

SIX YEARS
OF
A TRAVELLER'S LIFE
IN
WESTERN AFRICA.

BY
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FORMERLY H. M. F. MAJESTY'S ARBITRATOR AT LOANDA,
AND AT PRESENT HOLDING A SIMILAR APPOINTMENT IN THE BRITISH AND PORTUGUESE
MIXED COMMISSION AT THE CAPE OF GOOD HOPE.

With Numerous Illustrations.

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CHAPTER IV.

Presidios on the Cuanza—Island of Quinzanga—Calumbo—Marshes in the Neighbourhood—Climate—Medicinal Roots—Lex Talionis—The Quimbanda, or Witch-Doctor—Modes of Divination—Administration of Justice—The Phoca—Fresh-Water Sharks—Navigation of the Cuanza—Exploration of that River—Muxima—Natural Productions—Trade in Ivory—Salt Mines—Predatory Excursions of the Sovas—Massangano—Holy Salt of Baptism—The Fair of Dondo—Cambambe—Pungo-an-Dongo—Incident Illustrative of the Disorders Consequent on Slavery—Climate and Natural Productions—Population of Pungo-an-Dongo—Wealthy Farmers—The Fair of Beja.

HAVING left the island of Loanda, we proceeded to the river Cuanza, or Coanza, touching on our way through the Channel at the islands of Cazeange and Ponta da Palmeirinha. We found the coast to be in general shelving, the sea dashing with great fury against the beach, until we arrived at the Ponta da Palmeirinha, which gets its name from the number of palm-trees that adorn it. From this point the Continent extends in a south-easterly

direction to the river Cuanza, a large and powerful stream, the source of which is not clearly ascertained. It forms the south boundaries of the district of Angola, dividing it from Quissama, Benguella and Mossamedes.

The mouth of the Cuanza is easily distinguishable, owing to a yellow tinge which appears in the water. To the north are two large mountains, called, from their shape, the Mamas. In the centre of the bar is a small island densely covered with trees, on which the Dutch, during their usurpation, built a fort; this, I am sorry to say, is now in a dilapidated state, for its position commands an extensive range. There are, near to this, some other small islands, which are inhabited by a few poor men. About twenty-seven miles up from the mouth of the river is another small island, Quinzanga, with a settled population; and opposite to Quinzanga is the district of the Bar of Calumbo (Districto da Barra de Calumbo), a little more than thirty miles from Loanda overland. On another occasion I made the journey in a *typoia*, which is a kind of palanquin, borne by munenganas, or carriers, who are freedmen.

The village of Calumbo was founded as early as 1577, by Paulo Dias de Novaes; it is situated on the banks of the river, and commands a good trade with the presidios in the interior. It has a parish church. Governor Tovar constructed an extensive store for the convenience of the pub-

of Matamba, and compelled Queen Ginga to solicit peace, and to offer the islands of Quinalonga as compensation for the injuries inflicted.

On the 14th of March, 1800, a royal order was issued for the exploration of the Cuanza as far as possible eastward, for the purpose of establishing presidios or fortified settlements along its banks, wherever it might be thought most advisable; but this order was never fully carried out.

The voyage from Calumbo to Muxima, which is the second Portuguese settlement on the river Cuanza, is fifty-four miles, or eighty-four from the sea. Muxima is a presidio in the Quissama territory, situated on the left bank of the river, and was founded, in 1599, by the famous Balthazar Rebello de Aragão, when João Furtado de Mendonça was governor. It was established at Aragão's own expense, as appears from his memoirs deposited in the royal palace of Ajuda, Lisbon.

This presidio is of the greatest importance, as it keeps in check the barbarous inhabitants of the Quissama, who, since their country was first conquered, to the present time, have been very troublesome to the Portuguese, making occasional inroads, similar to those made by the Kaffirs on the English colony of the Cape of Good Hope.

The fortress of Muxima, built of stone and mortar, mounts eight guns of a large calibre, and has barrack accommodation, stores, magazines, &c.

There is also a neat church built of freestone, dedicated to Nossa Senhora da Conceição, to which is attached a large number of slaves, for the immediate service of the church.

The village contains about 500 houses, four or five of which are built of stone; eight of the Sovas are feudal chiefs of the presidio, amongst whom are included the Sova Muxima, the descendant of the ancient possessor of the soil—and also the Sova Quizua, whose territory, together with a lagoon, was conquered as early as 1746.

These Sovas frequently revolt when a favourable opportunity offers, on which occasions they unite together against the presidio; but whenever any dispute arises among themselves, they immediately resort to the Portuguese for assistance.

The immediate borders of the river are very productive, but in general the soil is sterile. Mandioca, maize, beans, palm and mendoim oil, are the principal productions of the country. There is also a good supply of pigs, goats, sheep, &c.

An inland communication could be easily opened between this and Benguella.

In consequence of the unhealthiness of the climate, the white population does not increase. A great trade is carried on between Muxima and the markets in the interior, especially in ivory, which is brought for sale to Muxima in large quantities. Elephants abound, and may be seen in troops from the walls of the fortress.

Quantities of wax, and some gum, are also brought here from Quissama, Libolo, and Bailundo.

Since the abolition of the monopoly in ivory, the trade has greatly increased, as large quantities of it were formerly smuggled by the people of Ambriz. The tooth of the hippopotamus is also plentiful, and, in consequence of its whiteness, is considered more valuable than the elephant's tusks. The quantity exported annually amounts to about 582,112lbs. In the interior there are large numbers of the Abada, called by the common people unicorns, a species of rhinoceros, a very furious animal, and dangerous to hunt; notwithstanding which, more than 300 of their horns are annually exported, as they are much used for turning purposes, and are highly esteemed by gentlemen as walking-sticks. An antidote against poison is also extracted from them.

But of all the productions of Quissama, its salt is the most valuable. It is obtained from mines at a place called Adenda, or Demba, which is on the south coast, thirty-six miles from the sea, and the same distance from the river. The salt is negotiable, and passes as money.

The mines are in a great plain, surrounded by mountains. The ground is dry, and there is no drinkable water. The surface of the soil is covered with a species of *pizzarra miccacea*, mixed with fragments of a flinty substance, which always appears as saline crystals on the rocks.