

**A voyage to Madagascar and the East Indies ... / Translated from the French; il. with an accurate map of the island of Madagascar. To which is added, a memoir on the Chinese trade [by Brunel].**

### **Contributors**

Rochon, Alexis, 1741-1817.  
Trapp, Joseph.  
Brunel.

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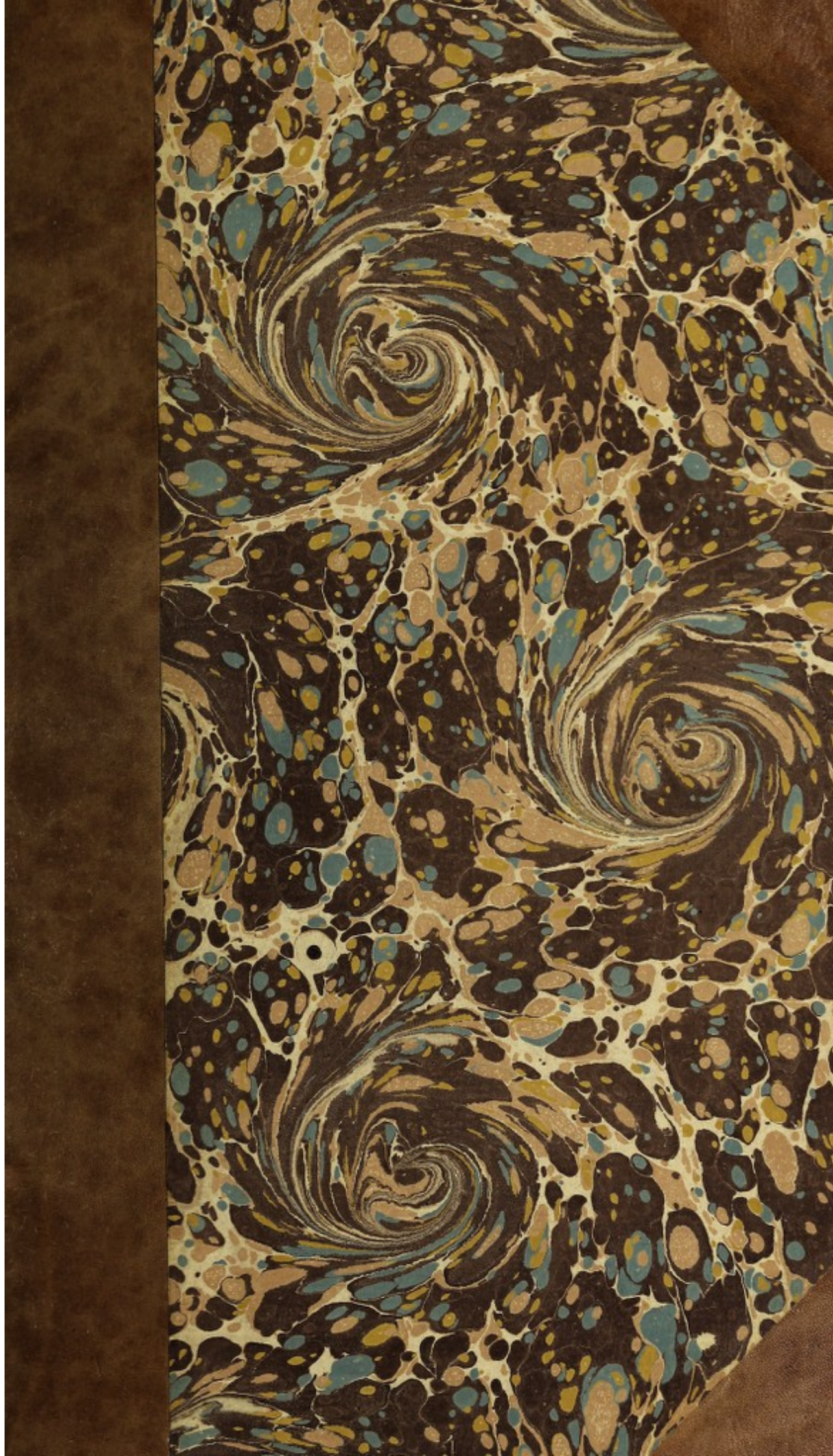
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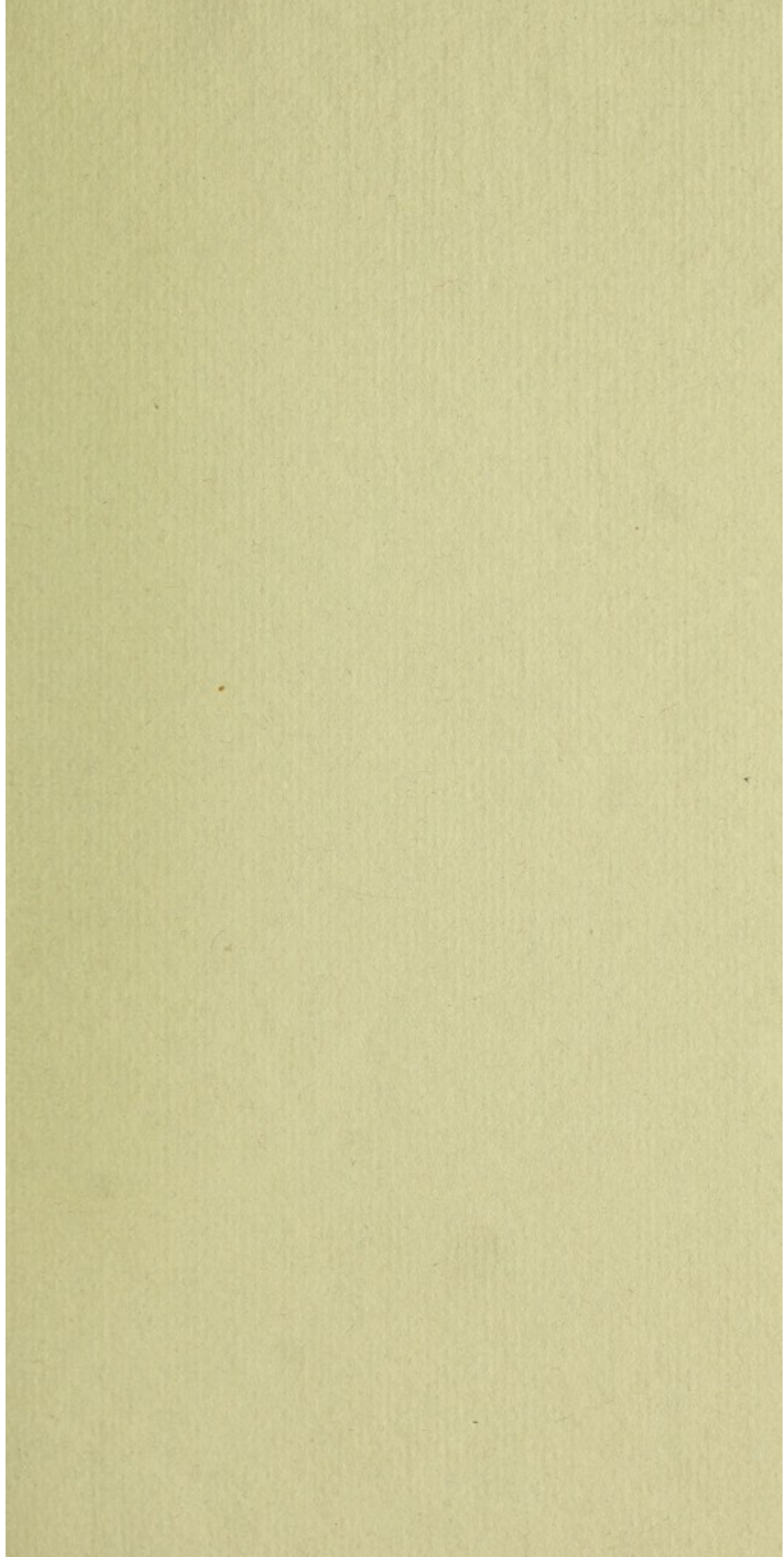







