyrannized over the whole human race, so frequently barred up the avenues to pity: by suggesting that the Author of good is pleased with murder, and that the souls of victims may be enslaved as well as their bodies. It is not here a place to enter into the subject of human blood offered to the Gods, or to the *manes* of the dead;* it is enough to shew, through our history, that Avarice can sheath the knife even of Superstition, and that her incitements

* Vide Potter's Antiq. c. 4, on Sacrifices; Bryant and others, on the same subject; Prevost's Histoire des Voyages, Index word *Sacrifices*; Purchas's Pilgrims, many places, &c. &c.

ments to slaughter, powerful as they may be, are confined within narrow limits, when self-interest attends upon lenity.

Where there has been no traffic of this sort, nature shudders at the devastations that have been made by revenge, and all the baser passions, under the colour of piety. Murder, in all its forms, has raged with unlimited fury. During the reigns of the Whydah Kings, their prisoners were sold, and human sacrifices were seldom and inconsiderable : * in Dahomy, where war took the lead of commerce, they were frequent, and often times numerous ; but in America, where traffic of this kind was not known, they exceeded all belief. Wars were instituted for the very purpose of obtaining victims ; and at the dedication of one temple at Mexico, which lasted four days, they sacrificed sixty-four thousand and eighty captives, in a manner too horrid to be expressed. †

The murder of so great a number of Whydahs on the present occasion, at Dahomy, seems principally to have arisen from there being no ships in the road. The factories had been plundered in the onset, and afterwards burnt ; ‡ the factors taken prisoners, and though released, were still in fright and confusion. The multitude of prisoners was daily increasing ; it became expensive, and perhaps alarming. As there was no vent for them, policy dictated to Trudo, that he might get rid of his fears and incumbrance, and at the same time increase his glory, if he should make so noble and valuable a present to his gods and forefathers ; that, from such an act, his magnificence would be considered as exceeding all bounds,

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and

* Vide *Bosman* under Whydah.

† Vide *Prevost*, *Histoire des Voyages*. Vol. xiii. p. 528.

‡ Vide *Smith*, p. 191.

and his piety be extolled to the skies. Under these considerations, he devoted to death four thousand,* which probably was the whole number as yet taken, and thereby gained an applause he could have well spared, had the more profitable alternative presented itself.

It is true, the custom of his country required an acknowledgement, and that a liberal one, to the Gods, for his victories; † but the quantum depended on the victor's pleasure: and we find Trudo knew how to keep his piety, at least, within due bounds. For in a transaction that followed shortly after, having taken eighteen hundred prisoners of another nation that had offended him more than the Whydahs, he contented his priests with four ‡ hundred of them: ships being then in the road, where he could turn the remainder to profit.

That Trudo had ideas of the advantages of trade to himself and his people, appears in many instances. He had commenced these wars with both the maritime nations, from their having refused him a part in their commerce. § He had an eager desire for European arms, and for such of their commodities as he thought were suitable to his dignity. He had told Lambe, some years before, that he could wish to have ships come to some place to trade for his slaves only, and to bring him what was fit for such a king as he. || Yet, with all those prepossessions, all these desires, Trudo and his Dahomans were equally ignorant of the principles on which trade must be conducted. The haughty ferocity of a people, bred solely to war and rapine,

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* Vide *Snelgrave*, p. 31. † Id. p. 46. ‡ Id. p. 37, 49. § Id. p. 5, 6, &c.
|| Vide *Smith*, p. 147.

is incompatible with the mild and steady spirit of commerce. Hence, by their harshness and violence on the one hand, and their fraudulence and ignorance on the other, they, in time, so far lost their connexions, that, from two thousand slaves a-year, transported from Whydah only, in 1726, * the greatest number now sent off from this and the two great kingdoms of Ardra and Dahomy, together with several other small ones united to them, is only five thousand five hundred; little more than one-fourth part of the former. See the Report of the Lords, relating to the slave-trade, printed in 1789.

This circumstance must appear the more astonishing to those who have been led to think that, in Africa, wars originated in the desire of obtaining slaves for the Europeans; especially when they shall find this kingdom, with very little intermission, to have been engaged in wars, with all its surrounding neighbours, for near seventy years.

C H A P. VI.

White men made prisoners.—Ships arrive.—Snelgrave's journey to Ardra.—King's camp and court.—Army returns from Tuffoe.—Victims chosen for sacrifice.

AMONGST the prisoners were the white men belonging to the different factories, to the number of forty, or more. They were ordered up to Ardra, and proper hammocks provided for

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them,

* Snelgrave, p. 2.

them, that they might travel with convenience. They were some days at Ardra before they obtained an audience; but then, the King received them politely, set them at liberty, and made some of them presents; with the promise, that he would cause trade to flourish, and have a particular regard to their interests, so soon as he had settled his conquests.

About three weeks after, several ships of different nations arrived in the road.* The first of which seems to have been the *Katharine Galley*, commanded by Captain W. Snelgrave: to whose attentive and judicious observations, this life of Trudo is much indebted. † He laments the horrid devastation of so fine and populous a country, the carnage of the inhabitants, and their remains lying every where around him. Particularly, as he had been several voyages there, and had been witness of its beauty and population in its most flourishing state: in the description of which, all other writers on the subject agree with him. Smith, ‡ who was at Whydah about the same time, says,

* The latter end of March, 1726-7, I arrived with the *Katherine Galley*, in the road of Whydah, *Snel.* 19,—sailed thence, and anchored in the road of Jaquin, 3d of April, *Id.* 21. On Friday the 7th of April, 1727, we arrived in Whydah road, and found lying here three French and two Portuguese ships. *Smith, Voyage*, p. 166.

† Published in 1734, under the title of “A full Account of some Parts of Guinea, and of the Slave-Trade,” 8vo. He speaks of the conquest of Whydah, as having happened about three weeks before his arrival. *V. Snel.* p. 19.

‡ Smith was sent out as surveyor, in 1726. His *New Voyage to Guinea* is a posthumous work, published in 1744, 8vo. of which see pages 166 and 199. See also our Introduction, which contains the substance of the description of the several writers.

says, "The natives were so industrious, that no place which
" was thought fertile, could escape being planted, though even
" within the hedges that inclose their villages and dwelling
" places; and they were so very anxious in this particular, that,
" the next day after they had reaped, they always sowed again,
" without allowing the land any time to rest;" which is no
small proof of its strength and fertility.

Smith, however, complains of its being very unwholesome, which, he says, he was afterwards informed became more and more so by the negligence of the Dahomans, * who have suffered it to remain uncultivated, and to be overrun with poisonous and stinking weeds. Snelgrave found trade so dead, that after staying three days at Whydah, and having heard the melancholy accounts of Mr. Tinker, the late, and Mr. Dupont, the then, governors, as well as those of other gentlemen of the factory, he sailed for Jaquin, about seven leagues to the eastward, to see if matters wore a better face there.

It was here that, shortly after his arrival, he received a messenger from the King of Dahomy, inviting him to Ardra; of which, after some hesitation, he accepted; and by that means became a spectator of many things worthy relation. In this journey, which is of about forty miles, he was accompanied by a Dutch captain, whose ship had just before been destroyed by the Portuguese; a Dutch writer, belonging to their factory, carrying large presents to the King; and the Lord of Jaquin's brother, with the tribute of that State, and great presents beside. The
prepa-

* This information seems to have been given him, about a year or two after the conquest.

preparations for their journey took them up three days. They had an hundred black servants in their retinue; each gentleman had six hammock men, by two of whom he was carried, the rest relieving the others in their turns; also a small horse to ride on, when weary with lying. They set out on the 8th of April, about nine o'clock, and reached Ardra the next day, about the same time. The roads, he says, were good; the country beautiful, but desolate; the towns and villages destroyed; and the fields strewed with human bones.

When they arrived within half a mile of the King's camp, they halted. Soon after, a messenger came from his majesty, to compliment and welcome them; intimating that a great man would presently arrive to receive them. They accordingly took out their best apparel, and dressed themselves under the covert of an old wall; after which, advancing towards the camp, they were met by the great captain,* as the blacks called him, who was a principal officer of the court, attended by 500 soldiers, with fire-arms, drawn swords, shields and banners. On their approach they used many strange ceremonies, that excited the fear of the travellers, as well as their wonder. The great captain, and some of his officers, approached them, flourishing their naked swords over their heads, and pointing them at their breasts; skipping and jumping round them, with many antic postures. After which, the great man assumed a sedate air; and, giving them his hand, welcomed them in the King's name,

* The principal officer of the court is called the *Tamegan*, as we shall see further on; but it is the second officer, or *Mabu*, that is master of the ceremonies. Snelgrave seems not to have known these titles, nor even the name of the King; for which last we are indebted to Mr. Lambe. Vide Smith's Voyage, 171.

and name, and drank their healths in palm wine: they, in return, drank the king's health, in wine and beer, with both which he seemed very well pleased. These ceremonies being over, they all set out, under this guard, for the camp, accompanied with a dismal noise, which they called by the name of music.

They arrived at the camp in about half an hour. It was situated near a great ruined town, late the principal place of the kingdom of Ardra.* Here the army lay in tents, which, according to the negro custom, were made of small boughs, covered with thatch, resembling bee-hives; but big enough for ten or twelve soldiers, who crept in at a hole in one side. On entering the camp, chairs, taken from the Whydahs, were set for them under some shady trees, where great numbers flocked round to see them; but were kept off by the soldiery. Having rested here about two hours, and beheld divers feats of activity performed by the soldiers to divert them, they were conducted to a thatched tent, prepared for their reception; where, having crept in, and stowed their baggage, the great man left them, to inform the King of their arrival: appointing them a guard, to prevent their being disturbed or molested.

It being now noon, they sat down to dinner on the ham and fowls they had brought with them; but were so annoyed by flies, they could scarce put a morsel into their mouths, without
taking

* Barbot calls this town Great Ardra; and Lambe, who lived there two years, Ardra; which is the name it is now, I believe, known by. The natives call it Azem, or Assen; and report, that it was nine english miles in circumference; containing a variety of shady walks and gardens, as well as a great number of spacious buildings, &c. V. Barbot, 346; Churchill's Voyage, Vol. 5; Prevost Hist. des Voy. Vol. iii. p. 519.

taking in some of these vermin with it. They little thought whence this nuisance proceeded, else they would have made a much shorter dinner; nor was it till about three o'clock, when, being desired by a messenger from the great captain, to come to the king's gate, that, on their way, they perceived, with no small degree of disgust and horror, two heaps of dead men's heads, piled up on two large stages, and covered with swarms of their late visitors, the flies. The interpreter told them, "they were the heads of four thousand of the Whydahs, who had been sacrificed by the Dahomans to their God, about three weeks before, as an acknowledgement of the great conquest they had obtained."

They found the king's gate to be only an entrance into a large court yard, palisadoed round, and containing several mud-walled houses. Stools were set for them; and an officer presented them with cows, sheep, goats, and other provisions, with this compliment, that, as the King was in camp, it was not in his power to provide for them better. They received this favour with due acknowledgement, and were returning out at the gate, when they were surprised with the sight of forty stout fellows, ranged on both sides the gate, with fusils on their shoulders, and broadswords in their hands; having round their necks strings of dead men's teeth, reaching as low as their middle, both behind and before, in great quantities. These, they were told, were the King's heroes, or worthies; who, having killed many enemies in battle, were allowed to wear their teeth in this manner, as trophies of their valour: on pain of death, however, if they dared to string one, whose owner had not been killed by their own hands.

Next

Next morning, at nine, they obtained an audience. They were received at the king's gate, and introduced into a large court, palifadoed round. Here the King was sitting in a fine gilt chair, taken from the King of Whydah. Three large umbrellas were held over his head, by women, to shade him from the sun; and four other women stood behind his chair, with fusils on their shoulders. All the women were finely dressed, from the middle downwards; the upper part of the body of either sex, remaining, in this country, generally uncovered: their arms were adorned with many large manellos, or bracelets of gold, of great value; and round their necks, and in their hair, were abundance of beads, of divers colours, brought from a far inland country, where they are dug out of the earth; and which are in as great esteem with the negroes, as diamonds among the Europeans.*

The King was dressed in a gown, flowered with gold, that reached to his ankles; an European embroidered hat; and sandals on his feet. His manner of sitting at that time, viz. on a chair, was not his custom, nor that of the country; but seemingly intended for more than usual state: for, on a future audience, he was cross-legged on a carpet, after the Asiatic manner, though he always preserved a proper majesty and decorum.

The visitors were placed at about ten yards from the chair of state, and ordered to stand still. The King then commanded the interpreter to bid them welcome; they bowed low, as directed;

F

and

* These probably were only the glass beads of Europe, brought there by the Muleys, or Malays, and pretended to be of great value.—J. F.

and Snelgrave, through the same means, paid his compliments to his majesty; with which he was much pleased. He ordered chairs for them, made them sit down, and drank to their healths. Then liquor being brought them, they returned his salutation; after which, the King invited them to stay, and see the customs of his country.

It is necessary to remark, previous to the detail of what passed, that, at the time when Trudo was employed in the conquest of Whydah, he had sent twelve of his wives from Ardra up to Dahomy, with a number of slaves, carrying a large quantity of goods and fine things, under an escort of five hundred soldiers. On their way, they were attacked by the *Tuffoes*, whose country is about six days journey from Ardra;* who routed the guard, murdered the women, and seized on the treasure. To revenge this outrage, the King had no sooner completed the conquest of Whydah, than he sent out part of his army; who returned the same evening we entered the camp, with eighteen hundred of the *Tuffoes* prisoners.

These prisoners were now, by the King's order, brought into the court; out of which he selected a great number for sacrifice; reserving the rest as slaves, for his own use, or for sale to the Europeans. Proper officers were in readiness, to receive the captives from the soldiers, who had taken them in battle, and
to

* Snelgrave, p. 36.—*Tuffoe*, *Tafoe*, or *Tafu*, is an inland country of the Gold Coast, nearly south-west of Abomey; it abounds in gold, and lies about 10 or 12 leagues to the northward of Rio Grande; and at about 60 leagues, or 6 days journey, from Ardra. Vide Prevost's Map; *Histoire des Voy.* Vol. 4. *in initio*; and page 214 of the same volume.

to pay them, in cowries, the value of twenty shillings sterling, for each man, and ten for a woman or child. Those were next rewarded, who brought the heads of enemies slain; some having three or four in a string, for each of which they received the value of five shillings; and servants were appointed to carry them to the heaps: the interpreter informing the visitors, that the King proposed, with these, and the others, to build a monument.

All this while the great men, both of the court and army, were prostrate on the ground: none approaching nearer than twenty feet to the King's chair. If they wished to speak to him, they first kissed the ground; then whispered their pleasure into the ear of an old woman, who communicated it to the King, and brought his answer. He was very liberal to them, on this occasion; presenting them, in all, with more than two hundred slaves. At each present, an officer proclaimed the nature of it, aloud; which was immediately re-echoed by the populace, that were waiting without, in great numbers, for the sacrifices.

These ceremonies were succeeded by sports. Two fellows brought in a great tub, containing, at least, six gallons, of something like frumenty, which, after falling on their knees, they threw so fast into their mouths, that it was dispatched in a few minutes. This, the interpreter informed Snelgrave, was their daily practice, to divert the King; but that they generally died in a few years, and then others took up the trade. Several other ridiculous things were performed; tired of which, and of the heat of the sun, in which they had now remained

three hours, defended only by umbrellas, they begged leave to retire to their tent, which being granted, they paid their compliments, and went away.

C H A P. VII.

Four hundred Tuffoes sacrificed.—The manner described.—Compared with the Mexican sacrifices.—Dahoman's reasons for this practice.—Idea of the Deity.

SNELGRAVE pursues his account, to this effect. Just as we had dined, the Lord of Jaquin's brother arrived, in such a fright, as had changed his colour from black to tawny, and deprived him, for some time, of the power of speech. It was occasioned by his having just met the unfortunate victims, whom the King had chosen out, that morning, on their way to the place of execution. Their fate, their cries, and lamentations, the dreadful idea of their being devoured by their murderers, filled his mind with horrors; and raised in it such apprehensions, for his own safety, as all our arguments could not remove. The King had not yet admitted him to audience; he construed this as an evil omen; he therefore begged the protection of our tent, which he considered as more likely to afford him security than his own; and we granted this request, without hesitation.

Of this ceremony, curiosity, getting the better of our feelings, impelled the Dutch captain, and myself, to become spectators; and having, by our interpreter, obtained of the priests the necessary permission, we went with him to the place where the sacrifices were to be performed, which was about a quarter of a mile from the camp. Great numbers of people were assembled on the occasion; and our guards, making way for us, through the crowd, brought us near to four small stages, erected about five feet from the ground; at the side of one of which we took our stand, in a situation, whence we could plainly see all that passed.

The first victim was a comely old man, between fifty and sixty years of age. His hands were tied behind him. In his behaviour, he shewed a brave and undaunted mind, without any semblance of fear. He was brought to the side of one of the stages, and standing upright, a Fetishier, or priest, laid his hand on his head, repeating some words of consecration, which lasted about two minutes: after which, he made the sign to a man, that stood behind the prisoner, with a broad sword; who immediately, at one blow, severed his head from his body.

The rabble, on this, gave a great shout. The attendants threw up the head on the stage; and the body, after having lain a little while on the ground, that the blood might drain from it, was carried away by slaves, and thrown on a spot adjoining to the camp. It was here the linguist told them, how the different parts of the victim were appropriated. The blood, it seems, they devoted to the Fetische, or God; the
head

head belonged to the king;* and the body was for the common people: by which Snelgrave understood, that it was given them for the purpose of eating; and in which idea he seems confirmed by the sequel.

As all this may appear to be the effect of savage nature, in its lowest, or most uncultivated state; we have only to turn our eyes towards the other side of the Atlantic, and behold what was transacted in the most polished of any nation that the Europeans have discovered. At Mexico, after having collected such a number of captives, as they considered worthy the acceptance of their deity, and which often amounted to many thousands, they disposed them in long files, unbound; at the head of each of which, a priest placed himself, after having shewn to every one of them an idol, which he held in his hand, as their god. They then proceeded to different lofty altars; amongst which, that in the great temple was near 80 feet high, and 40 feet square, at top. These they ascended by strait, and almost perpendicular flights of stairs. When at the top, four priests, seizing one of the victims by the hands and feet, whilst a fifth put the instrument of strangulation, a wooden collar, in the form of a snake, round his neck, to prevent his cries, they
 lifted

* The heads of victims, or those killed in battle, were preserved for different purposes, in many countries. Trudo seems to have made some distinction; the heads taken in the war with Ardra, he stuck round the walls of his two palaces, at Abomey, to the number of about thirty thousand. With those of the sacrificed Dahomans, and Tuffoes, he intended to build a monument of either his piety or victory. In the Mexican cemetery, the Spaniards counted above 136 thousand, stuck in the walls; besides those formed into Columns, and other devices. V. *Lambe's Letter*, in *Smith's Voyage*, p. 171. *Snelgrave*, p. 38. *Purchas's Pilgrims*, p. 991.

lifted him up, and threw him forcibly across the ridge of a triangular stone; when, probably, his back was broken. His breast, by this violence, was thrust into a proper position to meet the knife of the principal sacrificer, or chief priest; which he immediately cut open, and, with his right hand hastily tore out the victim's heart, holding it first up to the sun; then rubbing it, all bloody, over the face of the idol, that he had brought with him. At this signal, the four priests threw the body down the flight of steps; to the bottom of which, it was generally precipitated in a moment. All the captives being treated thus, the bodies were assigned, by the priests, to those that had taken them in war: who distributed them amongst their friends; and they were eaten solemnly.*

Here we find cruelty to have increased, with refinement. And it would be happy, if nations that boast of a much higher degree of cultivation, could free themselves from the like censure; especially when they have suffered blind zeal, and superstition, to hold the place of reason and religion.

The author goes on to inform us, that he saw many more of the prisoners sacrificed, in the same lamentable manner: that the men went to the side of the stages, bold and unconcerned; but that the cries of the poor women and children were very moving. The scene so far affected his companion, the Dutch captain, that, like the Jaquin just mentioned, he expressed his personal apprehensions, from a superstition so savage and cruel; avowing, that if, in the fit of enthusiasm, it should suggest, that white men were more acceptable offerings
to

* V. Herrera, Decade 3, c. 16. Prevost Voyages, Tom. xii. p. 546.

to the Fetische, than those of their own colour, it might bring both the curious Europeans into the most imminent danger: a notion by no means unreasonable; and which induced them to withdraw, as soon as they decently could. Captain Snelgrave, mean while, putting on a good face, entered into conversation with some of the caboccers and officers; who, in general, excused this cruel exhibition, as the custom of the country: one of the commanders observing, that they had constantly, after any conquest, offered to their god a certain number of captives; that these were always chosen out of the prisoners, by the king himself; that, were this omitted, no more success would attend them; and that their conquests, made within a few years, without any defeat, shewed such offerings to be both necessary and useful. His arguments were equally ready, in defence of sacrificing old or young: the former, he said, were too cunning to spare, and too old for market; the latter, being in this instance, designed to attend, in the other world, on those whom the Tuffoes had slain, it was proper they should be young, and fit for such service. Looking on this as a rude notion of a future state, Snelgrave ventured to ask him, what opinion the Dahomans held, concerning their God. From the answer, though naturally imperfect and confused, he could collect, that they esteemed him as a sort of Guardian Angel, subordinate to some other God. "Perhaps," said the officer, "that God may be yours, who has communicated so many extraordinary things to white men, as Mr. Lambe has told me; but as that God has not been pleased to make himself known to us, we must be satisfied with this we worship."

Having stood by the stages, near two hours; tired with this horrible place, and sight; and perceiving the mob grow somewhat

what thinner, on the side where they stood, the two travellers took the opportunity of returning to their tent; their guard still clearing the way before them. In the evening they walked out, to visit the officer just mentioned; and, in their way, passed by the place where the sacrificed bodies were thrown. There were two great heaps of them, consisting, as they were told, of the remains of four hundred persons. Next morning these were all vanished; having been, in the night, as the interpreter told them, solemnly eaten by the Dahomans. This account, whether true or false, is one part of the evidence, on which Snelgrave founds his opinion, mentioned in a former chapter; and which, probably, was supported by his knowledge of the manner in which the bodies of slaves are treated, in several parts of the coast; where, if not eaten, as above, burial is denied them, and they are left to rot above ground, or to be devoured by the vultures, or wild beasts.*

Snelgrave, though a spectator, has given but an imperfect account of this sacrifice; and, very probably, his mind was as much agitated, by his critical situation, as that of the Dutch captain; else he might have informed us of what was doing, at the other three stages: at each of which, in all probability, the
same

* "As to the burial of slaves, in some parts it is not allowed them; but their bodies are cast out into by-places, there to rot away, or be devoured by wild beasts: but at those parts of the coast, where they are kinder to their slaves, in this particular, they throw eighteen or twenty inches depth of earth over them." *Barbot*, p. 283, Churchill's edition.

There is no evidence of extraordinary kindness, in the Dahomans, towards their prisoners; on the contrary, we shall find, in the course of this work, several instances of burials being refused to their own people. J. F.

same scene was transacting, as at that where they placed themselves: for one priest could not have performed the necessary rites over 400 hundred victims, in an afternoon; unless he devoted several at a time, which, it seems, was not the case. The people's estimation of the number really destroyed, could not be very erroneous; which allows us the liberty of conjecture, as to the manner: and we cannot form any one so natural, as that several fetischers at once were employed on the same business, in different quarters.*

It is time to turn our eyes from a scene of so much horror; which we willingly quit, with this observation: that he would be esteemed as both a wise and happy man, who could prevent the appearance of such another, on the human stage: whether by the ascendancy of right reason, or by wisely playing off one ardent passion against another.

It was about this time that Captain Snelgrave became acquainted with the Portuguese Mulatto formerly mentioned. He had lived with the King, ever since the time of the Ardra war; who had given him a house, and a handsome maintenance, together with one of those phœnomena, sometimes met with on the coast, a white negro, † if I may use the expression, as

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* The same reasoning holds, respecting the numerous victims sacrificed, at one time, in Mexico. *Herrara* says, they were not only slain on the great altar, but in the cemetery, or place where they reserved the heads. In all probability, on extraordinary occasions, temporary altars were erected, round the great one, and in several parts of the city: else, how can we account for near 70,000 persons being offered up, in the space of four days?—J. F. *Vice* also *Prevost*, Vol. xii. p. 540.

† They are so called from having the features and wool of the negroes, with a white, or pale colour. The accounts that travellers have given of these people

a wife. As he spoke the language, and was acquainted with the manners of the people, he was of no small use to our traveller, in the regulation of his conduct, as well as in affording him several valuable anecdotes: it was from him that he obtained an account of the Eyeo war, as related in a former chapter.

C H A P. VIII.

Commercial regulations adjusted.—Story of Bulfinch Lambe, — of Prince Tomo, and other impostors.—King's washing time.—Fetische-day.—Army exercised.—Muleys.—Snelgrave's return to Jaquin.

OUR author now obtained an audience of the King, for the purpose of adjusting the regulations and duties, in their commercial intercourse; where he had the opportunity of beholding him in another and much more amiable point of view. For, though conscious of his own incompetency, he had left

G 2

his

people, which seem to be only a kind of *lusus Naturæ*, have caused some of our geographers to assert the existence of a nation of the same colour, in the inland parts. Atkins says, at Sesthos he saw a man of this kind, who told him he came from a great distance, where there were more; Captain B. Lambe, that he had seen several; Mr. Thompson, that he had seen such at Angola, and at Madagascar; and several have been exhibited in England. But all this gives no warrant for the existence of such a nation.—J.F. et vide *Atkins's Voy.* p. 67.

his part of this business to a Caboccer, who had resided a on time at Whydah, in the capacity of one of his agents, and was well acquainted with the subject; yet, when any difference or difficulty arose, he interfered, as a moderator, with no less intelligence than politeness.

When Zunglar, so was the agent called, had asked such duties as occasioned some demur, Trudo no sooner understood the cause, than he told Snelgrave, "that though, as a conqueror, he could establish what imposts he pleased, yet, as he was the first English captain with whom he had treated on affairs of commerce, he would indulge him like a young bride, who, at first, must be denied nothing." Accordingly he desired him to name the duties he thought reasonable; which having done, the King readily accepted of them, though they amounted to no more than the half of what had been lately paid to the conquered nation.*

After much conference, having adjusted the business to mutual satisfaction, his Majesty fell into discourse with our Captain, on several subjects. He complained much, that Lambe, the person mentioned before, though he had made him great presents at parting, and had his solemn promise that he would return shortly, had never kept his word. The author here adds, that Lambe took with him, by the King's order, a black man, called Tom, a native of Jaquin; who also was made prisoner, at the taking of Ardra. This fellow, who spoke good English, was desired to observe if what Lambe had said of our King, customs, and

* The impositions, both at Ardra and Whydah, are loudly complained of, by most of the writers about this time. V. *Phillips*, 227; *Bosman*, 339; *Burbot*, 128; *Atkins*, 172; and *Snelgrave*, several places.

and manner of living, were true. But Lambe, glad of getting out of the clutches in which he had been so long detained, went directly to Barbadoes, sold the slaves that had been given him, and at length sold Tom himself to a gentleman in Maryland. However, hearing at Antigua, in 1728, what our author had said about him, and that the King had promised to give him a ship-load of slaves, if he returned in any time; he went to Maryland; persuaded Tom's master to give him up; and brought him to England, in 1731.

Coming to our author's house, to ask the particulars of what he had heard at Antigua, and to request his advice on the propriety of returning to Dahomy, he was told it was to be feared that, five years, or more, being now elapsed, it would be too late. The next news he heard of him was, that he had delivered a letter to King George II, as from the King of Dahomy; and had trumped up Tom into the character of his ambassador; giving him the sounding title of Prince *Adomo Oroonoko Tomo*; under which title he was generally received; and several plays were performed for the express entertainment of his black highness: a farce that probably might have continued much longer, but that Captain Snelgrave, with some trouble, effaced the impressions that had been made on the English credulity. Lambe's letter was referred to the Lords of Trade, who declared it to be supposititious; and Prince Tom was shortly after sent back to his own country, where he followed the employment of an interpreter; and where, no doubt, he made an advantageous report of the sagacity and penetration of our countrymen.

This

This is neither the first, nor the last imposition, of the kind, put upon honest John Bull. We have had such black princes in abundance. People from any remote part of the world, that wish to carry on the business of imposture here, never fail of finding knaves or fools to assist them. Besides the famous Pfallmanaazar, it is not out of memory, that in London an Indian bazar servant * had assumed, with success, the character of a great man in his own country, and was on the point of being employed very seriously; but that his master, from whom he had been dismissed for his roguery, detected him. At China, some time ago, a fellow of that country was about to be bambood, for having the impudence to assert, that he had been introduced at our Court: which, to the shame of those who introduced him, was however found to be but too true. Nor have our neighbours escaped; the French have been full as grossly imposed upon, in more instances than one; particularly in the beginning of the present century, when Lewis Hannibal, no less than a King on the Gold Coast! † was baptized at Paris, by the famous Bishop of Meaux, Louis XIV. standing godfather. Cardinal Noailles, shortly after, administered the sacrament to him; and he was conveyed home by two or three men of war, with several rich presents: when behold, on his arrival, he proved to be a Slave of one of the Caboceers of Affinee, that the French had stolen off the coast, and, finding to be a lad of genius, had brought with them to France, where he set up the pretence of being the prince or king of Affinee.

After a great deal of conversation, which lasted till near nine o'clock, the visitors were told the King's washing time was
come;

* A servant belonging to a shop in the public market.

† *European Mercury*, 1701. This paper called him the King of Syria on the Gold Coast, instead of Affinee. Vide also *Bosman*, 394.

come; therefore, having first desired permission to return to Jaquin on the next day, they rose and thanked his majesty for all the goodness and condescension he had shewn towards them; praying that God would bless him with length of days, for the happiness of his own country, and that of the Europeans, who should come to it. The King returned his thanks for their good wishes, promising to dispatch them according to their desire; on which they paid their respects, and parted.

Next morning, expecting an audience of leave, they were disappointed; for it happened to be the King's Fetische-day, on which, it seems, he receives no company. But a polite message was brought, informing them they were at liberty to depart when they pleased. This congée was accompanied by presents of slaves, cattle, and provisions to the visitors; and cloaths and money to their servants; which put them all into a very good humour.

In the afternoon the rest of the army from Tuffoe returned. The author, and his companions, saw them perform the ceremony of passing the King's gate, and go through their exercise. They consisted of about 3000 regular troops, armed with musquets, cutting swords, and shields. They were divided into companies; each having their proper officers and colours. Their marching was in a much more regular order than our author had ever seen before, even amongst the Gold Coast negroes; who were always esteemed, by the Europeans, as the best soldiers on the coast.

As they passed the King's gate, every soldier prostrated himself, kissed the ground, and sprung up again with surprizing agility;

agility ; then they went through their exercise, in the area before the gate, which employed them nearly two hours ; and wherein they fired at least 20 rounds of small arms : the whole being so well conducted as to afford much satisfaction to our author and his company, as well as, in all appearance, to the innumerable spectators. Their exercise being ended, the soldiers were ordered to their quarter of the camp.

This army was followed by a rabble of ten thousand, at least ; carrying baggage, provisions, dead men's heads, &c. with abundance of boys, bearing the soldiers shields, as was the ancient custom, and which long prevailed in Europe. The linguist told the travellers, that the King allowed each soldier one of these boys, at the public charge ; who, thus brought up in the army, in time proved an excellent recruit, when wanted. From this stroke of policy it is easy to judge of Trudo's genius for war, as well as of the means whereby he obtained such great and easy victories.

In the evening, going to take their leave of the great captain, they found in his tent two of the Muley or Malaye people, of which there were about 40, at that time, in the camp. They were black ; dressed in long gowns, with a kind of turban on their heads, and sandals on their feet. The interpreter told Captain Snelgrave, that they belonged to a nation far inland, bordering on the Moors ; * had been taken in different wars,
as

* This is the most accurate account of any given by the preceding writers ; some of whom supposed them, from the name, to be natives of Malacca. It seems probable that Guinea is indebted to these wandering Mahometans, for many of its customs ; and Europe, for the knowledge of the inland countries. J. F.

as they were trading from one country to another; and were, like the white men, possessed of the art of writing. The King treated them kindly; in return for which, they dyed goat and sheep's skins of divers colours; out of which, amongst other uses, cartouch boxes, and powder bags, were made for the soldiers. The author was desirous of conversing with them, but was informed it would give offence to the great captain. Knowing the jealousy of all the negroes, in like cases, he desisted; * and having paid his visit, returned to his tent. Next morning, himself, and his companions, who had all completed their business at Ardra, to their satisfaction, set off about nine o'clock; and the servants, glad of getting from the place where they had beheld such horrors, trotted with them, at such a pace, that they reached Jaquin at five in the afternoon of the same day.

We now take leave of our traveller; who, notwithstanding his journey, and all the methods he could use, found great difficulties, from the roguery of the Jaquins, before he could get his loading; and turn our eyes towards the conquered nation, which we have so long neglected.

