often exhibited to the eye of the parched traveller, is pro- vokingly deceptive. Sometimes he sees in the distance what appears almost beyond question to be a sheet of water glittering in the sunbeams. He hastens forward, in hopes of soon allaying his thirst at the welcome lake ; but his efforts to reach it are as vain as those of the child to clasp the rainbow. Still his fainting steps pursue, for still the imaginary lake lies before him as lovely and alluring, but as distant, as ever.

It is of course only on the borders of the Sahara that oases on a great scale occur. In the eastern part they are extensive enough to form small kingdoms, generally de­pendent on some more powerful neighbour. In other parts, particularly the western, they consist merely of one or more detached villages, serving as emporia for the trade carried on by the caravans. And sometimes, especially as we penetrate into the interior of the desert, the oases are merely springs which nourish too scanty a vegetation to admit of inhabitants settling there, but affording supplies of water to the caravans, whose route is determined by the situation of these fountains. Dreary and encompassed with dangers as such abodes must be, every spot on which inhabi­tants can subsist is occupied; and notwithstanding the perils and sufferings of such travelling, regular journeys are per­formed across the whole breadth of this desolate region, from Morocco on the north to Timbuctoo on the south. The only animal fitted for traversing these solitudes as a beast of burden is the camel, which with equal truth and beauty has been designated the ship of the desert. By its patience of hunger and fatigue, by the provision which has been made for its carrying a large supply of water, and by the structure of its hoof, so formed as to glide smoothly over the level sand, it seems expressly designed by nature as a means of communication across these immense wastes The merchandise which they convey is firmly secured on their backs by means of creels and otherwise ; and for the sake of mutual aid and defence, as well as to relieve the te­dium of the route, they proceed in large bodies, occasion­ally amounting to the number of two thousand. The trade is carried on by merchants inured from their infancy to the hardships which attend such journeys. Their food con­sists of the milk of the camel, with barley-meal or Indian com, and a few dates, although the more opulent carry dried flesh and coffee. Water is conveyed in goat-skins, covered with tar for the purpose of preventing evaporation. The caravans, or akkabahs, as the Moors call them, do not pro­ceed in a straight line to their journey’s end, but turn in va­rious directions according to the position of the different oases. At each of these the travellers rest and refresh them­selves for a day or two, and take in supplies of water. Two great evils are encountered in crossing the desert. The first and most terrible is, when from a peculiarly dry season one or more of the springs happens to fail ; and the second is the burning wind, called the samoom, shoom, or simoom. Less than half a century ago a caravan consisting of two thousand persons and eighteen hundred camels, not finding water at the usual places, perished utterly, both men and animals. The vehemence of the wind, which is more like the breath of a furnace than the natural commotion of the atmosphere, raises and rolls before it the waves of red sand, causing the desert so much to resemble a stormy sea, that the Arabs have given it the name of “ Bahar billa-maia,” or waterless sea.

Major Denham relatés an instance of the terrible effects of the simoom. “ The overpowering effect of a sudden sand- wind, w hen nearly at the close of the desert, often destroys a whole kafila, already weakened with fatigue. The spot was pointed out to us, strewed with bones and dried carcasses, where, the year before, fifty sheep, two camels, and two men, perished from thirst and fatigue, when within eight hours’ march of the well which we were anxiously looking for.”

Captain Lyon thus describes the appearance of these dead bodies : “ We observed many skeletons of animals which had died of fatigue on the desert, and occasionally the grave of some human being. All these bodies were so dried by the extreme heat of the sun, that putrefaction did not appear to have taken place after death. In recently dead animals I could not perceive the slightest offensive smell ; and in those long dead, the skin, with the hair on it, remained un­broken and perfect, although so brittle as to break with a slight blow. The sand-winds never cause these carcasses to change their places, as in a short time a slight mound is formed round them, and they become stationary.” The fact here noticed of the preservation of the dead bodies in the sand has been observed in other parts of the world, for instance in South America. It appears that the heat of the sun rapidly exhales the natural juices, which prevents the usual process of putrefaction from going on, and thus the carcass is parched into something resembling the well- known mummy of Egypt.

The merchants possess some knowledge of the heavenly bodies, and direct their course by the polar star, often pre­ferring to travel during the clear nights of these climates rather than brave the scorching heat of a tropical sun. This nocturnal travelling, however, has its inconveniences, so that the most part of the journey is performed during the day. The camel-drivers sing as they go along ; and as they ap­proach houses, or when the camels seem in danger of drop­ping down with fatigue, their songs acquire additional spirit and expression, which is said to have the intended effect upon the animals. At four o’clock in the afternoon they pitch their tents and join in prayer. Supper follows this act of devotion, after which they sit down in a circle and converse or recite stories until sleep closes their eyes, and the perils of the desert are forgotten in its unconscious­ness.

The coast of Sahara contains some harbours and road­steads. Those of Rio-do-Ouro and of St Cyprian are form­ed by large creeks, resembling the mouths of rivers. The Gulf of Ardum, and the Portendic Road, have often been visited by Europeans. On the same line are Cape Boja- dore and Cape Blanco, which latter is supposed to mark the limit of the discoveries of the Carthaginians. At Ho­den, Tisheet or Tegazza, and Taudeny, in the western re­gion of Sahara, are extensive mines of rock-salt, an article which is wanting in the populous regions of Central Africa, and is consequently in great demand in those quarters. One of the principal dépôts of salt is Walet, which, by this ar­ticle, is rendered a place second in importance only to Tim­buctoo. Aroun, also, in the very centre of the desert, has become a place of some importance, containing three thou­sand inhabitants, chiefly by this trade and the passage of caravans. In the heart of Sahara, between Gadamis and Timbuctoo, is the district of Suat or Tuat, inhabited by a mixture of Arabs and Tuaricks, in no respect superior to the rest of the desert tribes. Aghably and Ain-el-Salah, their chief towns, are frequented as caravan stations, (r. r. r.)

SAHARUNPORE, an extensive and valuable district of Hindustan, in the province of Delhi, situated principally between the rivers Jumna and Ganges, and about the thirty- first degree of northern latitude. It is bounded on the north by the Sewalic Mountains, and the province of Se- rinagur. The soil is fertile, and being well watered by in­numerable streams from the hills, produces all kinds of grain, sugar, indigo, cotton, and tobacco. It has a fine and temperate climate for the greater part of the year; but dur­ing the months of April and May the hot winds blow with gτeat violence, while some of the winter months are exces­sively cold. This district, though it is placed between the Ganges and the Jumna, which here run parallel at the dis­tance of about fifty-five miles, is not subject to the periodi­cal inundation which prevails in Bengal and the southern