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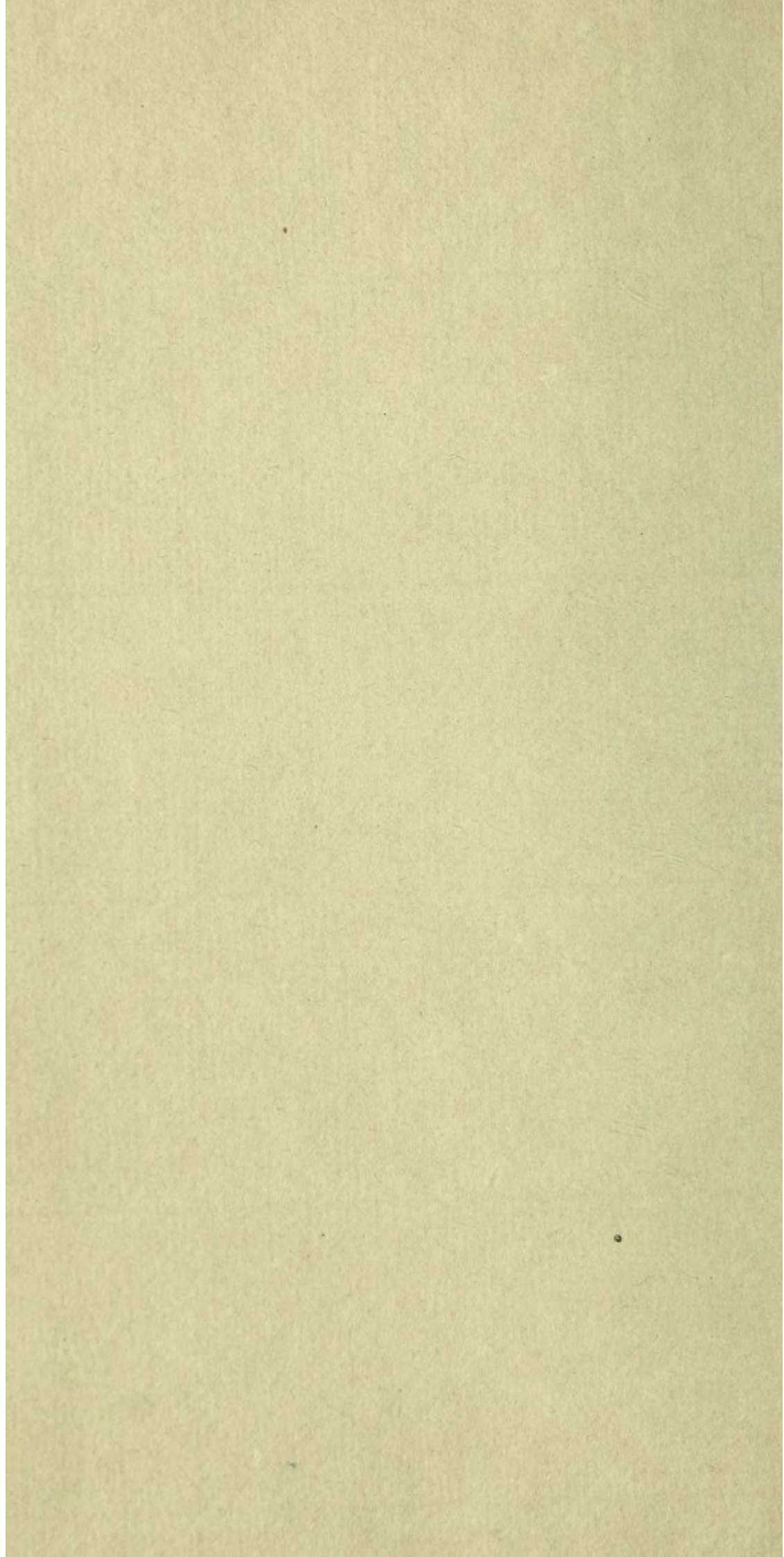
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