* It is this jealousy that has stopped the progress of all the European inquirers into the geography and history of this part of Africa; and which will probably remain an insuperable obstruction to it, for many ages, unless we could employ these Moors or Malayes, if found adequate to the task, and willing to undertake it. They seem to be the only people who have a *passé par-tout*, and who travel much farther than the Caravans. The Malayes, here, are detained, as being prisoners of war; but traders would not be under such restrictions, as we may see by comparing the treatment of Lambe, with that of other white people.—J. F.

C H A P. IX.

Distress of the Whydahs. — Ollue driven back to the islands. — Eyeos interfere. — Dahomans fly. — Testefole's conduct. — Whydah's second attempt—without success.

THE Whydahs thus dispersed, and in the greatest distress, their King sent ambassadors to Dahomy, to offer his subjection; but Trudo rejected his offer, under pretence that his conquest could not be secure, whilst that monarch was alive: giving them at the same time to understand, that the surrender of their King was the only means whereby they could hope to be restored to their country.

But their loyalty was superior to every temptation; they preferred wretchedness to treachery; and were content to drag on a miserable existence, till an occasion should offer, to recover by exertion, what their apathy had lost. They had fled, at the first onset, in multitudes, to the islands near Great Popo; and the conqueror, by keeping up a considerable army in Whydah, had prevented their return to their own kingdom.* They continued in those recesses till they were reduced to the utmost extremity, and obliged to sell their servants, and even their children,

* *Snelgrave*, p. 86, says, "About May, 1729, he permitted a great number of the common people to return, and they began to build houses near the English and French forts;" but of these no mention is afterwards made. Perhaps this permission is confounded with the following transaction of Ollue and his people.—J. F.

children, to purchase subsistence from the neighbouring Popoes.

In this state they remained several months; when the Dahoman army, at Xavier, being considerably diminished, one of the King of Whydah's great captains, who was called *Offue*,* left the islands, and attempted to make a settlement, under the protection of the French Fort, about four miles from Xavier; but the Dahomans coming against them, they took shelter in the French fort, which, in the assault, was blown up, and many of the blacks perished. The French governor, together with *Offue*, and some others, made their escape to the English fort, where they were received and protected. *Offue*, and several of the men, got safe over to their island; but the women and children fell into the hands of the Dahomans, who sold many of them to the ships then in the road.

The Dahomans expostulated with the English on their interference; and on being told by Governor Wilson it proceeded from their sudden assault on the French, his neighbours, which he considered as the common cause of all the European settlers, they discovered a scene of treachery in the French governor that was shocking to hear, though it appeared, in spite of his protestations to the contrary, to be but too true. They affirmed, that after having received *Offue* and his followers under his protection, he had sent, by a French surgeon then at the court, to invite the Dahomans down to destroy them, promising that he

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would

* *Offue*, or *Affue*, was a notable caboceer at Whydah, when Du Marchais was there, in 1725. *V. Prevost*, Vol. iii. p. 473. And the island where he and the King resided, I find, in some MSS. Sea Journals of 1736, was called *Offue*, or *Affue's Island*.—J. F.

would not afford them any protection; that, from finding he had acted so contrary to his promise, and not from any quarrel with his nation, or any of the whites, they had proceeded in this manner. Trudo sent a message, upbraiding the French governor with his perfidy, but at the same time acquainting him, that having no quarrel with his nation, he would give orders to repair the fort, if he required it; but if he liked it better, he was at liberty to depart, with all his countrymen, whither they pleased. This governor afterwards met with a severe reward for his duplicity, being murdered by the people he had so abused and injured.

After this disaster, the Whydahs found means to lay their situation before the King of Eyeo, and to implore his assistance. This, added to the instances of several fugitive princes, then at the Eyeo court, whose fathers had been dispossessed of their kingdoms, and afterwards slain by the Dahomans, at length produced the wished-for effect. A great army was raised with all expedition, and ordered to make a second descent on Dahomy.* This news, no less fatal than unexpected, having reached the ears of Trudo, he found there was not a moment to be lost. His former plan of flying to the sea coasts, he judged now to be inexpedient; as the Whydahs, and their neighbours, who at length had found the necessity of a firm alliance against the common enemy, were ready to give him great annoyance in such a situation.

He therefore resolved to bury his riches, burn his towns, and fly into the woods and thickets with his people.† This he immediately

* About the middle of the year 1728.

† *Snelgrave*, 121. This, it seems, is a common thing with the blacks, in such a situation.

mediately put in execution; but Appragah, and his adherents, of whom mention was formerly made, not getting so soon into motion, were overtaken by the Eyeos, and many of them made prisoners; all the treasure of Appragah was seized; and it was not without difficulty that himself escaped, attended by only a few servants.

The enemy, disappointed in their principal aim, fought the Dahomans in their retreats, and destroyed many of them; pursuing up the rest so closely, that they were reduced to the utmost necessity: * but they bore these hardships with patience, knowing that the rainy season, † and want of forage, would soon drive away their enemies; which happened accordingly: for, about the beginning of May, the Eyeos decamped, and left the Dahomans to rebuild, or rather repair, their towns and villages, ‡ from which they had now been driven several months.

Whilst Dahomy experienced this calamity, various reports prevailed concerning the King. Some affirmed that he was killed; others, that he was so reduced as never to be able to disturb his neighbours again; and many more teemed with circumstances

* *Snelgrave* says they were obliged to eat many of their slaves, p. 122.

† The rainy season begins about the middle of May, and lasts to the beginning of August. It is very malignant to both blacks and white. The rains fall more like fountains than drops, and as hot as if warmed over the fire. *Phillips*, p. 215. Churchill's edition.

‡ The houses being built of mud or clay, were not much hurt by the fire; it was principally the bamboo rafters, and the thatch that covered them, which they had to repair.—J. F.

cumstances equally to his disadvantage; towards all which reports belief kept pace with desire: for since the Dahomans had been in possession of the southern kingdoms, in spite of all the promises made to the several white men belonging to the factories, and notwithstanding all the labours of Snelgrave, trade had gone but slowly and irregularly forward; Trudo aiming more at conquest, and at striking terror into his enemies, by the numbers of his captives sacrificed, than at the advantage usually made of them. This caused the Factories to wish for the re-establishment of the Whydahs, who, though they had been exorbitant in their imposts, had been at once the most commercial, as well as the most civilized and polite people, on the whole coast. It is therefore no wonder, under these considerations, that *Tessésole*, the English governor, a hot and unthinking man, should eagerly invite the King of Whydah to leave his barren island, and come, with all his people, once more to take possession of his kingdom. The Monarch, whose ears were not shut to such a proposition, and who had now learned courage in the school of Adversity, unwieldy as he was, marched into Whydah,* at the head of an army of fifteen thousand men, of which some thousands were Popoes, whose assistance he had acquired. With these he encamped under the French and English forts, where he remained a considerable time before the King of Dahomy was acquainted with the transaction.

For the army of observation, formerly kept at Xavier, having been recalled on the Eyeo invasion, and the Dahomans being now employed in the repairs of their different towns, scarce thought of any other matter. Besides, they had too mean an opinion

* About August, 1729.

Several Nations with the King at their head, going to War



Shaved Women, with the King at their head, going to War.

Published April 1793, by G. Kneller, 22, New Street, London.

Page 56. 176.

G. Kneller del.

opinion of the spirit of the Whydahs, to think them capable of any exertion; and it was not till having nearly finished their work, and sending down a parcel of slaves to the forts, to purchase such European goods as probably they were in want of, that they found those forts surrounded with an army of Whydahs.

Amazed at this, they quickly returned, and informed their master of what they had seen. The King was struck with the news. The number of his soldiers had been greatly reduced by the Eyeos; he had lately sent an army against some of the inland countries; so that he might have reasonably been excused, had he considered his remaining troops as insufficient to attack the combined force of Whydah and Popo. But Trudo, equally politic as brave, and who had before experienced the timidity of one part of his enemies, thought the very appearance of number would be sufficient to put them to flight; the other he knew he was still more than able to cope withal: he thereupon speedily collected together his remaining troops, forming with them the vanguard of his army. The rear he composed of a great number of women, armed like soldiers, having their proper officers, and furnished like regular troops, with drums, colours, and umbrellas, making at a distance a very formidable appearance. With these he marched against the combined armies; who, surprised at the appearance of such a force, when they expected the Dahomans were quite reduced, began to debate on the propriety of a retreat. Ossue and the Popoes determined to stand their ground; and the King encouraged his part to do the like. The battle begun. Ossue, and the Popo general, attacked the Dahoman right wing with so much vigour, that they drove them for some time before them; but the troops under the Whydah King gave way at the first onset, and fled,
not-

notwithstanding all the efforts of their leader, who wounded several of them with his lance in their flight. The Dahomans, seeing this, rallied; and, in their turn, attacking the rear of Osiue's troops, put them and the Popoes to the rout. The King took refuge in the English fort, whence, by the connivance of *Tesefole*, he escaped in the night to his former asylum.

C H A P. X.

Trudo recruits his army.—Accused of impolicy and perfidy.—Tesefole's rashness and punishment.—Trudo makes peace with the Eyeos.—Mahee war.—Its consequences.

TRUDO was not unacquainted with the part which the Governor had played on this occasion, and highly resented it; but disguising his feelings for the present, and leaving a small army at Xavier, he repaired to Abomey. Here a numerous banditti of all the surrounding nations resorting to him, he found himself, in a few months, as strong and powerful as before the Eyeo war. This however was a very impolitic way of recruiting his forces, when he had one so much better in his power: for this Prince, however sagacious in other respects, had never once thought that increase of dominions, without an increase of people, weakens instead of adding strength to a kingdom; nor that a nation, however numerous, may be so dispersed over a large territory, as to be unable to defend any part of it.

Instead

Instead of conciliating the affections of the conquered, and adding them to the number of his people, he thought of nothing but their destruction; by which means he drove into other countries, secured from his invasions, some hundreds of thousands of valuable subjects, whose places he was now obliged to supply with the refuse and outcasts of every nation.

Nay, so eager was he for the destruction of those, on whose possessions he had seized, that he sometimes added falsehood and treachery to his other means of accomplishing it. He gave his word to a number of the people of Ardra, that on payment of a small tribute they should have leave to return to the quiet enjoyment of their own country. On the faith of this many thousands actually returned, built houses, cultivated lands, and were pursuing all the arts of peace, when the Dahomans, suddenly falling upon them, killed, or made captive, all who could not escape by flight: an action equally impolitic, unjust, and cruel; which did more hurt to Trudo's affairs than all that had been done them by his enemies; and tarnished all the glories of his conquests.

It was from this impolitic conduct, of destroying the nations he subdued, that the European trade, which seemed in Trudo to be a collateral object with conquest itself, gradually fell off,* so that the ships were detained on the coasts till the patience of both governors and traders was exhausted. *Tesefole* was so far exasperated at this, together with the behaviour of the Dahoman traders, which was in general very insolent, that he took every opportunity of testifying his displeasure. He treated any of them that came to the fort very roughly; caused one of

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their

* *Snelgrave*, p. 136.

their principal men to be whipped at the flag-staff, telling him, when he complained of this great indignity, that he would serve his King in the same manner, if he had him in his power. This foolish conduct, added to his former interference, lost him his life; for Trudo, highly offended, caused him to be watched, and taken by surprize: he was sent, bound hands and feet, to the King, who would not see him; but delivering him into the hands of some about him, they cajoled him out of a quantity of goods, under pretence of ransom, and then put him to death in a most cruel manner.* When this outrage was complained of, Trudo cunningly excused himself, by saying “he gave no orders for his death; he only desired some of his principal people to carry him to Xavier, where they might do with him what they pleased; but he little thought they would have used a white gentleman in such a manner.” Notwithstanding this assertion, it is very plain that his officers knew his mind; for, though he was earnestly requested to enquire after, and punish the offenders, no such step was ever taken: he only observed, upon another occasion, that what had been done to *Testefole*, his own imprudence had brought upon himself; and hoped the African Company would send a fitter person to govern their fort in future.

About this time, being apprehensive of another very disagreeable visit from the Eyeos, as soon as the season would permit

* *Snelgrave* says, that having fastened him to stakes fixed in the ground, with his face to the earth, they cut open his arms, back, thighs, and legs, in several places, filling the wounds with a mixture of salt, pepper, and lime-juice; in which torment, after he had remained some time, they cut off his head, divided his body in pieces, broiled them on the coals, and ate them; boasting to some Portuguese gentlemen, who upbraided them with it, that English beef was very good. *Snel.* p. 133-4.

permit them to march; to avert such design, and ingratiate himself in the favour of their King, the Dahoman Monarch sent ambassadors to him, loaded with rich presents, amongst which was one of his handsomest daughters. These were graciously received; and the ambassadors having gained over some of the grandees about the King, by presents of large pieces of coral, which the Eyeos esteem above all things, they by these means obtained for their master a very advantageous peace; which was shortly after further confirmed by the arrival of one of the King of Eyeo's daughters, whom he sent to Trudo for a wife, and who was received with every demonstration of joy by the King and the whole nation. *

The Dahomans, being thus delivered from their anxiety, found themselves at liberty to pursue their other designs; and accordingly directed their force against their neighbours, the Mahees, † which probably was the nation they were engaged with, at the time of the last reduction of the Whydahs. We are not acquainted with the motives that brought on this war; ‡ but we find that Trudo here was baffled by the same contrivance which he had used in defending himself against the Eyeos: for the Mahees, taking to their woods and mountains, so annoyed and harrassed the Dahomans, that, on the approach of the rainy season, the whole army was discontented, and murmuring to

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return

* *Snelgrave*, 135.

† *Snelgrave* calls them the Yahoos; but this is the now established pronunciation. For an account of the Mahees, vide *Post. Life of Ahadee*. Ch. 3.

‡ *Snelgrave* says, Trudo had sent an army into their country to take slaves; but the sequel does not seem to justify this interpretation of Trudo's intentions.

return home. This unusual behaviour of his troops exasperated the fiery and impatient spirit of Trudo; he upbraided their pusillanimity, and, without any ceremony, put several principal officers to death, for daring to mention a retreat. This severity, though it suppressed their murmurs, did not lessen their discontent: accordingly many desertions took place, of both soldiers and officers; but the most alarming was that of one of his sons, who, with 4000 men, fled to the King of Weemy.*

Trudo, nothing dismayed, was determined on victory or death; he accordingly animated his remaining troops, who, following his example, fell on the Mahees with such spirit, as drove them from their recesses, and put them to flight. It was then that, considering the fatigued state of his army, and the inconvenience of the present season, he contented himself with the victory obtained, and declining further pursuit, led his army back to Dahomy.

C H A P. XI.

Discontent of the Jaquins. — Trudo's endeavours to reconcile them. — Their conspiracy — and destruction. — Trudo's death and character.

JAQUIN, after having been received under the protection of Dahomy, hoped to have had a flourishing trade, and even to have engrossed that of the whole coast; but finding Trudo's ideas wholly employed on conquest, and that the Dahomans
around

* This probably was the eldest son *Zingah*, who perhaps was deprived of the right of succession on this account. Vide post. *Life of Ahadee*, ch. i.

around them were as unfit for commerce as their master, they became very discontented. Besides, learning by his treatment of others, how little they could depend upon the promises of their conqueror, they lived continually on the alarm. Accordingly they always kept a number of canoes ready to assist their flight, in case of a sudden attack from the Dahomans; and even sent their wives and children, together with the most valuable of their goods, to an island on the sea-coast, about ten leagues to the eastward of Jaquin, under the protection of the King of Appah: * whither they knew the enemy, from their fear of the water and ignorance of navigation, would not follow them.

Trudo did what he could to quiet their minds, but they were never long together satisfied with the Dahomans conduct; and now reports being current, that the King's force was considerably reduced, and his remaining troops disaffected, they thought it a proper time to shake off the yoke. Accordingly, with the advice and assistance of the Dutch governor, *Mynbeer Hertog*, they stirred up the King of Weemy, and other neighbouring princes, to join them, by representing this great design as equally important to them all; promising them, at the same time, the necessary supplies of arms and ammunition.

Besides, having considered the advantage of strong-holds, whether on occasion the weakest might retire, and check, or even repel a superior force; the Jaquins intended, under the direction of the Europeans, to construct fortifications, that so nothing might

* The kingdom of Appah reaches from this island as far as the bay of Benin. *Snelgrave*, p. 82.

might be wanting to insure success. But Trudo had timely intimation of their intentions; and, under pretence of an expedition into the inland countries, quickly collected an army of fifteen thousand men, which he put under the command of a faithful general, with public orders to march inland; these he complied with till night, when, according to his secret instructions, he suddenly changed his course, and marched immediately to Jaquin, by the way of Whydah.

They arrived at Jaquin about dinner-time, and, though so numerous, had almost entered the town before they were discovered. Under so great a surprize and consternation, it is no wonder at the confusion that followed. Slaughter and destruction reigned every where; even the canoes prepared for the purpose of escape, in this alarm were of little use; for the Dahomans so spread themselves, as almost every where to intercept the fugitives. It was with difficulty that the King, or Lord of Jaquin, together with *Hertog*, and some of the principal people, escaped to Appah, which was also the refuge of such of the common people as could, by bravery or good fortune, make their way to the water-side.

The slaughter and plunder that ensued may easily be imagined, from what we have already seen of the Dahoman spirit. *Hertog* lost all the riches of the factory; and the Lord of Jaquin, all that remained in his palace; but what he most felt was the loss of a much-beloved mother, who was in great esteem with the people in general, and of whose fate he could never afterwards obtain information.

Nor

Nor was the situation of the other Europeans found here, at this time, much better than that of *Hertog*. Their factories were rifled; themselves made prisoners, and sent up to the King of Dahomy, at Ardra, forty or fifty miles, on foot, under a vertical sun, to the manifest danger of their lives. Indeed that prince had little inducement to pay them any further regard, having been very ill treated by the whites, notwithstanding all his politeness and attention to them; yet, when they complained to him of their hard treatment, and that they had had neither victuals nor refreshment since they were made prisoners, he hastily went into an inner room, brought out a hatchet, broke open a cask of beef, taken amongst the plunder, and ordered several pieces to be dressed for them immediately.

As this transaction was so precipitate, some of the Europeans were much alarmed at the sight of the hatchet, and the seeming agitation of the King, thinking their lives were in danger; but they were agreeably deceived: and though they remained some time in captivity, yet, on the remonstrances of Mr. Dean, the British governor at Whydah, they were all at length released.

This second conquest of Jaquin happened, on the 22d of March, 173 $\frac{1}{2}$; shortly after which Trudo fell ill, and submitted to the universal conqueror. The circumstances of his death are not handed down to us; but we know that the fame of his great actions continues to fill the minds of the people of Dahomy to this day. They not only revere his memory, but even swear by his name, as the most solemn of all asseverations.

Trudo, considered as a conqueror, seems little inferior to any other of that class, which has swoln the page of history.

Like

Like them he waded to glory, through an ocean of innocent blood; and like them experienced the vicissitudes of fortune. Yet he never once lost his magnanimity, nor wept, like Alexander, when his generals refused to follow him: he knew how to enforce obedience; and drove, when he could not lead, them to conquest. It is true, bred as the nation was to war, it seldom wanted such incitement. We shall find, in the course of this history, instances of an heroic spirit that would do honour to any nation; yet, when that spirit flagged, Trudo was at hand to rouse it: and if he is accused of want of feeling, it will be found to be a true belligerent insensibility, alike to his own calamities, and those of other people.

Though rigid to those who opposed his arms, he was mild and generous to such as readily submitted to them; witness his treatment of Appragah. His politeness to the Europeans was exemplary; and which, in spite of the injuries he received from a part of them, he honourably continued to the rest. From traces of such greatness of mind we may justly incline to believe, that, where his conduct has appeared the most reprehensible, it has arisen from our ignorance of his motives, which should be known to form a proper judgment of human actions.

His person, as described by Snelgrave, was middle-sized and full-bodied; and, as near as he could judge, his age was, at that time, (1727) about five and forty: his face was pitted with the small pox, or perhaps tattoo'd in imitation of it, as is customary in that country; nevertheless there was something in his countenance very taking, and withal majestic. Upon the whole,

whole, says that writer, I found him the most extraordinary man of his colour that I had ever conversed with.*

At his death he left to his heirs a kingdom much enlarged; yet as it was enlarged by conquest, without being secured by policy, he left with it hereditary wars, which, like thorns in its diadem, have tortured the royal brow of Dahomy to this day.

* *Snelgrave*, p. 75.

HISTORY OF DAHOMY.

PART THE SECOND.

CONTAINING

THE REIGN

OF

BOSSA AHADÉE,

KING OF DAHOMY.

CHAP. I.

*Bossa Ahadee chosen in preference to his elder brother Zingah.—
Murders all of the name of Bossa.—Zingah's rebellion and
death.—Rebellion of the Mayhou.*

TRUDO's death was concealed, to prevent the horrid confusion and outrages, as is customary upon such occasions, until the prime ministers, who are styled the Tamegan and Mayhou,* had consulted together, and determined which of his

* The former is the prime minister; the latter is master of the ceremonies.

his sons was to succeed; a trust which devolves to those officers, upon the decease of their sovereign: for though the son who is first born, after his father becomes vested with the regal dignity, is esteemed heir apparent to his dominions; yet if he appears to those two ministers, from some defect or vice, either of body or mind, to be unworthy of this exalted station, they have the power of rejecting him, and of choosing, from among the other children, him who seems to be most deserving or best qualified to rule over them.* Upon the present occasion, they rejected the eldest son, † and were unanimous in fixing their choice on Ahadee; whose reign proved a continued series of misery to his unhappy country, and who, notwithstanding some good qualities, was a bad king, and a worse man.

The Tamegan and Mayhou having determined on their choice, announced Trudo's death, and proclaimed Ahadee king. His elder brother Zingah, thus finding his hopes disappointed, and himself aggrieved by the loss of an inheritance, with the expectation of which he had flattered himself, sounded privately the disposition of his friends. On applying to those upon whom he had conferred favours in his father's life-time, he received the assurance that numbers were willing to espouse

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his

* This we find likewise to have been the custom in the kingdom of *Whydah*; where, like what happens also in *Dahomy*, a general plunder prevailed, until the choice of the new king was publicly announced. There is something remarkable in this temporary anarchy, and return, as it were, into the state of nature, as if it were originally meant to make the people eager for the revival of sovereign power, and a settled government. R. N.

† Probably this was that son who, in the Mahee war, deserted from his father. Vide ante p. 60. J. F.

his cause; and he began to concert measures to surprize his brother, and seize the government either by stratagem or force. Ahadee, however, having received intelligence of his design, Zingah, and the principal conspirators, were seized, when they were just on the point of taking up arms to assert his claim. The prince was sewed up in a hammock at Abomey, from whence he was carried to Whydah, where he was put into a canoe, taken about two leagues out to sea, and there thrown over-board and drowned. The law of the country does not allow the sacred blood of the royal family to be shed, but appoints this punishment for their offences. Such was the end of Zingah, whose adherents were likewise all put to death.

The King having thus got rid of his competitor, and being now secure in the peaceable possession of his dominions, threw off the mask, and gave an unbounded indulgence to his inclinations, which unhappily were of the worst kind. One of the first edicts of his reign was, that every man of the name of Bossa, should be put to death; which cruel order was punctually executed throughout his dominions. Old and young indiscriminately suffered; and many innocent and useful men were lost to the community, to gratify the vanity of a wretch, who thought it an insult to majesty, that a subject should bear the same name as the sovereign.

Though Fame has transmitted this enormity to posterity, she has been kind to his memory in burying in oblivion the repeated acts of cruelty and oppression, which at last roused the Mayhou, and induced him in the year 1735 to take up arms, to free his country from the tyranny under which it groaned.

Great,

Great, indeed, must have been the provocations that induced the Mayhou to take this desperate step: for it is the disposition of the Dahomans to think favourably of their king, and to approve his actions. They reverence him with a mixture of love and fear, little short of adoration. When I asked a Dahoman, just before his going to battle, if he was not apprehensive of finding the enemy too strong; "I think of my king," said Dakou,* "and then I dare engage five of the enemy myself." I am anxious for your safety, said I, and shall be happy that you escape the dangers of the day. "It is not material," replied he; "my head belongs to the king, not to myself: if he please to send for it, I am ready to resign it; or if it be shot through in battle, I am satisfied—it is in his service." Even at this day, † after a tyranny of forty years, every Dahoman possesses the same sentiments; their loyalty and attachment remain unshaken. Though the people are daily falling victims to the avarice or anger of their prince, and there is not an individual in his dominions who has not lost some near and dear connexion by his orders, yet their misfortunes are not attributed to him, but entirely to their own indiscretions; and whatever the king does, they are persuaded is right. Such blind submission and obedience is probably no where else to be found. ‡

The Mayhou, who had seen better days in the service of Trudo, under whom he had been brought up, finding all his

* A faithful servant whom I employed in my factory, but who afterwards fell undeservedly under the King's displeasure, and was sold, by his order, for a slave. R. N.

† 1772. When Mr. Norris was collecting these memoirs. J. F.

‡ The inland Kings were no less despotic in the time of Leo; and were approached with the like ceremonies and prostrations. J. F.

his persuasions ineffectual to reclaim the young king, who was deaf to his advice, could no longer remain a mere spectator of the distresses of his country. He had erred in his choice when he preferred Ahadee to his brother; and judging it a duty which he owed to his country, to free it from the tyrant whom he had been instrumental in placing upon the throne, he withdrew from court, and soon appeared in open rebellion at the head of a powerful army. Thus, in addition to the evils with which Ahadee had afflicted his country, he plunged it into the horrors of a civil war. The issue of this, had the event been equal to the justice of it, might have been fatal to him: but it terminated otherwise by the exertions of the Agaow, or commander of the royal army, in which were many of the brave veterans who had so often conquered under Trudo. He entirely defeated the rebels: the Mayhou, and many of his friends, fell in the engagement; the prisoners taken on this occasion were put to death; and the few who escaped, having nothing to hope from the king's clemency, and to avoid the tortures intended for them, fled into the neighbouring states, where they ended their days in exile.

The King seems to have harboured no vindictive resentment against the Mayhou's family; for he soon after advanced his younger brother to his office, wherein he continued till his death, which happened in the succeeding reign; a circumstance rather extraordinary in Ahadee's conduct, as he has left us very few instances of his clemency, in offences less heinous than that of the Mayhou. When a man is condemned to death, or to slavery, in consequence of having committed, or (which in Dahomy often amounts to the same) of having been accused of a crime, his effects are, by law, forfeited to the king; his domestics,
relations,

relations, and friends, are all seized; some of them perhaps suffer death; the remainder are always sold for slaves. This being the case, it is evident that, when the delinquent happens to be a man of consequence, with numerous dependants and connexions, who are deprived of their lives or liberty on his account, the state must suffer a very considerable loss: yet this is a calamity which often happens; and, together with the carnage of war, must have contributed greatly to depopulate this unhappy country.

C H A P. II.

The invasion of the Eyeos.—Distressed situation of the Dahomans.—Ahadee's kindness to the British Governor.—The Dahomans are harassed by the irruptions of the Eyeos.—An accommodation takes place.

ALTHOUGH the internal tranquillity of the kingdom was restored by the Mayhou's defeat and death, the Dahomans did not long enjoy the sweets of peace: a storm unexpectedly arose from another quarter. The Eyeos, their former dread and scourge, again began to threaten them; whose numbers they feared, even more than their prowess.

The Dahomans, to give an idea of the strength of an Eyeo army, assert, that when they go to war, the general spreads the hide of a buffalo, which is naturally very thick and tough, before the door of his tent, and pitches a spear in the ground,
on

on each side of it, between which the soldiers march, until the barefooted multitude, which pass over the hide, have worn a hole through it: as soon as this happens, he presumes that his forces are numerous enough to take the field. Though the Dahomans may possibly exaggerate, the Eyeos are certainly a very populous, warlike, and powerful nation.

It was in the year 1738 that they again invaded Dahomy, with an immense army, laying the country waste, with fire and sword, to the gates of Abomey. Here the Dahomans had collected their whole strength, determined to stand their ground, and wait the arrival of the enemy. Though inferior in numbers, they were not intimidated. They had once fled from them, and now remembered the evils they had suffered by their flight. They knew their valour was never called forth upon a more trying occasion: however, they felt that their country, and every thing that was dear to them, lay at stake; and they determined to do all that could be expected in their defence. Accordingly, when the Eyeos made the attack in the morning, they received them warmly, repulsed them twice, with great slaughter, performing such wonders, that victory for some time hung in suspense; but fresh supplies of the enemy constantly pouring in to replace those who fell, the Dahomans, worn out with fatigue, were at last obliged to yield to superior numbers. They retreated, under cover of the night, into Abomey, having killed of the Eyeos above twice the amount of their own army. Their situation now became truly calamitous, and they had no prospect before them, but the utter extinction of their name and nation.

Abomey

Abomey is a very large town, surrounded with a deep moat; but it has no wall nor breast-work to defend the besieged, nor are there any springs of water in it: consequently, it could not be long tenable. The first care of the Dahomans on the night after the battle, whilst the Eyeos were too much fatigued to interrupt them, was to send away the wounded, together with the women and children, to Zassa, a town about twenty-five miles from Abomey. Ahadee, who was already there, having learned the unfortunate issue of the day, immediately fled, with his women and treasure, to an almost inaccessible retreat, about four hours journey from Zassa, the path leading to which is extremely intricate, and known to very few of the Dahomans themselves: nor is this retirement ever visited, except in cases of the last extremity, when the King is obliged to fly for the safety of his person. Mr. *Gregory*, governor of the British fort at Whydah, happening to be at Zassa at this time, the King was pleased to take him in his suite; which was esteemed an extraordinary mark of respect, as none but the King's own family take shelter there.

The Agaow, or general at Abomey, continued to defend the place, and amuse the enemy, until he learned that the King was safe, and that Zassa was evacuated: he then took the advantage of a dark night, conducted the remains of his army safely through the enemy, and fled; leaving the town to the mercy of the Eyeos, who afterwards plundered and burnt it, as they also did Calmina and Zassa. They lived in the country at discretion, as long as they could procure subsistence; but that failing in a few months, they returned to their own country. Had the Eyeos, when they engaged at Abomey, detached a part of their

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numerous

numerous army, and attacked Zaffa at the same time, the King and all his treasure must inevitably have fallen into their hands: for this neglect, their general was disgraced upon his return.

The Eyeos continued for several years afterwards to harass the Dahomans with an annual visit, who never thought it prudent after this to risk an engagement; but, when apprised of the enemy being in motion, they used to evacuate their towns, divide into small parties, and shelter themselves as well as they could in their fastnesses and woods. Ahadee used all his efforts to obtain an accommodation, offering the Eyeos any reasonable compensation to refrain from hostilities; but it was difficult to satisfy their demands. They claimed, in consequence of a former treaty, an annual tribute, the payment of which had been omitted since the time of Trudo. Though the amount of these arrears was considerable, fresh demands were also added: the Eyeos looking upon the conquest of Whydah as an inexhaustible source of wealth to the King of Dahomy. The expectations of the invaders, upon the whole, were so exorbitant, that Ahadee found it impracticable to satisfy them; so that they continued to ravage the country of the Dahomans for several years, burning their towns, destroying their crops in harvest, killing many people, and carrying numbers away into captivity. In the year 1747, however, the Eyeos consented to an accommodation, and compromised the matter for a tribute, which the King of Dahomy continues to pay them annually at Calmina, in the month of November.

C H A P. III.

Ahadee attempts to impose a King on the Mahees.—They make a vigorous resistance, but are at last defeated.—The war renewed with various success.—Peace concluded.

WHILST the Dahomans were thus distressed by the Eyeos, they were engaged in two other bloody wars, each of which continued above thirty years: with the Mahees on one side; and with the old Whydahs, who had abandoned their country at the conquest, and were now assisted by their neighbours the Popoes, on the other.

The Mahee country, which is very extensive, lies to the westward of Dahomy, on its borders. It is divided into several small states, each governed by its own laws, and independent of one another: these states, which are of the republican form, unite for the common safety, when dangers threaten any of the confederated members. The war with them was entirely provoked by Ahadee. Ever since the death of Trudo they had shewn themselves disposed to live in friendship with him, but his restless spirit would not suffer them to remain in peace. He claimed a right of interference in their national concerns, insisted on altering their mode of government, and, upon their refusal to comply, declared war against them.

He had heard, in his youth, that against every nation but Eyeo, the Dahoman arms were irresistible. He resolved, there-

fore, to abolish the republic, and give the Mahees a king. But he wanted talents proportioned to this arduous enterprize. The monarch, the statesman, and the general, had all been united in the person of Trudo, who constantly fought at the head of his troops. Ahadee, immured in his seraglio, where thousands administered to his pleasures, expected a prompt devotion to his will, and flattered himself with an easy conquest, thinking nothing more was expedient for that purpose, than to signify to the Agaow, "*That his house wanted thatch* *."

