and other countries in the Niger bend with the river ports and the colonies on the Gulf of Guinea. There is a complete system of telegraphic communication with all the French colonies in West Africa. The principal line (over 2000 m. long) connects Dakar with Timbuktu and from Timbuktu goes east to Zinder. At Burrem on the Niger, 212 m. below Timbuktu, starts a line across the Sahara to Algeria.

*Trade and Agriculture.—*The chief exports are gum (which comes largely from the northern districts such as Kaarta), rubber, gold, kola nuts, leather and ostrich feathers. Part of the trade is still done by caravans across the Sahara to Morocco and Algeria, and a goodly proportion of the exports from the middle Niger are shipped from Konakry in French Guinea. Under the direction of French officials, cotton-growing on scientific methods was begun in the Niger basin in 1904. American and Egyptian varieties were introduced, the American varieties proving well adapted to the soil. Indigenous varieties of cotton are common and are cultivated by the natives for domestic use, weaving being a general industry. Gold is found in. the basin of the Faleme and of the Tankisso. Rubber is abundant in the southern part of the Niger bend, the latex being extracted by the natives in large quantities. The people are great agriculturists, their chief crops being millet, maize, rice, cotton and indigo. Tobacco is cultivated by the river folk along the banks inundated by the floods. Wheat is grown in the neighbourhood of Timbuktu, the seed having been, in all probability, brought from Morocco at the time of the Moorish invasion (see Timbuktu). The oil of the karíte or shea- butter tree, common in the southern and western regions, is largely used. Cattle are plentiful; there are several good breeds of horses; donkeys are numerous and largely used as transport animals; wool­bearing sheep—distinct from the smooth-haired sheep of the coast regions—are bred in many districts, the natives using the wool largely in the manufacture of blankets and rugs. Ostriches are fairly numerous in the upper portion of the Niger bend and on the left bank of the Niger east of Timbuktu, and their feathers form a valuable article of trade. Most of the trade of this vast region is with France and through Senegal.

HI. History and Administration

The story of the French conquests throughout West Africa is inseparably connected with the history of Senegal. Trading stations were established elsewhere on the coast, but the line of penetration into the interior of the continent was, until the last few years of the 19th century, invariably by way of the river Senegal. Hence there is a peculiar interest in the record of the early settlements on this coast. The Portuguese had some establishments on the banks of the Senegal in the 15th century; they penetrated to Bambuk in search of gold, and were for some time masters of that country, but the inhabitants rose and drove them out. Remains of their buildings arc still to be seen. The first French settlement was probably made in 1626 (see Senegal, river). Between 1664, when the French settlements were assigned to Colbert’s West India Company, and 1758, when the colony was seized by the British, Senegal had passed under the administration of seven different companies, none of which attained any great success, though from 1697 to 1724 affairs were conducted by a really able governor, André Brue, who did not, however, spend the whole of his time in Africa; from 1703 to 1714 he directed the affairs of Senegal from Paris. Brue made many exploring expeditions and was on one occasion (1701) captured by the natives, who extorted a heavy ransom- Under his direction the auriferous regions of Bambuk, long since abandoned by the Portuguese, were revisited (1716) and the first map of Senegal drawn (1724). In the meantime (1677) the French had captured from the Dutch Rufisque, Portudal, Joal and Goree and they were confirmed in possession of these places by the treaty of Nijmwegen (1678). In 1717 the French acquired Portendic, a roadstead half way between capes Verde and Blanco, and in 1724 Arguin, an island off the coast of the Sahara, which still belongs to the colony. Goree and the district of Cape Verde were captured by the British under Commodore Keppel in 1758, but were surrendered to the French in 1763, and by the treaty of peace in 1783 the whole of the Senegal was also restored. The British again captured the colony in the wars of the First Empire (Goree 1800, St Louis 1809) and, though the treaty of Paris authorized a complete restitution, the French authorities did not enter into possession till 1817. At that time the authority of France did not extend beyond the island of Goree and the town of St Louis, whilst up to 1854 little was effected by the thirty-seven governors who followed each other in rapid succession. Of these governors

Captain (afterwards Admiral) Bouët-Willaumez had previously explored the Senegal river as far as Médine and was anxious to increase French influence, but his stay in Senegal (1842-1844) was too brief to permit him to accomplish much.

