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# WEST AFRICAN COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES, BRITISH AND NATIVE

AND A VINDICATION  
OF THE AFRICAN RACE

JAMES AFRICANUS BEALE HORTON

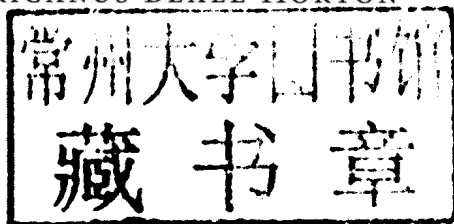


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*And a Vindication of the African Race*

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### **West African Countries and Peoples, British and Native**

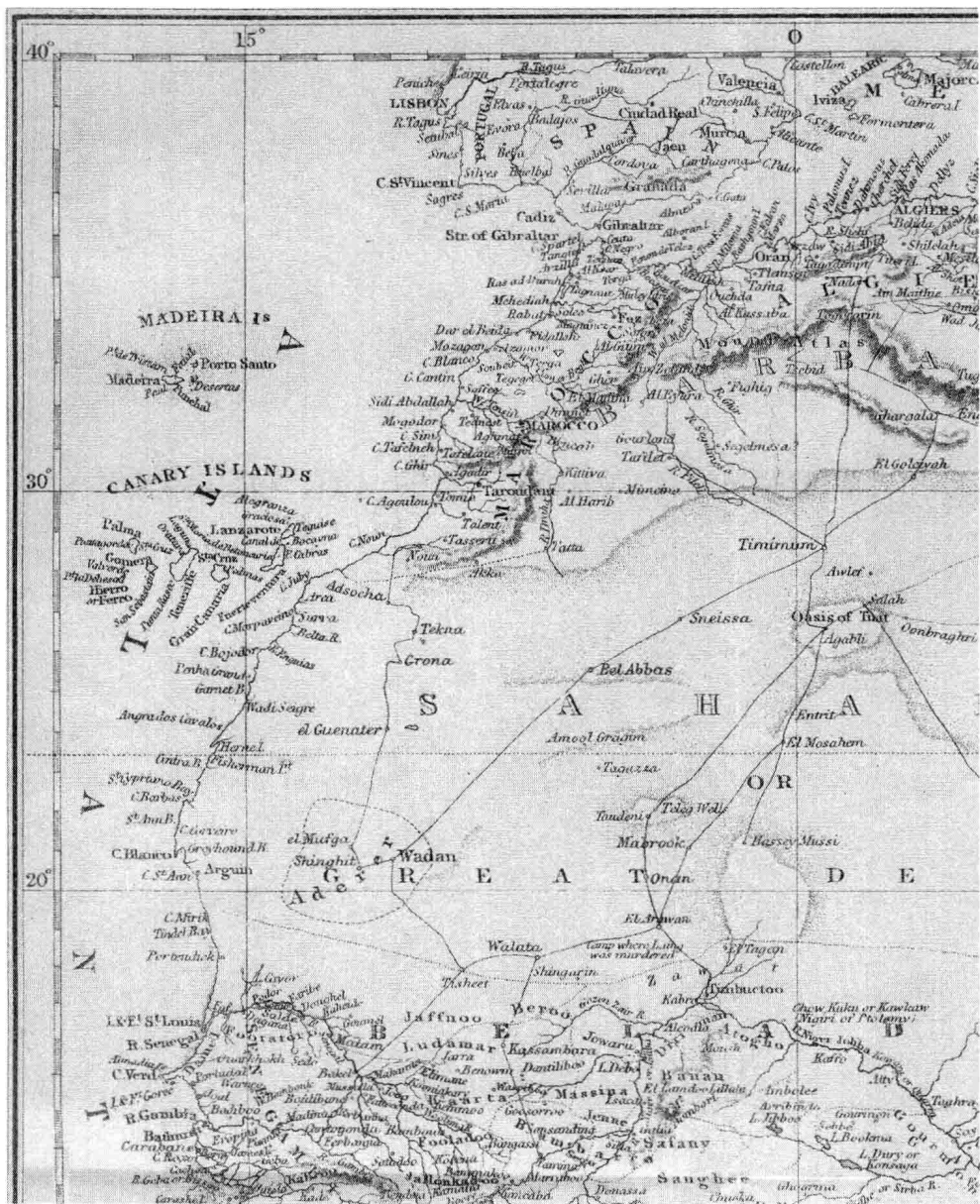
This book, first published in 1868, became the best-known work of medical officer and writer James Africanus Beale Horton (1835–1883), who was born in Sierra Leone to parents of Igbo descent. He was chosen by the British to train as an army medical officer and attended King's College, London, and Edinburgh University. He returned to West Africa and published his doctoral thesis, which was a medical topography of the region; subsequent works called for health reforms. *West African Countries*, however, went beyond medicine. In it Horton refutes the derogatory racial theories about Africans rife in Victorian Britain and its empire, and he examines the possibility of self-government and how it might function in Sierra Leone and other territories in West Africa, foreshadowing the decolonisation that took place almost one hundred years later.