Ahadee's ostensible motives for the commencement of hostilities, were, "that his subjects travelling through the Mahee country to more distant nations, for the purposes of trade, had been frequently oppressed by heavy taxes, arbitrarily imposed by the states of Mahee, through which they had occasion to pass; that these states were so numerous and avaricious, that it was impossible, in the present situation of affairs, to regulate their demands, for the future security of his subjects, and their property; but that if a king were appointed to govern the whole Mahee nation, treaties could then be established, to the mutual advantage of both kingdoms." This, in fact, was mere pretence; for no part of Ahadee's conduct had testified that regard for the welfare and interest of his people, which his language on the present occasion seemed to manifest. The true reason was, that one of his favourite wives, who was a Mahee woman, had a brother whom he wished to advance to this dignity: but the
Mahees

* This is the phrase used in giving orders to his generals to make war, and alludes to the custom of placing the heads of the enemy killed in battle, or those of the prisoners of distinction, on the roof of the guard-houses at the gates of his palaces.

Mahees refused to relinquish their independence, or to submit to be governed by a tyrant.

Ahadee however persisting in his resolution, a war commenced in 1737, and was carried on with all that savage fury which is customary among barbarous nations. The prisoners of distinction were put to death, and the other captives consigned to slavery. These were the best terms allowed by either party. Many battles were fought with various success; sometimes the Mahees, sometimes the Dahomans, were victorious; but neither would relinquish their pretensions: to follow them through all their scenes of slaughter, would be a disgusting task, and indeed almost impossible.

The severest blow which the Mahees received was in 1752, about fifteen years after the commencement of the war. They had been unsuccessful in some battles, and were unable to keep the field. There is, in their country, a very high mountain, called Boagry, which is almost inaccessible by nature, and which had been hitherto deemed impregnable: thither the Mahees fled, with the shattered remains of their army. The Agaow followed, pillaged, and laid waste the country, without opposition; and having imposed such terms as he pleased on the vanquished, sat down with the Dahoman army, and invested Boagry. This place, as a camp, had one fault; it was as difficult to quit, when occasion required, as it was arduous of access. Many skirmishes happened betwixt the besiegers and besieged, these making frequent sallies, and those many attempts to force their way up the mountain. The Mahees had plantations of corn, and plenty of water upon Boagry, which enabled them to persevere in a long resistance.

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The Agaow had invested this place near twelve months, without being able to gain any considerable advantage; when the King, impatient for victory, or solicited by his favourite, sent his general all the assistance that he was able to draw together, and ordered him to hazard every thing for the reduction of Boagry, whatever might be the loss of men on the occasion. The Agaow, who was by this time well acquainted with the mountain, led on his men to this dangerous enterprise, with the determination either to conquer, or die in the attempt. He attacked it in every practicable part. The Mahees made an obstinate resistance, killing an immense number of their enemy; but at last, the bravery of the Dahomans, and their superior numbers, surmounted every difficulty: they drove the Mahees from their entrenchments, and gained possession of the summit. A prodigious slaughter ensued, for there was no possibility of escaping; the unfortunate remnant which the sword had spared, were led in triumph, captive to Abomey; where the chiefs were put to death, and the rest sold for slaves.

The King, who was at this time also warmly engaged with the old Whydahs and Popoes, as we shall presently shew, had occasion for all his troops to reinforce his army for their reduction. This induced him to desist from further hostilities against the Mahees for the present, and even to consent to a truce with them; but as this was ill observed by either side, it proved of very short continuance. The Mahees, though defeated, were far from being subjugated: those who had fled, after hearing of the calamity which happened at Boagry, returned to their country, and were still a formidable enemy; especially as the Dahomans were now weakened by a series of near twenty years of unprofitable wars.

Hostilities

Hostilities were soon renewed, and carried on as before, to the ruin of both countries, without producing any thing decisive. Ahadee could not effect his purpose of imposing a king on the Mahees; nor were they so far humbled, as to submit to accept of one. They resolved to retaliate the insult at Boagry, by invading Dahomy; and actually penetrated into the dismal forest which divides that kingdom from Ardra, in order by that manœuvre to intercept any succours which might come from the kingdoms of Ardra or Whydah to the relief of Dahomy: but, in consequence of some division in their councils, a grievance to which republics are generally exposed, they retired again without achieving any thing worthy of the boldness and wisdom of the design.

In 1764, the advantage seemed to be on the side of the Dahomans, who then laid siege to Boagry a second time; but had not a sufficient force to render themselves masters of it. Several of Ahadee's sons were upon this occasion sent with the army, to animate the soldiers by their presence; and among them his favourite *Jupera*, whom his father sent under the Agaow's care, to acquire military experience. This general had been encamped above twelve months around Boagry, when the King, impatient of delay, accused him of cowardice, and sent the Mayhou to take the command, with orders to proceed immediately to the assault. When the Agaow found himself superseded and disgraced, he judged that it was time to consult his personal safety, well knowing the King's displeasure to be implacable. Having *Jupera*, the heir apparent, in his power, he could have taken a severe revenge of his ungrateful master; but he generously delivered him into the Mayhou's care, and withdrew.

drew privately to the Mahees, who received and protected him.

The Mayhou having made an unsuccessful attempt against Boagry, was repulsed, and obliged to raise the siege:— he therefore returned with his army to Dahomy; Jupera, to add to the unfortunate event, dying on the march. Ahadee, foiled in his views, and in fact unable to prosecute them any further, never afterwards attempted any thing of consequence against the Mahees; and the person, in whose favour he had made so many fruitless exertions, dying some years afterwards, both parties seemed heartily tired of the war, and agreed to a peace in 1772, which continued to the end of Ahadee's reign.

C H A P. IV.

War against the old Whydahs and Popoes.—Ahadee's treacherous behaviour to the Portuguese Governor.—Brave defence of the Governor's servant.—The inhabitants of Jacquin extirpated.

THE Whydahs, who had escaped from the arms of the Dahomans, took refuge among their neighbours the Popoes: a nation which borders on Whydah, to the westward; in a low, marshy country, surrounded with swamps, and intersected with
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many branches of rivers, that form a multitude of islands, on which they live. These refugees, assisted by the Popoes, with whom they had incorporated, and by this time become as it were one nation, bore an inveterate hatred against the Dahomans, and, urged by a desire of regaining their native country, omitted no occasion to harrass them. Their vicinity to Whydah; the facility with which they could transport their troops in canoes within two miles of Grigwee, its chief town; the embarrassed situation of Ahadee's affairs, whose country was frequently over-run by the Eycos, and whose whole force was constantly employed either in repelling them, or reducing the Mahees, while this frontier was left defenceless; afforded them many opportunities of harrassing the Dahomans on that side, and of making several successful invasions. They frequently got possession of the shipping place, and interrupted the trade, by which the Europeans were often considerable sufferers: the white people, their goods, or whatever property happened to be on the beach, falling a prey to them. Sometimes they made incursions to the town of Grigwee, where the European forts are situated; and, if repulsed by a superior force, they readily eluded their pursuers, by retiring to the lakes: for the Dahomans have no address in engagements on the water, as they are altogether unacquainted with the management of canoes. In the year 1741, an occasion presented itself, which, had it been rightly managed, might have concluded these differences, to the satisfaction of the Whydahs, and to the advantage of the Ahadee and his country: but, over-ruled by his evil genius, he made so bad use of this opportunity, as exasperated that people more than ever.

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The Whydahs, in their exile, still adhered to the system of their old government, and continued to be ruled by a King: but the inauguration at Xavier, * which had been the seat of government and the capital of Whydah, before the conquest, was a ceremony that could not be dispensed with: for the celebration of which, it was requisite that permission should first be obtained from Ahadee, who derived some benefit from the fine which he exacted for his consent. As a cessation of hostilities, on such occasions, was necessary, he did not omit to turn such a favourable circumstance to his own account, whenever there was an opportunity by employing his agents to sow divisions among the exiles, and by that means lessen their power.

To be King of the Whydahs, even in their humbled state, had its temptations. The brother of the rightful heir, upon the death of their father, which happened about 1741, aspired to that dignity. If Ahadee did not suggest, he at least encouraged this scheme, with a view to divide the Whydahs. He therefore assured him of his support; in return for which, the usurper engaged privately, not only to become his tributary and ally, but also to pay him a considerable sum, upon his accession to the government. This wicked young man, relying on Ahadee's protection, whilst the ceremonies were preparing at Xavier, to invest his brother with the regal dignity, had the audacity to murder him there, and the address to be appointed King in his place, closing the achievement by devouring the heart of his unfortunate brother: which last act of unnatural barbarity was

* The X is pronounced as in Xebeque.

was the proof required by Ahadee, of unlimited devotion to his commands.

Neither the instigations to this enormous action, nor the engagements which the usurper had made with Ahadee, though intended to be kept secret, could escape the penetration of the Whydahs; they suspected what had passed, and several of them, instead of returning from Xavier, to live under such a King, remained in the country, and settled under the protection of the Portuguese fort, at Grigwee; of which *Seignior John Bassile*, a gentleman of humane temper, and engaging disposition, was at that time governor. Here these people maintaining a correspondence with their countrymen, and making a favourable report of the governor's behaviour, as well as of their own situation, many of the old Whydahs were induced to come and settle in that country, to avoid the horrors of a civil war in their own. Five or six hundred persons established themselves peaceably in this manner; and if this disposition had been properly encouraged, in all probability a much greater number would have followed their example: but Ahadee, blind to this advantage, or swayed by those wretched principles that usually actuated him, and which had too much tainted his father, without waiting for such a desirable event, by which he would have gained a large addition of useful and valuable subjects, cruelly determined to seize upon these poor people, and sell them for slaves.

To facilitate this base design, the King invited *Seignior Bassile* to Abomey, on pretence of business; but indeed to have him in his power. The governor proceeded on his journey, and

being met upon the road by the Agaow, at the head of an army, in full march towards Whydah, he was arrested by the King's order, and informed, that the only condition of regaining his liberty was to deliver up all those fugitives who had put themselves under his protection. The governor urged his faith and honour plighted to these people, in vain; and further treating the instances of the general with contempt, was detained by him as a prisoner. The army continued its march to Grigwee; and encamped on Gonnegee, a plain between that town and the river; by which position he effectually cut off the retreat of the Whydahs to their own country. Here the Agaow, finding the governor was determined not to betray the Whydahs, and willing to make the most of him, offered to take a certain quantity of goods, as a ransom for them: *Seignior Basile* willingly accepted the proposal, and the goods were delivered accordingly. Notwithstanding this, pretences were still found to detain the governor, in order to exact from him more goods, for which a demand was made. To this he also consented, and sent an order to the fort for their delivery; but a head servant of his, a black man, who had charge of the fort, seeing that the Agaow was egregiously deceiving his master, refused to send any more goods. He likewise intimated his suspicions to the Whydahs, who, being of the same opinion, and knowing there was no possibility of escape, resolved to defend themselves to the last extremity. For this purpose they retired into the fort, and got every thing in order for its protection; determined, if overpowered at last, to sell their lives as dear as possible. The Agaow remained quiet in his camp, at Gonnegee, for about a fortnight, perhaps waiting for orders, and then came to a resolution to attack the fort, which was surrounded with a wall
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and a deep moat, and mounted about thirty guns. The Agaow's disadvantage lay in having no artillery; however, early in the morning, on the 1st of November, 1741, he led on his troops to the storm, and began his attack on every side. Those within the fort were not idle; but with their cannon made a prodigious slaughter. The Dahomans, with that bravery which animates them on all occasions, filled up their ranks with fresh men, as fast as others fell, and continued the assault.

About noon a quantity of gunpowder, in one of the bastions, took fire, and communicated the flame to the roofs of the buildings, which, being thatched, blazed with great fury. This accident threw the besieged into great confusion; which was considerably increased by the explosion of the magazine, in the destruction of which every soul near it was involved. The Dahomans now entered at the embrasures, almost without opposition, and put every man they met with to the sword. The governor's faithful servant, who had commanded during the defence, seeing all was lost, impelled with rage and despair, threw open the gate, and with a keg of gunpowder under his arm, and a lighted match in his hand, ran furiously towards the place where the Agaow was; and having got as near to him as he could, with intention to make him a partner in his own unmerited fate, set fire to the powder, and heroically blew himself to pieces. His second in command was taken alive, and roasted afterwards before a slow fire at Calmina.

In all probability *Seignior Bafile* was now set at liberty; for we find that Ahadee afterwards rebuilt the fort for the Portuguese, and disavowed the Agaow's proceedings; denying that
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he had given him any orders to act as he had done: but, although he was desirous to throw the odium of this affair upon his general, no one pretended to acquit Ahadee himself from the folly and infamy of the whole plan and transaction.

One successful mischief seemed always to incite Ahadee to another. The Agaow, now about to return from this exploit, received orders from the King, to march towards Jacquin; a country which borders immediately on Whydah, to the eastward. This had been a place of some consequence, where the Dutch had formerly a settlement. It had been conquered by Trudo, and annexed to his dominions; but the inhabitants, taking advantage of the perplexed state of Ahadee's affairs, had neglected, for some time past, to pay the tribute which had been imposed on them, for which he intended to let loose upon them his utmost vengeance.

This country, like that of the Popoes, is surrounded with marshes and swamps, and of difficult access; nor were the Dahomans sufficiently acquainted with the environs, to be able to make an inroad into it. But it happened at this time, that a woman of consequence, belonging to a Jacquin chief, having been guilty of some gallantries, and dreading the punishment of her inconstancy, had made her escape to Dahomy, where, upon a promise of the royal protection, she had engaged to conduct this army through the only path by which Jacquin could be invaded with effect. The Agaow having this woman for his guide, a fit instrument for such a purpose, entered Jacquin unexpectedly. The people, hemmed in by their impassable morasses,

morasses, were caught as it were in a trap, whence none could escape; and the invaders extirpated the whole nation, leaving not a single inhabitant alive in all the country. *

C H A P. V.

*Whydah invaded.—Dahomans routed by the old Whydahs.—
The forts refuse to submit.—Ahadee relieves them, and vanquishes the old Whydahs.*

THE Whydahs, in their islands, were too much disgusted with their new King, to suffer him to reign long over them. He had rendered himself so odious, that he could not even form a party among them to support his pretensions; and, unable to make Ahadee the payment which had been stipulated at his accession, all succours from that quarter were refused. He was therefore obliged to relinquish that government which he had so atrociously obtained, and withdrew to Dahomy. Here, after wandering about for some time, universally despised, he died miserably of a leprous disease, which he had contracted immediately on his return from Xavier; and which the Dahomans attributed to the horrid repast he had made there, when he devoured the heart of his own brother.

Ahadee's

* Adahoonzou II. sent a few families to re-establish a settlement there, in the year 1777.

Ahadée's conduct, throughout this transaction, served only to exasperate the exiled Whydahs still more against him; so that hostilities were soon renewed, with greater fury than ever. In 1743, they enlarged their plan of operations, and seemed determined to recover the possession of their native country. The Popoes, and all their other friends, concurred in assisting them; and they invaded Whydah with a powerful army. Their designs had been no secret, but it was out of the King's power to prevent them; for Dahomy being at that time overrun by the Eyeos; the Agaow and the army at a considerable distance, engaged with the Mahees; and every thing in confusion; he could not provide for the defence of Whydah, which was thus left with only the few troops usually established there, and effectually deprived of further military assistance. However, the Caukaow,* or general, did every thing that could be expected from a brave and loyal soldier; he put his small army in readiness; the Yavougah, or vice-roy, assembled all that were able to bear arms in the town, and joined him; the Xavier Caboceers, and all their vassals, increased his force, but still his army remained much inferior to that of the enemy: however he was not intimidated; fear never enters into the mind of a Dahoman; cowardice is no part of his composition.

Knowing his own heart, and relying on the bravery of his soldiers, he marched out against the enemy, and met them about a mile to the westward of the French fort. The generals of both parties held a dispassionate conversation at the head of their
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* The title of the military officer who commands in Whydah.

their troops; in which they declared to each other their respective determinations; the one to conquer, the other to defend the country. They drank together, and the Caukaow toasted health to his King, and success to his arms; wishing, that “if he should be unsuccessful on that day, he might not survive the disgrace, but perish like the glass out of which he drank;” dashing it, as he spoke, in pieces. The battle commenced, and was obstinately fought: all that rude skill, and ferocious courage could effect, was executed on each side; till at last the brave Caukaow, distinguished both as a general and a soldier, fell, at the head of his men, after inflicting and receiving innumerable wounds. The rest of the chieftains were still the foremost in danger. Yavougah, and almost all the officers of his party, were among the slain; and the Xavier Caboceers shared the same fate. At length the Dahomans, destitute of leaders, and overpowered by numbers, were thrown into confusion, and totally routed.

The enemy, thus masters of the field, next day pillaged Grigwee, without opposition, and burned it: the inhabitants flying out of the country, and leaving the Whydahs in peaceable possession. They then proceeded to the forts, and summoned them to submit, or at least to acknowledge the new government; but the governors continued attached to the King, and refused to accede to the proposals offered by his enemies. Mean while the Whydahs, with their families, flocked from their recesses into the country, in great numbers, and built a town upon Gonnegee, a plain between Grigwee and the river, just beyond annoyance from the guns of the forts. By this means, as well as by the investment of the army, the forts were deprived of every kind of succour, so that at the end of three months they began to be

very much in want of provisions; and, despairing of an opportunity of acquainting Ahadee with their situation, which they had not once been able to effect during the siege, so watchful was the enemy, it is probable they would not have continued much longer to decline an accommodation with the Whydahs; when a messenger, having eluded the vigilance of the besiegers, arrived privately from the King, with assurances that they might depend upon being speedily relieved, and entreating them to persevere in his cause for a few days longer: of which being assured, he returned with the same secrecy and safety.

Ahadee kept his promise; rejoiced to find that the forts continued true to his interest, he did not doubt of recovering the country. He had employed the interval between the fatal battle and the present time in making every provision for that purpose in his power. He recalled the Agaow and his army out of Mahee; and as the Eyeos were, at this season, returned to their own country, he mustered the rest of his Dahomans, from all parts, and his forces increased to fifty thousand men. This formidable army, commanded by the Agaow, arrived at Grigwhee ten days after the former messenger, and falling suddenly on the Whydahs, who did not expect such a visit, and consequently were not prepared for it, they defeated, and drove them out of the country; which thus again, as it were in a twinkling, changed its master.

C H A P. VI.

Rebellion of Tanga. — Catastrophe of his women. — His defeat and death.

THE kingdom of Whydah having been recovered by this fortunate event, Ahadee appointed a person named Tanga, to be Yavougah (or vice-roy) over it, in the place of his predecessor, who had perished with the Caukaow, in the late bloody conflict with the Whydahs. This Caboccer was a man of violent passions; vain, proud, and ambitious. He maintained a great number of domestics and attendants, whom he attached to his person by his liberality, and to his interest by protecting them in their villanies, and screening them from justice, in defiance of the King. His oppressions rendered him odious to the garrisons at the forts; and his great influence and wealth gave no small uneasiness to Ahadee; who nevertheless did not care to attempt him openly, but waited a fit opportunity to get him into his hands by stratagem or surprise.

Whilst he, on the one hand, was waiting to accomplish this purpose, Tanga, on the other, was meditating nothing less than the acquisition of the kingdom of Whydah for himself. This daring project was not justified by even a plausible motive. For, having been an eunuch from his infancy, he had no children to inherit the royal dignity; the post which he already possessed

was a very honourable one ; and his opulence so considerable, that it amply afforded him the gratification of every desire, except that of insatiable ambition. His plan was, to gain possession of the English fort, and then to declare himself king. He rightly considered that the command of any one of the forts would have been a considerable assistance to his design ; but he preferred this, from an opinion which prevails in the country, that it is impregnable.

The spot on which *William's Fort* * stands, was formerly dedicated to religious purposes ; and from the frequent exercise of the sacred ceremonies in that place, the deities, which were formerly worshipped there, are supposed still to protect it ; nay, so strongly are the natives impressed with this opinion, that the governors, in compliance with their intreaties, have permitted a house within the walls of the fort to be appropriated to *Nabakou*, the titular god of the place.

It has hitherto been so fortunate as to escape those calamities which the other forts have experienced : a circumstance the more extraordinary, as the Whydah King took shelter there, when he fled from Xavier, at the time of the Dahoman invasion of his kingdom, and found protection in it, until there was an opportunity of conveying him in safety out of the country. Though this action might naturally have provoked the vengeance of the Dahomans, they, however, did not appear to resent it ; yet they plundered the French fort at that time, and afterwards that which belonged to the Portuguese, as we have already

* The English castle in Whydah is so called.

already related; but as the English fort had escaped this and every similar disaster, it stood high in the opinion of the natives: Tanga therefore deemed the acquisition of it of greater importance to his designs, than of all the others.

When the Yavougah's scheme was ripe for execution, he attempted to surprize William's Fort, in August, 1745, in the following manner. Under pretence of making a public visit to the forts, he gave directions that a certain number of his men should be ready to attend him: for, when the vice-roy visits the governors, it is customary for him to be accompanied by two or three hundred men, under arms; besides the musicians, flag-bearers, umbrella-carriers, and several employed immediately about his person; amounting perhaps to one hundred more.

Upon the present occasion Tanga selected all these out of his best men, choosing those whom he could rely on, and knew to be devoted to his will; not doubting, if he could, without suspicion, introduce these into the fort as usual, he should easily make himself master of it. Before he departed from his own house, he supplied his men with ammunition, and ordered them to load their muskets: an order which appeared strange to those who were not apprised of his secret intentions. The English linguist, who was accidentally present, struck with this circumstance, slipped away privately, and acquainted Mr. Gregory, the English governor, with what he had seen. Mr. Gregory's suspicions were raised by the information; and he made a proper use of it, by providing for the security of his fort, whilst Tanga was paying a visit to the French governor.

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He ordered his guns to be loaded, and the gate shut, before the vice-roy arrived; and when he came, refused to admit him into the fort, unless he dismissed his retinue. Tanga refused to comply; and protested against such an exception, as an unprecedented indignity, to which it became him not to submit. He threatened, and soothed alternately, but to no purpose; the governor would not recede from his determination; and Tanga, finding it impracticable to introduce his ruffians, returned home, extremely chagrined at the disappointment.

Apprehending, from the governor's unusual precaution, that his designs were discovered, he began to fortify his house. Ahadee, on receiving intelligence of what had passed, declared him a traitor, and set a price upon his head. Some troops were sent to attack him, which he engaged and defeated; more succours arriving, they besieged him in his house, from whence he made frequent sallies, and some times with success; but his strength diminished daily by the loss of men in these skirmishes, and he saw no prospect of extricating himself.

In this dilemma he consulted his priests, who, having performed their superstitious rites, informed him, "That his safety alone depended upon his getting into the English fort." This was no easy matter to effect; for he was closely besieged by the King's troops, and upon bad terms with the English governor, who, besides abhorring his rebellion, had not forgiven an insult which he received from him some months before: for being in company with the other governors, on their way to Abomey, to complain to the King of his vice-roy's oppressive conduct; Tanga, apprised of their intentions, met them on the road at Ardra; seized them, and having kept them

them for some days prisoners in the stable among his horses, brought them back with him to Whydah, sufficiently humbled, and debarred from all access to the King.

Under these circumstances the only refuge pointed out to him by the priests, and which they had probably advised for this reason, seemed almost unattainable: but his affairs were desperate, and something must be attempted. He harangued his adherents, intreated their assistance, and distributed his treasures among them. His silks, his coral, his gold, were lavished without reserve, to animate them on this emergency. His wives, for, though an eunuch, he had a seraglio of some hundreds, joined their persuasions; and his people, at length worked up to an attachment and resolution worthy of a better occasion, refused to sacrifice him to their own safety, which they might have obtained by delivering him up. They determined to force their way through the King's troops, conduct their master to the English fort, and there recommend him to the governor's mercy.

This resolution being adopted, the women, dreading a reverse of fortune, and despairing to meet again with so indulgent a lord, put each other to death: the oldest first slaughtering the young ones, and then cutting their own throats. After which melancholy scene the house was set on fire, to destroy the remaining effects, and prevent their falling into the King's hands. Tanga and his party, taking such of the treasure as was most portable, sallied forth, and made good their passage through the King's troops; directing their course to the English castle, though it was firing upon them all the time they approached.

approached. Tanga finding this, endeavoured to retreat into the garden; but, as he entered it, received a shot which put an end at once to his ambition and his life.

Originally, and during his youth, a captive and a slave, he had had the address to recommend himself to Ahadee's friendship, who raised him to the highest rank; but his insolence, which was insupportable, and his ingratitude to his benefactor, proved how unworthy he was of the favours he had received. When he fell, his adherents immediately dispersed: some escaped out of the country; but the greater part of them were taken, and suffered as they deserved.

The affection of Tanga's wives, which impelled them in this desperate crisis of his affairs to devote themselves to death, may perhaps appear romantic, if not incredible. To explain this, it is necessary to observe, that Tanga did not guard his women with that jealous eye, nor subject them to such strict confinement as is usual in that part of the world. The seraglio was only a necessary appendage to the pomp and splendor of his rank; and out of this reservoir he generously supplied all his servants with wives. Such unprecedented bounty conciliated the sincerest regard of these people. Every young man within his jurisdiction was ambitious of serving Tanga. To his wives he appeared, not the rigid jailer, nor the tyrannic usurper of their affections, but the generous arbiter of their liveliest pleasures. Hence they could not but be charmed with a freedom which no other seraglio enjoyed; and would not survive that felicity and protection which was to terminate with the existence of their master and of their lovers, whose ruin seemed inevitable.

C H A P.

C H A P. VII.

Shampo becomes the object of Ahadee's jealousy.—Warned of his danger by his sister, he flies.—The Agaow's disgrace and death.

TANGA and his followers were not unworthy of the fate they met with; and if Ahadee had restricted his vengeance to those who really deserved it, his character would have been less exceptionable. Few real occasions offered to excite his displeasure; so general was the disposition among his people to submit implicitly to his will, and to applaud all his actions. But through the whole tenor of his reign, every man's safety was precarious, in proportion to his merit, or wealth: not content with being universal heir to their effects, and appropriating to himself every thing his subjects died possessed of; the innocent inhabitants of whole villages were sold for slaves, to raise supplies for his extravagance. And although those grievances were repeated at his pleasure, such was their submission and attachment, that none presumed to complain. Unreasonable suspicions occupied his breast; so that they who served him with solicitous fidelity, and became eminent by their exploits, and success, frequently became the objects of his envy and horror.

Among the number of these was Shampo, who had signa-
lized himself on many occasions, and held a considerable post in
the

the army. He was the darling of the soldiers, and every tongue was busy in his praise. Such merit could not fail to excite a tyrant's jealousy, and Ahadee from that moment determined to cut him off. Shampo had a sister in the King's house, who, by some means, got intimation of the King's design. To have an interview with her brother was impossible, for the King's women are forbidden to hold discourse with any man; but as she was at liberty to send provisions for his table, from the royal mansion, she concealed a knife and a cord with a noose on the end of it, among the victuals: from which expressive allusion, her brother was at no loss to comprehend that he was doomed to suffer, either by the cord, or by the sabre. He saved himself by a precipitate flight, and carried a considerable part of the army along with him into the Popo country, where he was received in a manner suitable to his merit. The Popoes promoted him to the command of their army, which post he enjoyed to the day of his death, in 1767, bearing to the last an implacable enmity against the ungrateful Ahadee.

His general, who had served him zealously, and executed his orders with great success, being less fortunate, fell a victim to his cruelty. This was the same Agaow, who had bravely stormed the Portuguese fort, recovered Whydah, and taken Boagry; who had in some measure restored the declining glory of the country; and who once stood so high in the estimation of his King, that, after bestowing many favours upon him, desirous to let the world see how much he honoured his merit, he gave him a formal leave to build *a house two stories high*: which favour, however, the general modestly declined.

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Where the inhabitants are in such abject slavery, that they must not sit upon a chair, because it is an indulgence reserved for white people, and a few of the caboceers, who enjoy this high privilege by especial grace and favour from the King; where none may presume, on pain of certain death, to have a door of boards for his house, to defend him from the weather; nor to make it decent, by whitewashing the interior part: in such a country, to have permission to build a convenient house, is a mark of extraordinary distinction.*

But the Agaow did not continue long to enjoy his master's smiles: he was seized and brought before the King, who accused him of an intention to withdraw from the kingdom, and follow the evil example of Shampo, by flying into the country of the Mahees as he had done to Popo. Nothing could be more unjust than this suspicion. The Agaow, resenting it with a becoming dignity and firmness, replied to this effect: " I have manifested my zeal on various occasions, for
 " your service, and thought no march fatiguing, no battle
 " hazardous, whilst executing your will; my actions, so often
 " crowned with success, have added affluence and honour to your
 " kingdom: what part of my conduct has exposed me to this
 " accusation? You have, as pledges of the fidelity of your slave,
 " my aged mother, my wives, and my children, in your hands.
 " Where, or to whom in preference should I go? I have con-
 " ducted your armies, and spread destruction through all the
 " nations around us; is it probable I should throw myself into
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* Except leave to wear sandals, this was the highest public mark of favour the King could shew.

“ the arms of those who tremble at my name ? Of those, whose country I have laid waste, and led the inhabitants captive, in triumph to your gate ? ” The King desired him to acknowledge himself guilty, and trust to his royal clemency. The Agaow refused to attest a falsehood, and was ordered to immediate execution. The person whose business it was to perform this horrid duty, though hackneyed in deeds of death, was too much shocked on this occasion to acquit himself with propriety. The scimitar failed, in his hand, to perform the office of beheading ; it only mangled the unhappy victim. He was sent back to prison, and there strangled.*

C H A P. VIII.

Fatal expedition of the Dahomans, against the Whydahs and Popoes. — The confederates invade Whydah, and are totally vanquished by the Dahomans, assisted by the English. — Peace concluded.

THE Whydahs, assisted by the Popoes, and directed by the sagacious advice of Shampo, became more formidable than ever. They visited the Whydah beach, and gave frequent interruptions

* The family of this brave man were afterwards so much reduced, that his eldest son was glad to find employment as a servant in Mr. Norris's factory.

terruptions to trade. In disputing the possession of this beach, the Dahomans were often very roughly handled, and as often returned unsuccessful. They had lost numbers of their men in these skirmishes, when their priests at last discovered, that their oracles had forbidden them to attack the enemy on the beach, but had ordered that they should wait in readiness, between Grigwee and the river; and that the party which should first cross the river, and begin the attack, should infallibly be routed. This was no unwelcome discovery, because it afforded a *salvo* for their honour, and an apology for submitting to insults, which they were too weak to resent.

Ahadee at last took the resolution of making a powerful effort, to prevent the further incursions of this troublesome people; and in 1753, some time after the reduction of Boagry, when a kind of truce with the Mahees afforded him some leisure, he sent a numerous army against them. The Dahomans were now provided with some canoes; which, with others that they seized, belonging to the enemy, enabled them to penetrate into the Popo country: but this was a mode of warfare which they did not understand.

Shampo, who commanded the confederate Whydahs and Popoes, by pretending to fly, encouraged the Dahomans to advance. By degrees they were bewildered among swamps, rivers, and marshes; in a wretched country, where provisions began to fail them. However, they pushed boldly forward, hoping to bring the enemy to an engagement; but Shampo outwitted them, and by the dexterity of his manœuvres, drew them on to that narrow slip of barren sand, which reaches
nearly

nearly from Volta to Benin, * where he effectually cut off their retreat. The Popoes, now unmolested, employed themselves, from their canoes, in firing at the entrapped Dahomans, at their pleasure; but the greater part perished by disease or famine. The dead were so numerous, say the Popoes, who perhaps may exaggerate, that the fish of the river, assisted by the beasts, and birds of prey, not being able to eat them all, their putrid carcasses corrupted the air, and occasioned a pestilence in the country. The whole Dahoman army perished upon this occasion, except twenty-four, whom Shampo sent back, to acquaint their King with the the fate of their companions. These, when they had told their sad tale, Ahadee ordered to immediate execution: bidding them go express to the shades, to inform their comrades how much he disapproved of their conduct in the war!

The next affair of any consequence that occurred was in 1763, when the old Whydahs and Popoes, in their turn, again invaded Whydah. Shampo himself being too old and infirm to take the field, his son Affurrey commanded the confederate army, which being joined by the flower of the Popo chiefs, marched into the country of Whydah, without opposition: for old Honnou, who was then Yavougah, or vice-roy, would not venture far out to risk a battle; but remained in Grigwhée with his men, to defend the town, which the Popoes were preparing to attack, before he offered to oppose them. Honnou was wounded and carried off the field early in the fight; upon
which

* This sand, which is from half a mile to three miles in breadth, lies between the sea and a river, which runs nearly parallel to the beach, for about two hundred miles.

which the command devolved on his second, called Baddely, who made a gallant defence; but being pressed by the superior force of the enemy, he retreated with his men towards the French fort, in expectation of being protected by their guns; in which, however, he was disappointed: for, though the King's honour, and the safety of the country, were at stake; though the enemy had begun to set the suburbs on fire; the fort fired nothing but powder at them.