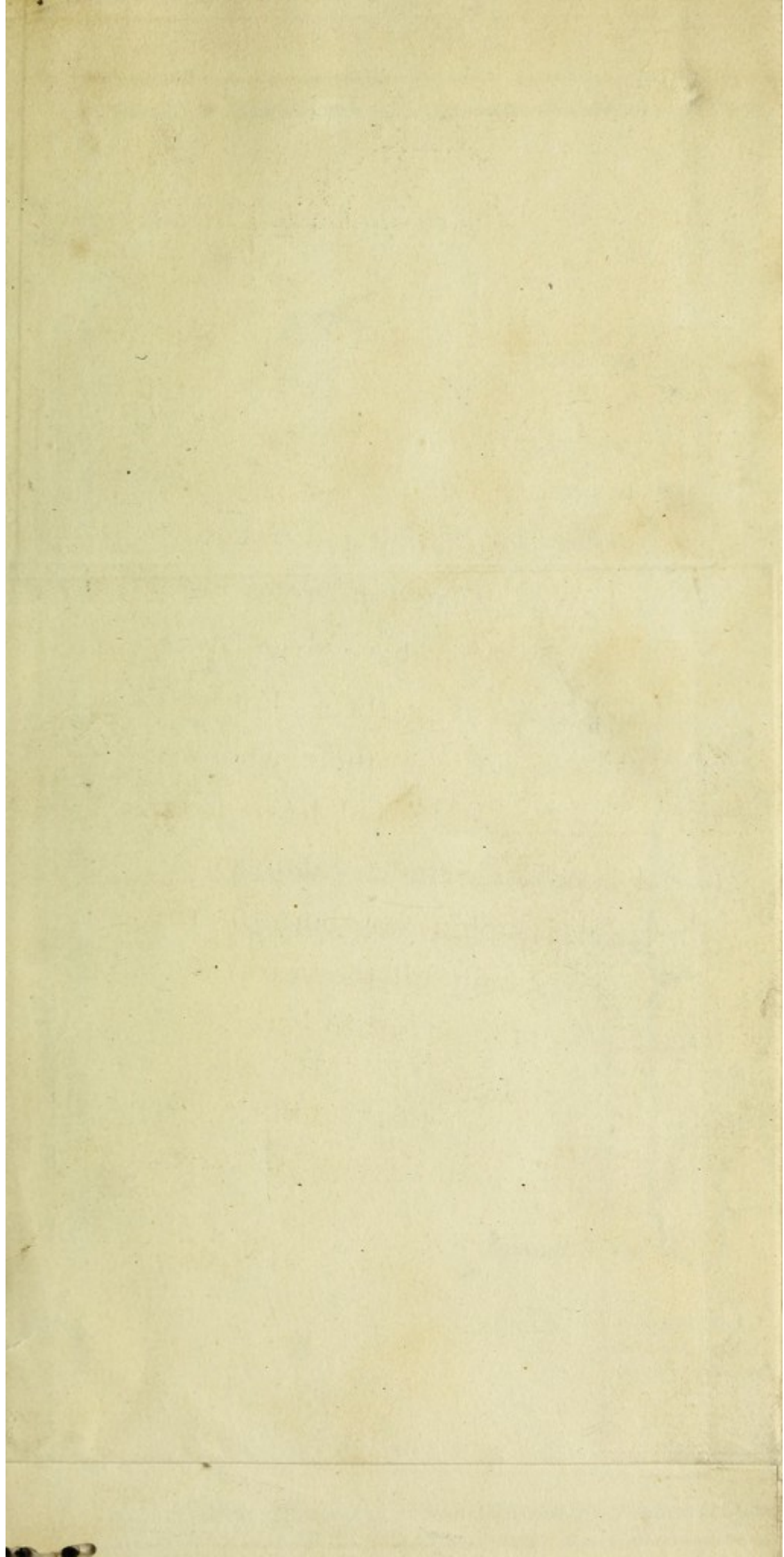
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A  
V O Y A G E  
TO  
M A D A G A S C A R,  
AND THE  
E A S T I N D I E S.