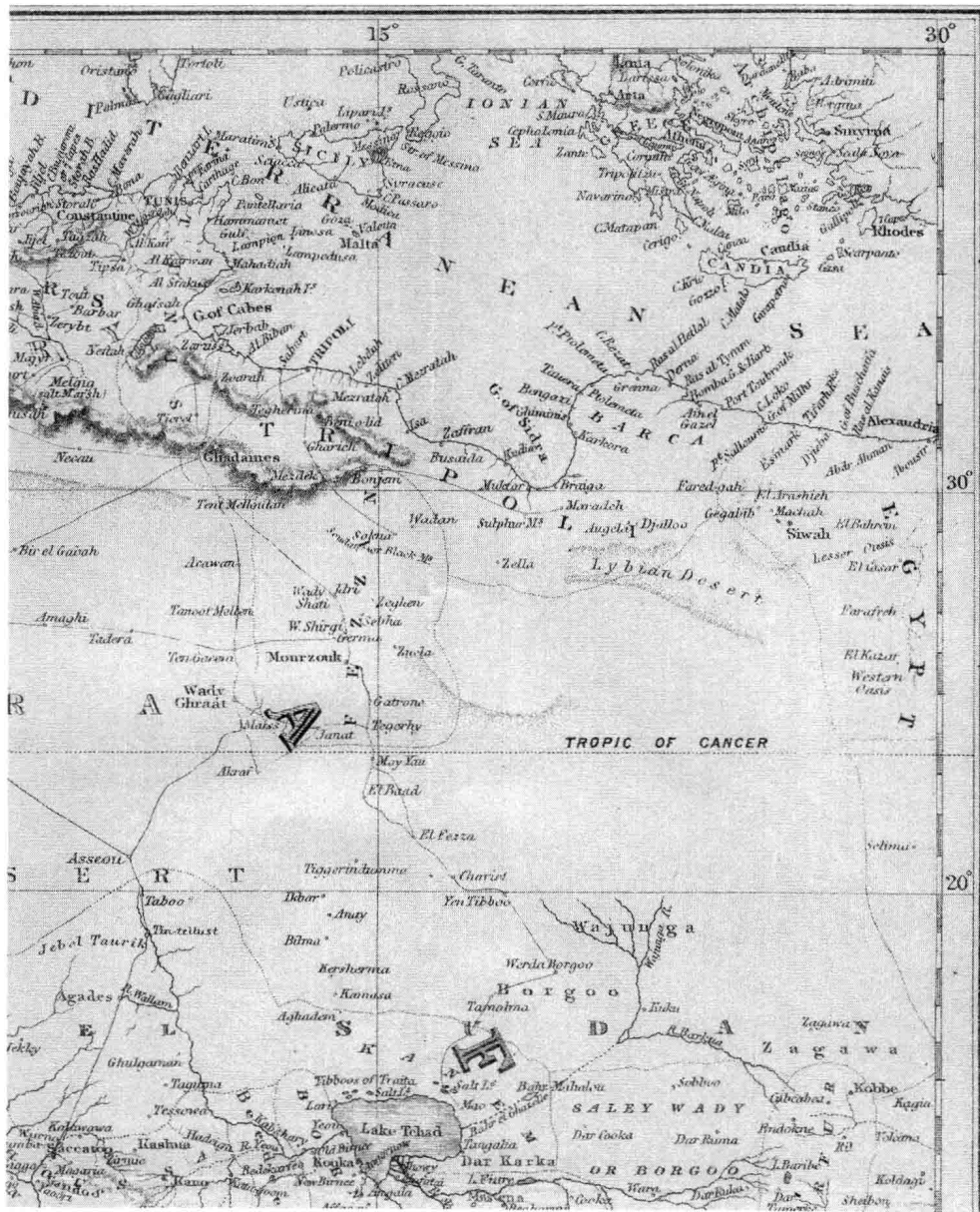
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