This neutrality of the French, if it deserves the name, though it might be politic, was certainly not very grateful; for however exceptionable the King's treatment of his own people might be, the whites had nothing to reproach him with, in his conduct towards them; to whom he had ever been respectful, and generous to a degree of profusion. In all disputes between them and his subjects, if they had but the colour of justice on their side, he determined in their favour; and the complaisance, civility, and respect, with which they had been universally received in his dominions, were greatly owing to his own conspicuous example.

The Popoes, animated by the conduct of the French, advanced boldly. Baddely and his men were obliged to fly before the enemy, who thought they had nothing more to fear, and were preparing to burn the vice-roy's quarters: little expecting the vigorous opposition they were about to meet with from the English fort, where Mr. Goodson was prepared to give them a very warm reception.

The British cannon, loaden with musket balls, and grape-shot, made a prodigious havock among them, and threw them
into

into the utmost confusion: they were stopt in their career; and it was some time before they had presence of mind, to seek their safety by flight.

The enemy upon this occasion had taken the Dahomans at a disadvantage; for the vice-roy, who did not expect the Popoes, had for that day, as it was seed time, permitted half his people to go to their plantations, which they had done early in the morning. These luckily returning, at the moment that the enemy had approached the English fort, Baddely rallied his forces, attacked the confederates, and gained a complete victory. Of thirty-two general officers, distinguished by the large umbrellas which were carried over them, thirty were killed on the spot. Affurrey, Shampo's son, escaped from the field; but, overwhelmed with grief and shame, sat down beneath a tree, and shot himself. Only one officer survived, to reconduct the shattered remains of the Whydah army to Popo. The King of Dahomy had dispatched the Agaow, with an army, to the relief of Grigwee; but he did not arrive till the day after the battle: and Mr. *Goodson*, as the King afterwards acknowledged, had the sole merit of the victory.

The Dahomans, now weakened by a long series of unprofitable wars, were unable to follow up their victory, but contented themselves with driving the enemy out of the country; and the Popoes and Whydahs, having lost the flower of their men and generals in the late engagement, attempted nothing of moment after this action: though hostilities were continued on a smaller scale for several years; during which the confederates confined themselves merely to plundering parties, and occasional visits to Whydah beach, where the effects

effects of the white traders on landing or embarking sometimes fell into their hands. But in 1772, a peace was happily concluded, under the mediation of *Lionel Abson*, Esq. governor of William's Fort, to the mutual advantage of both parties; who, after forty years of war, now enjoy the profits of undisturbed commerce and social intercourse. This able governor bestows so much attention to preserve tranquillity, and conducts himself so circumspectly towards both parties, by whom he is equally respected, and considered as an impartial umpire, that, whilst he remains in that post, a firm peace will probably continue.

Ahadee, worn out with years and infirmities, engaged in nothing worth relating after this transaction. He died at about 70 years of age, on the 17th of May, 1774. He was in person rather tall; graceful in his manners; and very polite to strangers: though the scourge and terror of his own subjects. He was succeeded by Adahoonzou II. whose life we shall next enter on, after having shewn what fell under our immediate observation, in a journey made to the Court of Ahadee, in 1772.

A J O U R N E Y

TO THE COURT OF

B O S S A A H A D E E,

KING OF DAHOMY,

In the Year 1772.

By *ROBERT NORRIS.*

MY business requiring an interview with the King, I applied to the vice-roy for the necessary attendants to Abomey, and was furnished by him with a linguist, six hammock men, ten porters, and a captain of the gang, who was responsible for the conduct of the rest: my own servants, and a few others, attending on the captain, who were armed, made up our number thirty.

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The porters, having received their several loads, which consisted of a mattress, a small trunk of wearing apparel, some provisions and liquors for myself, a case or two of spirits for the men, some bags of cowries for defraying our expences, and a few pieces of silk for presents, I got into my hammock, and commenced my journey at six in the morning of February 1, 1772.

In passing by the market-place of *Grigwhee*, I found a great number of people collected there; and observing some large umbrellas among them, I concluded that the vice-roy and his caboceers were of the party. Surprized at this early assembly, I sent a servant to inquire the occasion of it; but before he could return, a messenger from the vice-roy, who had discovered my approach, accosted me from his master, requesting to speak to me before my departure. I found him passing sentence of death on a criminal, a middle-aged woman, who was on her knees before him, in the midst of a circle formed by his attendants. I requested her life might be spared; and, from the circumstance of his having sent for me, flattered myself that my offer to purchase her for a slave would be accepted: but I was disappointed. He told me the King himself had considered the offence, and decreed the sentence; which was, "that her head should be cut off, and fixed upon a stake" that was lying by her, and which she had been compelled to bring with her from Abomey, for that purpose.

During this conversation a little girl, prompted by curiosity, and ignorant of what was doing, made her way through the crowd; and discovering her mother, ran to her with joy, to congratulate her on her return. The poor woman, after a

short embrace, said, "Go away, child, this is no place for you," and she was immediately conveyed away. The vice-roy proceeded in his sentence, which the poor wretch heard with seeming indifference, picking her teeth with a straw which she had taken from the ground. When the vice-roy concluded his charge to the spectators, of obedience, submission, and orderly behaviour, which the King required from all his people, the delinquent received a blow on the back of her head with a bludgeon, from one of the executioners, which levelled her to the ground; when another, with a cutlass, severed it from her body. The head was then fixed on a pole, in the market place, and the body immediately carried to the outside of the town, and left there to be devoured by the wild beasts.

The person executed, who had kept one of the little shops in the market, having discovered, a few days before, that some trifle had been stolen from her, had taken from the fire a lighted stick, which whilst she waved round her head, (an usual custom in that country) she expressed a wish that the person who had taken her property, and did not restore it, might die, and be extinguished like that stick. In going through this ceremony a spark had fallen on the dry thatch of one of the huts, and set the market on fire.

After a delay of half an hour on this disagreeable occasion, I resumed my journey. The face of the country, though flat, is extremely agreeable; it is mostly open; and a considerable portion of it is cultivated, and interspersed with clumps and groves of lofty and luxuriant trees. In an hour and an half we approached the town of *Xavier*, which is environed with
plantations

plantations of yams, potatoes, callavances, and corn; for which there is a ready market at Grigwhee.

Before the Dahoman conquest in 1727, when Whydah was an independent kingdom, this was the residence of the kings of Whydah; and the English, French, Dutch, and Portuguese had forts or factories here, on which those at Grigwhee were dependant: but they were destroyed on that event, and the guns removed by the conqueror, Guadja Trudo, to his palaces at Ardra, Calmina, and Abomey. No vestiges of them now remain, but the moats which surrounded them; nor can the site of the palace of the Whydah Kings be ascertained, but by the trench which encompassed it. The place is now overgrown with lofty trees, and is held sacred by the representatives of that unfortunate family, who live in exile with the remains of their countrymen, in the vicinity of Popo. And the new King of Whydah, on his accession to the government of his few and needy vassals, must come to this spot to be inaugurated.

All writers who have described this country, extol its natural beauties, and the fertility of its soil. Previous to the conquest it is said to have been so extremely populous that land was claimed as private property; and this being the great mart of trade to a very extensive tract of the interior country, the inhabitants are said to have abounded in riches. An anecdote which I have heard of the last King of Whydah, from the old people of the country, confirms, in some degree, this assertion.

When Captain, afterwards Sir Chaloner, Ogle, was sent in 1722, in the *Swallow* man of war, to the coast of Africa, in quest

quest of *Roberts*, the pirate, he landed at Whydah, and acquainted the King with the purpose of his errand. The King told him, "if he should secure that rascal *Roberts*, who had long infested his coast, he would give him the weight of "That in gold dust," pointing to an iron half-hundred weight that lay near him. Capt. Ogle fell in with and took *Roberts*'s ship, the *Royal Fortune*, at Cape Lopez. *Roberts* was killed in the engagement, and the pirates were tried and condemned at Cape Coast, where all of them were executed, except half a dozen, who were carried to Whydah, and hanged there. The King duly discharged his promise to the Captain, giving him in this way between three and four thousand pounds for his bravery: which was no small mark either of his riches or punctuality.

We made no halt at Xavier, the hammock men choosing to jog on at their usual rate of about five miles per hour; relieving each other occasionally. From thence to *Toree* took up two hours. It is but a small town; and, being a convenient stage, the inhabitants derive some advantage from supplying travellers with refreshment. It is separated from the province of Whydah by a pretty deep and rapid river, whose banks are covered with stately trees, and a great deal of close underwood, which afford a commodious shelter to elephants, of which there are plenty hereabouts.

When the Dahomans under *Trudo* were about to cross this river, which was formerly the northern boundary of the Whydah kingdom, the infatuated inhabitants, instead of disputing the passage, or risking a battle in defence of their country, were contented to place, with great ceremony, the fetish snake in the path, to oppose the invading army; which not answering their
their

their hopes and expectations, they deemed all other resistance vain, and fled precipitately before the conquerors. We crossed the river over a tolerably good bridge, formed by wooden piles placed at proper distances, and covered with faggots and hurdles.

Here we overtook our porters; and the hammock men being disposed to take a little rest and refreshment, I intended to amuse myself with strolling through the town, and viewing it. I purposed to do this alone, but found myself followed by my captain. On telling him I did not then require his attendance, and that he might remain with his companions; he replied, that "the Torees were a strange sort of people, and had bad customs; and, as he had to answer with his head for my safety, he would not trust me alone among a people who made a practice of eating men." Though I was pretty certain his fears for me were unnecessary, yet, to make him easy, I returned to my party, reflecting on the prejudices which people, residing at not more than twenty miles distance, entertained of their neighbours.

When the hammock men had rested a little, and taken a slight repast, we resumed our journey, and proceeded to a small town, called *Azoway*, which we reached in a couple of hours, the road being very good, though we saw no settlements or plantations between the two places. As the country was covered with thick woods, and the grass grew luxuriantly, higher than our heads, which prevented a free circulation of air, I found the heat, now that the sun had gained its meridian, so extremely fatiguing, that when we reached *Azoway*, I readily consented to the hammock men's proposal, of having my
hammock

hammock suspended under the shade of a spreading tree, whilst they went to bathe in an adjoining river: which done, and they having thereby refreshed themselves exceedingly, we proceeded with fresh spirits for Ardra, which we reached in two hours.

Ardra, * or *Alladab*, is pleasantly situated on a gently rising eminence of gravelly soil. A prodigious number of palm trees grow in the neighbourhood of it, which add greatly to the beauty of the prospect, and supply the inhabitants with great quantities of the oil, which they bring to market at Whydah, in large calabashes that contain from five to ten or twelve gallons each. The King and several of his great men have houses here; but they seldom visit them.

I was conducted to apartments in a house belonging to one of the King's officers, which are appropriated to the accommodation of white men on their journey; and was presented, by the man who had the care of it, with a jar of cool water, and a pot of the country beer, called *pitto*: which favour I acknowledged, by returning a flask of brandy.

Here we resolved to stop for the day; and my retinue, having deposited their baggage in my apartment, and suspended the cotton hammock in which I travelled, with the mattresses in it, for my night's lodging, went to the quarters provided for them, and left me to recover, in silence and retirement, from the fatigues of the day; nor was I interrupted by any impertinent
curiosity

* This is not the capital of the former kingdom of Ardra, but a Dahoman town called by the same name. Vide ante, p. 6.

curiosity of the town's-people during the remainder of it, but passed the night without even a bolt to the door, in the most perfect security. My sleep, however, was greatly interrupted by the incessant howling, roaring, and barking of wild beasts, particularly the jackals, called by the natives *tweelwees*, which, as if they had been its regular police, continued prowling through the town during the whole night, and disturbing us with their execrable cries. They are fierce, voracious animals, about the size of a large mastiff dog, but much stronger in all their parts, particularly the jaws, teeth and legs. Their feet are very large, and armed with formidable claws. They quit their retreats in the woods soon after dark, and range in troops through the towns and plantations, in quest of food. Any domestic animal that is not secured in a house, or at least within high walls, is sure to become their prey; nothing comes amiss to them; when they cannot get better fare, they eat any kind of trash: I have frequently seen the stomachs of those that have been killed, full of pieces of broken calabashes that had once contained oil, and of old cow-hides that had been used for covering the rolls of Portuguese tobacco. They are the greatest devourers of the carcases of those who are executed as criminals, or sacrificed at the public festivals.

They readily discover dead bodies that are interred, and drag them out of their graves. This is a joint operation of several; and when they have got their prey before them, they dance and caper round it, with great exultation and howling, for some time, before they devour it. When any of them singly falls in with a prize, he changes the horrid roaring which he used in the pursuit, to another vile note, which is to summon his companions to come, and partake with him: and it is by

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the same note that they announce the discovery of a human grave, and collect a party to explore its contents. I never knew an instance where they attacked a cow, that they did not seize the udder first; and in Whydah, where they are very numerous, I have often known cows rescued from them, with the loss of that part, by the exertions of the people, when they have run immediately to the place where the piteous bellowings of the poor animal directed them. I am surprized that *Monf. Buffon* should omit to mention, that though this animal has a strong resemblance in figure to the wolf and canine species, it differs from them in a striking feature, by having only two teats, which are placed one on each side of the breast, like a monkey. *

Early on the next morning, February 2d, we continued our journey across a very agreeable country, and having passed through two villages, stopped at a town called *Havee*, and breakfasted: it is but an inconsiderable place, though the King has a house in it. Our stay here was no longer than necessary, and we proceeded to *Whybow*; which place I reached about ten o'clock, and was kindly received by the hospitable old *Caboceer*, who provided an excellent dinner for me, and gave my whole retinue abundant proof of his liberality, by supplying them plentifully with good cheer. This old man's name was *Jabrakou*; he had been a warrior in his youth, and having acquitted himself with reputation, was rewarded with the government of this town. I found him a keen sportsman: he did

* *Mirifica pudendorum conformatio extat. A scemina, mas haud facile dignosci potest. Latitant penis ac testes intus, subter cutem hypogastricam. Per foramen effluit urina; penisque in coitu detruditur. Tantam autem rima labiis muliebribus profert similitudinem, ut, specie prima, valde ambiguum sexus estimetur, et quasi Hermaphroditicum.*

did not like domestic animals, he said, but the chase furnished him with a variety of delicacies : and he shewed me his larder, which was well stored with buffalo, venison of different sizes and sorts, wild hog, and *Agouti*, or *Bush-Cat*. Of all these he pressed me to partake for my journey, which though I declined as having no occasion for them; yet, on coming away, he insisted on my accepting a couple of nice Guinea fowls, which he said he had ordered to be roasted for my supper. It was with much difficulty I prevailed upon him to accept a small present in return; which he refused to do, until I promised to spend a few days with him on a hunting party, at my return.

I recollect Mons. Buffon says, the *Agouti* is peculiar to the new world, and is found no where but in America; yet they abound in this part of Africa, are gregarious animals, and are esteemed a great dainty by the natives. The *Bush-cat*, by which name it is distinguished by the British traders at this coast, approaches nearly, in the length of its body, to that of a full grown hare, and is rather thicker. The body, when divested of its skin, appears incased with fat, like a hog. The tail is short, and not bushy. I do not remember the number of its claws; but the feet are small, and do not seem formed for burrowing in the earth. The hinder legs are longer than the fore ones, and the ears are rounded and short. The lads who seized and brought them to me for sale, related that the practice was to wait for these animals in their haunts, morning and evening; that they were generally seen in companies, or probably families of fifteen or twenty, following one another in the same path. The head-most were suffered to pass on unmolested, and then an assault was made upon the rear

of the party with sticks; by this manœuvre, two or three were usually taken prisoners. On my asking the reason why they did not make their first attack upon the leaders? they replied, that in such a case the assailants would be exposed to the fury of all that followed, and that their bite was extremely severe; which I was induced to believe, as they are furnished with two very formidable incisory teeth in the upper jaw. By beginning with the rear, they told me there was little danger; because, those which were already passed, continued to march on, without disturbing themselves about the fate of their companions. The muzzle of the *Bush-cat*, except the upper lip, which is divided like a hare's, is not very unlike that of a rat; the upper jaw projecting considerably beyond the lower. Instead of soft hair, this animal is covered with harsh, coarse, stiff bristles, which adhere so little to the skin, as to be separated by a slight touch. This creature is endued with a power of erecting its bristles, which are of a brownish colour, clouded with dark spots. It is on the authority of the Brazilian Portuguese captains, who trade to Whydah, that I suppose this animal to be the Agouti; for they assure me, that it is not at all different from those which are so common in Brasil; and the French captains, who had been at Cayenne, concur in the same opinion. The African Agouti is very fat, and its flesh tastes greasy and strong, unless it has been cured by smoak; which is a preparation that makes it exceedingly palatable. *

Having

* *Piso* (*Hist. Nat. lib. 3.*) enumerates five species of the *Lepus* in Brasil; of which the Agouti is the third. In the circumstances particularly of its bulk and spots, the *Bush-cat* of Whydah seems to have a nearer resemblance to the *Paca*, which stands foremost in his classification. The American Agouti is rather a smaller animal; has short round ears; its hinder feet are armed with

Having staid with this friendly old man until evening, I set off for *Appoy*, which is an hour and a half's journey; and lodged there, in a house provided, by the king's order, for the accommodation of white people. I was now come to the disagreeable and fatiguing part of the journey, and judged some rest necessary, previous to entering upon it. Here the *great wood* commences, through which, the path is so narrow, crooked,

fix claws, and its anterior with only four: when it is eating, it holds the food between its fore paws, and sits erect on its haunches. It produces seventeen young ones at a litter, thrice in the year. In *Pere Labat's Voyage aux Isles de l'Amérique*, is a bad figure of it; but his description is very correct. He speaks of three species observed in the Caribbee islands. Peter Martyr allots the same number to the island of St. Domingo: they were the common food of the Indians, who called them the *Uti*, or *Outi*, which scarcely differs from the continental name, *Acouti*.

That it is common to Africa and America, is a curious fact. Are we to suppose, that there once existed an actual junction of the two continents? Or, that an intercourse of navigation prevailed between them in remote ages, prior to any history or tradition that has reached us? To the former supposition it will be objected, that the elephant, and other quadrupeds of Africa, have never, (as far as we are informed) been seen in America, either by the Indian Aborigines, or by the first European discoverers; and that America, in its turn, possesses some not yet known to exist in Africa, as the *Tamandua*, &c. Navigators, indeed, might transport from one country to the other, a breed of the smaller esculent quadrupeds, as the *Agouti*, for example. This is a subject upon which a great deal of various conjecture may be hazarded; but of which nothing can now with certainty be known.

Father Labat, who was an admirer of good cheer, to shew he was not unfructed in the art of cookery, gives us a receipt for the best manner of dressing this animal. He tells us, that, "first of all, it is to be scalded with milk, like a pig; and, when intended for the spit, great care must be taken to fill its paunch with a rich stuffing, composed of the barley, mixed with yolks of eggs, sweet herbs, and spicery. I have eaten it, (says he), many a time, dressed according to this, and other fashions, and always found it an excellent dish, and of easy digestion." Tom. III. fol. 25.

crooked, and bad, that it is impassable to be carried in a hammock, even at the present, which is the best and driest season of the year: during the rains, it is almost impassable.

We entered the wood at three o'clock in the morning, February 3d, with the advantage of a bright moon and serene sky. The captain of the guard disposed his men, some in front, some in rear, with loaded muskets, to defend us from the attacks of wild beasts, with which this dreary wood abounds; on each side of me, two of the hammock men carried lanterns with lighted candles in them, on which the natives have great reliance for terrifying the beasts of prey: the whole party singing, and shouting as loud as they could bellow; blowing their trumpets, and firing muskets occasionally; which, with the chattering of monkeys, alarmed at our approach, the squalling of parrots, the roaring of wild beasts, and the crashing and rustling of elephants through the underwood, formed the most horrid discord that can be conceived.

After a fatiguing march of five hours, we reached *Agrimce*, a small town on the opposite side of the wood; where we halted some time, to breakfast; and then resumed our journey to *Calmina*, which we reached in two hours. *Calmina* is a large town, and may contain about fifteen thousand inhabitants. The King frequently resides here, and has a spacious house, which occupies, with its appendages, almost as much ground as *St. James's Park*: it is enclosed with a high mud wall, which forms nearly a square. On a former visit, I measured one side of it, and found it *one thousand seven hundred*
paces

paces long*; in the centre is a gateway, and large guard-house, on the roof of which, are exposed, a great number of skulls of prisoners taken in war.

At Calmina, I was introduced into apartments in the Mayhou's house, where I met a messenger from him, with compliments to congratulate me on my safe arrival; and desiring to be informed, what time I proposed to enter Abomey, and whether I would consent to be received *in state*, by the great officers of the court? a ceremony which consists of the prime minister, and other head men, meeting the visitor about half a mile from town, on horseback; with numerous attendants, under arms, who perform their military exercise, and fire a few rounds of musketry. After which, the great men alight, and receive the stranger under the shade of large umbrellas; present him first with a tumbler of cool water, and afterwards with a small glass of spirits, which is drunk to the king's health; and then the whole body accompany him into the town.

I declined this honour, as agreeing but badly with my present fatigue: and having dismissed the messenger, charged with compliments, on my part, to his master; I remained there till evening. In the interim, an old lady of the house provided me with an excellent dinner; which came very seasonably, as the porters, with my provisions, did not arrive in time, owing to their fatigue in crossing the wood.

I left Calmina, at five in the evening, and prosecuted my journey for Abomey, which I reached in two hours. The intermediate

* From the stature of Mr. Norris, this is nearly as many yards, or about an English mile. J. F.

mediate country is cleared of trees; and the road, which is an excellent one, lying high, affords a pleasing prospect of the country. I found it in high cultivation; chiefly of corn and callivances, for the supply of the adjoining towns. Half way between Calmina and Abomey, is a country house of the King's, called Dawhee, which was the ancient residence of his family, and the capital of their little territory, before they emerged from their original obscurity.

On my arrival at the gate of Abomey, I was saluted with fifteen guns, and conducted to the white men's apartments in the Mayhou's house; whose steward waited on me, with a present from his master, of a jar of cool water, a pot of *pitto*, and some fowls. This officer soon made his appearance, accompanied by the Yavougah, or vice-roy of Wydah, and presented the King's compliments, on my safe arrival, and escape from accidents or sickness on the journey. This politeness was followed by a present from the King, of a sheep, some fowls, two jars of *pitto*, two baskets of corn-flour, a callebash of palm oil, one of salt, and a flask of brandy.

Having had occasion to mention the Mayhou, it may be necessary to explain his office, and that of a few others, who will be introduced in the sequel. The prime minister is called the Tamegan: he is the first civil officer of the state, and ranks immediately after the King; he is the *only* person in his dominions whose head the King may not take off at his pleasure: it is the Tamegan's duty to assist the King with his advice, and to aid him in the cares of government; and upon the decease of the King, he and the Mayhou have the power of appointing which of his sons is to succeed him. The next
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in rank is styled the *Maybou*; he is also a counsellor of the king, and acts as master of the ceremonies; he directs, or superintends the public festivals of the court; and has the care of all strangers that visit Dahomy, whether Europeans, Moors, or Negro ambassadors, from neighbouring states. The Tamegan and he, are judges in criminal cases; and one or other of them are almost constantly with the king, informing him of every circumstance that passes. The *Agaow* is commander in chief of the army. The *Yavougah* is vice-roy of *Whydah*; the literal translation of his title is, "Captain of the white men*." The *Yabou* is master of the horse; he has the care of criminals, and is to see their punishments inflicted; he has also the superintendance of the plantations, which supply the king's household with provisions; and is to see that the women who are to cultivate them are not remiss in the discharge of their duty. These are the principal personages of the kingdom; to which offices they have no hereditary claim; being appointed to them by the king's particular favour, arising from the opinion he entertains of their qualifications and abilities.

The court was engaged at this time in the celebration of a grand festival, which continues several weeks, and is called "the annual customs;" when the king waters the graves of his ancestors with the blood of many human victims. The governors of the forts at *Whydah* are expected to attend, and make a present on the occasion; which should consist of at least one piece of Indian damask, or some other handsome silk. The vice-roy of *Whydah*, and the governors of the different towns and provinces, must be there with their presents also; and give

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Yavou, white man---*gah*, Captain. A. D.

an account of their conduct, and of every circumstance which the king wishes to be informed of. They who acquit themselves to his satisfaction, have the honour to receive some mark of his approbation; which is generally a large cotton cloth, manufactured in the *Eyee* country, of excellent workmanship, which they afterwards wear for an upper garment. The black merchants, or trading men, and indeed every head of a family, must also attend for a few days, and bring a quantity of *cowries*, proportioned to their circumstances. Each of them endeavours to make his present, which is in fact a *tax*, as respectable as he can; and would be reprimanded, or perhaps punished, if he did not do so. They are all attended by their domestics; and the young fellows among them, who are desirous of having female companions, bring, each, the savings of their industry, if it amount to five *cabes*, or twenty thousand *cowries*, which they lay before the king's gate; and prostrating themselves in the dust, beg to be favoured with wives; which is generally complied with. The females are handed out from the palace, and distributed among the petitioners, and the *cowries* received in return. Each must take the female that is assigned him: be she old or young, handsome or deformed, he is obliged to receive her. Sometimes I have known the king's wives, who are the agents in this business, hand out, in malicious sport, the man's mother to him; whom he must maintain afterwards, and wait, content, till his circumstances enable him to try his luck on some future occasion.

The state principles from which this mode of supplying wives is derived are, that "parents have no sort of property in their children in the Dahoman territories:" they "belong entirely to the king," are taken from their mothers at an early

early age, and distributed in villages remote from the places of their nativity; where they remain subject to his future approbation of them, with but little chance of their being ever seen, or at least recognized by their parents, afterwards. The motive for this is, that there may be no family connections, or combinations; no associations, that might be injurious to the king's unlimited power. Hence, each individual is detached, and unconnected; and having no relative for whom he is interested, is solicitous only for his own safety; which he consults, by the most abject submission and obedience. Here, paternal affections, and filial love, scarcely exist. Mothers, instead of cherishing, endeavour to suppress those attachments for their offspring, which they know will be violated, as soon as their children are able to undergo the fatigue of being removed from them.

On the annual return of the *Customs*, at which all must attend, unless prevented by sickness, every person being immediately in the king's power; they who have been guilty of any delinquency, are apprehended without any trouble, and inquiry into small offences is frequently deferred to that time; but, on a suspicion of crimes that merit immediate investigation, such as imprudent familiarity with the king's women, witchcraft, or theft, the offender is visited by certain messengers, called *half-heads**, who bring the criminal before the magistrate of the town; and if the offence be proved, they either carry his head with them, in a bag, to shew the king that

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sentence,

* From having one half of their heads shaved, and the hair permitted to grow to its full length on the other; which, with half a dozen strings of human teeth that reach from the right shoulder across the breast and back to the opposite knee, gives them a strange appearance. R. N.

sentence has been executed, or conduct him to the capital, to receive his punishment there.

At this time too the king informs himself, particularly, of the behaviour of each of his slaves: the meanest of whom has access to him upon this occasion, and, if injured, has an opportunity of applying personally, and in private, for redress: which is a check on the conduct of those in power, and, no doubt, prevents them from oppressing their inferiors. There are indeed but few instances of personal injuries in this country; for as they are *all* slaves to the king, those who enjoy any pre-eminence are cautious how they abuse their fellow slaves, lest they incur the displeasure of their common master; and from this terror, in quarrels between equals, they content themselves with expressing their indignation in mutual invective; and rarely proceed to blows, lest a *king's slave* should be hurt, which would be of serious consequences to the aggressor.

I was suffered to remain uninterrupted in my apartments the day after my arrival, to recover from the fatigue of the journey; except that, towards evening, an old man begged leave to come in; and, approaching with great respect, produced a small calabash, containing a few pebbles, which he turned out upon the floor, and counting them deliberately over, shewed me there were fifteen of them, which I recollected was the *number of guns* that were fired on the preceding evening; and finding that he was the gunner, I paid him his perquisite of an * *ackey of cowries*, and a flask of brandy, and desired him to shew me his artillery; to which he readily agreed, and conducted me to an open space in
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* One thousand, value 2s. 6d. A. D.

the town, where I found twenty-two two pounders, and two fixes, without any carriages; not arranged for defence, but lying on logs of wood, to be fired occasionally for salutes, and on public rejoicings.

The town is large, and may contain about *twenty-four thousand* inhabitants. It is built without any order, or the least regard paid to the regularity of the streets. A number of small huts for the women, and a shady piazza or two for the master, the whole inclosed with a high *mud wall*, form the accommodations of each family. It is situated upon a dry gravelly plain, and is supplied with water from a rivulet near two miles off, which makes that article dear: a number of women being employed in carrying it round the town, in earthen pots, to sell. The town is surrounded by a wide and deep ditch §, but has no breast-work; nor does it appear how they have disposed of the clay that has been dug out of it, unless it has been expended in constructing the mud walls of their houses. There are, in different places, four wooden bridges across this ditch, and a guard-house at each, in which some soldiers are stationed.

The King has two houses, called *Dabomy* and *Gringomy*, in the town; and another without the gates, called *Dampogey*; they are about the same dimensions as that at Calmina; and, like it, are inclosed by a mud wall, about twenty feet high. In passing the guard-house, at the door of Gringomy palace, I observed a great number of human skulls, fixed on small stakes on the roof of it, which had belonged to prisoners
taken

§ It is so deep, that the lofty trees planted in its bottom reach very little above the surface. Capt. Fayer. J. F.

taken in war. On each side of the door was a pile of human heads, at least fifty in each; and at a few yards distance, opposite to the door, was a small stage, about ten feet high, on which lay about two dozen heads of unfortunate victims, who had been sacrificed a few days before, at some of the late festivals.

On my return, I received a message from the King, who desired to see me next morning, in Dahomy-house. I prepared accordingly for my visit, by unpacking a very handsome sedan chair, and a chamber organ, which I had previously sent up from Whydah. These I conveyed early in the morning by my porters to the palace, and followed them, at ten o'clock, February 5, accompanied by my linguist. I was received at the door by the Mayhou. On each side of it was a human head, recently cut off, lying on a flat stone, with the face down, and the bloody end of the neck towards the entrance. In the guard-house were about forty women, armed with a musket and cutlafs each; and twenty eunuchs, with bright iron rods in their hands; one of whom slipped away, to announce my arrival. The Mayhou, walking cautiously forward, conducted me through the first court to a door, near which were two more heads, where he prostrated himself, and kissed the ground; on which it was opened by a female, and we entered a second court, two sides of which were formed by long shady piazzas. In this we were met by the Tamegan and Yavougah, who, with the Mayhou, frequently knelt down, and kissed the ground, pronouncing aloud some of the King's titles, as we walked across this court, in which were ranged six human heads. From this we passed through a third door into the court, where the King waited for us. He was seated on a handsome chair of crimson velvet, ornamented with gold fringe, and placed on a carpet, in a spacious

cious cool piazza. which occupied one side of the court. He was smoaking tobacco, and had on a gold-laced hat, with a plume of ostrich feathers. He wore a rich crimson damask robe, wrapped loosely round him; yellow slippers, but no stockings. Several women were employed fanning him; and others, with whisks, to chace away the flies. One woman, on her knees before him, held a gold cup for him to spit in.

When the door which led into this court was opened, the Tamegan and his two companions immediately fell down, rubbed their foreheads in the dust, kissed the ground repeatedly, and approached the King, crawling on their hands and knees, prostrating themselves frequently, and throwing the dust plentifully, with both hands, upon their heads: had it been mud from preceding rain, the same ceremony would have been performed.

Having bowed to the King, I was directed to a chair a few yards from him; and having drunk his health in a small glass of brandy, and he mine, he inquired after the health of his brother, King George of England; and asked some questions respecting my voyage. We conversed, through the medium of my servant, who acted as interpreter; and of the Mayhou, who first kissed the ground, before he presumed to repeat the King's words to my servant: a custom always observed in every part of the country, as well as in the royal presence, when a person has occasion to repeat the king's words, or deliver any message or order of his. After some conversation, he desired me to let him hear the organ, and appeared much pleased with the tunes. I then explained the use of the sedan chair; which I represented as much more convenient than the hammock, which he generally

generally used. Half a dozen of his hammock men were then introduced, crawling on their hands and knees; and, by his desire, I went into the sedan, and, directing them what to do, was carried by them all in turns, until they appeared to be pretty expert at their business. He then went into it himself, and was carried repeatedly round the court, amidst the shouts and acclamations of his ministers, his women, and his hammock men. It was a smart showy thing, covered with red morocco leather, and lined with white silk. He was astonishingly delighted with it, and diverted himself with opening and drawing the curtains, which he deemed a most ingenious contrivance. At last, in the exultation of his soul, some of the eunuchs were called in to supply the place of the hammock men; and the door leading from the piazza to his private apartments being opened, he was carried by them to display his finery among his women. On which I had permission to depart, and his nobles retired in the same abject manner which they observed in approaching him. In the evening, I purchased thirty-two slaves, which finished the business of the day.