Alexis Marie  
BY THE ABBE ROCHON,

Member of the Academies of Sciences of Paris and Petersburg, Astronomer  
of the Marine, Keeper of the King's Philosophical Cabinet,  
Inspector of Machines, Money, &c.

*TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH.*

ILLUSTRATED WITH  
AN ACCURATE MAP OF THE ISLAND OF MADAGASCAR.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,  
A MEMOIR ON THE CHINESE TRADE.

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L O N D O N:  
PRINTED FOR G. G. J. AND J. ROBINSON, PATERNOSTER-ROW.

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M.DCC.XCII.



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the Translator has taken the liberty of  
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nese Trade, written by Mr. Brunel, and  
now translated for the first time into  
English.



LONDON:  
Printed by J. G. ALLEN, 10, Northampton Place, Strand.  
1830.

## INTRODUCTION.

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INTRODUCTION.

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When Vasco da Gama had opened  
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## INTRODUCTION.

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a from



from the ports of the Red Sea, directed their course, for the most part, to the gulf of Persia ; but it was not uncommon to see them stretch along the coasts of Abyffinia, and, without losing sight of land, enter the channel of Mozambique. In this channel they traded alternately with the inhabitants of the coast of Africa, and the islanders of Madagascar.

The ports which they principally frequented were Querimbe and Mozambique on the African coast, and Vingara and Bombetoc in Madagascar.

The Asiatics, notwithstanding the imperfection of their charts, and the extreme ignorance of their pilots, often engaged in the boldest enterprises. They not only visited the coasts of Malabar, but they even ventured to lose sight of land. They launched forth into the open ocean, and, after traversing



ing the gulf of Bengal, pursued their way to the Moluccas and the Philippines, through the straits of Sunda and Malacca.

The dangers inseparable from a voyage, which must have been tedious and difficult to sailors scarcely acquainted with the elements of the nautical science, did not discourage them. Their commanders were invited to the Straits, and the Moluccas, by the temptation of a lucrative commerce. They were certain of finding in that Archipelago Chinese and Japanese vessels, which went thither to search for nutmegs and cloves; and a reciprocal exchange of Persian and Indian merchandise, with the merchandise of China and Japan, formed a trade equally advantageous to the Indian and the Chinese.

At the period, therefore, when the Portuguese doubled the Cape of Good Hope, the navigation of the Moors was not con-



fined merely to coasting; and such voyages, undertaken without any other compass than what was supplied by an imperfect knowledge of the apparent motion of the sun and stars, certainly deserve to be known by those who study the progress and improvement of hydrography. The instrument used by pilots in the Indian seas for taking the latitude is in the form of a chaplet, the beads of which shew the altitude of the stars for the different places at which they are to touch. The position of the beads, with regard to the eye and the horizon, here serves as an index.

Much dexterity and long practice are necessary to use this instrument, the imperfections of which must be readily perceived by those who have the smallest notion of navigation. I tried several times at Pondicherry to make use of it, but I could never obtain by it the altitude of a star within a degree



degree of the truth. I must, however, allow that, being short-sighted, observation to me becomes much more difficult and inconvenient than it would perhaps be to another.

Though the commerce which the Moors carried on in the Asiatic seas cannot, in any respect, be compared to that which has been since carried on by the European nations, it was not altogether contemptible. So many celebrated writers have given the history of the rise and decline of the European establishments in India, that it would be entirely useless for me to say any thing here on that subject. My design, in this work, is, to give an account of the island of Madagascar, and of the advantages which might be derived from settlements there, were they made in such a manner as to promote the happiness and instruction of the islanders.

But, notwithstanding every precaution,

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and all the care that may be taken, infant establishments in that island must always have a great dependence on the isles of France and of Bourbon, on account of their proximity. It is of importance therefore to give some idea of them.