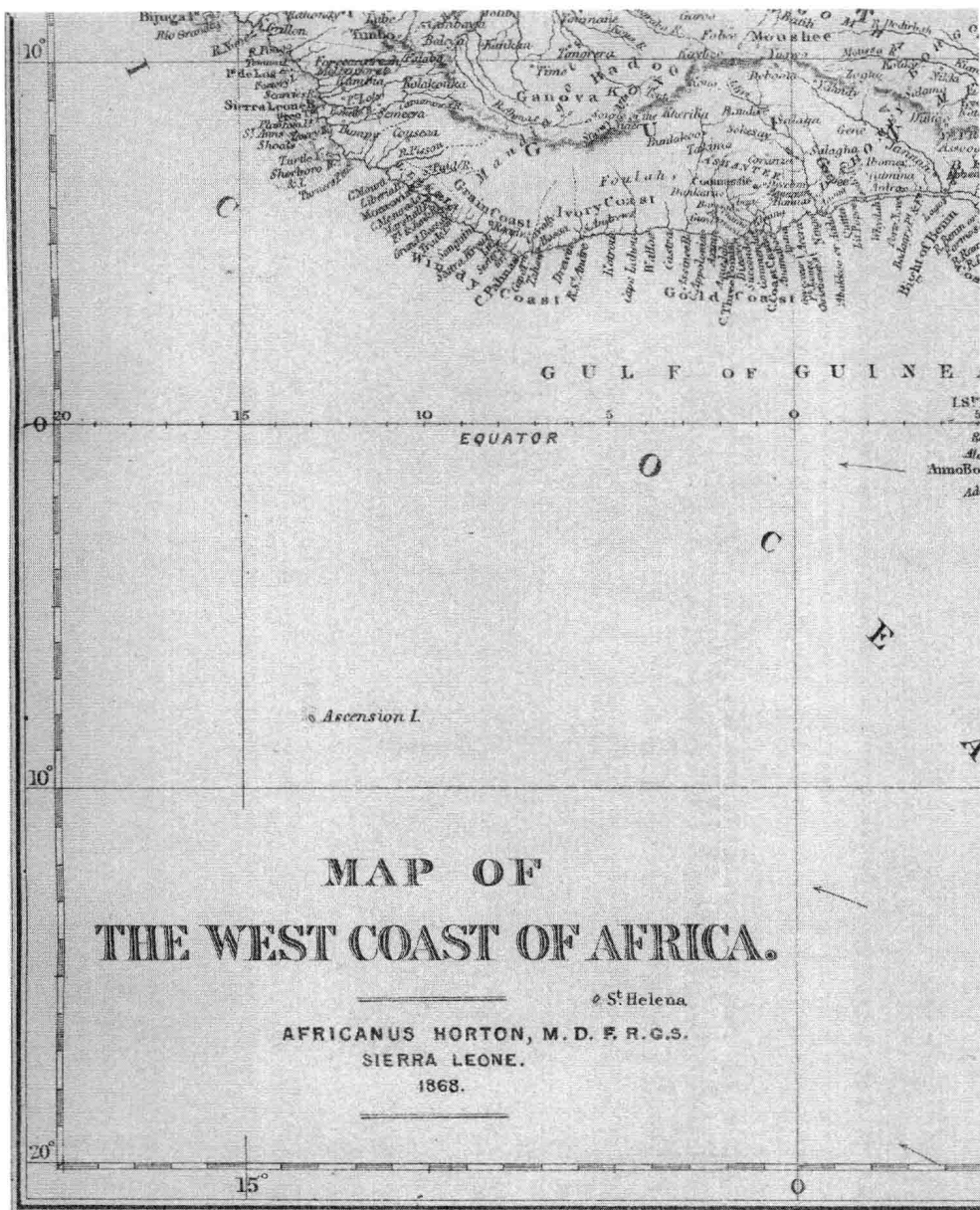
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