On the next morning (February 6) I had an invitation to come, if it were agreeable, and be a spectator of some amusements at the king's gate, at Gringomy, which I accepted, as I understood that the Agaow, or general, had returned, in the preceding night, from an expedition against the Mahees, and had brought some prisoners, which I wished to enquire about. I found the Tamegan, Mayhou, Yavougah, Agaow, and Jahou, seated on stools, placed on leopards skins, at the king's gate, and sheltered under large umbrellas from the sun. An accommodation of the same sort was provided for me. A great concourse of people was assembled; but I found it was not a time

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or place for business, so entertained myself with the droll distortions, and antic dances of a multitude of people, to the harsh music of a variety of instruments. Amidst all this festivity, should a man's foot slip, and occasion him to fall, it is regarded as a bad omen, and the poor wretch is immediately taken out of the crowd, and his head struck off, without any interruption to the dance, which goes on, as if nothing had happened.

To these succeeded a troop of about two hundred and fifty females, whose motions and grimaces were still more comic, if possible, than what had preceded. This band was composed of ladies of pleasure, ordered to be such by royal authority. This is a precaution taken by government to prevent the peace of private families being violated, and is perhaps more necessary here than in any other state, as adultery is severely punished, and every indiscretion of gallantry exposes the delinquents to death, or slavery: especially too, as the people of rank engross the major part of the women.

The King's seraglio consists of between three and four thousand. His principal men have from one hundred to three or four hundred wives each; and people in humbler stations, from half a dozen to twenty. From this unequal distribution, in which the rights of mankind are infringed, and their wants egregiously miscalculated, the lower class remain unprovided with female companions: but in every town there is a certain number of women, proportioned to its size, who are to be obliging to every customer that offers. The price of their favours is regulated, and very moderate; and though these poor creatures pay a heavy tax annually, which was the occasion of their being convened at present, yet by brewing small beer,

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and breeding poultry for sale, added to what their occupation brings in, they are enabled to live: and I am inclined to think there are wretches in the world, of the same profession, more miserable than these.

Whatever entertainment this scene might have afforded, it was damped by my servant's officiousness, in pointing out seven men, with their ankles and wrists secured round tall posts, fixed in the ground, where they were to remain till the night preceding the next festival, when their heads were to be struck off. These unhappy victims, though conscious of their impending fate, were not indifferent to the music, which they seemed to enjoy, by endeavouring to beat time to it. An equal number of horses were likewise fastened to stakes, on the opposite side, and were to suffer the same fate.* I soon took my leave, and quitted this scene of distress; but had not proceeded far, before I was almost suffocated by an insupportable stench, which, upon looking round, I found to proceed from the heads of thirty-two horses and thirty-six men, who had been massacred on two preceding festivals, not for any crime of theirs, but as a sacrifice to the mistaken grandeur of the king, and agreeable to custom immemorial.

Directing my course from thence towards the market-place, I found at the entrance of it two gibbets, about twenty feet high,

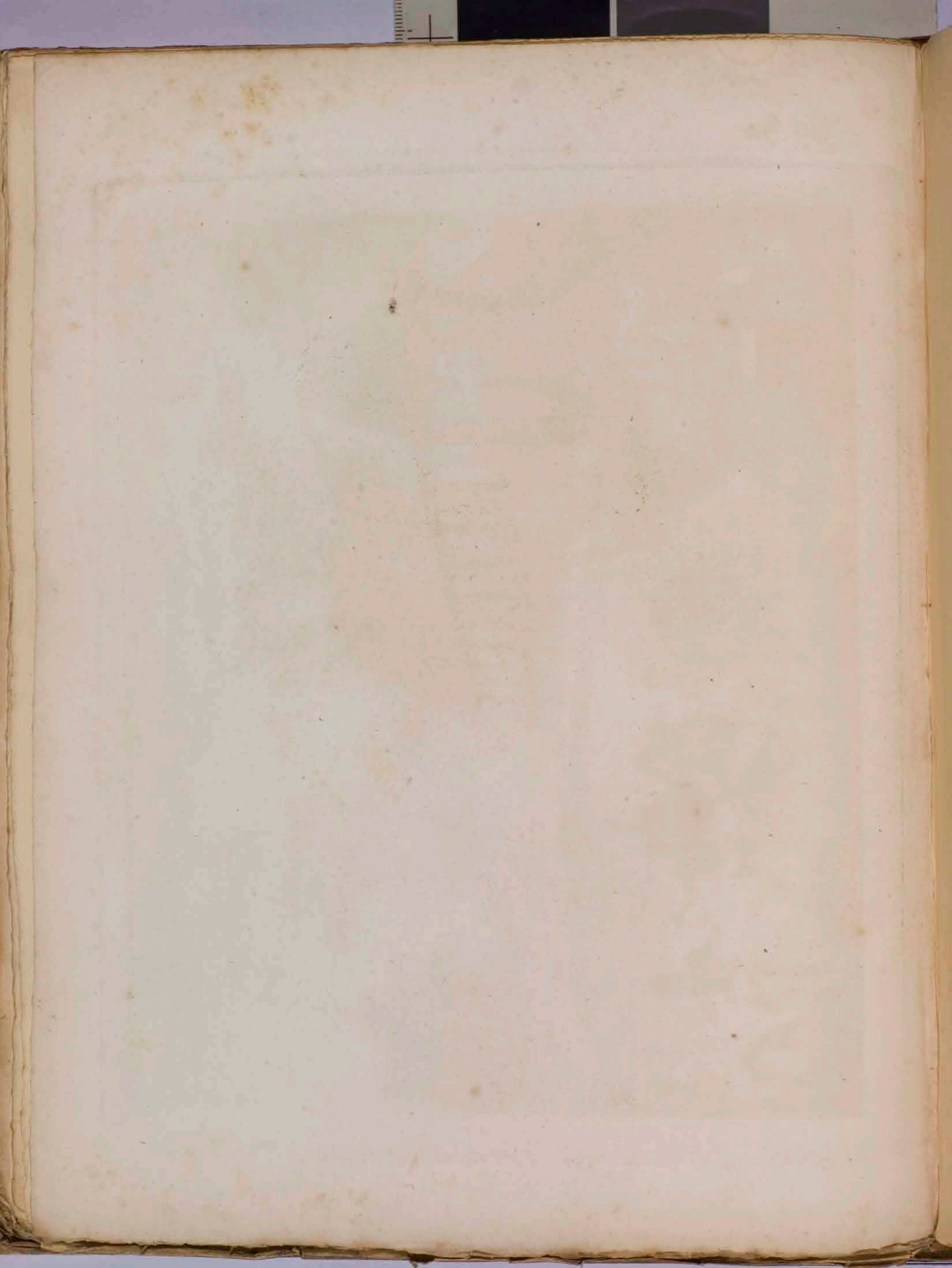
* It is an ancient custom amongst savage nations to offer up all kinds of animals taken in war. The Hermunduri, in a war with the Catti, after it was over, made one general sacrifice of men, horses, &c. "*Victores diversam aciem Marti ac Mercurio sacravere, quo voto equi, viri, cuncta victa occidioni dantur.*" Taciti Annalium Lib. 13, in fine. J. F.

Victims for Sacrifices



Victims for Sacrifices

Plato III.



high, with a murdered man hanging naked by the ankles to each; and at the other end of the market, two other gibbets, furnished in the same manner. These poor wretches had been put to death by blows of heavy clubs on the head, and had their privities cut close off, that the delicacy of the King's women, who had to march under them, in procession, on a festival, about eight days before, might not be offended. The birds of prey were tearing out their bowels, and devouring them piecemeal; which the natives looked at without the least emotion; only admiring the grandeur of the King, who could defray the expence of such exhibitions. I observed in the market, that the flesh of dogs was exposed for sale here, as well as at Whydah, in common with that of other animals.

February 7th. Early this morning I went to the gate of Dahomy house, to see a procession of the King's women, who came out, in number about seven hundred, neatly dressed, and danced in the parade before the guard-house, where a number of men under arms were drawn up at a distance, to prevent the populace from approaching them. Upon their retiring, the Agaow advanced with about five thousand men under arms, who went through the various evolutions of their exercise; and concluded with a general dance, and some war-songs. After which, I went in to pay my respects to the King, and by his desire played over the tunes on the chamber-organ. It had three barrels, which made it rather too complicated a business for him. It played several agreeable tunes, and some select marches; but he preferred the *hundred and fourth* psalm; and I fixed the barrel to that, at his request, for his future amusement.

February 8th. This morning I received a message from the King, to wait on him at Dahomy house; which I did, and found him sitting in a piazza, dressed in a silk night-gown. Having bowed to him, I was directed to a chair, where some slaves were ready to hold a large umbrella over me. The King was attended by his great officers of state, and the parade crowded with a multitude of the populace. At a little distance from me sat a dozen swarthy men, with turbans on their heads, and cloathed with cotton shirts, made like surplices, long loose drawers or trowsers of the same, and morocco leather slippers. These people are called here Malays; they speak and write Arabic; and are supposed to come from the northern part of Africa, from the confines of morocco, and the states of Barbary. They travel to this, and other parts of Africa, more remote; for they visit Angola, apparently from motives of trade; and yet I could not discover that they pursued any branch of it, that was of importance enough to be an object. They buy hides, and skins, which they tan and work into horse-furniture, tobacco pouches, and other useful articles; and carry some bales of skins back with them. Whatever be the real motives of their journey, they behave with propriety, and are courteously received, and much respected wherever they come. They profess the Mahometan religion; and when their long lent of Ramadan is over, the King annually kills an elephant to feast them. *

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* These Malays, or Mullahs, are noticed by Snelgrave, who, on his visit at the camp of Guadja Trudo, the former king of Dahomy, observed two of them, and was informed that they belonged to a far inland nation, bordering on the Moors, and, together with thirty-eight others of their countrymen, had been taken prisoners at different times, whilst they were trading from one country

Soon after I was seated, the music, which, besides trumpets, flutes, and bells, consisted principally of a multitude of drums, of various sizes, began to play, and a numerous crowd danced to this rough harmony. When one band was tired, they were relieved by another, and these by two more. After some time, tables were spread with abundance of good victuals, at one of which I dined, as did also the Mallays at another. Adahoonzou, the King's eldest son, and heir apparent, who knew me on former visits here, squatted down behind my chair, and condescended to receive a roasted fowl, and some other things, which I handed to him from my table. But the King never eats in public; it is even criminal to suppose he ever eats at all; or that he is so much like other mortals, as to want the refreshment of sleep. When the repast was over, the music was renewed; and the
King

country to another. They were in fact itinerant Arabs, possibly mongrels, expert in writing Arabic, and in the art of dying with a variety of colours, goat and sheep skins, which they manufactured into cartouch-boxes, bags for holding gunpowder, and trappings for horses. By these valuable talents they had so far attracted the admiration and esteem of their conqueror, that he treated them with extraordinary marks of favour. The title of Mullahs, or Mollahs, which properly belongs to an order of Mahometan priests, whose office it is to supervise and controul the Cadis, may possibly be assumed to give themselves a greater air of dignity; and it is not improbable, but that under the unsuspected appearance of traders, they may be secretly employed as missionaries, to make known and spread the doctrines of the Koran among these interior black nations. If the negroes should ever be disposed to lay aside their own hereditary superstitions, it is hardly a doubt but they will embrace Mahometism in preference to any other religious system, because it allows polygamy, flatters their prejudices in many other respects, and will induce a conformity of faith and manners with their northern and north-eastern neighbours. But as yet, they do not seem, in general, inclined to adopt a change. The remnant of the Whydahs, who had escaped the edge of Guadja Trudo's sword, were abundantly thankful to him, for permitting them to continue in the enjoyment of their *snake-worship*.

King advanced into the parade, followed by a guard of twenty-four women, armed each with a blunderbuss, where he danced for some time, to convince his subjects of his health and activity: to their inexpressible joy and satisfaction, which they manifested in the loudest acclamations. He then testified his approbation of the performance of his musicians, by rewarding them with eighty ounces* of cowries, which were brought in by three hundred and twenty of his wives, each carrying a *cabests*, or four thousand of them, in a brass pan, which they distributed to the drummers, who departed, highly satisfied; and I also took my leave, and withdrew.

February 8. On my arrival this morning at Gringomy-house, I found a vast concourse of people assembled. I was received by the Mayhou, who conducted me into a spacious parade; on each side of the entrance were three human heads, that had been cut off the night before; and in the centre was erected a lofty tent, or large umbrella, shaped like a sugar-loaf, about fifty feet high, and forty feet wide; it was open below, and rested on a circular range of small iron rails, through which the king could have a view of what passed in the parade. He soon made his appearance, and seated himself, amidst the shouts and acclamations, of the people under his tent, on an elegant armed chair, covered with crimson velvet, and ornamented with carving and gilding. I was placed under the shade of a large umbrella,

* An ounce here means an ounce *value*, of which there are two sorts: the ounce of *gold*, worth four pounds sterling; and the ounce *trade*, of only half that value, which is the quantity alluded to. Now, this being given in cowries, the weight of each ounce is about forty-two pounds avoirdupoise, and the whole quantity about a ton and a half weight. See the following Table. J. F.

umbrella, the Mallays on my right, and on my left about thirty eunuchs, with each a bright iron rod in his hand, and dressed like women. After the music had played about half an hour, with the confused noise of which, and the shouts and songs of the multitude, I was almost stunned; a droll harlequin entered, who entertained the King with an odd sort of dance, and fired occasionally a blunderbuss, with five barrels, which gave the King so much satisfaction, that he sent him five cabes of cowries, or fifty shillings. *

The procession then began, with a guard of an hundred and twenty men, carrying blunderbusses, who marched out two a-breast; next, fifteen of the King's daughters, fine comely women, in the prime of life, attended by fifty female slaves; after them marched, in regular order, one by one, seven hundred and thirty of his wives, bearing provisions and liquors for an entertainment in the market-place; these were followed by a guard of ninety women under arms, with drums beating. A table was then laid, and I breakfasted, whilst the procession continued. Six troops advanced, each consisting of seventy women,

* A complete table of the Dahoman monies, numbers, and weights, collected from the several authors.

		No.	value	s. d.	weight	lb. oz. tenths.
40 cowries	1 tocky, or string	40	0 1 $\frac{1}{2}$		0 1 7	
5 tockys	1 galhina	200	0 6		0 8 4	
5 galhinas	1 ackey	1000	2 6		2 10 0	
4 ackeys	1 cabes	4000	10 0		10 8 0	
4 cabes	1 ounce, trade	16000	40 0		42 0 0	

Now from this ounce, weighing on experiment about 45lb. troy, or 42lb. avoirdupoise, the weights in the last column are determined. J. F.

women, with a distinguished favourite walking under an umbrella at its head. She who led the van was held by the King and her attendants as too sacred to be seen; so that they secured her effectually from my sight with the umbrella, and certain long targets of leather, covered with red and blue taffeta, with which they encompassed her. In the last troop were two umbrellas, and four favourites, very fine women, who were said to be in higher esteem with the King than any, except the lady before mentioned. All these entertained the King with their songs and dances as they passed; and the favourites went into the tent to pay their respects, and received considerable presents of cowries from him.

The women were succeeded by ten bands of his younger children, fifteen in each, from about seven to fifteen years old, each band consisting of those that were nearly of the same age and size. Seven troops of fifty women each followed next, each troop preceded by two English flags: these, like the former, amused his Majesty with their songs and droll dances. Four of them particularly engaged my attention; their dress was too extravagant to be described; each had a long tail fixed to her rump, which seemed to be a slip of leopard's skin, sewed up and stuffed, which, by a dexterous wriggle of her hips, she whirled round like a sling, with surprising velocity: these likewise had a share of their master's bounty, and marched off loaded with cowries. Besides these, there were fifty or sixty women employed about the King's person, going on messages, and distributing presents, which he dealt about him with a liberal hand.

When



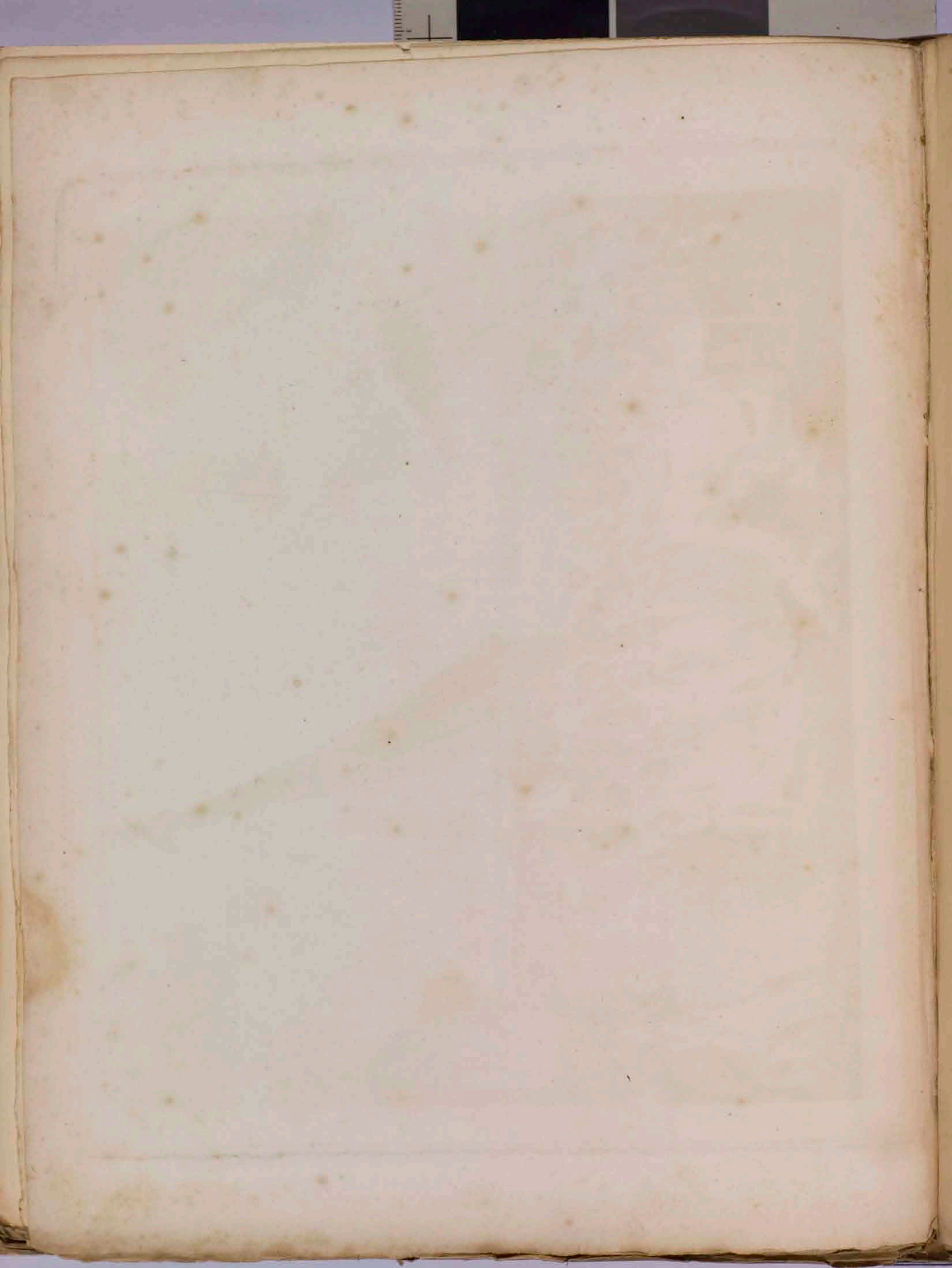
Plate IV

Public Procession of the St. George's Women's Society

Published by J. B. Whittier, No. 10, South Street, New York

p. 113

Whittier engr.



When the women had marched out, the eunuchs began their songs in the King's praise; enumerating his titles, and proclaiming his grandeur and actions, in terms of the most fulsome adulation, which continued until the women had made the necessary preparations for him in the market-place. Then the King retired, and the procession began in the following order: First, two coaches, drawn by twelve men each; next, the sedan chair; then three hammocks, screened from the sun by large sumptuous umbrellas of gold and silver tiffue, and covered with canopies of the same; each of these was surrounded by a very strong guard, and the King was in one of them, but whether in coach, chair, or hammock, would have been presumptuous, even criminal, for any of the attendants to venture to guess. My hammock followed, and then five other hammocks, belonging to the great officers of the state, accompanied by an immense crowd of attendants and spectators.

We then proceeded in this manner to *Ajawbee* market, directly under five gibbets, with a man hanging on each, as described before, who had been murdered in the preceding night for that purpose. We then entered a large parade, inclosed with different kinds of cloth, extended on rails, to keep off the populace: adjoining one end of it was a higher inclosure of finer cloth for the King. None came into the large parade but the Tamegan, Mahou, Yavougah, Agaow, Jahou, and their attendants, except myself and servants: and here I sat down to a dinner, which would have served an hundred more. After I had dined, the Tamegan and the other officers attacked the remainder; and the crowd without were so well supplied with victuals and brandy, that every one of them was fully satisfied.

In the evening I had permission to visit the King; and having passed half an hour with him, returned to my quarters, sufficiently tired with the noise and fatigue of the day. On my way, I passed by the place where I had seen the seven men, and the like number of horses, tied two days before. They were now gone; and, I was told, had been murdered on the preceding night: but that none of them were those upon the gibbet, nor those whose heads were in the king's house.

Nothing material occurred on the three ensuing days, which I employed in purchasing some slaves and ivory; but on the 12th I was summoned again to court, to attend another festival. Only four human heads were placed at the king's door upon this occasion. The dances and the procession were nearly the same as before, except that the dresses and ornaments of the women were much more showy. The variety and abundance of rich silks, silver bracelets, and other ornaments, coral, and a profusion of other valuable beads, exceeded my expectation. Besides, there was added another troop of forty women, with silver helmets; and there was a display of the King's furniture and trinkets; most of the women carrying something or other of his; some of them, fine swords; others, silver-mounted guns; above a hundred of them held either gold or silver-headed canes in their hands; and that none might be unprovided, some carried candlesticks, and others lamps, perhaps fifty at least of each, with many other articles, which were all held up for the gaping multitude to admire. We dined, as before, in the market-place; and in the evening, when I went to wait on the King, a female dwarf was introduced to dance before him; in which she acquitted herself very well: she
seemed

seemed to be about thirty years old, and measured only two feet seven inches high; was without any deformity, and tolerably well shaped.

During this day's amusements, we were visited by an *Harmattan*, which, if described scientifically, would furnish a curious chapter in the history of winds. Leaving that task to those who are more equal to it, I shall only endeavour to give some idea of its most striking *phænomena*.

On that part of the coast of Africa which extends from Cape Verd to Cape Lopez, there are, in the months of December, January, and February, frequent returns of a wind, from the north-east, which is known by the name of the *Harmattan* wind. It probably may be felt further to the southward than Cape Lopez, but I cannot speak of what occurs in countries which I have not visited. It comes on indiscriminately at any hour of the day or night, at any time of the tide, or at any period of the moon's age, and continues a day or two, sometimes five or six; once I knew it to continue a fortnight; and there are generally three or four returns of it every season. It never rains during an *Harmattan*; but it sometimes immediately succeeds a shower. It blows with moderate force; not quite so strong as the sea-breeze, which in the fair or dry season sets from the west, west-south-west, and south-west; but something stronger than the land-wind, which blows at night from the north, and north-north-west.

This wind is always accompanied with an unusual gloominess, and haziness of the atmosphere. Very few stars can be seen through the fog; and the sun, concealed the greatest part

of the day, appears only for a few hours about noon, and then of a mild red, exciting no painful sensation in the eye. No dew is perceived during the continuance of this wind; nor is there the least appearance of any moisture in the atmosphere. Salt of Tartar, dissolved in water, so as to run upon a tile, and exposed to the Harmattan, even in the night, becomes perfectly dry again in a few hours. Vegetables of every kind suffer considerably from it; all tender plants, and seeds just sprouting above the earth, are killed by it; the most flourishing evergreens feel its baneful influence; the branches of the lemon, orange, and lime trees, droop; the leaves become flaccid, and wither, and their fruits, robbed of their usual nourishment, are cramped in their growth; and ripen, or rather appear yellow and become dry, before they have arrived at half their usual size. Every thing appears dull and faded. The grass withers, and dries like hay; of which circumstance the natives avail themselves, to burn it down in the vicinity of the roads; as well to keep them open, as to destroy the shelter which it affords to wild beasts, or even to enemies that might lurk concealed in it. The covers of books, shut up closely in a trunk, and protected by lying among clothes, bend back as if they had been exposed to a fire; the pannels of doors, window-shutters, &c. split, and the joints of a well-laid floor, of seasoned wood, will gape so wide, that one may lay his finger in them; the sides and decks of ships become quite open and leaky; and veneered work flies to pieces, from the contraction of the wood in different directions: if casks containing liquor, as wine, or spirits, be not frequently wetted on the outside, they generally lose their contents.

The

The air becomes considerably cooler in an Harmattan; and the thermometer (Fahrenheit's) is generally ten or twelve degrees below the common standard. The *natives* complain much of the severity of the weather on these occasions, and clothe themselves in their warmest apparel, to guard against it; and though that alteration is highly grateful to the Europeans resident in the country, yet *they* also feel many inconveniencies, in common with the Blacks: for the eyes, nostrils, lips, and palate, becoming disagreeably dry and uneasy, there is a necessity and inclination to drink often, not so much to quench thirst, as to remove a painful aridity in the fauces. The lips and nose become chapped and sore; and though the air is cool, there is a disagreeable sensation of prickling heat upon the skin, as it had been washed with spirits of hartshorn or strong lye. If this wind continue five or six days, the scarf skin generally peels off from the hands and face; and from the rest of the body, if the Harmattan continues a few days longer. Perspiration is considerably suppressed; but when sweat is excited by exercise, I have found it peculiarly acrid; tasting like spirits of hartshorn diluted with water.

So far its effects on the animal and vegetable world are very disagreeable; but it is also productive of some good. This state of the air is extremely conducive to health; it contributes surprisngly to the cure of old ulcers and cutaneous eruptions; persons labouring under fluxes and intermitting fevers, generally recover in an Harmattan; and they who have been weakened and relaxed by fevers, and sinking under evacuations for the cure of them, particularly bleeding, which is often injudiciously repeated, have their lives saved, in spite of the doctor. It
stops

stops the progress of epidemic diseases; the small-pox, fluxes, and remittent fevers not only disappear, but they who are labouring under these disorders when an Harmattan comes on, are almost sure of a speedy recovery. Infection is not then easily communicated. In the year 1770, I had above three hundred slaves on board a ship in Whydah Road, when the small-pox appeared among them: the greater part of these were inoculated before an Harmattan came on; and about seventy of them underwent that operation a few days after it set in. The former got very well through the disorder; none of the latter had either any sickness or eruption. We thought we had got clear of the disorder; but in a very few weeks it began to appear among these seventy; about fifty of them were inoculated the *second* time; the others had it in the natural way. An Harmattan came on, and they *all* recovered, except one girl, who had a malignant ulcer on the inoculated spot, and died some time afterwards of a locked jaw. These salutary effects may probably be not universal; especially where the Harmattan may come laden with the noisome effluvia of a putrid swamp, which is not the case in this part of the country.

I am sorry to be obliged to dissent from such respectable authority as that of Dr. Lind, to whose labours we are so much indebted, for his valuable directions for preserving the health of seamen. I presume his account of the Harmattan is derived from information, and not from his own observations, which are universally so just. Had he experienced it in person, he could not have called it "fatal and malignant;" and that "its noxious vapour was destructive to *Blacks* as well as *Whites*;" "or that the mortality which it occasioned was in proportion

" to

“to the density and duration of the fog.” He seems to confound the salubrity of the Harmattan, with those baneful effects to the constitution, that follow the commencement of the periodical rains in April and May.

These rains are ushered in by hard gusts of wind, from the north-east, and east-north-east, called *Tornadoes*, from a corruption of the Portuguese word *Trovão*, a thunder-storm, which occur usually on the full and change of the moon, about the latter end of March, and in the months before mentioned. They are accompanied by severe thunder and lightning, and a very heavy shower of two or three hours continuance; which softens the surface of the earth, that had been parched up by the preceding Harmattans, and a succession of six or eight months dry weather in that burning climate; and gives an opportunity for the collected, stagnating, and putrid vapours, confined under its arid surface, to rise and escape. These, volatilised by the solar rays, which beam forth with redoubled heat, when the tornado is over, strike the nostrils with the most offensive stench imaginable, and occasion many bilious vomitings, fluxes, remittent and putrid fevers of the worst kind. Besides these, which are annual, there seems to be a collection of pestiferous vapours, which remains imprisoned for a longer period, and does not emerge above the surface oftener than once in five, six, or seven years. The periods which I recollect to have been most fatal, were in 1755, or 1756, when Governor Melville, and most of the gentlemen and garrison of Cape Coast, died; and in 1763, and 1769.* The mortality in some of these years

* The year 1775 was also fatal to many.

years, for they were not all equally fatal to the European settlers, was so great, that, as Dr. Lind says, "The living were scarce sufficient to remove and bury the dead."

The fog which accompanies the Harmattan, is occasioned by an infinite number of small particles, floating in the air. They are so minute as to escape the touch, and elude every investigation that I could devise. I could not succeed in attempting to examine them by the microscope; though a part of them are deposited upon the grass, leaves of trees, and even upon the skin of the Negroes, which they make to appear whitish, or rather greyish. These particles do not fly far above the surface of the sea; the fog is not so thick on board the ships in Whydah road, at two or three miles distance from the shore, as it is on the beach: and in proportion to the distance from the shore, the fog decreases. At four or five leagues distance from it, the fog is entirely lost, though the wind is felt ten or twelve leagues off.

Upon a careful inquiry concerning the face of the country, I learn, that except a few rivers, and some swamps and lakes of no considerable extent, the country behind Whydah, for four hundred miles back, is covered with verdure, open plains of grass, with some clumps of trees, and some woods or forests. It rises with a gentle and gradual ascent, for about an hundred and fifty miles from the sea, before there is the appearance of a hill; and behind those hills I do not hear of any remarkable ranges of mountains. The surface is generally a loose, sandy soil; below that, a rich reddish earth; and not a stone to be found in it, of the size of a walnut. I hear of no barren tracks of arid
sand,

sand, from whence those particles are likely to be detached by the Harmattan. Dr. Lind writes, that "the Harmattan is said to arise from the conflux of several rivers about Benin;" but here, at Abomey, I felt it blowing from the north-east, stronger than I usually have elsewhere: and Benin bore from me south-east; therefore the Harmattan was not likely to originate there. On the Gold Coast, it generally blows from the north-east; at the Isles de Los, a little to the northward of Sierra Leone, from the east-south-east; and at the river Gabon, near Cape Lopez, from the north-north-east. The intersection of these points, or (what I would prefer) an east line drawn from Cape Verd, cut by a north-east one from the centre of the Gold Coast, and a north line from Cape Lopez, would, I think, point out a probable source for this extraordinary wind; but this is mere conjecture of my own.

As the business which brought me to Abomey, and which respected abuses practised by the carriers of goods; who, in bringing them from the beach to the factories in Grigwee, pilfered considerable quantities of them; was in some measure effected, by the King's promising that he should take proper measures to prevent the like in future; I was now desirous to return; and acquainting the King with my intention to do so, as soon as the Harmattan should cease, took my leave of him. This wind continued blowing fresh for two days longer, which detained me, as the weather was too disagreeable for travelling. In the interim, a part of Dahomy-house took fire, which greatly endangered the whole of it. As soon as the hurry occasioned by it was over, I was induced to wait again upon the King, on this occasion, as a mark of respect. I observed, as I expected,

U

much

much confusion and disorder in the house; several heads had been cut off, and lay scattered about, to the number of twenty at least; and I found the King much irritated against his women, who were accusing each other of carelessness, and each endeavouring to remove the blame of it from herself. It probably was not easy to ascertain how the accident happened; however, the King, finding the investigation difficult, and his displeasure being perhaps somewhat appeased by the lives which he had taken away in the first impulse of his anger, he settled the business, by selecting *nineteen* of them, whose residence was in the quarter where the fire broke out, and sold them to me for slaves. On the third day, the Harmattan ceased, and I prepared for my departure; previous to which, the King sent me a fat sheep, an anker of brandy, and five cabets of cowries, towards defraying my expences on the road; and a further present of a fine striped cotton cloth, and a handsome female slave.

I should have set off on my return to Whydah early on the morning of the 16th of February, which was the last day of the *Annual Customs*, on which the King distributes a profusion of presents among his people; but I was prevailed upon to remain till evening, at the request of my attendants, who hoped to pick up something in the scramble of the day. On this occasion, a large stage is erected near one of the palace gates, adorned with flags and umbrellas, and surrounded with a fence of thorns, to keep off the rabble. On this are piled heaps of Silefias, checks, callicoes, and a variety of other European and Indian goods, with a great many fine cotton clothes that are manufactured in the Eyeo country, and a prodigious quantity of cowries. When all is ready, the King comes upon the stage, accompanied by any
of



Last day of the Annual Customs for Watering the Graves of the Kings' Structures. 1791

Published by J. Smith, in the Strand, near the Theatre Royal.

