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ACCOUNT  
OF  
A VOYAGE  
TO THE  
WESTERN COAST  
OF  
AFRICA;

PERFORMED BY

*HIS MAJESTY'S SLOOP FAVOURITE,*

In the Year 1805.

BEING A JOURNAL OF THE EVENTS WHICH HAPPENED TO THAT  
VESSEL, FROM THE TIME OF HER LEAVING ENGLAND TILL HER  
CAPTURE BY THE FRENCH, AND THE RETURN OF  
THE AUTHOR IN A CARTEL.

BY F. B. SPILSBURY,

*SURGEON TO THE FAVOURITE,*

AND AUTHOR OF PICTURESQUE TRAVELS IN SYRIA, &c.

ILLUSTRATED WITH NUMEROUS ENGRAVINGS.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR RICHARD PHILLIPS, 6, BRIDGE STREET,  
BLACKFRIARS,

*By J. G. Barnard, 57, Snow-hill.*

1807.

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VOYAGE  
TO THE  
WESTERN COAST OF AFRICA.

ON Sunday September the 22nd, 1805, his majesty's sloop Favourite got under weigh from St. Helen's, about eleven o'clock, A.M. under the orders of Capt. K. Maxwell, of his majesty's ship Arab, with five vessels in company; and on the 24th about seven P.M. we took our departure from the Lizzard, bearing N.  $\frac{1}{2}$  W. distant about five leagues. It was at first understood that we were to proceed to the West Indies, but after various orders and equipments, we at length received a final one for the African station. I was now supplied in my department with a double allowance of bark, and such other medicaments as are requisite for a climate so fatal to Europeans as that to which we were destined.

Nov. 2nd. Cape Blanco bore E. by S.  $\frac{3}{4}$  S. distant 131 miles.

Nov. 3d. Mustered the ship's company at quarters, and read the articles of war to them; as is customary at least once a month. A great number of flying fish were seen flying round us.

Nov. 4th. Read the articles of war to the ship's company, and the captain cautioned them on the preservation of their health. We at length made Cape Verd, passed the large Bird's Island, and dropt anchor before the town of Goree.

GOREE.

Before anchoring we sent the cutter with our sub-lieutenant on shore, with a flag of truce, for fear the French might have possession of the island. Saw our convoy lying in the roads. The boat returned with compliments from the governor, and that he would be glad to see the captain on shore. Goree is almost a barren rock: the inhabitants get nearly all the provisions from the Main-land. The governor's name is Lloyd, He has established some good regulations

among them. By cutting their dollars into four parts, he keeps the specie on the island, which before was always drained from it. Nor will he allow bodies to be buried there for fear of infection, but has them sent over to the Main, where they are generally dug up and devoured by the tigers and other wild beasts. The lady of the captain of the African regiment told a pathetic tale of the loss of two of her children, whose corpses they were obliged to smuggle into the fort. The riches of the inhabitants consist of slaves, each house having a slave yard, with huts for them; among the female slaves are many elegant figures, and some of the mulatto women are real beauties. Most Europeans form temporary attachments when they come to this island; and so very chaste are the women that none have ever been known to attempt other connexions while they think their husband survives, even though he may have left the island. The slaves of both sexes are naked, except the piece of cloth which passes round the loins. The females do all the drudgery, such as beating corn, &c., with their children at their backs: this operation is performed in a wooden mortar, with a large pestle; and to shew their agility, the women clap their hands while it flies upwards. There are continual importations of slaves from the Main-land.

About 190 of the African rifle-corps are stationed here, the remains of a body, the rest of which have fallen a prey to the climate; among them are some fine-looking men. An anecdote was told me of a person of rank on the island, which is deserving of notice, as it shews how far human nature may be degraded, when we are deprived of our finer feelings. The governor had a good horse, which this gentleman remarking, said with great *sang-froid*, "was worth four slaves," and offered to purchase it at that price.

It was now a most healthy season, the commencement of their winter. We frequently sent the boat to the Main-land, which always returned with plenty of excellent fish of various kinds. Our people were obliged to use the utmost caution for fear of the sharks, which are of a large size, and swarm round the island; I have seen them from eight to ten feet long. Natives of the Main come over to Goree, with all kinds of provisions, in a small canoe, sharp at each end and flat bottomed, but raised in the fore part. Some have one sail, others two, which are cut in what the sailors call shoulder of mutton fashion: the canoe is a solid body of a tree hollowed out, and simple as it is, they sail very fast, and the owners steer them in a wonderful manner with their paddles; but by no temptation would they be attracted near us.



The inhabitants of Goree are not jet black, but a mixture. There are about 300 vessels continually trading up the river Gambia for slaves, which, from the best authenticated accounts, are procured in the following manner: If a prince wants a commodity of any kind, and it requires more than he is worth to pay for it, he destroys a village, seizes its poor inhabitants, and sells them: they weep bitterly at first, but are soon reconciled to their unfortunate situation. Their principal chief is the prince of Marabou; his subjects are jet black. The small town which the kings of Marabou reside in, is surrounded with a mean wall: they have an idea that this wall is a charm, or, as they term it, a *griggery* or *grisgris*; and they think that should any enemies presume to come over it, the houses themselves would fall and destroy them. A neighbouring prince offered to the governor of Goree a hundred slaves, if he would permit our African soldiers to storm it first; however, one of the enemy contrived to get over, and stabbed one of the king's sons.

On this coast, it frequently happens that a large tree in a town becomes a *grisgris*, and some princes who are under a *fittish* will not go on board a ship, or on an island, from an idea that they will sink immediately on setting their foot on it, while others suppose they will die if they see salt water. They are in general covered with such charms: among the Jolofo, Mandingos, &c., who are Mahometans, they consist of pieces of the Alcoran, covered with leather, or some other relic; nor do they suppose they ever can err, but attribute everything to the ill conduct of those who have offended them.

There is a law in Goree, that if any man murders a slave, he shall buy another to make good the owner's loss.

At the moment of my writing this, the 10th of November, it is so very sickly on the river, that a slave-ship has sent in word, they have lost all hands.

Bird's Island is larger than Goree, and produces a quantity of cotton, wild; but no water is to be got there. There is one small bay, the entrance to which might be easier defended than Goree, and the whole of it might be made a garden. One person from Goree built a house on it, being discontented with his former situation; but he left it for want of water.

On the 11th, Mr. Guy and myself went on shore; a shot was fired over the town from a battery on the hill, which is an annual custom, importing that the healthy season had commenced. If this custom had been neglected, it would have given rise to unpleasant conjectures, as the inhabitants, as may be supposed from what has been said, are very super-

stitious. In the evening a ball was given, at which there was certainly a numerous and beautiful assemblage. We were also at a wedding; the bride, a beautiful black girl, was introduced to us; she was veiled, and had a profusion of gold ornaments about her; consisting of bracelets, rings, necklaces, &c. We were led to it by the sound of a drum, and the clapping of hands; the company formed a ring; and each woman by turns got into the middle, and danced; they made the most hideous contortions of their features and limbs, after which they joined in the circle. The next day they go in procession round the streets; the bride supported by one of her friends, and the rest at intervals dancing round her, singing, &c.; this continues for some days, and even the governor could not be excused from attending, the custom is so established. If any officer or settler, of respectability, wants a wife, he must court the girl a month, and then give what they call a great dinner; inviting all her relations, and keeping open house for some days; this, of course, is extremely expensive, as it costs seldom less than two hundred pounds. At the weddings of the poorer classes, each one of the company gives a piece of money; I met my washerwoman going to one with a dollar for that purpose.

The second remove, or mixture of a mulatto with a white, produces children nearly of a white cast, or as they are called by Europeans *misters*: I do not think the mulattoes in general so handsome as the blacks.

November 12. The prince of Marabou this day paid us a visit, and the captain presented him with an old cocked hat, of which he was very proud—his brother Alexander, a general, accompanied him. We found he owed the island fifty slaves, and was on the point of commencing a war for the express purpose of liquidating the debt.

This is the only place at which I heard of going to war for slaves, and I am apt to think there is some mistake, as he was a merchant, and more likely to purchase than otherwise. He brought a milch-goat with him to sell, and kid, but as the lady for whom it was intended was on shore, he would not leave it, but took it into the boat with him. I have given him a drawing of him, exactly as he was dressed. His brother was a strong athletic man, had a fine open countenance, which bespoke urbanity of manners; in short, we were all fond of Alexander: he was almost covered with *grisgris*: his worsted blue cap, with red hoops, had a most ludicrous appearance.