If the isles of France and of Bourbon are, at present, the principal settlements which the French have in the Indian seas, it is only to their situation that they are indebted for that advantage.

The port of the former is the arsenal of the French forces, and the centre of their commerce.

The isles of France and of Bourbon were discovered by the Portuguese, who called the former *Cernè*, and the latter *Mascarhenas*. The isle of Bourbon has no port capable of receiving large vessels. It is fifty leagues in circumference; is almost of a circular form; and its mountains are very high.

The



The summit of the mountain called *les trois Salasses*, is reckoned to be sixteen hundred fathoms above the level of the sea. This mountain stands nearly in the centre of the island.

The principal place in the isle of Bourbon is called St. Dennis. It is in this town that the governors of the colony reside. That celebrated astronomer the Abbé de la Caille found, by astronomical observation, that it lies in lat.  $20^{\circ} 51'$  and long.  $53^{\circ} 10'$  east from the meridian of Paris.

The difficulty of landing at St. Dennis has caused a kind of bridge to be invented, which extends a good way into the sea, and is raised so high above its level as to be out of the reach of the greatest surges. From the extremity of this bridge hangs a ladder of ropes, and small vessels approach in such a manner that those who wish to go on shore can lay hold of the ladder, at the



moment when the sea, by the violence of the surf, has attained to its utmost degree of elevation. This manner of landing is ingenious, though very inconvenient, on account of the vibratory motion of the ladder, and the shocks it experiences by the agitation of the sea: but the surf is here so strong, and breaks against the shore with such violence, that without this expedient communication between the town and the harbour would be frequently interrupted.

The volcano of the isle of Bourbon, though its eruptions are very common, has never occasioned any devastation since the place was inhabited. The planters have had the prudence to remove from this formidable gulf, access to which is so dangerous, if we may judge from the description given of it by that learned naturalist, Mr. Commerfon.

M. de Cremont, then intendant of the  
isle



isle of Bourbon, spared neither care nor expences to enable Mr. Commerfon to approach as near as poffible to the mouth of the volcano, and to examine its productions. He even did more: he accompanied him in his excurfion: and this enlightened zeal in a governor deferves, without doubt, the grateful thanks of thofe who cultivate the fciences and intereft themfelves in their progrefs.

Access to the volcano of the ifle of Bourbon is very difficult: the country is burnt up, and a defart for more than fix miles round, while heaps of afhes, lava, and fcoriæ, together with fiftures and precipices, render it very dangerous and troublefome to afcend to it. One muft choofe a favourable time, during ferene weather, to vifit the mouth of this gulf, for a few drops of rain are fufficient to excite an eruption. Thofe who fhould attempt to approach it,

when



when the weather is unsettled, might lose their lives by their imprudence\*. The view

\* The following account is given of this volcano, in a Memoir published by Mr. Brunel. "It is situated almost at the summit of a hollow truncated mountain, the base of which, gently inclining, rests on a bed of calcined earth, at the distance of a full league from the sea. Though the matter it contains in its bowels boils up continually, it does not always swell so much as to rise through the crater. When an eruption takes place, the melted lava may be seen flowing down the sides of the mountain in undulations, which follow each other in succession, and exhibit the appearance of a flaming cascade. The light which it diffuses to a great distance, whether at land or at sea, is equal to that of the moon when she shines with full splendour. It is even a tradition, believed in the country, that this natural pharos first drew hither those Europeans who visited these coasts.

"The environs of the volcano are parched and covered with sal-ammoniac, native sulphur, alum, pumice-stone, and scoria. A remarkable peculiarity which distinguishes this from all other volcanoes is, the frequency



view of a volcano, in the time of an eruption, is a very awful and majestic spectacle.

The

quency of its eruptions, which are never attended with earthquakes : the security, therefore, of the inhabitants is not disturbed by the vicinity of a phenomenon, which every where else is highly dangerous. It may not, perhaps, be improper to remark, that water has never been seen to spout up from this volcano, and that no hot mineral springs are found in the island.