Richard Smith

PLATE 17

of the governors, or captains of ships that may be there, and attended by the Tamegan, Mayhou, and a few others of his head men, to each of which he gives, according to their rank, the choice of an Eyeo cloth, and a string of coral beads. His subordinate officers are then called over from among the crowd below, and receive each a piece of cloth, and some cowries, as a mark of their master's approbation and regard. The King then throws a bunch of cowries with his own hands among the crowd; on which his women begin to fling the remainder of the goods indiscriminately among the multitude: the white men, if they please, and the Tamegan and his companions, assisting. And finally, as some cruelty must accompany all their exhibitions, a man tied neck and heels, an alligator muzzled, and a couple of pigeons, with their wings clipped, are thrown off the stage among the crowd, where a confusion, greater, if possible, than what has preceded, ensues, in scrambling for the heads of each, to the great amusement of the King. Whoever are lucky enough to carry off the prizes, which consist of the heads of the victims, are each rewarded with a handsome present. This is the last human sacrifice at the Customs, and is a part of the ceremony which the Whites seldom stay to see performed; but, if report may be credited, the carcase of the human victim is almost wholly devoured, as all the mob below will have a taste of it.

I reached *Agrimee*, on the borders of the wood, that night; and, after a few hours rest, rose before day, to get through this fatiguing part of the journey, before the heat of the morning, not halting until I got to my old friend, Jabrakou, at *Whybow*, with whom I spent that day, and a great part of the next; but

could not stay to accompany him at a great buffalo hunt, for which he was preparing. I arrived at Ardra on the evening of the 17th of February, where an occurrence happened, that might have terminated worse for us than it did. I had my hammock flung in the white men's apartment, adjoining to the Mayhou's house; and the weather being very warm, the hammock-men, porters, &c. chose to spread their mats, and lie in the piazza, and in the little court before it, in the open air. When we were all asleep, except the captain of the gang, who, after having taken a nap, was regaling himself with a pipe, a leopard leaped over the wall, walked over those who were sleeping in the court, and, without hurting them, seized upon the fat sheep which the King had given me, that was tied in a corner of the yard, and carried it off with him in an instant, over a wall eight feet high, before the man who saw him had time to get a shot at him.

The next day, February 18, 1772, I returned safe to my factory; and here my narrative should conclude; but that I am tempted to add a few circumstances that occurred in a subsequent journey to Dahomy. I had occasion to visit Abomey again in December 1773. The King was then infirm, and sinking under years, as well as disease; he was confined to his chamber, but desiring to see me, gave me an opportunity of inspecting his private apartment. It was a neat detached room for sleeping in; separated from the court, in which it stood, by a wall about breast-high, the top of which was stuck full of human lower jaw-bones. The little area within it was paved with skulls; which I understood were those of neighbouring kings and other persons of eminence and distinction, whom having taken prisoners.

in the course of his wars, he had placed there, that he might literally enjoy the savage gratification of trampling on the heads of his enemies. He did not long survive this interview, but lingered on to the 17th of May, 1774, when he died, aged near seventy years, of which he had reigned about forty; and was succeeded by his son Adahoonzou.*

* In 1766, when I was at the court of Ahadee, he appeared to me to be about seventy. His person was rather tall: he was graceful in his manners, and very polite to strangers, though the dread and terror of his own subjects. A. D.

HISTORY OF DAHOMY.

PART THE THIRD.

CONTAINING

T H E L I F E

O F

A D A H O O N Z O U II.

AHADEE'S SON AND SUCCESSOR.

C H A P. I.

Confusion on the King's death—Adahoonzou chosen King—Takes arms against Abavou—Defeats him—Devotes his followers to death.

A HORRID scene commences in the palace the moment the King expires. The wives of the deceased begin, with breaking and destroying the furniture of the house, the gold and silver ornaments

*Perilla
des Indes
1724-89.*

ornaments and utensils, the coral, and in short, every thing of value that belonged either to themselves, or to the late King, and then murder one another.* This destruction continues till the Tamegan and Mayhou have announced the successor, and he has taken possession of the palace; which he does with all expedition, to stop the hand of desolation, which ceases the instant the new King is declared.

Adahoonzou II. upon being nominated King, hastened with his retinue to the palace gate, which he broke down, and taking possession of it, put a stop to the carnage; but before he could accomplish this, a great part of the furniture, &c. had been destroyed, and two hundred and eighty-five of the women murdered. The sedan-chair, however, remained

* *Bisman*, an author of established credit, speaking of the customs at Whydah, prior to its conquests, relates, that, "upon the death of the King of that country, and as soon as it was publickly known, every person fell to stealing as much as he could of his neighbour's goods, without being liable to any punishment. This scene of rapine and confusion continued till a *new king* was confirmed on the throne; who, by public proclamation, forbid it, and was instantly and strictly obeyed." He adds, "that the succession to the crown seemed to depend on the great officers, and their adherents; so that the younger brother was frequently elevated to that rank, in exclusion of the eldest." The temporary anarchy and tumult usual in these countries, whenever the throne became vacant by the death of the sovereign, may possibly have originated (as I have already hinted in a preceding note), in a design either to accelerate the choice of a successor, in order, by that means, to prevent a civil war; or, to confirm the popular attachment to a *monarchical* form of government, by disgustting them with the turbulence and licentiousness incident to a *democracy*. But this is merely matter of conjecture; and, after all, might be no more, than would probably happen, upon setting any other slaves loose for a while from the awe of a controuling and despotic power, and during its suspension.

remained entire, and Ahadee was interred in it, accompanied, it is said, by six of his wives, who were buried alive with him; all those who had been killed in the affray being put into the same grave.

The new King inherited his father's propensity for war, and an opportunity soon offered for gratifying this passion. In the autumn of 1774, the King of the exiled Whydahs, who had fled from their country on the Dahoman conquest, died. These people occupy a small swampy territory, between Whydah and Popo; and live in amity with the inhabitants of the latter, who assist them in their incursions and depredations on the former. The Dahomans never fail to take some advantage of any dissensions that happen among these people; and one now occurred on the death of their King. For there were two competitors for the government, *Abavou*, or the *Swamp-Dog*, son to him who killed his own brother at Xavier, and ate his heart, as related in *Abadee's Memoirs*; and another, who was equally related to the deceased, named *Eyee*, or the *Monkey*. The former, who had the most numerous adherents, drove his rival out of the country. Adahoonzou determined to support Eyee's pretensions, without being at the trouble of enquiring into the merits of them, and sent an army to his assistance. Abavou and his party were obliged to fly in their turn. The Dahomans drove them off the main land in the first campaign, and compelled them to take refuge on an island called *Foudou-Cong*, or *Feteesh-Island*, which is in a lagoon, or broad expanse of water, formed by a river in that country. There they remained inaccessible during the periodical rains, because the Dahomans had no canoes, and indeed knew nothing of the management of them;

them; but as soon as the waters subsided, they began an arduous undertaking. The army was reinforced with a prodigious number of men; they cut down the trees on each side of the lagoon, of which they made piles, and carried on a bridge, or causeway, on both sides, directly to the island; and after a bloody conflict, in which many lives were lost, they carried it.

Abavou and his party retreated upon the lagoon, in about eight hundred canoes, which they had with them; but their escape was prevented by the Dahomans, who had previously piled the river across, a few miles below, where it was narrow, and kept possession of both shores. The Whydahs remained in this distressing situation for some months, without any other subsistence than what they derived from the fish in the river; or by landing occasionally in force, and beating up the quarters of some of the Dahomans, where they sometimes found a small supply of provisions.

At last, Abavou, seeing his people worn out with famine and fatigue, and no prospect of extricating them from their difficulties, resolved to surrender himself. He thanked his followers for their services, and told them, that the only return he could now make for their attachment and fidelity, was to deliver himself up, and endeavour to prevail on Adahoonzou to accept *his* life, as a peace-offering for their safety. With this determination he came on shore, and was sent by the Dahoman general to the King, who ordered his head to be cut off. His adherents submitted themselves prisoners at discretion.

Although this transaction passed within a few miles of Whydah, and we could not fail of knowing every stage of it: for in fact there was nothing else to attend to, as *trade is entirely suspended whilst the country is at war*; yet Adahoonzou, to gratify his own vanity, sent his *half-heads* to announce his victory to the governors of the forts there; and signified his wish, that they should testify their joy at the event; which was complied with, a royal salute being fired at each of the forts, and by every ship in the road.

Soon after this, he thought fit to send a messenger to acquaint me, that he wished to see me; and I waited on him towards the end of December 1775. At our first interview, he asked me, if I had ever seen Abavou? On my replying that I had not, he added, "Then you shall now." I knew Abavou had been dead a month at least, and had no curiosity to see his remains; but did not think it adviseable to oppose the King's intention. Some women, to whom he gave directions about it, soon returned from an inner apartment of the palace, carrying a wide, shallow, brass vessel, that contained a large bundle, much bigger than a bee-hive, which was ornamented with two small silk flags, each about the size of a handkerchief. This bundle was composed of various folds of cloth, the uppermost of cotton; within them were several silk wrappers, which being removed, Abavou's head made its appearance, lying in a china basin. It was in perfect preservation, as dry as an Egyptian mummy, and the hair smartly dressed. "That is the fellow," said the King, "who gave me so much trouble." I replied, "You seem to take care of him, now you have him." "Yes," said he, "I am a warrior myself; and if I should fall into the
"enemies

“ enemies hands, could wish to be treated with that decency, of
“ which I set the example.”

He ordered a great number of the prisoners, who had surrendered on the late occasion, to be shewn to me. I declined purchasing any of them, as they were much emaciated, and appeared to be sickly. “ Since that is the case,” said he, “ I shall put them to death.” I endeavoured to dissuade him from that resolution, and recommended that he would make them boilers of salt, as they came from the country which supplied them with that article, or to employ them in some other way. He said, “ it would be setting a bad example, and keeping people in the country, who might hold seditious language: “ that *his* was a peculiar government, and that these strangers “ might prejudice his people against it, and infect them with “ sentiments incompatible with it.” I really cannot say what was at last the fate of these poor people; I know they were not kept for salt boilers, and doubt not some of them were purchased afterwards, when their health and strength were recruited, for slaves for the West-Indies; but those who did not find purchasers would undoubtedly be put to death; and the Annual Customs, which were then at hand, would produce a demand for two or three hundred of them, to “ water with their blood “ the graves of Adahoonzou’s ancestors.”

Thus far we are indebted to the pains of Mr. Norris: the continuation is collected from the communications of Mr. Lionel Abson, whose intelligence, and long residence on the spot, have given him uncommon opportunities of collecting whatever was worthy attention. A. D.

C H A P. II.

The King's surnames—Bravery of the King of Eyeo—Annual Customs at Dahomy—Disgrace of the Yavougah—The Agaow defeated by the Sarrachees—Death of the Sawgan.

1774. **T**HE same enterprising and barbarous spirit, the same restless and savage ambition which had characterized the long reign of Bossa Ahadee, were inherited by Adahoonzou II. his son and successor. This prince, as hath already been related, hastened to seat himself on the stool of his deceased father, and thus put a stop to the horrid carnage which never fails to desolate the palace, on the demise of the monarch.

Ai-yaw-soo, or the *Male* Oyster*, was the favourite name which he assumed on his accession to the government; and this he constantly made use of when swearing by, or speaking of himself: but he was honoured with another title by the King of Eyeo, upon a very memorable occasion.

About the time of Adahoonzou's accession, the ministers of the King of Eyeo, being tired of his government, had attempted, as had been their usual practice, to depose their monarch in the manner which has been mentioned in the third chapter of Part First. But this Prince had the good sense to despise, and
the

* Probably from being hard to crack.

the fortitude to resist, such a ridiculous custom. He, therefore, peremptorily refused the parrot's eggs, which had been offered for his acceptance: telling his ministers that he had as yet no inclination to take a *nap*, but that he was resolved to *watch* for the benefit of his people.

The ministers were extremely disappointed and astonished at this unexpected contempt of a political custom, the abolition of which must destroy their power: they endeavoured, therefore, to effect by force, what they could not accomplish by this stale trick. *Ochenoo*, the prime minister, put himself at the head of the rebel party, which, though formidable, was soon defeated by the adherents of the Sovereign, with great slaughter. *Ochenoo* himself, with all his numerous family, were put to death by the victors; who did not even spare the pregnant women, but ripped open their bellies, and cut to pieces the immature fruit of their womb. Thus, by his spirited conduct, the King of Eyeo emancipated himself from the tyranny of his ministers, and established a remarkable precedent to direct his successors on similar occasions.

Upon the re-establishment of his authority, after this event, *Adahoonzou* sent an embassy of congratulation to the King of Eyeo, who bestowed upon him the following proverbial surname: *Yee ma sa boo beate cofru glob; an elephant cannot shelter himself under the swish-pots: ** intimating, it should seem, that
it

* *Swish* is the mud or clay of which their houses, &c. are built. *Swish-pots* are broad, shallow baskets of wicker-work, which, covered with thin clay
and.

it was as difficult to conceal the accomplishments of Adahoonzou, as to hide an elephant in so small a space. This appellation was proclaimed, for two months, in all the market-places of Dahomy, and in the different adjacent friendly towns.

The first expedition which was undertaken by this Dahoman Prince has been already recorded, after the close of the *Journey to the Court of Abadee*, where it was observed, that a considerable number of the prisoners, who had fallen into Adahoonzou's hands, would probably be reserved for the *annual customs*, in order to *water the graves of his ancestors*. This, in fact, was the case; for Ai-yaw-foo took care to celebrate this anniversary, by sacrificing some hundreds of the devoted victims at the shrine of his progenitors.

1775. The solemnization of this inhuman festival was farther marked by the unmerited disgrace and destruction of the Yavougah, or viceroy of Whydah, a most deserving officer, who had long conducted himself, in a very ticklish post, with the approbation of the Europeans, as well as the natives. The King, it is true, unfeeling as he was, afterwards repented of the rash conduct that had deprived him of such a valuable subject, and professed the most sincere contrition, for having too easily listened to the viceroy's base accusers, the *Cokce* and the *Fooye*, two subordinate officers.

These

and burning charcoal put under them, are used to destroy ants, and other vermin. They rise but a few inches above the ground, and therefore cannot afford shelter to an elephant.

These men had alledged, that the Yavou-gah, during the procession of the King's women at the Customs, had been heard to exclaim, " Ah! see what a number of charming women are devoted to the embraces of one man!—Those given to us, who have borne the brunt at the siege of Whydah, and defeated Abavou and his army, are hardly good enough for house-sweepers.—It is ungenerous—but we are Dahoman-men, and must submit." The viceroy had been accused likewise of having encroached on the royal prerogative, by wearing sandals, and ordering a white man's umbrella to be carried over his head; faults of too heinous a nature to be overlooked by a Dahoman Monarch. In short, his malicious calumniators had practised every art, to render the unsuspecting *Caboceer** odious to his Sovereign; and they effectually succeeded.

It is usual for the King of Dahomy, at the *annual customs*, as hath been before observed, to hear complaints, punish delinquents, and reward merit. It is likewise the practice, on the same occasion, for the officers of all denominations, civil or military, to swear allegiance to the Sovereign. The viceroy of Whydah, who holds the third place under the King, repaired, among the rest, to Abomey, to celebrate this anniversary.

The Tamegan, or prime minister, having prostrated himself on the earth, rubbing his face, and smearing his head with dust, harangued for an hour and an half, to express his loyalty to Adahoonzou's person and government. The Mayhou, or master
of

* From the Portuguese *Caboceiro*, a head man.

of the ceremonies, who spoke next, declared that the Tamegan, in his speech, had gone over the whole duty of a Dahoman Caboecer, and left nothing for him to add: he desired, therefore, to stand upon the same ground with the prime minister, and begged that, when deficient, the King might remind him of his duty. Adahoonzou was extremely delighted with these demonstrations of attachment and fidelity, and taking off his hat, called aloud—"True, Tamegan and Mayhou,—so it is;"* while the whole assembly testified their submission by kissing the earth, and rolling their bodies in the dust.

The Yavougah then rose up, and attempted to speak; when the King, advancing briskly towards him, with sparkling eyes, and a stern countenance, gave him a violent slap in the face; after which he pushed him down, and laid his hand on his cutlafs. At this instant the Tamegan, by way of intercession, began again to rub his face in the dust; which Adahoonzou observing, he said, with a forced smile, "Tamegan, you have prevented the Turkey buzzards † from having a good dinner to-day." He then desired the Yavougah to sit down, while the ceremony proceeded in the usual manner.

Among the speeches delivered on this occasion, that of the *Sawgan* ‡ was very remarkable. He said, "That it was his duty to accompany the Agaow to the field; and that if ever he should betray the least symptom of cowardice, or shew the

* An expression, which in that country denotes the King's thanks and approbation.

† Birds of prey.

‡ A military officer of high rank.

“the soles of his feet to the enemy, he hoped the King would
“have his cutlafs ready, to behead him at the moment of his
“return. But,” added he, “this will never happen: for
“should I ever have cause to suspect that I am accused of
“treachery; of turning my back to the foe; or having given
“cause of complaint; I shall never afford the Tamegan an oppor-
“tunity of asking impertinent questions, or of interfering be-
“tween me and my Sovereign: I prefer death at any time.”
This gallant speech was much applauded by the King and the
surrounding chiefs; and a loud laugh of approbation was be-
stowed on the hero, by Majesty, and all present, though they
little suspected that an occasion would soon offer to try the
sincerity of the Sawgan’s professions.

As the Dahomans are extremely cautious in their expressions,
especially when addressing their superiors, this speech merits
particular notice. A becoming resentment at the King’s rash
behaviour to an old and faithful servant, a thorough contempt
of the Yavougah’s pusillanimity, in submitting to such igno-
minious treatment, when the means of avoiding it were in his
own hands; these operating together, made such a deep im-
pression on the Sawgan’s ingenuous soul, that the presence of
Majesty itself could not restrain this just reprehension both of
King and minister.

The Viceroy, after the King’s violent treatment, was often
obliged to submit to disagreeable examinations; during which,
one day, the man who had usually attended at his gate, was
killed in his presence, for refusing to accuse his master of sup-
posed crimes, to which he had been presumed to be privy.

Two of his messengers soon after shared the same fate; and *Dossugab*, his trading man, would have also fallen a victim, but for the intercession of his sister, whose interest surpassed that of all the other women in the King's house. This man sent a message to Mr. Abson, the governor of William's-Fort, entreating him to offer any price for the Yavougah, who, when replaced, would reimburse the sum that might be demanded for his ransom. The governor accordingly sent a servant to the Tamegan, begging his interference; with a caution, however, not to deliver the message, if he should previously hear of the viceroy's death; but in that case, to pretend that he had been sent to buy Guinea-hens. Upon the arrival of the messenger at Calmina, he was informed, that the Yavougah's coat had been stripped from his back, at the King's door, and that his person had been seized and carried to the Mayhou's house, from whence he never came out.

The Mayhou was accused of having done every thing in his power to get the Yavougah disgraced, in revenge for the treatment which his (the Mayhou's) brother had met with from the Viceroy's father, which ended in his death. The Mayhou had often sworn vengeance against the Yavougah's family; and meeting a favourable opportunity, he did not let it slip.

Although Mr. Abson's message was not delivered in Dahomy, yet the King had been informed, and afterwards told him, of the finessè about the Guinea-hens. He said, however, "That he was sorry for what had happened; that he had been imposed upon, and that he would revenge the Yavougah's death upon his calumniators;" adding, at the same time, "that Dof-
" fughah's.

“ fughah’s message to save him was a piece of unpardonable impudence, which he could not easily forgive.” Indeed he afterwards punished him, by detaining him several years in Dahomy, before he would permit him to return to Whydah.

The Yavougah’s successor, one of his accusers, soon after became insane, which the King told Governor Abfon had been done by the Fetish, to revenge his predecessor’s death. “ I now call you,” said Adahoonzou, “ to thank you for your message, and I wish you had not been so much of a Dahoman-man as to have made use of any artifice. I was then very angry indeed; but might have listened to a white man. You would have had some trouble to convince me, but I now tell you, that the Yavougah was falsely accused; I confess his death was the worst thing I ever countenanced.”

1775. Soon after the Customs, the Agaow marched against the Sarrachees, a neighbouring nation, who gave him a warm reception, broke his lines, and penetrated to the post of the Sawgan, who had been stationed in the rear, to guard the baggage and the women, belonging to the Dahoman army. This brave officer, finding himself hard pressed, and without support, as he had detached the flower of his party to assist the Agaow, desired the women, and his attendants, chiefly boys, to provide for their own safety without delay; he resolving, singly, to contend with the enemy, while he was able to wield his sabre. Accordingly he called for his large *stool*, sat down, and with more than Roman coolness waited the approach of the foe. As the Sarrachees advanced, he stood up, fired his musquet, loaded and fired again, killing his man at each dis-

charge, till, surrounded and overpowered with numbers, he unsheathed his cutlafs, and rushed among the thickest of the enemy, laying many dead at his feet. His victors, however, spared his life, and offered to treat with Adahoonzou for his ransom. The King soon after paid the price of his freedom, and he was released; but could never be prevailed upon to return home, although many messengers had been sent to endeavour to bring him back. To the last of these he observed, "That although of all the King's subjects he, perhaps, might be the most ugly, yet there was none more loyal. He was sensible of the King's goodness, but desired that he might be reminded of his, the Sawgan's, speech, at the watering of Ahadee's grave, which would fully account for his late, and present conduct." Having delivered this message, he drew his sword, and immediately put a period to his life.

C H A P. III.

The Possu defeated by the Mahees—The Agaow's barbarous victory over them—Reflections on Adahoonzou's conduct—Expedition against Apee—&c.

THE manuscript from which these Memoirs are compiled, has not furnished any farther particulars concerning the unsuccessful enterprise against the Sarrachees. Yet it is highly probable

probable, that the Agaow was completely defeated, as it appears that he was soon after disgraced, and the command of the army bestowed on the Possu, or second general. Under the conduct of this leader, the Dahoman forces marched into a province belonging to the Mahees: * here they were once more repulsed; and the Possu being slain, the Agaow was restored to his former rank.

1777. Enraged at his repeated disgraces, and stimulated by resentment against the Mahees, Adahoonzou resolved to be amply revenged. The most vigorous preparations were made for another expedition; a numerous army was ordered to be levied; and the King threatened to lead it in person. He contented himself, however, with sending the Tamegan to the camp, where he remained fifteen days. When the troops were ready to march, the King repaired to the plain where they had encamped, in order to review them, and to hear the chiefs swear allegiance. This ceremony being performed, the Agaow led them against the enemy, accompanied by the Tamegan, who continued with him during the first four days of his march.

The Mahees, making but a feeble resistance, were routed with great slaughter; the country was ravaged, and men, women, and children put to the sword, without distinction, and without mercy. To complete the horrid scene, and to strike the inhabitants

* The Mahees, who had been much persecuted during the preceding reign, in order to live on peaceable terms with Dahomy, claimed kindred with Adahoonzou, whose mother was a Mahee woman. This will account for their subsequent conduct, in affording him ready assistance in his wars. It does not appear what provocation they had given to occasion the present attack.

bitants with terror, the bodies of the slain were hung upon the trees, their heads being reserved for the King, who, upon this occasion, had published a reward of *twelve akies of cowries* * for each head, in addition to the price which he had usually allowed for a living slave: "For," said he, "I want heads, not slaves."

The insatiable thirst after blood, the barbarous vanity of being considered the scourge of mankind, and the savage pomp of dwelling in a house garnished with skulls, and stained with human gore, seem to be the only motives for the atrocious actions which have just been related; and indeed it is difficult to assign any other reasons for Adahoonzou's conduct hitherto. It will, however, soon appear, that a desire for plunder had some share in determining him to attack the neighbouring states that bordered on the sea.

He had long regarded *Apee, Porto Novo, †* and *Baaagree*, with a jealous eye, on account of the great number of ships which resorted to these ports, while Whydah was almost totally abandoned. He adopted the policy of his grandfather Trudo, and resolved, at the same time, to extend his dominions, and to appropriate to himself the European commodities which had been accumulated by his neighbours.

But, as the states which had thus become the object of Adahoonzou's jealousy and ambition, are surrounded with lakes and swamps, the approach was rendered difficult to the Dahomans, who

* Thirty shillings sterling. † The sea-port belonging to Ardra.

who were unacquainted with the management of canoes. It was therefore found necessary to secure the friendship and assistance of one of the maritime princes.

1778. Frequent messages had been observed to be exchanged between the Kings of Ardra and Dahomy; but as their negotiations were carried on with the most profound secrecy, it was impossible, for some time, to penetrate into their designs. At last the plot was discovered, when it was ripe for execution. Dahomy was to attack by land, while Ardra undertook to intercept the fugitives that should attempt to escape by water; and Apee was the devoted object.

The Dahoman forces, in four divisions, led by the Agaow, the Possu, the Zoheinoo, and the Phussupoh,* made a bold push to carry the town and country at once. The enemy gave way, and the assailants, flushed with success, expected an easy conquest; when, all of a sudden, they found themselves surrounded by a swamp, and attacked by *Hooroo*, an Apee chief, at the head of eight hundred men. This brave detachment, for a considerable time, maintained an unequal and bloody conflict with the whole Dahoman army, of which many fell, and two of their generals were wounded.

A Dahoman chief, named *Allopwee*, having offered to fight *Hooroo* at single combat, the challenge was instantly accepted, and *Allopwee* was shot through the head, by the first ball discharged from *Hooroo's* musquet; upon which this gallant chief-

tain.

* Names of the offices, not of particular persons.

tain was attacked by the whole body of the Agaow's troops. Never did soldier make a braver resistance. At the head of a handful of men, with undaunted intrepidity, he fought a host of foes, till he and his party fell to a man.

The victors then laid waste the whole country with fire and sword; making six hundred men, and a great number of women and children, prisoners. They likewise found much booty in the houses of the King and principal Caboceers, consisting chiefly of many valuable European articles, such as silks, laced hats, canes, and trinkets of gold and silver. But nothing pleased the King of Dahomy so much as a green decanter, shaped like a common bottle, but flattened, and having two cavities for the finger and thumb, for the more conveniently pouring the contents into a glass. The outside was ornamented with about a dozen of heads, raised, and of the size of a small medallion. Adahoonzou used to shew this to the Europeans, as the greatest curiosity that he had met with in all his wars, declaring, that no white man had ever brought him such a valuable trinket, although he always made a point of paying liberally for such rarities as suited his taste.

While the Dahomans were employed in ravaging the country, and securing their prisoners, the Ardras repaired in full force to the river, in order to intercept such of the enemy as might attempt to make their escape by water. But the King of Apee, surrounded by a body of faithful adherents, forced a passage, sword in hand, through the midst of the Ardra army, and embarking in their canoes, together with the King's women
and

and children, a Portuguese captain, and sixty-seven slaves, his property, landed them safe at *Wemey*.

Having thus conducted their King and his family to a place of safety, the Apees reembarked in their canoes, and went in quest of the Ardrahs, whom they fought, and put to flight; and had it not been for two canoes, each mounting four brass guns, and twenty-four blunderbusses, which belonged to Antonio Vaz, * and which covered their retreat, the victory would have been perfect. After this advantage, the Apees hastened to support their fellow-citizens on shore, and arrived in time to engage and disorder part of the rear of the Dahoman army: but the main body having crossed the swamp before their arrival, their loss was inconsiderable, and the Agaow seems to have known nothing of the rencontre till the Apees had retired.

Thus far successful, the Agaow proudly conducted his soldiers to Calmina, accompanied with the Apee prisoners, the

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major

* *Antonio Vaz Coelho* was a free negro, born in Brazil, where he had been taught to read, write, and keep accounts. He had inherited some property from his parents; and being of an enterprising disposition, he had made several voyages to Ardrah, where he at last settled, and became a very respectable trader. In this country he had made some very judicious matrimonial connections, having chosen his wives from among the first families in that place. Thus he attained considerable influence, which enabled him to indulge his ambition, to assume a political character, and he acquired a great ascendancy in the public councils of the community in which he lived. He had an uncommon share of vanity, and was excessively fond of military enterprises, which led him to affect a splendour of equipage far above that of his companions. He generally armed his dependants with blunderbusses, which he purchased from the Europeans; and war canoes armed with swivels, were by him first introduced.

major part of whom were reserved to bleed at the Annual Customs, which were then near at hand; and in the mean time, a daily sacrifice of one or two was made at the King's gate.

Adahoonzou was much disappointed at the escape of the King of Apee, and would have certainly punished his protectors, had he not dreaded the resentment of the King of Eyeo, with whom the state of Wemey was then on a friendly footing; but upon the whole he was highly gratified at the conduct of his generals and soldiers; paid them handsomely for their prisoners, and gave them leave to take a little repose, or to follow their own private occasions.

C H A P. IV.

The paths cleared—Barbarous execution of six Apee women.

1779. **A**T the approach of the Customs, Adahoonzou summoned all his caboceers and traders, on whom he bestowed considerable presents and honours, giving them horses, umbrellas, coral, and other marks of distinction. Some were likewise honoured with drums and flags; and the black traders were allowed to sit upon chairs: a privilege that, heretofore, they had not been permitted to enjoy.

He

He then ordered all his subjects to set about clearing the paths, giving each caboccer a string, measuring ten yards, the intended width of the roads. Thus a spacious communication was opened, not only between each town and the capital, but all the way down to the beach. With incredible labour and fatigue, a passage was cut through the wood at *Apo*; the gullies were filled up, and the hurdle bridges, over the swamps, were widened.

When this work was completed, the King said, with a vain-glorious air, "If any one be desirous of paying me a visit, he shall not have it to say, that thorns or briars impede his march."

The commencement of the Customs being arrived, the Half-heads, as usual, were dispatched to invite the European governors to witness the ceremony. On their arrival at Abomey, they found Adahoonzou in his palace, called Dahomy, seated amidst four hundred of his women, all very richly dressed. Observing, at a little distance, six women on their knees, with despair painted in their countenances, the white men who were present shuddered with apprehension for the miserable victims, and anticipated, in idea, a scene big with horror, but inferior in barbarity to that which was about to be realized. The monster Adahoonzou desired that a bundle might be brought; which untying with his own hands, he presented the contents—five cutlasses!—to five of his fat and over-grown women; and having ordered the six kneeling females to be placed before him, he made a speech to the following purport: "These women were brought from Apee by my army; I took them

“ home, domesticated them in my family—treated them as my
“ wives;—but, not contented, they made their escape to their
“ native country; where, however, they found nothing but the
“ ground and the trees; for every thing else had been destroyed
“ by my troops. They afterwards surrendered themselves
“ to the King of Ardrah; but he was too just to keep them,
“ and has therefore sent them back to me, to receive the proper
“ reward for their ingratitude. This woman,” clapping his
hand on the head of one of them, who suckled a child, “ is
“ a relation of the King of Ardrah;—but remember, that it is
“ not her respectable ancestry that prevents her from sharing the
“ same fate with the rest;—no—her infant saves her for a
“ while;—but she must shortly *pass out at the same door* with
“ her companions!”

Having concluded this truly savage harangue, the woman and child were put aside, and the five other victims were conducted to the spot where men, horses, and bullocks are usually sacrificed for the Customs. There, being ordered to kneel, with their faces touching the ground, the women who held the cutlasses began to put in execution their infernal commission, in a manner too shocking for description! One of the unhappy wretches was quickly delivered from her misery, her head being severed from her body at four strokes! The sufferings of the rest, from the awkwardness of the executioners, was protracted for twenty minutes; the King standing over, and instructing them.—“ Not that way—hold your cutlafs thus—give it me—
“ ’tis so—imagine you are chopping wood.” Thus did the hellish monster direct the ministers of his cruelty to cut off heads, with as much apathy as if indeed he had been chopping
wood;

wood; while the air was rent with the shouts of his grandees, calling over his * *strong names*, and bursting into such peals of laughter, that a distant witness of this horrid ceremony would have been led to believe that some very diverting scene was exhibiting.

The sufferers were all very comely, well-made women; and it is very remarkable, that not a groan was heard from any of them during their execution.

Many of the Apee prisoners suffered the same fate, few being carried to market. Indeed this wretch more than once has been known to put to death many hundreds of his captive enemies, without reserving a single slave for sale, or even for the payment of his debts.

C H A P. V.

Death of the Mayhou—Claim of the Eyeos—Dahomans repulsed at Agoonah—Expedition of Adahoonzou at the head of his women—Defeat and death of the Kings of Agoonah and Sar-rachee—Famine.

