

so that even the north parts of Africa are hotter than the south parts of Europe; and over the central regions of Africa the sun's rays falls perpendicularly, as they do over the extreme south of Asia. The middle of Africa, therefore, is hotter than its southern parts; for, as I have told you, wherever the sun's rays fall straight down, that is, in perpendicular lines, there it feels hottest.

Africa, as you have before read, contains vast deserts. The Sahara is the largest desert in the world, and is said to be like a vast ocean of sand, often raised up by the winds, like the waves of the sea; and the green spots, called oases, which are shaded by a few palm trees, and kept fresh by some spring of water, appear to the weary traveller like islands in this vast ocean. But Africa is not without some fertile countries. Wherever there are rivers it is fertile, and wherever there are mountains there are rivers, because there is always rain in mountain regions; and these rivers descending from the mountains, carry fertility with them as they wind through the plains.

All the nations of Africa, north of the great desert, and one country, besides Abyssinia, resemble the people of the south of Europe in their skin, or, if exposed to the sun, are rather darker.

South of the great desert, the nations are black, and though differing from each other, all belong to the negro race. Some negroes have black skins, short, black, curly, and woolly hair, with black eyes, flat noses, and thick lips. They are certainly an ugly race, but when educated and well treated, they are found to be kind and good-natured, faithful to their protectors, and as well