There are several ostriches kept on this island; the governor frequently hunts them on the parade with dogs. As soon as

the bird is produced he begins dancing, and at last sets off, leaving the dogs far behind: he goes regularly to the bottom of the parade and up again; setting the dogs at defiance, whom he easily out-runs with the help of his wings; nor can they catch him.

Goree is a rock of iron stone; the principal water they get from the Main-land, as they have only one well on the island, which is not nearly sufficient to supply their wants. The established custom of not giving any woman leave to quit the island after her marriage causes a number of widows to be resident there, many of whom of course are young ones, their husbands probably still living elsewhere.

Their dress is a wrapping petticoat, if such I may call it, of white cotton with a coloured edge, and at the upper part a narrow border of a finer sort; this they lap two or three times round them and tuck in; such a garment costs seven dollars: the rest consists of a chemise, over which a loose piece of cotton cloth is carelessly wrapped, and a handkerchief round the head. They are excessively fond of gold, and hide every guinea or doubloon they can procure. It was here I first tasted palm-wine, and I cannot say that I think it an unpleasant liquor. The ladies, if on the beach when it is coming on shore from the Main, will hold out their hands to have some poured in to drink. When new, it is very pleasant, and looks like milk and water; but when kept a few days, is very intoxicating. When new, the natives here are extremely fond of it.

Washing on this island is charged at the rate of a dollar for a dozen pieces, counting a handkerchief, &c., as a shirt. They are beaten on stones, and then rinsed. This is the only kind of washing in use, notwithstanding which, the articles are bleached very white.

There is a law here which deserves mentioning. If a slave is born on this island, he cannot be sold out of it, unless he or she commits some considerable crime. It was here governor Wall perpetrated the barbarous murder, for which he suffered the sentence of the law. Both the event and the punishment still continue in the memory of the inhabitants.

They are extremely fond of music; and here as well as on other parts of the coast, which I shall have occasion to mention, they have hand-organs in their houses. It certainly is a great change to an Englishman, when he witnesses the customs at Madeira; but what must it be when he lands at Goree? It is impossible to describe the sensation at first stepping on shore, where he finds everything so perfectly different from European scenes; he is immediately sur-

rounded by numerous black boys and girls, quite naked, and skipping around him in play; but not begging: the females naked, especially the slaves; or with only a small rag round their waists.

We were recommended to a free man, a Mr. Crew, where we found the most liberal accommodations; he had lost his wife, and had a fine boy, who was a more perfect black than himself: at dinner I could not help looking round me at the novelty of being waited on by boys and girls, nearly in a state of nature; indeed one named little Harry was quite an adept. The above gentleman once lived at Sierra Leone; and is well known for the goodness of his disposition and pleasantness of his manners: he had lately been in England, and intends sending his son thither to finish his education. When our boat went to the main land, to draw the seine for fish, the prince always came down, and they invariably complimented him with a few choice ones. Here we first began to give our men bark in wine; a glass before they went, and another when they returned, under the idea of preventing fever.

Whatever medical gentlemen may think of this practice, I shall call it a *hocus-pocus* mode of driving away fever. I am of opinion, it might be much better reserved till another opportunity, when it is really wanted, and might prove of great utility. If, instead of this, the men were allowed double the quantity of wine, it would be of more service; for can any one seriously suppose, that a dram of bark, only occasionally exhibited, can be of any advantage? Again, the surgeon is by this, reducing his stock, when it cannot be replenished, as here, money could not purchase it, though for want of this useful tonic, his people were dying round him.

There is another circumstance necessary to be attended to with respect to medicines at sea. All powders, especially bark, should, when sent to hot climates, be put into bottles, well corked down, and then dipt in rosin or wax; for it is well known, that the loss of the virtues of this medicine in these climates, is owing to its being exposed to the air. One proof I shall lay before my readers—From Apothecaries'-hall I had bark in jars; with a bung and a wrapper tied over it: I had also from the same place some in bottles, which I dipped in rosin. When I opened them at Sierra Leone, there was a wonderful difference in their quality, the jar did not smell more aromatic than the small quantity in the bottles; that in the jar appeared to hang together as if mites were among it, and, though the utmost care had been taken of it, it seemed to be damp: samples from each were easily distinguished. As this article is of such material consequence, I hope care

will be taken in future to bottle it in the same manner as the lime juice, which latter might be curtailed on this station, as limes and acid fruits are in plenty, and may be obtained for the trouble of gathering.

Now I am on this subject, I hope I shall not be thought tedious in mentioning some of our necessaries, as they are termed, more especially the tea, if such I may call it, as is allowed for a sailor when ill. This is supplied by contract, and is of the very worst quality, being composed of the sweepings of the ships' holds, or what would otherwise be sold for dyeing. When water is added, should any one be blind-folded, I defy him to tell what the infusion is, as it has more of the taste of decayed hay, than any other thing I can think of. Surely, if a sick sailor is to be allowed these *necessaries* for his comfort and speedy recovery, they should, to say the least, be of good quality: I would ask if such wretched stuff as I have now described, is worthy of a surgeon's oath, "*That the necessaries have all been expended for the use of the sick only?*" I once sent some of the trash to a late board; and received for answer, "*We have examined the tea and find it as good as the contract will allow.*" There used also to be cocoa and spices allowed, but these have vanished, and only a few races of ginger substituted for them.—I shall now proceed with my journal.

November 13th. At noon we left Goree, with the *Mary* and *Anderson*; we were in lat.  $13^{\circ} 12'$  N. long.  $17^{\circ} 9'$  W. Had on board *Ensign Forbes* and his lady, as passengers to *Sierra Leone*. On the 14th, uncommonly large bats flew on board—their heads like that of a fox, and their teeth very large; but, on account of the cruelty of the sailors, we were obliged to throw them overboard. We were from now till the 22d, continually in soundings; during which time, a large quantity of dolphins were swimming about the ship.

November 18th. We had fine clear weather, rather inclining to calm. Great quantities of the *Remora* or sucking fish, under our stern, with the beautiful little pilot-fish, in shape nearly resembling a perch: two or three of these constantly attend the shark, playing about his fins, and under his belly, when he is not in pursuit of any prey. Of these, the sailors give the same account as the natural historians formerly did of the jackall, or lion's provider; and it therefore bears that name of pilot-fish: in the shark they always find a protector, as they never swim to any distance from him.

## SIERRA LEONE.

November 22d. Cloudy with showers of rain, thunder, and lightning. Quarter past four P. M. let go our anchor in 12 fathom. At eight o'clock the Anderson fired two guns, and made signal for land in the S. E. A beautiful bird flew on board, it had blue wings and a red beak: at this time we again anchored: lat.  $8^{\circ} 36' N$ .

This evening the atmosphere was extremely mild with lightning: the island is high in some places, on which the clouds seem to rest. The point of Cape Sierra Leone was clothed by numerous large trees. I do not know that I ever saw so majestic and tremendous an appearance as was formed by mountain towering over mountain, which, added to the gloominess of the night, increased its horrors. By the number of lights that appeared we were certain we were near some large town. The captain stood on till a boat came from the shore, by the people of whom we were informed of the death of the governor. On the sides of the hills there are elephants, tigers, tiger cats, &c., with a very large species of monkey called Chimpanzee, which is near six feet high when full grown. He is very mischievous; when young, however, he is most affectionate to men; and cries like a child when he misses his protector. A gentleman here gives a woman 10s. 6d per week to suckle one, in order to send it home. There is also an insect which is at least equally alarming, a sort of black ant. When they enter a house, the inhabitants are obliged to leave it immediately; otherwise they would devour them as they do everything else they meet with; serpents, rats, &c., &c.

November 23d. We came to an anchor off Free-town, and at half past seven o'clock a boat came off and informed us this was the principal town. It was quite dark. On our landing we found that not only the governor was dead, but also a captain of the African corps, who was to have been tried by a court martial for some serious offence. They were very sickly, and in great distress both for medicines and food. The town is in a most romantic situation. At the back of it the mountains are clothed with wood. Near it is another town, commonly called Dalia Mooda; it is situated on the side of a hill, covered with verdure. The natives are black, but there is a great difference betwixt their dress and that of the people of Goree; here the fashion of the women's cloaths somewhat resembles the costume of a Welsh girl, and they are all exceedingly clean and neat.