1781. **T**HE death of the old Mayhou, which happened some time afterwards, made some stir in Dahomy. For though the dying recommendation of a beloved and wise counsellor may be
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* An expression according to the Dahoman idiom.

of great weight with a King, in the choice of his successor, yet the defeasance of a right, esteemed as hereditary, cannot fail to alarm those whose families are all interested in the decision. The old man had shewn a great unwillingness to be succeeded by his son, who was a very profligate character; and therefore, a little before he expired, he sent the coat and stool which he had received, on his appointment, from Ahadee, to a person that he esteemed, called *Avoga*, to be delivered to Adahoonzou, as a mark that the bearer was worthy to succeed him. On the demise of the Mayhou, this being quickly known, the King immediately called the Tamegan, shewed him what he had received from the Mayhou, and told him by whom it had been brought. The Tamegan remained silent for some time; then bursting into a flood of tears, said, "The Mayhou had good reason for what he had done; for never had father such wicked and ungrateful children; yet," continued he, "for my sake, and for the country's peace, I entreat that one of his sons may be invested in the office; myself will take charge of his education, and be responsible for his conduct."*

The King granted the Tamegan's request; but the new Mayhou, in spite of all the pains bestowed upon him, turned out to be a weak, drunken, and worthless fellow; and the Tamegan was a thousand times upbraided for his ill-judged partiality to the family of the deceased caboccer.

The

* The deceased Mayhou had many sons, all equally abandoned. Six of them had dishonoured their father's bed; and some of them had conspired against his life.

The King of Dahomy, like the Grand Signior, is heir to all his subjects. On the death of any of his officers, their whole effects, of which their wives and children are considered to be a part, go to the King. The late Mayhou had been very long in office, and consequently was supposed to possess much property.

The Eyeo ambassadors, therefore, who happened to be in Dahomy, at the time of his death, thought this a good opportunity to encrease the amount of the annual tribute, which they had been sent to receive. They made a demand of one hundred of the Mayhou's women, which Adahoonzou endeavoured to elude; but they insisted on his compliance, and, in peremptory terms, refused to return without them. The King, however reluctantly, was obliged to give them some of the women, in order to get rid of them.

Tributary states can never satisfy the avarice of the powers, from whom they have been obliged to purchase peace by such a disgraceful acknowledgment: Three months after the departure of his ambassadors, a messenger arrived from the King of Eyeo, with a demand of the rest of the Mayhou's women; accompanied with a threat, that, in case of non-compliance on the part of Dahomy, the Eyeo general *Bauchenoo* should be sent to fetch them.

Adahoonzou was mortified to the last degree at this haughty message: but he was obliged to submit, without daring to shew his resentment. Not choosing, however, to part with the Dahoman women who had belonged to the Mayhou, he sent his

army

army into the neighbouring country of Agoonah, to procure wherewithal to satisfy the Eyeo monarch. There they met with a vigorous opposition, their leader, the *Cakawo*,* with some other officers of note and many soldiers, being slain.

This news being brought to the King of Dahomy at mid-day, he immediately got up, girt on his cartouch-box, shouldered his firelock, and marched towards Agoonah, at the head of eight hundred armed women.

The whole country was in motion, men, women, and children. The King's big mother, *who never dies, though she is sometimes put to death*,† fell down lifeless, before she got a league from Calmina: many were trodden to death, and not a few expired from excessive fatigue, and the extreme heat of a vertical sun. Adahoonzou sent a message to the European governors, begging that they might not be alarmed, as he was only going to take a walk, and would presently return. Mr. Abfon sent two of his servants, armed, with a message, signifying his sorrow at not being permitted to accompany him in person. This compliment was very gratifying to the King; he talked of it to the day of his death, and had it put in all his songs.

On the approach of this uncommon army, the people fled from Agoonah to Sarrachee, pursued by the Dahomans. The
King

* A military officer.

† The expression in italics is left as in the MS. The fact is, that besides the King's real mother, there is always a nominal one, who holds this title, as a mark of honour and rank among the women.

King, now exceedingly fatigued, pitched his tent, and took a little repose. Soon after he received some of the heads which had belonged to the flying enemy, and was informed that they had retreated to a mountain that was very difficult of access. Upon receiving this intelligence, Adahoonzou returned to Calmina, after having told the Agaow that he expected the Kings of Agoonah and Sarrachee would be his guests at the ensuing Customs.

This hint was sufficient. The Agaow invested the mountain to which the enemy had retired, and where they had dug many cavities, in which they occasionally concealed themselves. After many skirmishes, the Dahomans discovered the lurking places of the foe, from which they smoked them, by fires strewed with pepper. The poor wretches, therefore, to the number of eighteen hundred, together with their two Kings, were thus obliged to surrender at discretion.

1782. Agoonah dying by the way, his head was carried to Dahomy. The captive Prince of Sarrachee was led in triumph, and placed at the King's gate, on the day that preceded the Customs. There he was insulted by the populace; which at first Adahoonzou pretended to take offence at; reprimanded his officers, for suffering a King to be treated with such indignity; ordered his hands to be untied; clothed him; and recommended him to *Jabo*, the master of the horse, with injunctions to take particular care of him. Nevertheless, four days afterwards, this unfortunate prince was brought in a basket, tied like a hog, and ordered to be thrown from the stage, which is usually erected at the Customs, while there was yet day-light enough

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for the spectators to discover who he was : his head was cut off below ; scrambled for ; and probably devoured by the mob, to the inexpressible gratification of the astonished spectators.

Among the other exhibitions at the anniversary, which has been frequently alluded to, a prodigious quantity of cowries, European merchandize, and cloths, manufactured in the country, are collected, and piled upon a stage, * to be thrown among the populace. It happened, upon this occasion, that some of these articles were missing ; and it was discovered, that they had been conveyed away to the shed allotted for the white men. The Europeans had observed the theft, but were loth to accuse the guilty : however, strict enquiry was made, and several of the suspected persons lost their heads.

This year was remarkable for a great scarcity of provisions ; infomuch, that, had it not been for the wild *mangoes*, *cashews*, and other spontaneous productions of the woods, half the country would have starved. This crude diet was the occasion of a great mortality, by the flux, and other disorders.

* See the Journey to the Court of Ahadee.

C H A P. VI.

Success on the beach at Badagree—Defeat of the Agaow—The King denounces vengeance against Badagree.

BADAGREE, a neighbouring port of trade, became next the object of Adahoonzou's ambition.

It has been said, in the preceding part of these memoirs, that a lake, or river, runs parallel to the sea, along all this coast, forming a small strip of land or beach, that lies between the sea and the river. This is only inhabited, occasionally, by a few people belonging to the shipping, and some natives in the pay of the captains, for the convenience of receiving goods from on board, and transporting them across the lake, and through the adjacent swamps, to the different factories, which are settled at the towns, some miles back in the country, of which the map will convey the idea better than words.

1783. A small party of Dahomans made an excursion to Badagree beach, where they seized some people, who belonged to Prince *Davee*, and who had been employed as porters, or water-rollers, by the Europeans. They likewise cut the water warps,* broke the canoes and gang casks, and brought off some little booty.

A a 2

This

* Ropes used for hauling the casks of water through the surf. By the help of these, the fatiguing and troublesome business of watering the ships is managed; the people in the long-boat, which is moored without the breakers, assisted by those on shore, perform this necessary work.

This trifling success was very acceptable to Adahoonzou, who resolved to attack the town of Badagree itself. Accordingly, some months afterwards, the Agaow pursued the same rout; but finding no plunder on the beach, the army was ferried over the river by the Ardrahs; contrary, however, to the intentions of the King of Dahomy, who had directed them to make a circuitous march to a place which was fordable, and where they would not have occasion even to wet their cartouch-boxes. This intended manœuvre was dictated by a suspicion, that the Ardrahs might play him a trick, by transporting his army, and then leaving them in a hostile country, without the means of retreating, should they happen to meet with a defeat. However, he betrayed no want of confidence in them, lest they should refuse to furnish him with some promised auxiliaries.

The Badagrees getting intelligence that the Dahoman army had crossed the river, concealed themselves in the swamp, among the rushes. The Agaow, next morning continuing his march, without suspicion, fell into the ambuscade. The Badagrees, who are good marksmen, rushed upon the Dahomans with great fury, and put them into disorder; killing the Possu, and a great number of soldiers. The Agaow, however, rallied his scattered forces, cut a passage through the enemy, and killing twelve with his own hand, made a masterly retreat to the river, where he was the last man that embarked. The army having regained the beach, by means of the Ardrah canoes, the Agaow dispatched a messenger to Dahomy, with the disagreeable news of his defeat; alledging, at the same time, that the Ardrahs had been privy to the Badagree ambuscade.

Adahoonzou

Adahoonzou sent him a kind invitation to return home, and requested that he might not afflict himself on account of his late misfortune; adding, "that his late Agaow should yet be furnished with the means of conquering Badagree, although the destruction of Dahomy itself should be the consequence. He was sorry," he said, "that an opportunity had been given to the Ardrahs, of cheating him,—but he would look for another path."

The loss of the Possu, and the many soldiers who fell with him, caused great murmurings among the people, which, however, subsided on the arrival of the army in Dahomy. About this time, the Governor of Williams Fort received a long letter from *Onum*, Prince Davee's son, containing, among other particulars, a message to Adahoonzou, accusing Ardrah of treachery, and saying, that Dahomy was in danger. The King made answer, "My name is *Deddi ma tronu*. I am easy in my pace, but always in pursuit; let Ardrah take care of his own country."

It may seem strange, that the King of Dahomy should have received a friendly message from Badagree, against which he had commenced hostilities; and to account for this circumstance, it is proper to observe, that this state was divided by party, which, on the preceding year, had occasioned the expulsion of *Ginguem*, their late Prince. He had been seized by his subjects, and delivered on board a Portuguese ship, to be carried to Brazil, where he had received his education. They had furnished him with about twenty slaves for his subsistence, together with a letter for the General of *Bahia*, desiring that he might keep *Ginguem* there. Thus Badagree, being torn by
civil

civil dissensions, Dahomy endeavoured to turn this circumstance to his own advantage.

At the celebration of the Customs, Adahoonzou would not suffer his singing-men to touch on Badagree in their songs—this subject was, according to the Dahoman idiom, *too strong for him*. He had lost many brave officers and men, and denounced eternal vengeance against those who had been the occasion of his disgrace. He called together the Agaow, and all his captains; and while he watered his mother's grave, made a public speech of three hours; in the course of which he stooped down, and taking up a portion of earth in his fingers three times, he as often swore by his mother, that, "If he did not make a total conquest of Badagree, he was unworthy to be called her and Ahadee's son."

C H A P. VI.

A numerous army sent against Badagree—The Dahoman camp attacked, with great slaughter—Dahomans gain a decisive victory—Death of the Phussupo.

1784. ABOUT two months after the Customs, the King prepared for another campaign. The army encamped in the neighbourhood of Calmina, and was quickly joined by a numerous body of auxiliaries from the inland countries of *Mabee* and *Nago*.* Thus augmented, the Agaow decamped, and
marched

* Of this country nothing more is known than the name. J. F.

marched in great force towards Badagree, conducted by guides, which had been provided by the King of Eyeo. He laid waste the whole country in his progress, making many prisoners, which were immediately sent to Eyeo, according to a treaty which had been previously entered into with that Prince.

Having arrived in the vicinity of Badagree, he rested three days, and on the 4th encamped with his numerous army. The ground occupied for this purpose was so extensive, that it required *four hours* to walk from one extremity to the other. *Sessu*, an Ardrah Caboceer, gave the Agaow assurances of a plentiful supply of provisions during the investment of Badagree, although it should continue for three years; as did likewise *Koffu*, a Nago chief, belonging to Eyeo. The operations of the Dahoman army were directed by the Eyeo messengers, who had conducted them hither; and nothing of importance was undertaken without their concurrence.

The powerful King of *Lagos* was prevailed upon, by bribes and promises, to join this formidable confederacy; and he undertook to prevent the Badagrees from receiving supplies of corn from his dominions. For this purpose, he equipped thirty-two large canoes, and stationed them three miles to the eastward of Badagree, to cut off all communication with Lagos. Many prisoners were taken by those canoes, which the Dahomans allowed the people of Lagos to *eat*, according to the country phrase; which, in this instance, means, to convert to their own use. This weakened the enemy, and at the same time secured the interest of Lagos.

The

The Badagrees, thus abandoned by all their neighbours, and cut off from the possibility of obtaining supplies by land or water, resolved to make a desperate push, and sell their liberty and lives as dear as possible. A day was fixed to attack the Dahoman camp, and the plan was concerted with such secrecy and adroitness, that the design was put in execution before it was discovered.

A variety of circumstances concurred to favour this bold enterprize. Many days had elapsed since the Dahomans had formed their camp, during which time no hostilities had been committed by either party. A relaxation of discipline had prevailed among the troops, and the centinels had become remiss in their duty. The Agaow had retired a considerable way down the river, in the night previous to the attack, in order to perform some religious ceremonies, in compliance with an injunction that had been laid upon him by Adahoonzou. During the general's absence, which was to have been three days, the command devolved on *Queenooob*.

In this situation, at the dawn of day, the Badagrees, in three divisions, commanded by Prince Davee, and his generals, the Oclah and Possu, rushed upon the Dahomans, sword in hand, set fire to their camp, killed a great number, and made many prisoners. The consternation and disorder occasioned by this sudden and unexpected attack, must have produced a total defeat, had it not been for the coolness and presence of mind with which *Queenooob* rallied his panic-struck troops, and made a stand. Oclah's division appearing to be the most vulnerable, was immediately encountered by this brave Dahoman chief, who, perceiving that
their

their leader charged in his hammock, directed his men to take a good aim at that object. The blood soon appearing through the hammock, the men who carried Oclah, threw him down, and the whole division immediately betook themselves to flight.

At this instant the Agaow arrived, resumed the command, and was quickly in possession of Davee's head. This news no sooner reached the Possu, than he made a precipitate retreat, with five wounds in his body. The fortune of the day being now changed in favour of the Dahomans, the few men who had been left to guard the town of Badagree, together with the women and children, made their escape in canoes, and fell down the river towards Lagos; so that no more than two hundred fell into the hands of the Dahomans. But great was the carnage in the field of battle, the Agaow giving no quarter, till the Badagrees were reduced to a handful. After this engagement, six thousand heads were sold to the King of Dahomy by his soldiers.

Immediately after this decisive victory, the Agaow dispatched the Possu in pursuit of the fugitive women. On the following day he overtook them; upon which they called out to him, that they belonged to Dahomy. While the Possu was speaking to them, he was joined by the Phussuppo, who had been sent by the Agaow to support him. Upon a consultation held by the two chiefs, it was determined, by the Phussuppo's advice, to return to head quarters, the women promising to follow.

It does not appear what was the Phussuppo's reason for giving this advice, and so easily relinquishing such a considerable prize :

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but it is certain the Agaow received the news with rage and indignation; yet, as he had frequently witnessed the courage of those two officers, who ranked next to himself in the army, he judged it prudent to overlook their late conduct, and stifle his resentment, not choosing to bring them into a scrape with the King.

The women arriving at a town in the neighbourhood of Lagos, were advised by the King of that territory to remain there; for if they should proceed farther, he should be under the necessity of selling them, or of delivering them up to Dahomy. This piece of commendable moderation in the King of Lagos, who might have appropriated the poor fugitives to himself, delivered them from their fears, and they continued to reside there.

Whilst the Possu and Phussapo were in quest of the women, the Agaow was employed in collecting the heads of the slain, and in securing the slaves on the field of battle, where he waited the return of the two generals, that they might accompany him to the town of Badagree, in order to seize the booty that might be found there. Five days had elapsed since the evacuation of the town, in which interval the Ardrahs had possessed themselves of most of the plunder, which they had transported, by means of their large canoes, and hid in the neighbouring salt works and swamps; so that the Dahomans got but little booty in the late bloody conflict, except a few prisoners, and the heads of those who had fallen in the battle.

The

The most distinguished of the prisoners were sent by the Agaow to Adahoonzou, with a message, intimating, that he waited for orders. The King soon returned an answer, instructing him to make the Ardras paddle the army across the river, and to pursue his route homewards by the beach. The reason for this manœuvre was for some time kept a secret; but it was afterwards known that the King of Eyeo, expecting the Agaow's return by the same path in which his messengers had conducted the army to Badagree, had sent a strong force to intercept him, and bring the Dahomans, with all their plunder, to Eyeo. The messengers, therefore, who had hitherto been their conductors, were extremely astonished when the Agaow dismissed them, and bid them make the best of their way homewards.

The Agaow and his troops, after this, were once more ferried over to the beach, by the Ardrahs, who there left them, in order to secure their plunder. They were still suspected of treachery by Adahoonzou; but every man in Dahomy was forbid, at his peril, to speak disrespectfully of them, for reasons which will appear in the sequel.

The Dahoman army having marched along the beach, till they got into the territories of Ardrah, were invited to halt, and partake of a repast, consisting of bullocks, hogs and sheep, which had been provided, by order of the King of that country, who likewise bestowed some presents on the Agaow, and the rest of the Dahoman chiefs.

It was at this place that the Phussupo recollected the advice which he had given to the Possu, respecting the Badagree women;

in consequence, probably, of some expressions let fall by the Agaow on the occasion; for he had sent a message to that general, antecedent to his return to head-quarters, importing, "That he should not give the King nor the Agaow the trouble of enquiring into a matter which was too late to be remedied. He had given his advice without malice, or any sinister intentions, which, since it was likely to produce disagreeable consequences, his return home might be inconvenient both to himself and to the Possu—that he took the whole blame upon himself; and as the Possu had no share in it, he trusted he should be acquitted."

These reflections prevailed with him to take the fatal resolution of making away with himself, which he effected on the morning of the army's departure from Porto-Novo beach, by applying the muzzle of a loaded pistol to his mouth. Thus fell the last and oldest of Ahadee's generals. His death was much regretted by the King, who declared, that if he had returned, after such a glorious war, he should have received him kindly. The Possu was not put to the necessity of making any defence.

C H A P. VIII.

Rejoicings for the late victory—Palace adorned with the skulls of the vanquished—Barbarous massacre of prisoners—Conquest of Wemey.

GREAT rejoicings followed this conquest. Adahoonzou and his Caboceers danced round the palace for several successive days; a profusion of victuals was expended in feasting; and a vast quantity of brandy was consumed; while the heads of the vanquished Badagrees were daily exhibited, for the gratification of the astonished multitude.

Not contented with displaying his barbarous trophies at Calmina, the King's savage vanity led him to believe that the participation of such a splendid spectacle would be acceptable to the Europeans. *Topab*, accompanied by the chief eunuch, and a magnificent retinue, was sent down to the forts at Grigwee, with a number of the heads, attended by drums-beating, and colours flying. This officer met with a very cold reception, the governors refusing to salute him, or to give his people any thing to drink. This piece of disrespect was extremely mortifying to the King.

1785. At the succeeding Customs, the singing-men had a fine opportunity of flattering the vain-glorious monarch. Badagree was no longer a disagreeable theme. The air resounded with the notable exploits performed by the victorious army; and
Echo,

Echo, from the adjacent woods, reverberated the * *strong names* of the *Male Oyster*, till hoarseness and fatigue overpowered the vocal band. The officers and soldiers were liberally rewarded, by the distribution of cowries and cloth; and the skulls of the vanquished enemy were ordered to be applied to the decoration of the royal walls.

The person, to whom the management of this business had been committed, having neglected to make a proper calculation of his materials, had proceeded too far in the work, when he found that there would not be a sufficient number of skulls to adorn the whole palace. He therefore requested permission to begin the work anew, that he might, by placing them farther apart, complete the design in a regular manner. But the King would by no means give his consent to this proposal, observing, "That he should soon find a sufficient quantity of "Badagree heads to render the plan perfectly uniform."

The operators, therefore, proceeded with the work till the skulls were all expended, when the defective part of the walls was measured, and a calculation made, by which it appeared, that *one hundred and twenty-seven* was the number wanted to finish this extraordinary embellishment. The prisons, where the wretched captives had been confined, were accordingly thrown open, and the requisite number of devoted victims dragged forth, to be slaughtered in cold blood, for this hellish purpose. Previous to their execution, they were informed that the heads brought home by the Agaow had not been found
sufficient

* A phrase, according to the Dahoman idiom, meaning his titles and exploits.

Abamoosoo cuts off 107 heads to complete the Ornament of his Wall. See p. 107.



Pl. VI

sufficient to garnish the palace, and that theirs were required to supply the deficiency. This act of barbarity was greatly applauded by all present.*

It hath been already observed, that the Dahomans had been duped by the Ardrahs, of which Adahoonzou was not insensible. He had long meditated a blow at the King of Ardrah, his relation; but as he had occasion for his services in these late expeditions, he had stifled his resentment at his perfidious conduct, till a fit opportunity should occur to throw off the mask, and punish him as he deserved.

There were still several obstacles to prevent the execution of the design which the King of Dahomy had formed against Ardrah; the most important of which was the friendship of the King of Eyeo with the latter, and the alliance of Wemey, a contiguous and respectable state. These obstacles Adahoonzou did his endeavour to surmount, in order to accomplish his design, without being very scrupulous about the means. He sowed the seeds of dissention between the allied states of Wemey and Ardrah, so effectually as to produce a rupture, which would have been fatal to the latter, had not the forces of the former been repulsed by the cannon of Antonio Vaz, which turned the fortune of the day in favour of the Ardras; who, to prevent farther incursions, fortified themselves on the side of Wemey with a strong clay wall and a moat.

1786.

* At this time there were six slave ships in the road of Whydah, a great scarcity of trade, and the price of a prime slave little short of thirty pounds sterling.

1786. Soon after this transaction, Wemey became obnoxious to the King of Eyeo, on account of some of his trading-men having been way-laid and robbed, by a party belonging to that state. Upon this occasion, the King of Eyeo begged that Adahoonzou might chastise them, as it was too far for him to send an army for that purpose. Nothing could be more acceptable to the King of Dahomy than this commission, as it exactly accorded with his own views.

The people of Wemey, on the other hand, hastened their own destruction, by sending an imprudent challenge to Adahoonzou, and threatening, that if he did not attack Wemey, they should march against Dahomy. Adahoonzou answered, in the same boasting strain, that he should send his Agaow, with a supply of guns, powder, and iron,* for their use.

The Agaow having received orders to prepare for war, beat his drum, formed his camp, and summoned the whole Dahoman forces to repair to his standard. Adahoonzou invited the Mahees to become his auxiliaries in this enterprize, promising that all the booty which they should acquire should be at their own disposal. Accordingly, one hundred Caboceers from the different states of Mahee, with their numerous adherents, joined the Dahoman army.

Thus strongly reinforced, the Agaow invested Wemey in May 1786, and made himself master of it in November following, having met with very little opposition from the besieged,

* Cut iron is used instead of lead ball.

sieged, who, notwithstanding their bragging message, never ventured to try their strength with him, but remained inactive, till at last, being reduced by hunger, they were obliged to surrender at discretion.

Although this was a bloodless conquest, a prodigious number of the miserable captives were afterwards put to death; and of those who were permitted to live, numbers were so emaciated with hunger, that they perished on the path, between Wemey and Calmina.

C H A P. IX.

Enterprise against Porto Novo—Redemption of the French prisoners—Message of disapprobation from Eyeo—the Tamegan goes to Alladah, to make fetich—Expedition against the Whydahs.

THE King of Dahomy was excessively elated with his late success, and nothing but the want of Eyeo's permission prevented him from attacking Ardrah, which now lay open before him. This permission, it was said, he had obtained, though in terms somewhat ambiguous; Eyeo having consented that Adahoonzou might repel any insult that might be offered by the King of Ardrah; but at the same time, strictly forbidding

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the commencement of hostilities, without leave first asked and obtained.

The King of Dahomy having got this kind of half sanction, did not fail to turn it to his own advantage. At this time there were no less than eleven French ships in the road of Porto Novo, the port of Ardrah; and the daily debarkation of a large quantity of merchandize, afforded a favourable opportunity of making a successful excursion to the beach; whilst the jealousy at seeing such a number of shipping in a neighbouring port, and only one brig in Whydah road, was a fresh spur to the meditated enterprise.

In consequence of secret orders, which had been given by Adahoonzou, the *Coke*, or second Caboceer, at Grigwhee, accompanied by the *Cakaow*, the military officer who is stationed there, and about three hundred of the King's soldiers, stole out of town in the night, and on the second morning afterwards, at the break of day, arrived on Porto Novo beach. Fourteen Frenchmen, one Portuguese, and upwards of eighty canoe-men from the Gold Coast, here fell into the hands of the Dahomans, without resistance.

The *Coke* and the *Cakaow* returned with their prisoners, of whom they very well knew how to make the best advantage. They entered into treaty with the governor of the French fort at Grigwhee, for their ransom, which at last was fixed at
twenty-

twenty-six * ounces of cowries for each white officer or boat-swain of canoes, and twenty-four ounces for each sailor and canoe-man; amounting in the whole to about *four thousand and six hundred pounds sterling*—a very handsome booty!

The captors accepted of *Monf. Gourg's* notes for the above-mentioned sum, without scruple, as there had never been an instance in that country of a white man refusing to honour his written obligations, so that they pass as current with the natives as money. This gentleman, who had been an officer in the French service, was admonished not to comply so easily with the exorbitant demands of the Dahomans, but he would not be advised.

The prisoners being thus redeemed, were delivered up to *Monf. Gourg*, the French governor; but upwards of thirty of the canoe-men died of the small-pox, which then raged in the country, before they could be conveyed to the respective captains who had hired them on the Gold Coast.

It does not appear that the Dahomans found any other plunder on the beach, besides the prisoners before mentioned; but it is certain that the King of Ardrah was highly irritated at this infraction of the alliance which had lately subsisted between the two kingdoms. He immediately dispatched ambassadors to the King of Eyeo, complaining of this unprovoked breach of friendship, which was followed by a message from that Prince,

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* These are ounces in trade, or currency, equal to forty shillings each. An ounce in gold is reckoned at four pounds sterling; vide ante, p. 134.

reprehending the conduct of Adahoonzou, in terms the most menacing and offensive, forbidding him ever to think of a hostile visit to Ardrah in future, and telling him, "That *Ardrab* was "Eyeo's* callabash, out of which nobody should be permitted to eat "but himself."

The King of Dahomy was thunderstruck at this message, which, however, he durst not resent, but was obliged to appease his irritated master, by dividing with him his late ill-gotten spoil.

Nor was this all: for so great was his dread of Eyeo's resentment, that for many months afterwards, whenever any warlike preparations were made by that monarch, Adahoonzou was under the greatest apprehensions that the kingdom of Dahomy would feel the effects of his vengeance.

This impresson continued to disturb the Dahomans for a considerable time afterwards; so that on the following year, 1787, when the King of Eyeo made some movements towards the Mahee country, Adahoonzou was so much alarmed, that he set all his people to work, to barricade and secure the halls of his different palaces, that he might, in case of an attack, have some places of security, in which he might hide himself.

The cloak of religion is often assumed to cover the most atrocious actions. While Adahoonzou was bending all his
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* The callabash, or gourd, is chiefly used in this country to serve up soup, and other food; though it serves also for other purposes, such as bottles, drinking cups, and other utensils. Some of them have been found to measure a yard in diameter. These are converted into washing-tubs.

endeavours to extirpate the human race, he did not forget to solemnize the rites of superstition. His prime minister, the Tamegan, was sent to *Alladab*, one of his palaces, not many miles from Grigwhee, with a *Gong-gong-beater*, many drums, a number of priests and attendants, to make *fetish*. The European governors, and captains of ships, took this opportunity to pay him a visit, carrying each a small present, and were most hospitably entertained by this old and respectable caboceer, who did every thing in his power to make the time of their stay agreeable.

About this time, many movements were made by the different generals of war; three of whom were sent to Grigwhee, who, with the help of the town's people, went against the old Whydahs, and returned with the pitiful acquisition of a few baskets of salt.

Not long after this nugatory expedition, it was reported, that the people of Porto Novo were about to invade Grigwhee, with *Sessu** at their head. This Caboceer, for his services during
the

* *Sessu*, a man of a morose and avaricious temper, was a native and Caboceer of Ardrah. He had the management of the carriers, who transported the goods belonging to the shipping, from Porto Novo beach, across the lakes, to the town of Ardrah. In the execution of this office, he committed such extortions and abuses, that the English and French captains conspired against him; and, with the assistance of Antonio Vaz, his enemy, drove him out of Ardrah. After his expulsion, he settled in the vicinity of Badagree, with his numerous vassals and dependants; for he was powerful as well as rich. Having put himself under the protection of Badagree, and by means of his influence in the back-country, and the obstruction he gave to the traders going to Ardrah, by placing armed people in the paths, he actually contrived, for many years, to divert a considerable part of the trade of that place to his own town, and to Badagree.

the investment of Badagree, had been promised the sovereignty of that state by Adahoonzou. But his assistance being no longer necessary after the conquest of that country, the promise had been forgotten, and Sessu had taken possession, without the King of Dahomy's permission. This monarch did not think fit to disturb the new self-created Prince, on account of his precarious situation with respect to Eyeo; but finding that Sessu was meditating a blow against the capital of Whydah, the most vigorous measures were taken to oppose him, which had the desired effect; for the caboceer abandoned his projected enterprise.

1788. The Annual Customs were soon after celebrated in the usual manner, a number of victims being immolated at the tombs of Adahoonzou's departed ancestors. Upon this occasion, he made a long speech of acknowledgment to the European governors, for the attention they had paid to the Tamegan during his residence at Alladah.

C H A P. X.

Expedition to Croo-too-hoon-too—An embassy from that Nation—Barbarous treatment of them by Adahoonzou—The Agaow attacks and vanquishes the Ketoos.

THE Eyeo army was still in the field; and the panic, occasioned by the apprehension of a hostile visit, continued to disturb
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the Dahomans; so that no enterprize was thought of, till it was known that the Eyeos were on their march homewards, which happened a considerable time afterwards.

Upon this, Adahoonzou, on some affront, sent out his army against a country called *Croo-too-hoon-too*. The van, which was commanded by the Possu, having on its march passed a narrow defile, was so vigorously attacked by the enemy, that this general was obliged to make a precipitate retreat, and endeavour to repass the defile, where the Agaow had arrived with the main body. This rencounter between the advancing and retreating troops, occasioned so much confusion and consternation among the Dahomans, that if the *Croo-too-hoon-toos* had followed up their blow, not a single * umbrella would have got back to Calmina. But these people had no other object than self-defence, and therefore were satisfied with having repulsed and driven the invaders out of their territory.

On the return of the army, the Agaow complained bitterly of the Possu's conduct, to which he attributed the failure of the expedition; but the King was not disposed to listen to his representations, to the prejudice of that officer.

Some months after this transaction, five of the *Croo-too-hoon-too* Caboceers arrived in Dahomy, to pay homage to Adahoonzou, in the name of their country, saying, "That it was
" but natural to stand on their defence, when attacked in their
" own

* The large umbrellas, carried over the heads of the Caboceers, are at the same time a defence against the sun, and a mark of distinction.

“ own houses; that they were not conscious of having given
“ any cause of umbrage to the King of Dahomy, and therefore
“ were much astonished at the Agaow’s visit; that, as they
“ preferred peace to war, they were unwilling to contend with
“ such a powerful monarch, but rather were desirous of be-
“ coming his tributaries, and offering him a part of the pro-
“ ductions of their country.”

Adahoonzou, apparently, received them in the most hospitable manner, treated them with all imaginable kindness, and dismissed them with considerable presents. On the day after their departure, the Agaow, in consequence of having received secret orders for that purpose, followed them with so much caution, that they entertained no suspicion of his being so near them. Two days after these Caboceers had reached their own country, and while the inhabitants reposed in seeming tranquillity, the Agaow unexpectedly attacked their town, putting men, women, and children to the sword.

After this enormous and unparalleled act of perfidy, he proceeded to rife the houses of the murdered, where he found, among other moveables, a variety of very curious dresses, made of the skins of such animals as the country produces. These were a very acceptable acquisition to Adahoonzou, who, afterwards, at the Customs, exhibited them to the Europeans, except those that were made of tigers skins; which animal, being the fetish, or deity, of the country, it would have been sacrilege to have exposed their skins to public view.

At

At the time when these spoils were shewn to the white men, by the King himself, while he stood at the gate of his palace, called * *Gree ma zon baw*, Adahoonzou remarked, " That this " was but a small war; but that he was about to make a truly " great one, which they should soon hear of."

1789. He was as good as his word; for the Customs were scarcely finished, when he took upon trust all the guns and powder which could be found among the shipping, assembled all his subjects, able to bear arms, and gave out, that he was going to oppose the *Popoes*, who had threatened to invade Whydah; telling the European governors, that they should see him in person at Grigwhee.

Adahoonzou left his own house, and made a camp separate from that of the army; the Tamegan and the Mayhou had likewise theirs; and so had the Yavougah, the Coke, and the Cakaow, which three last-mentioned Caboccers had been called up from Grigwhee, their usual station, to join the grand army.

As the communication with Popo was at that time open, and there appeared no hostile preparations on that side, it was impossible to discover the intended destination of this formidable army. The secret at last was divulged, and it was known that the object of this expedition was *Ketoo*, the country where the fine red cotton cloths are manufactured.

D d

The

* You do not give a goat a plantation to sow corn in.