The appointment of General Faidherbe as governor in 1854 proved the turning-point in the history of Senegal. In the meantime the Niger had been explored, Timbuktu visited by Europeans and the riches of the region were attracting attention. General Faidherbe sought to bring these newly opened-up lands under French sway, and dreamed of a French empire stretching across Africa from west to east. As far as concerned West Africa he did much to make that dream a reality. On taking up the governorship he set about subduing the Moorish (Berber) tribes of the Trarzas, Braknas and Duaish, whose “ kings,” especially the king of the Trarzas, had subjected the French settlers and traders to grievous and arbitrary exactions; and he bound them by treaty to confine their authority to the north bank of the Senegal. In 1855 he annexed the country of Walo and, ascending the river beyond Kayes, erected the fort of, Médine for the purpose of stemming the advancing tide of Moslem invasion, which under Omar al-Haji (Alegui) threatened the safety of the colony. In 1857 Médine was brilliantly defended by the mulatto Paul Holle against Omar, who with his army of 20,000 men had to retire before the advance of General Faidherbe and turn his attention to the conquest of the native states within the bend of the Niger. The conquest of the Senegambian region by the French followed. The outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War in 1870 checked the French schemes of penetration for some five or six years, but the delay proved to be no disadvantage for Great Britain, France’s only serious rival in West Africa at the time, remained inert.

The first French expedition into the heart of the Niger country was undertaken in 1863, when General Faidherbe sent Lieut. E. Mage@@1 and Dr Quintin to explore the country east of the Senegal. The two travellers pushed as far as Segu on the Niger, then the capital of the almany Ahmadu, a son of Omar al-Haji. At Segu they were forcibly detained from February 1864 to March 1866.

During this period they gathered much valuable information concerning the geography, ethnology and history of the middle Niger region. In 1878 the explorer Paul Soleillet (1842-1886) also penetrated to Segu. In 1879 Colonel Brière de l'Isle (governor of Senegal, 1876-1881) appointed Captain Joseph S. Gallieni to investigate the route for a railway and to reopen communications with the almany Ahmadu; and at this time the post of Bafulabé was constructed. The armed conquest began in 1880, and for more than fifteen years was carried on by Borgnis-Desbordes, J. S. Gallieni, H. N. Frey, Louis Archinard, Col. Combes, Tite Pierre Eugene Bonnier and other officers. In 1881 the Niger was reached; the fort of Kita was erected to the south-east of Médine to watch the region between the Senegal and the Joliba (upper Niger); the fort of Bamako on the Niger was built in 1883; a road was made, 400 m. of telegraph line laid down and the work of railway construction begun. In 1887 Ahmadu, who had formerly been anxious to obtain British protection, signed a treaty placing the whole of his country under French protection.@@2 Besides Ahmadu the principal opponent of the French was a Malinké (Mandingo) chieftain named Samory, a man of humble origin, born about 1846, who first became prominent as a reformer of Islam, and

@@@1 Lieut. E. Mage (1837-1869) of the French navy, an officer of brilliant promise, first visited Senegal in 1856 when, under Faid- herbe’s direction, he went on a mission to the Duaish Moors. The "Gorgone,” which he commanded, was wrecked off Brest in December 1869 and Mage was drowned.

@@@2 It was in this year (1887) that the governor of Senegal took possession of a small uninhabited group of islands, named the Alcatras, lying off the coast of French Guinea. This act had a tragic sequel. By agreement with the governor, a chieftain of the neigh­bouring mainland sent four of his warriors to the islands to guard the tricolour. These soldiers were, however, like the islands themselves, completely forgotten by the authorities, and, the Alcatras producing nothing but sand, the four men starved to death, after exhausting the supplies with which they had been originally provided.