In the morning two canoes came alongside; though only

the breadth of a man, there were three persons in each of them kneeling and sitting, two paddled, while the third baled the water out. The canoes appeared to be made of the bark of trees; and were exceedingly light. This day some women came on board to barter oranges, lemons, &c.; they were extremely pleased to see Williams, the gun-room black cook, whom they recollected by the name of Harris. There are some crown-birds here, but they are very rare to be met with. Ten dollars is the price asked for a bow and arrows, with the quiver complete. The governor, a pale invalid, came on board this morning, and politely invited us on shore; he at the same time lamented the want of good bark, as they had now none in the colony, and wished me to spare him some: I supplied him with what I had from Apothecaries'-Hall on my own account, in bottles. The colony is not at this time in a very thriving condition.

I was informed that a few days before a large snake had been killed, the carcase of which was as much as two men could carry on a pole: they are very common, and it is a fact that they can swallow leopards, bears, &c. There are also two extremely large species of the alligator, which are nearly twenty feet long; they swim between the ships, and pick up any garbage that is thrown overboard: they were frequently fired at, but a bullet will not penetrate them. The smaller ones are very numerous.

November 25th. I dined with the governor, who related some curious anecdotes of the reptiles just alluded to: in particular, of one of them destroying a sentry, and carrying him fairly away: his musquet was found left behind on his post. It came afterwards for the other sentry, but was driven away.

On the 27th of November we again weighed for the islands de Los. On the 29th we had five men taken ill with fever: they were attacked with pain in the head, vomiting, pain in the bowels, and sometimes complained of pain all over the body, attended with great lassitude and a slow, *irritable*, quick pulse. In the evening we came to an anchor, and we saw Cape Verga, bearing N. N. E. distant ten or twelve leagues. In the afternoon of the 30th we anchored, tiding it along shore, as the wind was contrary. During our passage a female of Sierra Leone related to us the following story, which will shew the spirit of revenge occasioned by jealousy in the native women. A slave-trader kept a native girl, of whom he was extremely fond: one day unfortunately some words arose, and he struck her over the eye; revenge immediately took possession of her mind, nor did she make it any secret that she was resolved to poison him. This the girl

who related the story perfectly understood, and warned the gentleman of the fate that would attend him; begging of him not to permit her to cook his supper, but let the informant perform that service: this with some difficulty he consented to, still laughing at the idea of danger; but being soon afterwards thirsty, he hastily called for a glass of water, which was given to him by the native girl whom he had assaulted: he drank it before the other could wrest the goblet from his hands, and as soon as the deadly potion was administered the native burst into a loud fit of laughter. Soon after the victim clapped his hand to his breast, and exclaimed, "My God! I am poisoned!" The narrator immediately got him to bed, and sent for his friends, but he expired in a few hours. When his friends arrived and found him dead, they seized the girl, put a chain round her neck, and sold her as a slave. Another instance, in which the attempt, however, proved abortive, is also worth relating. A black chief who lives near Sierra Leone, married a settler of this colony, an American black; who by her attention and industry by trading for him up the rivers, not only procured him riches, but respect and attention from the colony. According to his country's custom of having more wives than one, he took some from among his own nation, who soon became jealous of the first or head woman.\* They attempted to poison her, but the plot was discovered; on which she fled, first returning him all his slaves and presents, declaring she never would cohabit with him again. On the other hand he, almost distracted, took every means of discovering her, but in vain. At last a letter arrived from Liverpool, informing him of her affection and death. It is here necessary to remark, that the natives of this country have four or five wives in general, and each woman sleeps with her husband, in turn, a certain number of nights. This is invariably a rule, and so regular are they in the observance of it, that although the man may have no connection with the wife whose turn comes, he cannot refuse to sleep with her: although there may, however, be a favourite wife whom he oft-times calls to him, treats with marked respect, or pays her many attentions, yet if any connection be discovered out of proper turn, the others will hold a palaver, claiming the custom of their country, and the former is in danger of being taken off by poison; therefore

\* I have mentioned the chief female as *head woman* or *first wife*. Her privilege is to enjoy an entire command over the rest; and of this in all but the circumstance specified, she makes a most despotic use. Her dress and ornaments are more rich, she follows her husband wherever he goes, and chuses such women as she wishes to be with her.



whatever is done must be with the utmost secrecy; and these embraces are stolen with as much precaution as an emperor would make use of in his intrigues. Perhaps one custom may account for their having a plurality of wives; when a woman has borne a child, she does not return to the arms of her husband till that child can bring her a pot of water: nor do they go with their husbands when they have, as they express it, "*the moon on them!*" I have been assured that this is a general term for the occurrence all along this coast and throughout Africa. In short, they attribute more to the influence of the moon than we do. The people at Sierra Leone, declare that the moon will turn meat putrid, and produce fevers. I have already alluded to the extreme modesty of the African women; I must here again observe, that although an European lady may turn up her nose at "*the horrid naked creatures,*" delicacy will not permit me to enter into particular explanations, but I must declare that they are at certain times much more modest as to their actions and behaviour than many of our fantastical women of fashion. Their attention and submission to their husbands, and their affection for their children, are worthy of the highest encomiums — Blush! ye fair faced females! this — this is Nature! Here the name of *wet nurse* is unknown! here the true enjoyment of an offspring is felt as it should be!

On the 1st of December we read the Articles of War to the ship's company; a custom which, by act of parliament, is obliged to be repeated every two months. We mistook the island of Matacovy for Temara. It appears a beautiful spot covered with trees and verdure, but has shoal water all round it: it is in the possession of the Mandingoes. On the 2nd of December having missed the islands, either from the incorrectness of the charts or uncertainty of the tides, and having now a fair wind for Sierra Leone, we returned and anchored again off Free-town. On the 10th we again got under weigh for those islands; the 12th we anchored about seven o'clock, four miles from Factory Island; went on shore with the captain and purser to the factory, where we found Mr. Frisk, an American gentleman, extremely ill with an ulcerated leg. It appeared to be an exfoliation of a part of the tibia, which he supposed was a disease called by them *craw-craws*; but this is a species of the itch, producing small white blotches on the skin, in the joints, between the fingers, and sometimes all all over the body, and which easily gives way to preparations of sulphur and lime-juice. He said he would not submit it to the native mode of cure, as it would give him excruciating pain; this method is to bind a roasted lime on the diseased

part. I gave him every medical assistance that lay in power, in return for which he made me a present of two kids and a billender of oranges; he also made the captain a present of a very fine ox and some goats. On our first landing here, the people belonging to this gentleman, thinking us French, ran into the woods, as did also his head woman, pulling off her cloth, and scampered away with great expedition. This factory consists merely of a few huts, and the island was purchased by another American of Rio Pongos, of the prince who owned it.

We next went to Crawford's Island, and called at Mr. Wilson's, who we found was gone to Sierra Leone; in his yard were a great number of slaves, which had been purchased of him, and relanded from an American slave brig lying off this place, whose crew, from the captain to the lowest sailor, were laid up with fever; only a few female slaves were kept on board to attend them. This was the first time I saw the male slaves in chains. The women never are so confined. Two or more are chained together round their necks with heavy padlocks on their breasts, round the ancles, or hand-cuffed. Those with chains were beating rice, but a melancholy gloom hung over their countenance: they frequently would rest, look at each other, and sigh. The women appeared more cheerful, and the girls did not seem to be much affected. The steward made the captain a present of a small pig. We then walked to another factory on the same island, the owner of which we found was in London: we were, however, handsomely treated by a young woman from Sierra Leone, named Betsy Walker, who gave us refreshments, presented to the captain some goats and pigs, and to myself a kid. She related that when she saw our vessel in the offing, she had resolved to collect the slaves, and remove the property into the woods, as she before had been twice obliged to do when the French effected a landing, by which means she preserved the effects of her friend from plunder. She was continually on the watch with a glass, and in short she shewed so much attention to the trust reposed in her, so much affection and anxiety for his safe return, that I could not help reflecting on leaving her, "What is this difference of colour, that it should stigmatize the being who possesses it?" The house, superintended by this female, was in the most exact order; her slaves were at liberty and in perfect obedience, looking up to her as their protector and friend. Here is an extraordinary instance of a female, on an island where there is but another family; liable every moment to brutality from the attacks of the corsairs, or a whim of the

petty kings of the opposite coast, defending herself, securing the property of her keeper, and obtaining the respect of all who surround her.