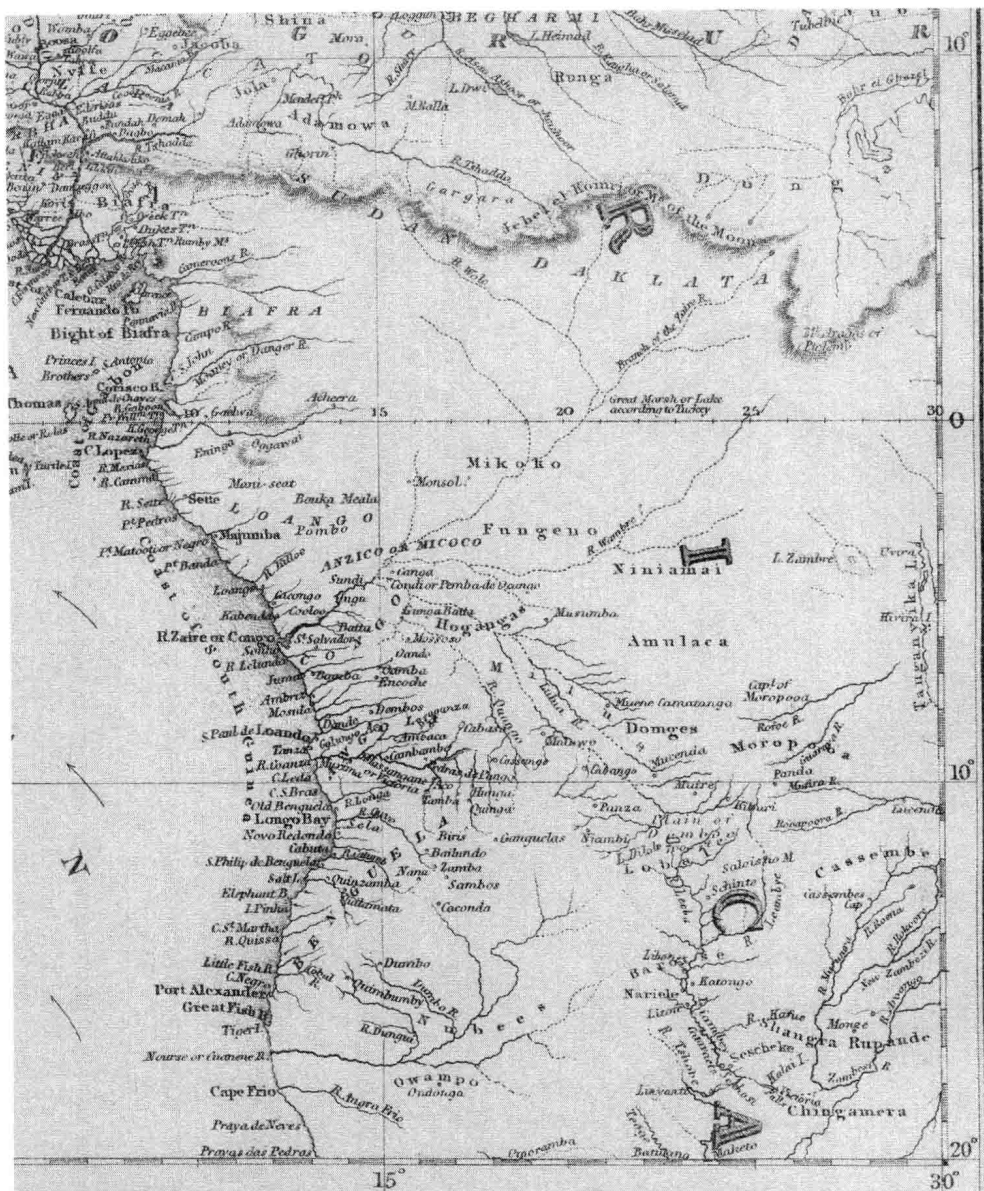
WEST AFRICAN COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES.