The town of Ketoo being surrounded by a large moat and a double wall, the inhabitants at first bid defiance to the Agaow, telling him from the walls, that the large gate was open for his reception. This bravado was disregarded by the general, who contented himself, for the present, to pillage the neighbouring plantations. In the mean time, his succours arriving, he collected all his force, and prepared for a general assault; but before he proceeded to storm the town, he made a feint of retreating, which drew the enemy without the walls, to engage; upon which he attacked them with dreadful carnage, killing or taking the greatest part of the besieged.

Two thousand prisoners, and a great number of heads, were the first fruit of this victory. The captives were carried in triumph to Dahomy, where nine-tenths of them were butchered in cold blood; two hundred only being reserved for sale.

This victory was followed, as usual, by feasting and rejoicing; and a slave apiece was given to the European governors at Grigwee, as an acknowledgment for the preparations they had made, to oppose the threatened invasion of the Popoes.

CHAP.

C H A P. XI.

Death of Adahoonzou—King's Devil killed—Massacre of prisoners—and of the King's women.

THE conquest of Ketoo was the last remarkable transaction that happened during the reign of Adahoonzou. The time drew nigh that was to rid the earth of this scourge of the human race. Messages had been frequently brought from the King to the European governors, for some time after the Ketoo victory; but now it was a month since any messenger had arrived at Grigwee, either from the King or his Caboceers. A certain gloom was apparent over the whole Dahoman empire. A mysterious silence prevailed. Every countenance betrayed a secret which the tongue durst not reveal. The truth at last came out—Adahoonzou *was dead of the small-pox!*

This disorder had not been attended with any unfavourable symptoms; but the King, impatient under confinement, was desirous to convince his people that all was well with him. The * *Gong-gong-beater* had been commanded to summon all his subjects to the King's door, in order to see him; and he was actually on his way, from an inner apartment to the gate, accompanied by some of his women, when he was seized with a giddiness, fell down, and expired. This happened on the 17th of April, 1789.

D d 2

The

* This officer, who carries a rude kind of hand-bell in his left hand, made of hammered iron, and a stick, somewhat like a drum-stick, in his right, is the public herald or crier, upon all occasions.

The women retired; the Tamegan made a speech to those who were assembled at the gate, informing them, "That the King had intended to play a little in public, but was prevented by some particular business; that he designed, however, very shortly to see his people, when he would put in execution his purpose of diverting them."

The minister had scarcely concluded this short address, when a loud shriek was heard from within the palace. This was quickly communicated from Agoonah, where the King then lay, to Calmina and Pahou. The whole kingdom was immediately in an uproar, the people beating their breasts, tumbling down, and exhibiting such marks of frenzy, that one would have thought the whole country had been seized with the same disorder. Confusion and anarchy, as usual on such occasions, universally prevailed; every body was armed, and frequent robberies were committed.

The Caboceers, nevertheless, attended to the main business, which was the conveyance of the corpse to Abomey. They had it on the way three hours after the breath departed. The man called the *King's Devil*, was killed on the path, between Agoonah and Dawee; and on the arrival of the corpse at the gate of Dahomy-house, at Abomey, *sixty-eight men* (all Ketoos) were massacred, before it was carried into the house.

The butchery now began among the women, who immediately proceeded to destroy one another; and this scene continued for two days and a half. Human nature shrinks at the recital of such horrible facts. The simple narration is sufficiently shocking, without the detail of the particular circumstances that

that marked this bloody scene. Suffice it to observe, that *five hundred and ninety-five* women were murdered by their companions on this occasion, and sent, according to the notion that prevails in this unhappy country, to attend Adahoonzou in the other world.

C H A P. XII.

*Earthquake at Abomey—Reflections on Adahoonzou's conduct—
Ascendancy of Eyeo—Punishment of Pauffie and her husband.*

BEFORE we begin the life of the new monarch, it may not, perhaps, be amiss to relate some farther particulars that occurred during Adahoonzou's reign, which could not hitherto be conveniently introduced, without interrupting the connexion of the foregoing history.

Upon the return of the Agaow from the expedition against Croo-too-hoon-too, the Eyeo messengers being then at Calmina, the King did not choose to communicate to them the success of his arms, lest they should make a demand of the spoil for the use of their master. For it had been usual for them, on the eve of the return of the Dahomans from any victory, to covet every thing they saw in Dahomy that was curious or valuable. The King, therefore, had directed the Agaow to proceed to Abomey, and deposit his plunder there; and in the mean time Adahoonzou hastened to dismiss the Eyeo ambassadors.

When.

When the King afterwards went to Abomey, and had seated himself amidst his Caboccers, to examine the booty, they were exceedingly alarmed by an uncommon motion of the earth, which shook the stools on which they sat, and threw down a part of the walls of the palace. It was the shock of an earthquake, which was felt, not only at Abomey, but extended to Agoonah, Calmina, and several of the neighbouring villages.

As no event of this nature had been handed down by tradition, the Dahomans applied to the Europeans for an explication of this extraordinary phenomenon. With the view of bringing about a reformation in the conduct of Adahoonzou, they informed him, that the Almighty took this method of signifying his displeasure at the crimes committed by mortals; and that it was not uncommon, upon certain occasions, for the earth to open and swallow up towns, and even whole provinces, with all their inhabitants. It does not, however, appear that this representation produced any alteration in the King's behaviour.

Although Adahoonzou possessed a great share of personal courage, he appears to have been remarkably deficient in every other endowment requisite for the government of a great kingdom. His bravery, and enterprising spirit, served only to point him out as the fit engine for accomplishing the wishes of his more politic and formidable neighbour and master, the King of Eyeo.

This remark will account for the conquests which the King of Dahomy had been permitted to make, without the interruption

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tion or interference of Eyeo. Ardrah had been the intermediate tool, by whose instigation Adahoonzou had been prompted to harass his neighbours; and Eyeo got the major part of the spoil that had been acquired by Adahoonzou's victories.

The King of Dahomy was made to believe, that the whole trade of the Europeans was to center at Whydah, and that all the slaves who were brought to Ardrah, should be sent to Grigwhee for sale. This turned out to be a scandalous imposition: for the King of Ardrah soon stopped all communication with Whydah. The messengers from Porto Novo* were no longer seen at the King of Dahomy's Customs; and the Dahoman traders, who had been accustomed to visit Ardrah, were no more allowed that liberty.

The excursion of the Dahomans to Porto Novo beach, therefore, is not to be wondered at; and Ardrah most probably would have received a more severe chastisement, but for the interference of Eyeo.

Adahoonzou was extremely exasperated at having been made the dupe of the people of Ardrah, and left no method untried to set Eyeo against them; but they were too rich, and constantly defeated Dahomy's designs, by heaping a profusion of presents on the King of Eyeo. Porto Novo road was seldom without seven or eight large French ships, and the richest European commodities were continually passing from thence, to be presented to the King of Eyeo, a very close-fisted and shrewd monarch.

Contrary

* The sea-port of Ardrah.

Contrary to the usage of his predecessors, Adahoonzou bore very hard on his subjects, who had settled under the different European forts. When any * *palaver* obliged them to repair to Dahomy, they were sure to be cast, and lose their liberty or lives: for if they happened to elude the stroke of the scimitar, they were sold, and the amount carried to the King.

The following anecdote will serve as a specimen of the manner in which Adahoonzou served delinquents of this kind. A woman named *Pauffie*, who lived under the protection of the French fort, and had acquired considerable property by trade, to the amount of seventy slaves, and upwards, had insinuated herself into the good graces of *Monf. Olivier*, the former governor of the French fort at Grigwhee, by her dexterity in her profession.

This woman used to follow her husband, who was also a considerable trader, to Dahomy, where she made many friends, and among others, some of the Eyeo nation. *Olivier*, who was possessed of some valuable coral, which he could not dispose of at Grigwhee, for the price it merited, had employed *Pauffie* to sell it for him; and she accordingly had disposed of it to the Eyeo messengers, at an extravagant price.

It had been likewise the practice of this woman to sell iron † bars; which, for the convenience of concealment, were cut into
pieces

* From the Portuguese word *palabra*, a word; but used for *dispute* or *lawsuit*.

† Iron, guns, powder, and coral, are not permitted to be sold to any body but the King, or to his ministers, for him.

pieces of the necessary length for hoes, and other implements of agriculture; and which iron had likewise been usually furnished by *Monf. Olivier*.

The *Eyeo* messengers having carried the coral to their own country, it some how fell into the hands of their King, and of consequence produced an enquiry, how it had been obtained. Now it seems, coral had formed no part of the tribute which had lately been paid by the King of *Dahomy*; upon the plea, that for a long while there had been none to be found in the country, as there had been no ships in *Whydah* road for a considerable time.

The King of *Eyeo* sent a special messenger to the *Dahoman* Monarch, to reprehend him for the supposed subterfuge, and to shew him the coral which had been purchased in his country; informing him at the same time, that *Adahoonzou* knew he held his dominions no longer than whilst he regularly paid his tribute; and when he neglected that, *Dahomy* belonged to *Eyeo*.

This message was very mortifying to *Adahoonzou*; who resolved to make a severe example of those who had been the occasion of it. A strict enquiry was immediately set on foot; and the disposer of the coral, together with her husband, were soon apprehended. The latter was sold, and died on board a ship in *Whydah* road. The woman was carried up to *Dahomy*, where, it was said by some, that she had been chopped in pieces; though others affirmed, that the King of *Eyeo* had interfered, and saved her life.

Eight days had elapsed before these circumstances became public; but Mr. Abson, who had received intelligence of Pauffie's fate somewhat earlier, advised Monf. Olivier to secure her property. To this prudent advice he lent a deaf ear, which he quickly repented; for soon afterwards the Yavougah, and other officers, with a King's messenger at their head, and followed by a number of attendants armed, entered the hall in the French fort, and kissing the floor, as is usual when charged with King's message, said, "That a woman, named Pauffie, belonging to the French fort, had got into the King's *palaver*;* that he hoped Monf. Olivier would not countenance her behaviour, by making any resistance to the execution of his commission, which was, to level her house with the ground, and to seize cowries, slaves, and every thing which he might find, and carry them to the King."

The old governor resented this outrage, so contrary to the civility and respect which was due, and always had been paid, to the Europeans; and said, that he would sooner perish in the ruins of the fort, than submit to such a gross indignity. The Yavougah, however, persisted in putting the royal orders into execution. Olivier loaded his guns, and ordered the matches to be lighted; but he did not think proper to proceed to extremities. Pauffie's effects, therefore, were all seized, and carried to Dahomy; her debtors were obliged to pay whatever was due to her; but her creditors demands against her were scouted.

CHAP.

* Was under the King's prosecution.

C H A P. XIII.

*Instances of severe punishment—The King becomes trader—
Destructive consequences of his interference.*

ALTHOUGH the King of Dahomy's women be guarded with eastern jealousy, and the violators of the royal bed seldom escape punishment; yet intrigues of this kind, in Adahoonzou's reign, had not been uncommon. It happened during that epocha, that a dangerous female conspiracy had been formed against the liberties of the people. Some of the ladies of the seraglio, who bore evident marks of gallantry, having been questioned concerning their paramours, named upwards of *one hundred and fifty* men, belonging to some villages in the neighbourhood of Calmina. These were all sold, although most of them were afterwards found to have been innocent, by the confession of a woman who discovered the plot.

During the customary anniversary that happened previous to the King's death, one of the silver ornaments, which had been preserved since the time of *Weebaigab*, third King of Dahomy, was missing. After a most rigid search, it was found in the hands of one of the King's smiths, to whom it had been delivered by a captain, and a boy belonging to the Sawgan. These two people, who had cut the silver to pieces, for the purpose of being made into rings, were immediately seized, and carried from the King's gate to the market-place, preceded by the King's Gong-gong-beater, who made a speech to the populace, purporting, "That the King was about to make the prisoners

E e 2

" keepers

“ keepers of his treasure, while he celebrated the memory of “ his ancestors.” Upon which they were knocked down, their bellies opened, and filled with salt, in the presence of all the Caboceers and vassals, who had been summoned together to attend this cruel execution.

Notwithstanding this severe punishment, some of the people were daring enough to steal several of the strings of cowries, with which the King had taken a fancy to ornament his different palaces. Some of the perpetrators being discovered, were obliged to make atonement at the expence of their lives.

Upon another occasion, a man, who had been Adahoonzou's servant, during his minority, in his father's life time, became the object of his vengeance. This man had a connexion with one of the King's women, and was detected making his escape with her. The woman was carried back to the palace, and the man imprisoned in the Mayhou's house. One day, soon after, the King came out in a great hurry, attended only by two soldiers, and walking to the Mayhou's house, he ordered the delinquent to be brought forth, and cut to pieces in his presence.

Many instances of a similar kind might be produced; but the foregoing will suffice to shew the reader the vast disproportion between crimes and punishments in this unhappy country: which is not to be wondered at, when it is considered how many human creatures have been put to death during this bloody reign, without having committed *any* crime at all.

Having

Having given some specimens of Adahoonzou's administration of justice, let us take notice of the effects produced by his interference in commerce.

In consequence of the failure of some of his expeditions, the King took it into his head, that it was owing to the intrigues of *aliens* residing in his dominions. He therefore ordered the Gong-gong to be beat; giving warning to all strangers, Eyes excepted, immediately to quit the kingdom: alledging, that whenever any expedition was on foot, his designs were by them communicated to the enemy; so that the Agaow had been rarely successful, and often came off with hard blows.

To make amends for his bad success in war, he was resolved to try the effect of a monopoly in trade; a profession which his ancestors had considered as ignoble, and which they had never put in practice, except through the medium of their Cabo-ccers.

Accordingly, he issued a proclamation, that no trader should, at any market, pay more than thirty-two * *cabesses* of cowries for a man, and twenty-six cabesses for a woman, slave. In consequence of which decree, he himself commenced trader, and began to buy slaves on his own account at those prices: setting his men to watch the traders, and confiscate their slaves and themselves, if vendible, for every breach of his ordinance; and if the traders so offending should not be saleable, they were to be beheaded.

The

* A cabess, cabeça, or head of cowries, is ten shillings sterling. V. p. 135.

The pretext for these *wife* regulations was, that the treasure might be kept in his own country, and that it might not go to enrich the Mahees and *Nagoes*. This new edict was very much approved of by a certain description of people, who had nothing to lose; but the real traders said, all was going to perdition. For they remarked, that the Mahees, *Nagoes*, and other inland merchants, would naturally seek other channels for their commerce, and that they would come no more through the Dahoman dominions. It turned out exactly as they had predicted: the trade flowing on one side to Wemey, for the Porto Novo market; and on the other, to *Pesbie*, for the Popo and Quitta markets; at which places the traders might freely buy guns, powder, and iron; articles forbidden to be dealt in by strangers in Dahomy; except the latter, when manufactured into implements of husbandry.

All this did not open Adahoonzou's eyes; so that the Agaow was frequently sent out to lay in ambush, and catch such traders, with their slaves, as he could lay his hands on: sometimes he was successful, but oftener got nothing.

The King's avarice did not stop here; for having experienced the sweets of gain, thus cheaply acquired, he ordained, that every trader, possessing two slaves, should relinquish one, and the best of them, to him; and if three, two were to be the King's, he paying the price which himself had fixed, in *strung* cowries, at the gate of the palace. For this purpose, his women were kept constantly employed stringing them; in the execution of which, they took care that there should be a deficiency of from
three

three to six per *string. Nor was the trader allowed any consideration whatever for his trouble, expences, or the duties he had been obliged to disburse on the journey.

All this caused general murmurings and discontent; many bankruptcies ensued; and some considerable traders, who had possessed property to the value of sixty or seventy slaves, were reduced to beggary. Some bore this reverse of fortune with surprising magnanimity; others seeing all go to destruction, sickened, and died, as commerce had done before them.

To fill up the measure of oppression, under which his commercial subjects laboured, the King imposed additional duties, which, for a while, gave the revenue a flourishing appearance; but, like the last efforts of an expiring man, this transitory delusion quickly vanished.

Nobody, however, durst speak out. Hints, indeed, had often reached the royal ear; but they were disregarded. The Caboceers, in a body, ventured to remonstrate; but they were accused of a conspiracy against the King's life; in consequence of which, a *palaver* arose, that took upwards of two months to settle. As the last resource, the European governors were requested to represent to the King, the pernicious consequences of his measures. Upon their interference, he promised to
relieve

* Forty cowries make one string, if loose; 39, when strung: the 40th being allowed for the piercing and stringing. V. Introduction.

relieve his subjects, but failed in the performance. In short, Whydah, which had always been a precarious port of trade since its conquest by Trudo, was for some years without any trade at all.

C H A P. XIV.

Adahoonzou's speech, upon hearing what had passed in England upon the subject of the Slave-trade.

AS a proof that Adahoonzou was not at a loss for arguments to defend the conduct of himself and his predecessors, when necessary, we shall close that Prince's history, with the heads of a speech, made by him upon an occasion which is about to be taken notice of, and which took up *two hours* in the delivery; for the Dahomans are extremely verbose.* Governor † Abson having taken an opportunity of communicating to Adahoonzou some of the particulars respecting the Slave-trade, which had become the subject of conversation, and parliamentary enquiry,
in

* If Mr. Abson supposes long speeches are confined to Europe and Africa, he is mistaken: the Brasilians were famous for this species of rhetoric long ago. When they wished to excite the people to war, their Eldermen, from their hammocks, harangued their auditors, on the virtues and wrongs of their ancestors, for *six hours* together. *Purchas's Pilgrims*, 1036.

† The present Governor of William's Fort, who has resided there since 1766, and is well acquainted with the language.

in this country; and having carried with him some of the pamphlets for and against the abolition of that traffick, which he read to him, in Adahoonzou's native language; the King listened with great attention; and though business several times broke in upon the narration, still requested Mr. Abson, after every interruption, to proceed. When the whole was finished, the King spoke as follows:

“ I admire the reasoning of the white men; but, with all
“ their sense, it does not appear that they have thoroughly
“ studied the nature of the blacks, whose disposition differs as
“ much from that of the whites, as their colour. The same
“ Great Being formed both; and since it hath seemed conve-
“ nient for him to distinguish mankind by opposite complec-
“ tions, it is a fair conclusion to presume, that there may be as
“ great a disagreement in the qualities of their minds. There
“ is likewise a remarkable difference between the countries
“ which we inhabit. You, Englishmen, for instance, as I have
“ been informed, are surrounded by the ocean, and, by this situa-
“ tion, seem intended to hold communication with the whole
“ world, which you do by means of your ships; whilst we Daho-
“ mans, being placed on a large continent, and hemmed in
“ amidst a variety of other people, of the same complexion, but
“ speaking different languages, are obliged, by the sharpness of
“ our swords, to defend ourselves from their incursions, and
“ punish the depredations they make on us. Such conduct in
“ them is productive of incessant wars. Your countrymen,
“ therefore, who alledge that we go to war for the purpose of
“ supplying your ships with slaves, are grossly mistaken.

F f

“ You

“ You think you can work a reformation, as you call it, in
“ the manners of the blacks; but you ought to consider the
“ disproportion between the magnitude of the two countries; and
“ then you would soon be convinced of the difficulties that must
“ be surmounted, to change the system of such a vast country
“ as this. We know you are a brave people, and that you
“ might bring over a great many of the blacks to your opinions,
“ by the points of your bayonets; but to effect this, a great
“ many must be put to death, and numerous cruelties must be
“ committed, which we do not find to have been the practice
“ of the whites: besides, that this would militate against
“ the very principle which is professed by those who wish to
“ bring about a reformation.

“ In the name of my ancestors and myself I aver, that no
“ Dahoman man ever embarked in war merely for the sake of
“ procuring wherewithal to purchase your commodities. I,
“ who have not been long master of this country, have, without
“ thinking of the market, killed many thousands, and I shall
“ kill many thousands more. When policy or justice requires
“ that men be put to death, neither silk, nor coral, nor brandy,
“ nor cowries, can be accepted as substitutes for the blood that
“ ought to be spilt for example sake. Besides, if white men
“ chuse to remain at home, and no longer visit this country
“ for the same purpose that has usually brought them hither,
“ will black men cease to make war? I answer, by no
“ means. And if there be no ships to receive their captives,
“ what will become of them? I answer for you, they will be
“ put to death. Perhaps you may ask, how will the blacks
“ be furnished with guns and powder? I reply by another ques-
“ tion,

“ tion; had we not clubs, and bows, and arrows, before we
“ knew white men? Did you not see me make Custom for
“ Weebaigah, the third King of Dahomy? And did you
“ not observe, on the day such ceremony was performing,
“ that I carried a bow in my hand, and a quiver filled with
“ arrows, on my back? These were emblems of the times,
“ when, with such weapons, that brave ancestor fought and
“ conquered all his neighbours. God made war for all the
“ world; and every kingdom, large or small, has practised it
“ more or less, though perhaps in a manner unlike, and upon
“ different principles. Did Weebaigah sell slaves? No; his pri-
“ soners were all killed to a man. What else could he have
“ done with them? Was he to let them remain in his country,
“ to cut the throats of his subjects? This would have been
“ wretched policy indeed, which, had it been adopted, the
“ Dahoman name would have long ago been extinguished,
“ instead of becoming, as it is at this day, the terror of
“ surrounding nations. What hurts me most is, that some
“ of your people have maliciously represented us in books, which
“ never die, alledging, that we sell our wives and children,
“ for the sake of procuring a few kegs of brandy. No; we are
“ shamefully belied; and I hope you will contradict, from my
“ mouth, the scandalous stories that have been propagated;
“ and tell posterity that we have been abused. We do, indeed,
“ sell to the white men a part of our prisoners, and we have a
“ right so to do. Are not all prisoners at the disposal of their
“ captors? And are we to blame, if we send delinquents to a
“ far country? I have been told, you do the same. If you
“ want no more slaves from us, why cannot you be ingenuous,
“ and tell the plain truth; saying, that the slaves you have

“ already purchased, are sufficient for the country for which you
 “ bought them; or that the artists, who used to make fine
 “ things, are all dead, without having taught any body to
 “ make more? But for a parcel of men with long heads, to
 “ sit down in England, and frame laws for us, and pretend to
 “ dictate how we are to live, of whom they know nothing,
 “ never having been in a black man’s country during the whole
 “ course of their lives, is to me somewhat extraordinary. No
 “ doubt, they must have been biassed by the report of some one
 “ who has had to do with us; who, for want of a due knowledge
 “ of the treatment of slaves, found that they died on his hands,
 “ and that his money was lost; and seeing others thrive by the
 “ traffic, he, envious of their good luck, has vilified both black
 “ and white traders.

“ You have seen me kill many men at the Customs; and
 “ you have often observed delinquents at Grigwee, and others
 “ of my provinces, tied, and sent up to me. I kill them; but
 “ do I ever insist on being paid for them? Some heads I order
 “ to be placed at my door; others to be strewed about the
 “ market-place, that people may stumble upon them when
 “ they little expect such a sight. This gives a grandeur to my
 “ Customs, far beyond the display of fine things which I buy.
 “ This makes my enemies fear me, and gives me such a name
 “ in the **bush*. Besides, if I should neglect this indispensable
 “ duty, would my ancestors suffer me to live? Would they not
 “ trouble me day and night, and say, that I sent nobody to
 “ serve them; that I was only solicitous about my own name,
 “ and

* The country expression for the woods.

“ and forgetful of my ancestors? White men are not acquainted
“ with these circumstances; but I now tell you, that you may
“ hear, and know, and inform your countrymen, why Customs
“ are made, and will be made, as long as black men continue to
“ possess their own country. The few that can be spared from
“ this necessary celebration, we sell to the white men. And happy,
“ no doubt, are such, when they find themselves on the path
“ for Grigwee, to be disposed of to the Europeans. *We shall*
“ *still drink water,* * say they to themselves; *white men will not*
“ *kill us; and we may even avoid punishment, by serving our new*
“ *masters with fidelity.*”

All this, and much more to the same purpose, adds Mr. Abson, was said by the Dahoman Monarch, in my presence, however incredible it may appear in England: and I can see no reason to doubt it, unless we suppose that common sense is confined within narrower limits than experience shews it to be.

* Meaning, “ We shall still live.”

HISTORY OF DAHOMY,

PART THE FOURTH.

CONTAINING

THE INTRODUCTION TO

T H E L I F E

O F

W H E E N O O H E W,

THE PRESENT KING.

C H A P. I.

*New King's accession—Speech—Expedition—Cruel treatment of
the French Governor.*

AS soon as Adahoonzou's remains were deposited in Dahomy-house, at Abomey, *Whcenoobew*, his son and successor, rushed into the palace, and put a stop to the carnage among the women. This Prince, who assumed the name of *Se-do-zaw*, (*wherever I rub I leave my scent*), had three competitors, two of whom
were

were brothers to the late King; and the third was a man who had been sold and carried to Brazil, in Ahadee's time, but had been redeemed by Adahoonzou.

However, the struggle for the succession was not so violent as to occasion the loss of any lives; the Tamegan having taken every necessary precaution to prevent bloodshed; and being indeed very active and attentive on this memorable occasion.

No provisions were exposed to sale during the space of several days after Sedozaw's accession, which afforded a pretext for the commission of many disorders; but the interference of the Tamegan soon put an end to all confusion, and the new King promised to indulge his subjects with many privileges; on which account Whenoohew's reign commenced with considerable *éclat*. He redressed the grievances of the traders, by removing the oppressive restrictions which had been laid upon them by his father. He relieved them, in particular, from the intolerable imposts, which had given the finishing stroke to commerce; and incorporated the revenue-officers, that had been employed to collect them, with the army.

The venerable Tamegan, who had been always respected by the Europeans, as well as by the natives, but who had been neglected in the late reign, became the favourite of Whenoohew, who consulted him on every important occasion, honouring him with frequent personal visits at the minister's own house; a mark of royal respect and condescension unknown in former reigns.

The

The ancient custom, however of celebrating the memory of the deceased Dahoman Kings, by the effusion of human blood, still prevailed to such a degree, that Wheenoohew, upon his first visit to his father's tomb, took with him *forty-eight* men, tied, ordering, from time to time, one or two of them to be killed in the path, and saying, "He would walk in blood, all the way from Calmina to Abomey, to see his father."

On Wheenoohew's first entry into the royal palace, he made a long speech to his subjects, wherein he declared, "That he was resolved to administer justice with a rigorous and impartial hand; and advising them to keep clear of *palavers*; for that he would kill or sell all those who should be found to have promoted unnecessary litigation. He told them, that he had adopted Ahadee's principles of governing, to which he should adhere; that he would hear no complaints but through his *Caboceers*; and threatened to punish with instant death, the least whisper to his women: a crime that had been too common in his father's time. He decreed, that all trading men should pay the duties to their respective masters, and not to him; for he wanted no presents but from his *Caboceers*, neither would he bestow any. They should be allowed full liberty to trade, and every one should follow his own occupation, of whatever denomination; but he cautioned all to avoid getting into scrapes with him, since, if they did, they would be sure to repent of it; for he knew nobody, nor was he inclined to make any new acquaintance."

1790. The first warlike expedition of Whenoohew was directed against *Baigee*, a Mahee province, from whence the
Agaow

Agaow returned, with the head of the Caboceer and a few captives. These were sent to Abomey, to be slaughtered, for the purpose of filling up Adahoonzou's grave. The Agaow was sick when he undertook this enterprise, and died soon after his return. The same day was likewise marked by the death of *Irookoo*, who had been one of the competitors for the throne.

About this time, the King of Dahomy was extremely irritated at the indecent and insolent behaviour of the King of Ardrah, who had set apart a whole week for the celebration of Adahoonzou's death; during which, there had been one continued scene of drunkenness and revelling night and day, accompanied with an incessant discharge of cannon, and songs of execration to Adahoonzou's memory. This was so offensive to Wheenoohew, that, upon being informed of the Ardrah *orgies*, he is said to have shed tears. He summoned the Caboceers and people to the gates of his palace, told them of this flagrant affront, and said, that if the King of Ardrah were not protected by Eyeo, he should immediately send his whole force to chastise him for such a scandalous insult.

A new Agaow was soon after made, and the army sent once more against Mahee; but the rivers at that time being swelled by the rains, it was obliged to retire, without effecting any thing. The Agaow having made the King acquainted with his ill success, was not permitted to come home, but was sent against the old Whydahs, the military officers at Grigwhee having been ordered to join him with all their forces.

This too was an expedition marked with no event, except the destruction of the plantations through which the troops had passed; who indiscriminately devoured the fruits of the earth belonging to friend or foe.

A third unsuccessful enterprise increased these evils to such a degree, as to threaten a famine in that part of the kingdom which had been exposed to such predatory excursions.

The next expedition was more successful; the general having returned, though it does not appear from what country, with about *three hundred* prisoners, which were all killed at Abomey, to fill up Adahoonzou's grave: nor did these suffice; for another excursion against the Mahees having produced *one hundred and seventy* captives, several of them were afterwards killed at Abomey, for the same purpose.

The new King, however, did not seem satisfied with these trifling successes. It behoved him, after the example of his ancestors, to provide liberally for the celebration of the first grand Customs for his father; and as this anniversary was now near at hand, he suspended two of his generals, the Possu and the Zoheino, and put others in their room, from whom he expected a better account of his enemies.

The army, after this, marched to a Mahee country, bordering on Ketoo, from whence they returned with upwards of *one thousand* prisoners, which are reserved for the solemnization of these grand Customs.*

About

* The solemn coronation, if we may so call it, of the King, was deferred, till the grand Customs, which were to be held in the beginning of the approaching

About this time, *Mons. Gourg*, the French Governor, having become obnoxious to the natives, his expulsion from the country was determined upon, and put into execution in a manner as cruel as unprecedented.

This gentleman, who had the misfortune to lose an arm in the service of his country, was, not many months after the accession of *Wheenoohew*, one afternoon, seized between the English and French forts, by a party, under the direction of a man, called *Alindaboo*, who, after insulting him in the French language, and even beating him, carried him to the *Captain's* † tree.

Mons. Gourg was there bound, and carried from thence to the beach, where he was obliged to remain all night on the sand, exposed to the musquitos and sand flies, till five o'clock next morning, when he was thrown into a canoe, in a manner never practised even towards a black man.

The surf on the beach, and the breakers on the bar, on this occasion, happened to be so high, that it was deemed, by the

G g 2

canoe-

approaching year; as also another ceremony, which was necessary to be performed, namely, his inauguration at *Alladah*; where, according to custom, he was to be invested with a *line coat*, as a token of his sovereignty over that kingdom. This solemnity, which may take place before the other, had been retarded, on account of the indisposition of the *Tamegin*, who had been seized with a paralytic disorder, from which he was then recovering; and it was expected, that he would quickly accompany the King to *Alladah*, in order to make a speech on that occasion.

† A large tree, not far from the fort, where the Viceroy receives the captains of ships.

canoemen, impracticable to put to sea; and in fact, no other canoe durst attempt the bar, during that and several succeeding days.

The boatswain of the canoe remonstrated in vain; the canoe was pushed off the beach; and this unfortunate gentleman was afloat three hours, drenched with repeated breaches of the surf, before he got over the bar. At last the canoe passed it, and he got safe on board a small vessel belonging to the Gold Coast. The canoe, however, was overfet on her return.

It does not appear, that the natives had any reasons, sufficiently strong, to warrant this violent behaviour. Mr. Gourg indeed had been accused of haughty and supercilious behaviour. He made no trade himself; and he did not receive the traders, nor even the Caboceers, with that ceremony and respect which had been always customary; and to which indeed they had been entitled, in consequence of the courtesy and politeness they had always shewn towards the white men. It was reported, that his own officers had conspired against him, and had done him ill offices with the King.

However that may be, this cruel treatment seems to have affected his health; for he afterwards died on board the ship *Rouen*, during his passage towards Cape François.

This is the second instance of the expulsion of a French governor from Whydah; *Monf. Cuillie* having experienced a
fimilar

similar fate, though with less humiliating circumstances, about the year 1762, upon a charge of having sold contraband articles to the enemies of Dahomy.

A transaction happened about this period, which is worthy notice. Eyeo, powerful as we have seen it, appears to be tributary to a neighbouring and more powerful Prince, called *Tappah*,* of whose history little is known. The King of Eyeo, desirous, it seems, to throw off the yoke, had ordered the buffalo's hide to be twice trodden, in order to give *Tappah* a hearty drubbing. His army however, numerous as it was, met with a complete overthrow, and was under the necessity of submitting to the victor's own terms, having lost thirteen umbrellas in the action.

1791. In the months of January, February, and March, the solemnization of the grand Customs, and of the King's coronation, took place; the ceremonies of which lasted the whole three months, and were marked almost every day with human blood. Captain Fayrer, and particularly Mr. Hogg, Governor of Apollonia, were present; and both affirm, that not less than 500 men, women, and children, fell as victims

* *Tappa*, from its vicinity to *Gago*, seems to be *Inta*, a name given to *Assienta* by some of our geographers. It is a very powerful kingdom, on the S. W. border of Eyeo, or *Gago*. Probably 'Ta-pa may mean Ta— or Inta-men; but this is only conjecture. J. F.

tims to revenge and ostentation, under the shew of piety: many more were expected to fall; but a sudden demand for slaves having thrown the lure of avarice before the King, he, like his ancestors, shewed he was not insensible to its temptation.

F I N I S.