“ In the month of June, 1787, this volcano was observed in one of its greatest eruptions. The summit of the mountain was covered with condensed vapours, of a blackish colour, which rose from the ancient crater in spiral clouds. On the 24th lava ran into the sea. Nine days after it had been thrown up, it extended eighty fathoms in breadth in some places, and in others forty. A month after, the matter, which flowed then in abundance, formed a current to the sea of about sixty fathoms in breadth, and from fifteen to sixteen feet in depth. The waves smoked at the distance of more than thirty fathoms from the place where the lava fell into the water, appearing around of a greenish yellow, and forming a band to the leeward of the same colour,

nearly



The study of those subterranean fires which occasion such phenomena, and still more that

nearly a league in length. This current, parallel to one older, and consisting in the like manner of several strata of melted matter, formed a projection, the basis of which was volcanic sand mixed with a kind of iron drofs. Eleven days after the arrival of the lava at the sea, a solid crust was formed at its surface, upon which it was possible to ascend to within fifteen paces of the place from which it issued; but, as the heat then became insupportable, the observer called to mind the tragical fate of Pliny, and repressed his curiosity. One, however, may venture, without any danger, to walk on a torrent of flowing lava, if care be taken to examine its effects. In flat places it soon cools at the superficies, which then becomes hard like thick ice, whilst the liquid matter may be seen through the crevices, continuing its course in perfect freedom below; but, sometimes, meeting with obstacles, it flows back, breaks the crust, and covers it with fresh boiling lava. In declivities, therefore, and sinuosities, it is long in acquiring a durable degree of solidity; and this the curious ought to observe with attention.

“ On



that of the substances produced by them,  
cannot be too strongly recommended to  
those

“ On the first of August the lava ceased to flow ;  
but it still emitted smoke, and appeared extremely red  
at the bottom. Some time after another crater or  
mouth was thought to have been discovered at the  
distance of a league from St. Dennis, the capital of the  
island. Clouds of smoke and a strong heat proceeded  
from a ravine, which it was impossible to approach  
during the space of a month ; but at the end of that  
time it was perceived that the heat and smoke issued  
from a cavern, which was found to be the retreat of  
certain Maroon negroes. Fire having been kindled in  
this place, either by accident or on purpose, it had  
been nourished by a quantity of leaves, stalks of maize,  
and other combustible substances, lodged in it for a long  
time, which burned very slowly, because the cavern  
received little air. The remains of birds nests found  
here plainly shewed that this cavern had not always  
been exposed to the like degree of heat ; and this added  
to other observations quieted those alarms which had  
been excited by this new appearance. The isle of  
France, in the neighbourhood, is considered as a coun-

try



those who wish to render their travelling useful to the advancement of science.

### Volcanic

try which has been exposed to violent convulsions of nature. It abounds with caverns, cascades, precipices, subterranean arches, iron mines, calcined stones, vitrifications, torrefied sand, and pyrites, which are striking vestiges of ancient volcanoes ; but, on account of their antiquity, their situation cannot now be ascertained, nor their craters distinguished. The most elevated mountains in this island are not above five hundred fathoms high, whereas in the isle of Bourbon there are peaks which rise more than fifteen hundred fathoms. These two islands, which are distant from each other only thirty leagues, were, doubtless, formerly united, and have been detached by some prodigious effort of nature. We have every reason to believe that they are still connected at the bottom of the sea, and that there are subterranean passages which form a communication between them.

“ The earthquake, which happened at the isle of France, on the 4th of August 1786, seems to support this conjecture. That morning, at thirty-five minutes after six, a calm succeeded a strong breeze from the

E. and



Volcanic productions exhibit an immense variety of appearances. Filaments of glass, extremely

E. and E. S. E. which had prevailed for four days. A hollow noise, which terminated in a sudden explosion, like the report of a cannon, was heard in the S. W. quarter; and at the same instant two smart shocks were felt, one vertical and the other horizontal. At that time the barometer did not indicate the smallest change in the atmosphere; and the E. S. E. breeze commenced a quarter of an hour after, and continued till eleven the night following. This strange phenomenon was not attended with any accident fatal to the isle of France; and, by accounts from the isle of Bourbon, it appeared, that the volcano there had thrown up much larger quantities of lava than for some days preceding.