We watered at Temara; I went with the party; the water springs from a rock near the beach, and the casks must be rolled down. A party of black men who came down to the spot said they were sure Mr. Williams would be very glad to see us. We therefore walked across the island, which is covered with underwood; and on the opposite side we came to the ruins of a village, and were shewn to the hut of their prince, Tom Williams, a stout young man, who spoke very good English; he told us he was very sorry he could offer us nothing but water, as he had but just returned to Temara, having had a war with a neighbouring king, who had destroyed his town, as we saw, and had taken a great number of his people; but he assured us that he had been fully revenged, and was now returned to rebuild his town. He said he was taken to England when young, and lived a long time at Chester; but having happily returned to his own country, he fixed on this island, which belonged to him by right. His wives procured us some water, and offered to cook us some fowls, but we declined their politeness and took our departure. It is necessary to remark here, that saluting is not the same as the English fashion; but is performed by one person holding out the hand open, over which the other draws his. One point of this island is called Tom Williams's Point, and on this his town is situated.

December the 16th, at four o'clock, Cape Sierra Leone bore S. W.  $\frac{1}{2}$  W. three or four miles. At a quarter past four the ship struck on a shoal of sand called the Middle-ground, the cape bearing at this time S. W. nearly five miles. Hove the sails all aback, and sent the master away to sound. Finding it impracticable to get her off at that time, in consequence of the falling tide, we struck the lower yards and top-masts, and put them over the side to keep the ship upright. Boats were also employed in carrying out anchors, to heave her off.

At twenty minutes past five, came alongside to our assistance Mr. Mc. Cawley, master of the Mary, and also a boat from the Arab: we started our water in the hold, and got every thing ready for heaving her off at high water. A. M. light airs and cloudy. At twenty minutes past twelve brought to the capstan, and endeavoured to heave her off, but without effect. At twenty minutes past nine a schooner came alongside and carried out our bower anchor; she took on board also part of our guns. At ten the Arab came to our

assistance. The 17th, early in the morning, all hands were employed at the capstan, and at three they hove her off into three fathoms water. At thirty minutes past three received a hawser from the Arab, and warped her off the bank, and at six anchored in seven and half fathoms. People were now employed in getting up the yards and topmasts, and at nine, we weighed and made sail. In the evening we anchored off Free-town in eleven fathoms water.

December 20th. We first heard of Lord Nelson's victory over the combined fleet off Trafalgar, and fired a salute of twenty-one guns in consequence. We now received orders to go to Rio Pongor, to look after a privateer. At half-past six A.M. we weighed; at seven hoisted in all the boats; and at fifteen minutes past eleven we anchored in seven and half fathoms, Free-town, bearing S. by E. On the 22d, we lay off Crawford's island. 23d. Tom Williams's Point, S. b.  $\frac{1}{2}$  W. six or seven miles. Thirty minutes past five saw four strange sail, gave chase to a schooner and ship, and came up with the schooner, which we found to be a friend. At forty minutes past eleven we came to off Factory Island, in seven and half fathoms water, with the kedge. At this time we had on board a gentleman named Wilson, who was to have piloted us into the Rio Pongos; but meeting with Mr. Lawrence, a black gentleman, son to a Mr. Lawrence of Deal, whom he thought to be a better pilot than himself, he returned to Crawford Island, leaving another black man, Captain Jack, as a clever pilot for that channel. He was one of the men taken in a schooner before our last return to Sierra Leone, belonging to a Mr. Butterfield, who was captured in her. He and Mr. Butterfield had agreed that with three or four more men, they should, if the boat came alongside, try to effect their escape, leave their despatches with Mr. Frisk, and make the best of their way to Sierra Leone, to give timely notice of an enemy being on the coast. They employed themselves for some time in damping the priming of the musquets; the French prize-master gave them a sufficient opportunity of doing so, by drinking so much porter as to make himself drunk. At last the boat came alongside, when they jumped into her and rowed off. Neither oaths, menaces, nor the actions of the enemy, who pointed their musquets at them, had any effect; only one of the latter went off, fortunately it did no mischief. Mr. Butterfield promised this Captain Jack a slave if he succeeded: he was the person who brought to Sierra Leone the intelligence of the circumstance, which occasioned our going in chase of them. We found Mr. Lawrence at Factory Island coming in search of us, to inform us

of the privateer; he also told us that a great number of the men were captured by the natives, and were in chains.

I had now again the pleasure of seeing Mr. Frisk, whose leg I found to be much better, but his knee contracted. At thirty minutes past three P.M. we made all sail, Mr. Lawrence's sloop in company. Saw a ship in the northward firing at the sloop with grape and round shot: discharged our larboard broadside at her; which she returned with two, and proved to be the *Hibernia* from Liverpool, bound to Rio Pongos. On the 25th saw a strange sail; heard the report of two guns, and sent the jolly boat with the master and pilot, to discover the entrance or river: she returned however without success, the pilot declaring that "*his tree no lib dere*," the tree being his mark for the entrance. This sufficiently shews the errors of the charts as there is no river where it is laid down.

December 26th. We picked up a very large canoe adrift; came to an anchor in four fathoms, and saw a strange sail in shore, steering to the northward. Sent our cutter to reconnoitre again: at eight A. M. fired three guns: at ten observed our cutter coming; without having found the mouth of the river. Made sail again to the N. W.

December 27th. At five P.M. anchored with the kedge in three and half fathoms. We now, from several circumstances, judged we must be at the mouth of the river: all hands were therefore anxious in making preparation, knowing the enemy's privateer to be of superior force to us. We hung the hammock cloths over our sides to prevent their seeing the guns: our head was muffled up, and disguised in the same manner; and the carpenters were employed in making a false poop: which when finished, occasioned her looking more like a rusty old Guineaman, than a man of war.

December 28th. The cutter returned; they had been a long way up the river, and in the night were close to the privateer, before they were aware of their situation: nor did they find it out until they heard their sentries challenge each other. She immediately got under weigh, and a brig with her did the same; our boat following them, but close under the land for fear of discovery. When our cutter left them they had anchored at the mouth of the river, which is twelve or fourteen miles to the northward of its place in the charts. From the soundings, two and half fathoms, there was scarce water to get over the bar. It was therefore proposed, if we could not get in with the *Favourite*, to cut the privateer out. We hoisted out the gig, and sent the first and second lieutenants to make observations. In the mean time we got

under weigh. We had not made much progress, when we saw them returning, waving their hats. We now got out all our sweeps, regulated the strokes by the drum, and sent the boats ahead to tow. When they came back, they said they had seen her taken aboard, with a prize, which she had made. Dropped anchor at one P. M. we saw two brigs under American colours; at two commenced firing, when a black privateer hoisted French colours and returned it: at twenty minutes past two she struck: we boarded her; and they called for the doctor. I was consequently sent on board, and found seven killed, including the captain, and twenty-four wounded; their decks were so slippery with blood, that I could not stand without holding by the rigging. Having ordered those who were dead to be thrown overboard, I found an old man with his face entirely cut away, except the lower jaw; the ball had left neither eyes, nose, nor cheeks! and where the septum of the nose was, I could see the brain forcing a passage. This poor object was nevertheless continually swallowing his own blood, and coughing: the French themselves, as an act of humanity, threw him overboard. The captain and two more were killed after they had struck, owing to their not being able to stop their men from firing. One of our twelve pound shots struck one of her guns; the shot split, killed the man at the helm, and another piece went through and tore his lungs out. I got their surgeon at last up from below; and between us we dressed the wounded. There was one man whose leg it was necessary to amputate; the French surgeon begged to be allowed to operate, but performed his task in such a shocking manner, I was obliged to turn my back on him. The vessel proved to be the *General Blanchard*, commanded by J. B. de Breux; formerly governor of Goree, a man of great courage, and much lamented by his own people, as well as his enemies. I took some of the wounded with me on board. The vessel was considerably damaged both in her hull and rigging. Her complement before the action was 130 men and 16 guns of various calibre. We now sent the boatswain with a gang of hands to splice and knot the rigging; and the purser up the river, to inform the settlers of her capture, and to procure some fresh beef. Several Englishmen came on board with presents, and were highly rejoiced at our success. On the purser's return, he informed us he had been a great distance up the river, and that the people behaved in a very liberal manner; they were highly delighted with the news, as were the natives—and stated that we might expect the next day a large party of gentlemen, who would bring presents of live stock of every denomination with