# WEST AFRICAN COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES,

BRITISH AND NATIVE.

WITH THE

REQUIREMENTS NECESSARY FOR ESTABLISHING THAT SELF  
GOVERNMENT RECOMMENDED BY THE COMMITTEE OF  
THE HOUSE OF COMMONS, 1865;

AND A

VINDICATION OF THE AFRICAN RACE.

BY

JAMES AFRICANUS B. HORTON, M.D. Edin., F.R.G.S.,

AUTHOR OF "PHYSICAL AND MEDICAL CLIMATE AND METEOROLOGY OF THE WEST COAST OF  
AFRICA," "GUINEA WORM, OR DRACUNCULUS," ETC., ETC., ETC.

STAFF ASSISTANT-SURGEON OF H.M. FORCES IN WEST AFRICA; ASSOCIATE OF KING'S COLLEGE, LONDON;  
FOREIGN FELLOW OF THE BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF EDINBURGH; CORRESPONDING MEMBER OF  
THE MEDICAL SOCIETY OF KING'S COLLEGE, LONDON; MEMBER OF THE INSTITUTE  
D'AFRIQUE OF PARIS, ETC., ETC., ETC.

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"Africa ought to be allowed to have a fair chance of raising her character in the scale  
of the civilized world."—EMPEROR OF RUSSIA.

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LONDON:

W. J. JOHNSON, 121, FLEET STREET.

1868.

LONDON: W. J. JOHNSON, PRINTER, 121, FLEET STREET.

TO

THE REV. HENRY VENN, B.D.,

PREBENDARY OF ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL, HONORARY SECRETARY OF THE CHURCH MISSIONARY  
SOCIETY, ETC., ETC.,

AS A

SLIGHT MEMENTO

OF APPRECIATION FOR HIS UNTIRING ZEAL TOWARDS THE DEVELOPMENT  
OF THE MORAL, SOCIAL, AND CHRISTIAN ADVANCEMENT OF  
THE AFRICAN RACE;

AND AS AN

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF MANY PERSONAL KINDNESSES RECEIVED,

*This Work*

IS MOST RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED

BY

THE AUTHOR.

## P R E F A C E .

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IT must appear astounding to those who have carefully and thoughtfully read the history of England in connexion with the subject of the African race, when its greatest statesman, so long ago as 1838, stated in Parliament the endeavours his Government had been making to induce the various continental and transatlantic ones to put down slavery, that the abolition of that institution in the Southern States of America should have produced so much bile amongst a small section in England; who, although they have had undeniable proofs of the fallacy of their arguments, and inconsistency of their statements with existing facts, have formed themselves into an association (*sic* Anthropological Society) to rake up old malice and encourage their agents abroad to search out the worst possible characteristics of the African, so to furnish material for venting their animus against him. 'Its object,' as has been stated, 'is to prove him unimprovable, therefore unimproved since the beginning, and, consequently, fitted only to remain a hewer of wood and drawer of water for the members of that select society.' It would have been sufficient to treat this with the contempt it deserves, were it not that leading statesmen of the present day have shown themselves easily carried away by the malicious views of these negrophobists, to the great prejudice of that race.