them: accordingly early on the following morning, several boats came with different gentlemen (slave-factors\*) bringing goats, cattle, sheep, poultry, &c., &c. One of the company brought a very handsome boy slave about ten years old, as a present to the captain, and to whom we gave the name of John Favorite. At the same time came a general of the king of that country, accompanied with a singing man. Before he well got up the ship's side he opened his pipes; and when on deck, seized the captain with both hands, and with great rapidity and loudness of voice began his song, in which he called over the names of all the neighbouring sovereigns; saying they were great warriors, but the English still greater, and ending each strain with "King George live for ever!" Wherever the captain went, he would follow him, singing in his cabin, between decks—it was all one. The captain thinking to stop him from thus annoying him, made him a present of an umbrella; but this only increased his ardour, for he put it under his arm, strumming on it as if it were a guitar. At this time, we had our prisoners all aft, with a netting separating them from the quarter deck. They now took his attention; and he made the most horrid grimaces at them, with signs of cutting their throats; drawing out his knife, and singing; or rather vociferating all the time. We asked him to go below, and had some rice boiled for him, but he would drink nothing but sugar and water. He proceeded to sing as usual, to our great annoyance. Our purser at length gave him a present of a French pistol; this not only increased the noise of the singing man, but evidently displeased the general; and to prevent his chagrin, I was obliged to give him a pair of the purser's shoes. Every thing was now settled amicably; and they departed in high glee, often calling on board the privateer. We now found the Blanchard had only the day before got her men from slavery on shore; and the captain nobly declared he would sooner be taken than leave his men in that situation; otherwise he would undoubtedly have got away. The fact was, they went to cut an English trading brig up the river, but in their attempt, they were taken by the natives; and the gentlemen with much difficulty saved their lives. The river is so extremely narrow, and wood grows so close down to the edge, that volleys of musquetry could be poured on them without seeing whence the firing came. We had at this time on board as passengers, Lieutenant Odlum of the African corps, and

\* The Sierra Leone colony, though expressly established for the abolition of the slave trade, has produced more slave-factors than any other settlement.

his lady. He was the only person wounded in the action, and that slightly, the ball entering his shoes and bruising his foot. We had also one boy extremely ill of a fever.

December 29th. This day the Arab joined us; and twenty-four people now fell ill of a fever. I can only account for this, by recollecting what happened on our going into the river; from the time we began pulling our sweeps, to the time we commenced action, we were constantly stirring up the mud.

Our black pilot in his own idea was certainly a very great man. He received his money for piloting the ship over the bar; and then immediately asked for his prize-money. He behaved extraordinarily well during the action: he asked the captain for a musquet, which when given him he used like a bush-fighter, loading and firing with much rapidity from behind the foremast.

We returned over the Bar as we came, and anchored in three and half fathoms water, Rio Pongos bearing N. by E. three of four leagues; sent fifty-four prisoners on board the Arab. On the 30th we were busy in repairing our damages, especially our driver-boom, through which a twelve pound shot had passed. At five P. M. we made sail for Goree, having our prize in company.

January 3d. We unfortunately took the powder out of our prize; and were informed by one of our people, that when the captain was killed an officer was seen putting his hands in his pocket, and pulling out a handful of money. This led to farther enquiries; and we found they had sold a prize for 500 doubloons, which, in searching, we found among the people.

Monday, January 6th, 1806. About six o'clock we cast off our prize, and ordered her to proceed on her voyage. Three vessels now appeared N. E. of us: we went down to overhaul them, they standing towards us about half past eight. We found they were French. We then immediately wore, they tacked, and commenced firing. Their force consisted of one 74, two frigates, and a brig. The 74 came up, and gave us three broadsides, as well as the frigates, one of which we found afterwards had expended 130 shot. We cut away our anchors, but this made the ship worse. I was ordered below. At this moment we received a large shot from the commodore, just on the quarter, which was near sinking her, and at half past eleven, having no possibility of escaping by resisting longer, we struck. The scene we now witnessed it is not in the power of my pen to describe. The purser threw open the slop-room, and every man helped himself to what clothes he chose. I put on two shirts, two pair of trowsers, and my best clothes. The captain declared they would strip



us; and my boy put into a bag my shirts and a case of instruments, which, by good fortune, were those presented me by Sir Sidney Smith, and which I used at the siege of Acre when employed on shore with him; he also put up my cot, in which he wrapped a quadrant. When they boarded us, all was in confusion. Our chests, however, were ordered on deck; and the officers declared they should be sacred, and that no plunder should be allowed. As to myself, I was peremptorily ordered into the boat; but managed to take my cot and bag with me, though I was not permitted to get my chest up from below. When I arrived on board the commodore's ship, he ordered me back again to take care of the sick and wounded, in which time my chest was stove to pieces, and all the instruments and clothes stolen, even my bed-curtains. What they could not take away, they tore to pieces and threw overboard: in a word, the plunder was general. Mr. Odlum, whom I have before mentioned, and his wife, were also pillaged while present; the women they left with the wounded and sick. A French officer, a Lieutenant de Vaisseau, now joined us, who paid some little attention to our wants: he was, indeed, a humane man. During the course of this day no provision was thought of; and from the women nothing was heard but sighs and moans. The French captain desired us to sleep in the cabin, and a sentry was placed to see the men did not plunder us. The sentries were, however, as bad as the rest; so we had no chance of keeping what little we had remaining. They were not content with what they could get from us, but broke open also the women's chests, and stole chemises and every other article of their paraphernalia. At night I chanced to sleep near our captain's wine-bin, and could not refrain from so good an opportunity of procuring refreshment. We broached and drank two bottles; being very careful, however, that the sentry should not see us. It was during this time that the sentries opened the lady's chests and stole her clothes. I had a boy in my list extremely ill, named Corbet, whom during the chase we had laid below. He was, after our being boarded, continually run over by the Frenchmen; for they having sworn to stab any one who should oppose them, none dared to put themselves in their way. In consequence of this treatment, the blood gushed out of his nose and eyes; the poor lad lingered a few days and died. As soon as he had breathed his last, they bundled him, hammock, bedding, and all, into the sea, like a dog, without funeral service, or any other ceremony.

The next day I arranged my sick and the wounded Frenchmen of the privateer. I was ordered to place the French and

Spaniards aft, the English forward, but never could get any wine for them, though the officers had taken possession of all Captain Davies's and our's, of which there was a very large stock. One of our men, named Francisco, a Portuguese, immediately entered the French service, and became the commissary's steward, and through his means our people had as much to eat and drink as they pleased; nor did they ever abuse the favour. This indulgence was far from the case with our poor fellows in the other ships, who were allowed three half pints of water a day, a very short quantity considering the intense heat of the climate; they had also a large spoonful of brandy in the morning, one at noon, and a third at night, and numbers of these unfortunate men sold the small remains of their clothes to procure provisions. As to myself, I cannot complain of my treatment. The only thing which distressed me was the sighs and moans of the lady, who, though treated with the greatest respect by every officer on board, never ceased, and her complaints at last became really troublesome. While we were with them we continued running to the southward, and they talked of going to Sierra Leone; but all the English on board every ship gave such an account of its strength, that they determined to relinquish their project. There was no order, or any apparent idea of religion among them. When they heard of Lord Nelson's victory, the paper was sent to every ship: it stated that there was only four sail of French ships which could be of any service to the English, the rest were Spaniards. When the deuded Frenchmen heard this, they pulled off their caps and huzza'd "*Vive l'Empereur\**," till the decks echoed with their shouts. They boasted highly of their continental victories, but allowed the English to be their masters on the ocean.

Nothing particular happened till the 22d of January. When we made Cape Mount, the commodore sent two ships round in such a manner that it was impossible any thing should escape. There were four vessels in the bay, three American and an unfortunate Liverpool slave brig, which fired a gun; and on the French commodore hauling down English and hoisting his own colours, she struck. Her name was the Trio. The female slaves on board her they sold to the Americans, and the male ones they divided among their own ships. The first lieutenant went on shore for the Trio's boat, which was at first refused him by King Peter Careful, who thus reasoned

\* After the punishment, the poor boys stand with their trousers down, and are obliged to cry out, "*Vive l'Empereur.*"

with him: "Suppose I no give it you, how you get it? you no have it." But when he found he was English, the prince sent orders to have it given up to him. It was hid among the bushes up a small arm of the river, over which the mandingo trees made a complete cover; and as he could have brought 4000 men with fire-arms into the bushes, could they have found it, it would have been impossible to succeed in carrying it away. The first mate of the Trio went with our officer, and asked Jack, the prime minister, if he had nothing to *yam*. "Yes," said he, "look in that box:" in which appeared, as they supposed, a kid, of which they ate very hearty, and washed it down with trade brandy. After which Jack asked, "What you eat?" They guessed kid. He said, "No; it be *dog*. Me see you coming. Me no kid, no fowls, no nothing but poor dog. You ask me to *yam*. Me kill dog and roast dog. You no like dog; you sick. You *yam* more than me." At this they could not help laughing; and they declared it was extremely good. They stopped all night, but could not sleep for the filth; and Lieutenant Parsons, in the morning, came down to the beach. He was very soon joined by the king, who, during the night, was very uneasy, changed his dress four or five times, and appeared very jealous. In the morning they returned. Before we took the Trio, we were extremely fearful the commodore would put his threat in execution of landing our poor unfortunate men on the African shore, and take the officers with him: had this been the case, very few would have lived to return to their native country. How pleasing then must have been the sound, "Get all your things on deck to go on board the flag of truce;" for we found they had converted the Trio into a cartel. Every thing was on deck in an instant: and a smile and colour broke forth from the pallid cheeks of my poor convalescents. We now thought all further plunder at an end, but soon found we were mistaken: every man's hammock was again searched by the commissary and another French marauder, who had been prize-master of the schooner from which Mr. Butterfield escaped. They took from each their tobacco pouches, knives, needles, and every article they could find, except barely the suit they had on, and their beds: the two former articles, in particular, are really a serious loss to a sailor. From my servant they took his bed and some spirits which he had managed to save from his scanty allowance. They were then proceeding to the quarter-deck; but the captain, tired of their depredations, declared we should not again be plundered. He said he was ashamed of the commissary's behaviour, saying he used us worse than we should have been

by a privateer or pirate. At last, towards the evening, we joyfully embarked, and got on board the cartel: our sensations, on meeting together once more, are not to be described. Soon after the captain came on board, and we got under weigh, as did the French squadron. We could not help looking after the *Favourite*; and could not persuade ourselves we were clear of the enemy till they were out of sight. During the time I was prisoner in my own ship, I could not help observing the amazing difference between her situation then and when manned by British sailors, in point of discipline and alacrity, as well as seamanship. They were very glad when it blew a little fresher than ordinary, to get my boy to stand at the helm; so ignorant were they, in general, of naval tactics. Every thing of which they did not comprehend the use they threw overboard, without consulting their officer, to whom they showed no respect. They dined on the quarter-deck, which is sacred to the officers in our service; and they spoke to their superiors as if they had been equals. Very few of them had any beds till they came on board; and they swarmed with vermin, which we of course could not help sharing with them. The gun-room was entirely deserted, as all the officers messed with the captain in the cabin. At the time we were taken, we had a great quantity of live stock (a very pleasing surprise for monsieur), and the greater part they divided among them. Such also was their voraciousness, that I was obliged to assist my new mess-mates to hide some, as well as wine, butter, cheese, &c., or they would have left us entirely without these necessary articles. I had, however, no fault to find with the captain, excepting not allowing wine for the sick. As to myself, I had his confidence; and sat down to a good table with him, while my ship-mates in the other vessels were almost starving. The only trouble I had was to settle little disputes between them and the lady: she thought she had a right to take her own things; a little bread and butter, for instance, between her meals. They thought the contrary: and simple as this was, it occasioned continual discord; the commissary running with complaints against her to the captain; she, at the same time, being continually peevish and cross, from the various losses they had sustained.

I must now continue my narrative from the *Trio* cartel. The French commodore gave us five days' provision for 160 men to go to Sierra Leone. Besides the *Favourite's* crew, there were the *Trio's*, and Robert's of Liverpool; Hero's of Glasgow; Flora's from London; and Belle's from Greenock. From the calms about the Banana and Turtle Islands, we

were detained eight days, and of course short of provisions and water.

January 24th. Cape Mount bore E. S. E. distant five leagues. At five P.M. the commodore ordered all the British subjects into the Trio. We weighed and made sail, the wind W. S. W. to N. E. fine clear weather.

January 25th. Some of the sailors belonging to the merchantmen became mutinous; supposing, as they were in a cartel, no one had any command over them; the consequence was, that all hands were called, the captain read the articles of war to them, pointed out the ill consequences of want of order and regulation, and the necessity of subordination; otherwise the navigation of this small vessel, with so many men, would be dangerous, as the passage was long and tedious to England. He then impressed on each of the backs of the mutineers three sound dozen each, after which they were perfectly obedient to order.

January 27th. Wind variable, lat.  $7^{\circ} 30'$ . Light airs occasionally, and lying at anchor during part of the time. On mustering the company, we found in all 160 of us, officers included.

January 28th. Wind W. N. W. to N. N. W. land extending from N. E. to E. N. E. lat.  $7^{\circ} 46'$  N. We anchored at Saint Anne's. At six A.M. weighed, but were obliged to be towed by our boats.

January 29th, 30th, 31st. Wind W. N. W. to N. N. E. lat. as yesterday. Extreme of land N. E. seven or eight miles. Weighed and anchored, the Turtle Islands in sight.

Saturday, February 1st. Fearing the wind would fail, I was sent in the jolly-boat from the False Cape to Sierra Leone, with a letter to the governor to inform him of the loss of the Favourite. A breeze springing up, she arrived there before me, but could not get ashore until I had delivered the letter. We found at anchor here, the Anderson, who fired an evening gun, which made us mistake her for a man of war. The whole of the inhabitants were extremely sorry for us; I gave the men something to drink, and then delivered my letter; on which the governor politely asked me to his table. While I staid there, the brig came to an anchor off Free-town; and then the captain came on shore, and we all supped at Mrs. Small's, by whom we were most kindly treated, which was the more acceptable, as for some time we had been on short allowance.

Monday, February 3d. Light breezes and cloudy, wind still variable. Went on board the Anderson, and saw a Chimpanzee; his face is bald, as are his hands and feet; his arms

are very long, and when he walks on all fours, he appears like the well-known beggar in London who has lost both his legs; his body is covered with long black hair, and he is continually clinging round any one who notices him. At night when any of the female slaves leave a part of their clothes about, he hunts for them to make his bed. This was the first time I had been on board of a slave ship; but I must declare that the slaves all appeared happy; she was in excellent order, which redounded to the honour of the captain. There were also on board a young alligator, two porcupines, and a crown-bird. Captain D—— sent for a small slave boy, named John Favourite, which was given him by a gentleman of Rio Pongos; but the captain of the slave ship declared he would keep him for himself. When we were taken, the second captain of the *Regulus* thought of keeping the boy, and had his ears bored, put a necklace on him, and had a bed made up for him in his cabin; but the commander insisted on his returning him: not so with our wine. They took of private property from the captain, two pipes of Port, and several of Madeira; from myself a quarter-cask, and another from the first and second lieutenants, but had the *generosity* to restore the captain *six bottles*.

Tuesday, February 4th. Early in the morning I set off with Capt. Davie and the gentlemen of Bance's Island in their barge to that place. As we were rather late for the tide, we stopped at Tasso Island; there I saw another alligator rather longer than the one before spoken of, and a large species of eagle. This island is covered with cotton, palms, and pine apples. A great number of the slaves here had ulcerated legs as well as the *craw-craws*. I saw a small thin girl, not more than twelve years of age, who had a very fine young child; there I also saw a beautiful little animal of the deer kind. It is common here, though Mr. Brown, the governor of Bance's Island, has prohibited their being shot. We refreshed ourselves with some bread, cheese, and porter, and then crossed over to Bance's Island; which, though very small, has a most delightful appearance at a little distance; it resembles a strong fort; they have a good battery, and the buildings are large and commodious, with a gallery to walk all round. The public dining room where they all meet, is of a considerable size. The present slave-yard is ill adapted, and the houses are mean and dirty, but there is a new one building on a new plan. The town is large in proportion to the island, and every thing is conducted in the most orderly manner; they have a furnace here for heating shot red hot, but there is one practice which must be considered as very obnoxious;

I mean the burying of the dead on so small an island. I could discover an offensive effluvia from the burying grounds. It is to be hoped, that the governor or the merchants, to whom this duty belongs, will, for the future, order the bodies at Goree, to be sent to the Continent or Tasso, and not endanger the lives of such a number of persons, by so shocking a custom.