It is without doubt an uphill work for those who have always combated that vile crusade of prejudice, especially when considering themselves at the point of putting a crowning stroke to the superstructure which had taken them years to erect, to find the foundation undermined by rats of a somewhat formidable size, and therefore requiring a renewed and a more unassailable structure. One of the anthropological myths is to prove that, up to the age of puberty, the negro can combat successfully, and even show a precocity superior to that of the more enlightened race of a temperate climate, but that after this period, which corresponds to the closing of the sutures, he is doomed—a limit is set upon his further progress. But to prove more convincingly that this malign statement is fallacious, let those who are interested in the subject refer to the Principals of the Church Missionary College, Islington; King's College, London; and Fourah Bay College, Sierra Leone; where full-blooded Africans, who have had the complete development of their sutures, have been under tuition, and they will then be able to form an opinion from unbiassed testimony. I do not for a moment attempt here to prove that, as a whole, a race whose past generations have been in utter darkness, the mental faculty of whose ancestors has never received any culture for nearly a thousand years, could attempt to compete successfully in their present state with one whose ancestors have successively been under mental training and moulding for centuries. To think so would be to expect an ordinary-bred horse to have equal chances in a grand race with a thorough-bred one. But I say that the African race, as exemplified by the results of enterprises in Western Africa, if put in comparison with any race on the face of the

globe, whether Caucasian, Mongolian, Teutonic, Celtic, or any other just emerging from a state of barbarism, as they are, will never be found a whit behind. But to draw deductions by comparing their present state with the civilization of the nineteenth century is not only absurd, but most unphilosophical.

Even Captain Burton, the *noli me tangere* of the African race, the greatest authority in the present school of English anthropologists (their vice-president), who, from his writings, has led everyone to believe that he has a fiendish hatred against the negro, whilst animadverting in all his works on Western Africa, in the most unmistakably malicious language, on the impossibility of improving that race he so hates, forgot himself in one place, and exclaimed, as to their intellectual superiority, 'There are about 100 Europeans in the land; amongst these there are many excellent fellows, *but it is an unpleasant confession to make*, the others appear to be inferior to the Africans, native as well as mulatto. The possibility of such a thing had never yet reached my brain. At last, in colloquy with an old friend upon the Coast, the idea started up, and, after due discussion, we adopted it. I speak of *morale*. In intellect the *black race is palpably superior, and it is fast advancing in the path of civilization.*' The first and last *italics* are ours.

But these anthropologists have still worse designs for Africa, since we find them seriously arguing in their meetings and proclaiming in the public press that the Mohammedan religion, in all cases where Western Africa is concerned, should supplant that of Christianity; that the belief in the False Prophet is substantially better than the belief in Christ



for the African. And when we see the chief of them suiting his actions to his words, kneeling in the presence of the native population every morning with his face towards the rising sun, bowing and making signs, in the attitude and after the fashion of a true believer in Mohammedanism; when, I say, we see such men seriously arguing that polygamy is the natural and more genial institution, and monogamy not, and laying aside and totally ignoring the biblical revelation, what else can the negro expect but a complete falsification of every circumstance relating to his race?

I believe and firmly hold, that it is not by Mohammedanizing the inhabitants of Western Africa according to the present school of anthropologists, that they can or will be civilized; and I maintain that no civilization would take root and bear fruit except that based on the principles of the Christian religion; and that the people had far better remain as they are, than to have any other religious belief except the Christian introduced and propagated amongst them. I, amongst a great many others, appreciate every European element that enters Western Africa, whether in the capacity of merchants or pioneers of civilization, or in that of missionaries; and whilst I hail their efforts, respect their talents, and revere the civilization they are capable of imparting, I will never permit any unjust abuse, any unfounded diatribe against the African race, to be ruthlessly lavished on them without repelling or exposing the calumny. I am aware that such explicit and independent statements as are contained in this work, do not tend to advance a man's worldly interest; but if they tend to expose the weak and one-sided opinions of those who take every opportunity to advance theories about Africa and the Africans contrary to the truth,