Every gentleman here has his black wife, and the usual mode of marrying is as follows: When a girl is marriageable, the mother looks out for a husband, who, if approved of, must send the following articles, viz. one fathom of cloth, a jar containing three gallons of spirits, and four or six hands of tobacco; they then bring the girl, and she pulls off her ping or bodice, puts on the cloth, and that moment commences a woman. Hence they have a common manner, when they mean to express themselves delicately respecting the loss of their virginity, of saying, he was the man who put a cloth on me. The ping is a narrow slip of cloth, three fingers in breadth, which only a virgin wears; yet with this simple covering, they are far more modest than the girls of Europe.

Near this island is another, named Bob's Island. To this place all the widows are removed, where they are taken great care of, and provided with every requisite of life. It may therefore be more properly termed Widow's Island. In the rainy season, there are always a large quantity of alligators among these islands; and at a boat-house, close to the fort, on Bance's Island, one came and took away a black boy in presence of a number of persons, who could render him no assistance. On the first fall of his upper jaw, the blood gushed out at the boy's nose, mouth, and eyes. The one I saw at Tasso, would make a spring at a stick, and if he missed it, his jaws gave a loud snap. The teeth are extremely sharp and pointed, and stand at some distance from each other. The captain held a stick to him with a brass ferule, which he marked with his teeth, and shook violently.

The large breasts of the black women, are, generally speaking, owing to their hard labour, as they always beat the rice, and do all kinds of drudgery; the men only hunting or making instruments of war. During the time I was here, the slaves worked extremely hard, beating rice for our passage, &c. One handsome girl, whose breasts, before she began, were round and prominent, in two or three days, by the continual jarring, began visibly to fall. She was conscious of this herself, and would frequently look at them, lift them up and sigh. From this circumstance, I have seen young women, whose breasts were entirely flabby, appearing

only like a large pendulous piece of skin. It is therefore owing to their little nourishment and hard labour which they endure, that we may ascribe the difference between the African and European women in this particular.

I have mentioned already, that the laws of adultery among them are very severe. A man was caught in bed with one of the king's wives, and Mr. B. was, in consequence, obliged to send him in the Anderson to be sold. As to the woman, she being the daughter of a king, was only punished by being sent home to her friends.

Every night the native men begin their dances, which are very laborious; they take hold of hands and dance about to the sound of their drum; while each pair, alternately, throw their right and left leg over the other, and when this is done, they then throw over the left and right. Another dance is something like that in Goree;—they have also an obscene dance, from the description of which no satisfaction could be derived. These people, all of whose dress consists of a small piece of cloth round the waist, are very saving, and often return to their own country with great riches, but their king generally compels them to make over to him the best part, and if they hide it, and will not confess where, they are roasted over a slow fire. They carry their dead on a bier, with a fine piece of cloth or chintz over it. When they come to the ground they make a halt, place it in the earth head downward in a perpendicular direction, and then fill up the ground with stones, over which they place half of the canoe belonging to the deceased. During my stay at this island, I was sent for on board a brig by an American gentleman who was sick. From his own chest I gave him nothing more than a simple cathartic, and retired. When I returned to Sierra Leone, I was not a little surprized at receiving the following letter:—

“ *Bance Island, February 8, 1806.*

“ MY DEAR SIR,

“ Your departure being sudden and unexpected, I had no opportunity to take my leave. Permit me to request your acceptance of *ten dollars*: not as a fee worthy of your notice, but as an earnest of my respect for your superior abilities. Please to favour me with your address, and permit me to assure you, that it will ever give me a sensible pleasure to serve you to the utmost of my poor abilities. Wishing you an agreeable passage and a safe arrival to your native soil, I beg leave to subscribe myself, my dear Sir,

“ Most affectionately yours,

“ MARTIN BENSON.”



I should not do justice to the merits of the governor, were I to pass over in silence his politeness and generosity towards us. He sent the following letter, inviting us to his table, during our stay, which I will intrude on the reader; and, at the same time, sent us presents of wine, spirits, &c.

“ *Fort Thornton, Feb. 1, 1806.*”

“ Acting Governor Ludlow presents compliments to the gun-room officers of his Majesty's late sloop *Favourite*, and hopes that under their present unfortunate circumstances, they will consider his table as their own daily, while obliged to remain there. It will be his greatest pleasure to lessen the difficulties of their situation in every other respect as far as the state of the colony will admit.”

Free-town is laid out very regular; whatever wind may blow the inhabitants are sure to have no obstruction from it; the houses and huts are built of wood or mud, and well thatched with straw, projecting some distance from the wall, and raised above it to admit free air in the rainy season. This thatch is always renewed once a year, and this process, at the same time, destroys the white rat which harbours in it. Each house has a small garden at its back; containing orange plantations, paw paw, apples, pepper, ginger, &c., &c., but their larger plantations are at some distance from the town. The pleasantest and most common nut here, and which is found in great quantities, is the ground nut, a pound of which is worth about twopence: they boil and dry them before they expose them for sale. There is a good hospital here; and while I remained it had only one surgeon, who, though he pays the greatest attention, is not able to do justice to the great number of inhabitants. As to the schools, I fear they will be of little utility, unless good masters with liberal salaries are sent out.

Most of the inhabitants are methodists; and on a Sunday not only the black men preach, but the women also. For the smallness of the place, there are more public houses by far, than in any town I ever saw in England. It has a mayor, alderman, sheriff, and common council, and is governed by the same laws as England. Over the stocks is the pillory, which is different from ours, in being placed horizontally. Their greatest enemies are the Timmanees; with whom they have had several wars. Their own people, the American blacks, rebelled some years ago: but were reduced by the accidental landing of the Maroons just in the critical moment. The latter are a brave set of men, who well deserve

every encouragement of the settlers. Two of the ringleaders in this rebellion were tried, condemned, and executed. So suddenly was the attack of the Timmanees, who at this time were to have been joined by the above mentioned rebels, that they had nearly carried the settlement, having actually got among the houses. Mr. Ludlow, the acting governor, to whom we were much obliged both before and after our capture, related the following anecdote. One of king Tom's wives had a *gris gris*, made by one of their magicians: she was to hold two bottles of water in her hands; and was to dance in the front, and to sprinkle the water about: this charm was to damp our powder. She tried this experiment, until a shot broke her arm: when she let fall the bottles, and ran screaming away. After the action, on asking some of the prisoners what they thought of our manner of attack, they answered, "You don't fight like men, fire and have done, but you poke 'em, poke 'em." alluding to the charge with the bayonet. As to the American settlers, they have not nor ever will forget the shock they felt on the landing of the Maroons; their savage warlike appearance struck them with dismay: even the girls can still scarcely speak to each other with common civility. In the Maroon girl you evidently see the consciousness of freedom, while the unfortunate American, in her mind, feels yet the lash of an unfeeling master. The character of the latter is liberal and profuse, while the Maroon is saving even to parsimony: these may be called permanent settlers of Sierra Leone.

An unfortunate Maroon woman lost her husband by the bursting of a shell; for some time a small pension was allowed, but of late it has been stopped: for what reason I could not learn. The governor ought to be particular in seeing the widows and children of those who fall in defence of the colony provided for, and not left to want and misery; subject to every insult without power of retribution. What a heart-felt satisfaction must it be to see at the widow's feast the poor as well as the rich!

The following annual custom prevails here. The rich widows once a year meet and give a great dinner, in the field, with porter and wine, to the governors; each one cooking and providing a certain number of dishes. The feast ends with their usual favorite diversions of country dances, in which some of them excel; and the unfortunate Yarico I before mentioned is an instance.

All the natives I have yet seen have peculiar marks on their bodies, both men and women; the latter in general have very large ones on their shoulders, and sometimes on the abdomen,

in the form of stars and other figures: these appear to be made with a sharp instrument, and the wounds kept open until an excrescence arises, which they suffer to skin over, thereby giving a prominence to each incision. In some of them, one side of the back is entirely covered with these marks; therefore the pain they must endure for this addition of beauty, as they deem it, must be very great. As to their hair, they are far more curious than any ladies in Europe, having it plaited in the most curious and pleasing forms; and to have this operation performed, they will lay patiently down during several hours; nor do they want combs to grace it. Their teeth are beautifully white; they constantly use a small bit of stick to clean them; and so much are they in the habit of keeping them so, that a Goree lady (all such ladies spring from the natives) in common conversation, is continually rubbing them. The palm-tree is here one of the greatest blessings, producing oil and wine: with the former they rub themselves all over; and it likewise serves them for sauce, as they eat it almost with every thing.—The wine I have before mentioned, is not at all ungrateful, and its deep yellow gives a rich appearance to the dish. They have one dish peculiar to them; as I believe all nations have: this they call palaver sauce; it is composed of fowls, stewed rice, palm oil, and Cayenne pepper, with which the whole is so highly seasoned, that few Europeans can swallow it. This dish the ladies frequently make for their husbands against their return.

The word bush is very common among them; indeed they are so partial to it, they use it on all occasions. If they want to hide themselves, it is in the bush! If to perform the tender office of examining each other's heads, it is done in the bush! if wanting medicines, they take them in the bush! To sum up the whole of their character; that they are jealous is true, and that left to themselves they are a most hospitable, good-natured, harmless set of beings. As to converting them to Christianity, that I believe is a task not easily performed; for they are not to be divested of the superstitious rites in which they are brought up; one of the principal of which is, their belief in the magical effects of the red water; which I will illustrate by an anecdote. A poor girl in her native town, was suspected of witchcraft, which is here punished in the same manner as poisoning. If they plead not guilty, they are to drink a certain quantity of red water, the composition of which I could not learn. If they do not swell soon after, they are considered innocent; on the contrary, if they do, they are sure to die, and their relations are sold for slaves. This girl made her escape to Free-town; in conse-

quence of which she was converted, and became free. Notwithstanding this, she frequently wished to return, and to undergo the trial of the red water; so strong was her former way of life impressed on her mind, which might perhaps be strengthened by a wish of being with her friends and countrymen.

I am extremely sorry to find the natives do not now, as heretofore, send their children to the Sierra Leone schools: this object might be promoted by allowing them to return when educated.

If a king or any other person goes to a factory, or slave-ship, and procures articles which he is not at that time able to pay for, he sends his wife, sister, or child, as a pawn, putting a tally round their necks; the child then runs among the slaves until exchanged; and it is an invariable custom never to take these pawns away; but should any accident occur, as with the Trio, they immediately send the pawns on shore. The captain of the Trio had a female pawn on board, when the French squadron appeared, and he sent her on shore to her friends. As he behaved with such honour, he can again return; but had he not, no Englishman would have been again allowed to trade. Should any other vessel come from that place, they will deliver to him the slave for the pawn. If a vessel takes off any slaves without paying for them, they will detain the captain of the next vessel which arrives, until the full debt is paid. At Tasso Island, I saw a great number of pawns with their tallies. In the annexed Plate the king in full court dress, followed by his wives, has a boy with this article round his neck, going to be pawned.

The slave-trade has, by numbers who have not considered the business with sufficient attention, been deemed a traffic barbarious and inhuman. To all appearance it certainly is so; but it should be considered they are slaves to those at the head of their own country; nay, multitudes of them born so. It is a fact, that by them they are barbarously used, and almost starved, and are in general rejoiced when they get on board as slaves to Europeans. The various reports of their barbarous treatment in our colonies, by those who have been there, are except in a few instances, contradicted with undeniable evidence. Besides, if the English did not take them, which, it is to be regretted, they no longer dare to do, there are plenty of vessels from various nations who would monopolize the whole, and sell them at a much higher rate. Some kings, it is true, go to war for slaves; but this, I am apt to think, is, when they are saddled with debt. That there is kidnapping also, must be allowed. On the coast it frequently falls on the head of the kidnappers. A man will lay

in wait until he can seize a boy or girl who is prime, that is, four feet four inches high; this he hurries down to a factor or ship, and sells. With the produce of his villainy he goes into the country and purchases more slaves; these he sells again, and goes on trading until he brings a string of them. By this time, the negroes have perhaps found out who stole their child; they then lay in wait for him, seize him and all his newly acquired slaves, and retaliate by selling the whole. Mr. Wilson declares he has frequently bought the slaves and the kidnapper in this way.

All the riches of the negro kings consist in slaves, over whom they have power of life and death. In the way of bargaining or common conversation, it is customary to say, it is worth so many slaves, or such a one owes me so many slaves. Thus, by the slave trade, thousands are taken from real and abject slavery, to a climate congenial to them, though a sigh may arise for the loss of their country, and this most certainly happens, but as frequently from a different cause. Indeed they cannot have an idea that you would use them so well, merely to change their masters, but often think they are fattening to be eaten. To convince them of their mistake, when a slave dies, they are all called on deck to see him thrown overboard; and when once assured that we are not cannibals, their good humour returns, and they are known sometimes to express a wish for the ship to sail. I am certain the idea of the application of a whip, will, to many, cause a sigh; but this is, at least, as frequently used in their own country, while it is never applied in a well regulated ship, but *in terrorem*, as they are extremely apt to be sulky during the voyage, and will not eat.

The consequences of the abolition of the slave-trade, will, I fear, be too soon apparent, unless the wisdom of parliament should induce them to repeal the bill. By its continuance, a principal nursery for our navy will be destroyed. The Americans and others will supply our colonies at an exorbitant price; and even then they will not take our produce, with which we are already overstocked almost to our ruin.

On the 10th of February we got under weigh for England, and the ship was immediately put upon short allowance of water. Sunday, the 16th, we were obliged to punish three men for stealing of water, it being now a crime of the most atrocious nature; and if not immediately stopped, might, in the end, be productive of the loss of the cartel. Nothing particular happened until the 20th, when such an immense shoal of porpoises swam round, that the sea appeared covered with them as far as our large glasses could reach; and soon a fin-back whale made his appearance, and swam some time under

our bows. This was in lat. 9.56 long. 19.2. We were still on one quart of water a day.

March 2nd. Several flying fish flew on board. We let the people bathe, always lowering a boat down, and keeping a good look out.

March 6th. We fell in with H. M. S. Woolwich, bound to the East Indies, who made us a present of some English corn beef and potatoes, a present to us highly acceptable, as also a supply of water. We sent six men in her, among which was our old steward; the captain of the Woolwich was at this time lying dead.

March 29th. Saw land about Cape Clear, N. E. by N. seven or eight miles; took on board a pilot, and came to anchor in Crook Haven. We had no sooner anchored, than the vessel was surrounded with boats, bartering for old clothes or rice. This sudden change from short allowance of salt provisions to fresh, I was fearful, would have produced some serious consequences, but I was happily disappointed. I thought the men would never have been satisfied. Milk, eggs, broiled fowls, &c., were all day long, in a state of requisition between decks; and though there was no room for the men to lay side by side, yet now they made room for fresh messmates, and the ship was crowded with young pigs, turkies, geese, ducks, &c., as well as lambs; the whole presenting such a scene, as it is impossible to describe; the cooks were at work all day long, and all these luxuries were independent of their fresh beef. Here one of our ladies, who had been with us all this war, was brought to bed of a fine girl; we pittied her situation; and, to add to the scene, one of our men having said on shore, that the lady wanted a nurse, a poor unfortunate girl, about seventeen, came off to attend her; but this the captain and officers knew nothing of, until the ship was at sea for England. Here the mate and surgeon of the Trio deserted, when under weigh, it being rather calm. The captain had sent the boat a-head to tow, with two men and a boy, but instead of which, they pulled ashore and ran away. We had no fire arms nor any other boat, and were unable to prevent their escape.

On the 8th of April we came to anchor at Falmouth, with feelings which it would not be easy to describe, after the sufferings which, in so short a time, we had experienced. I believe the most dissolute man on board the cartel returned heartfelt thanks to Providence, for being once more restored in safety to his native land.



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