“ We have reason therefore to suppose that the combustible substances in the caverns of the isle of France, after fermenting, caught fire, and that having then endeavoured to force a passage, they experienced a resistance proportional to their force, which must have produced those shocks above mentioned; and that making an effort afterwards in every direction, they found



extremely fine, and almost resembling hair, are sometimes found at a very great distance from volcanoes. This species of lava is not at all common.

The origin of the colony of the isles of France and Bourbon is connected with the first establishments of the French in Madagascar. Were it not for the proximity of Madagascar to these islands, one could scarcely conceive why the latter should have been chosen for the purpose of forming a respectable settlement. These two islands are so small, that they are hardly perceptible in a chart of the vast Indian Ocean.

It is well known, that several Frenchmen, found a passage through subterranean galleries to the isle of Bourbon, where, meeting with less resistance, they issued through the crater of the volcano, which prevented that island from experiencing any shocks, though there might be the same commotion in both places." T.



who had suffered from the unhealthfulness of Madagascar, formed a resolution of quitting that large island, in order to settle in the small island of Bourbon, the air of which is exceedingly salubrious.

It was in the year 1664 that they put this design in execution ; and they took the wise precaution of carrying along with them some sheep and cows, together with a young bull.

The island, at that time, was uninhabited, and the soil uncultivated : but the coast abounded with fish, and the ground was covered with tortoises of an immense size. At first, the colonists lived upon fish, turtle, rice, potatoes and yams. They were forbid the use of butcher's meat, because the preservation of their live stock was a matter of the utmost importance.

When the season became favourable, they planted sugar-canes, and sowed wheat.

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Their



Their first crops exceeded their expectations; and in a little time the success of the colony was no longer doubtful. The life of the ancient patriarchs does not exhibit a truer picture of the happiness always inseparable from man, when he approaches to a state of nature, and lives under a serene sky, amidst innocence and labour, than the situation of these colonists.

The inhabitants of Bourbon employed their sugar-canes in making a kind of fermented liquor. The islanders of Madagascar had taught them the method of making this beverage, which, in my opinion, is preferable to the best cider of Normandy. It is a pity that a liquor so useful cannot be kept more than twenty-four hours after it ferments.

The small number of oxen and sheep, transported from Madagascar to Bourbon, instead of perishing, acquired every day, in



this new land, an additional degree of increase. These animals found in the woods, with which the island is covered, a shelter from the scorching sun of the torrid zone ; they fed upon succulent grafs ; and appeared, above all, to delight in those vast savannas, the productions of which are similar to those of Madagascar.

When the inhabitants of Bourbon had made a proper provision for their subsistence, by paying great attention to agriculture, the principal and the most productive source of all riches, they thought that coffee, in the course of time, might form an useful branch of commerce between their island and Europe. In the year 1718, therefore, they sent to Moka and Aden for some young plants of the coffee-tree, and were not deceived in their speculation. These plants being cultivated with care, became in a few years very productive ; and the



island soon afforded the French East-India company a very important article of trade.

While the small French colony of the Isle of Bourbon continued to prosper, that of the Dutch, established in the Isle of France, was much distressed, and in a languishing condition. I am unacquainted with the reason why the Dutch established themselves in this island, which they called Mauritius. I know, only, that they complained of the great devastation occasioned in it by locusts and rats.

In 1712 they resolved to abandon entirely the establishment which they had formed at the Isle of France, in order to remove to the Cape of Good Hope. It may be readily conceived why they preferred a vast continent to a small island.

The inhabitants of Bourbon were not sorry for the departure of the Dutch ; and they lost no time in taking possession of the  
spots



spots where they had been established. The Isle of France has two good harbours, and is only thirty-four leagues distant from that of Bourbon. Though the air is salubrious, the island is neither so fertile nor so extensive as Bourbon : but these disadvantages are counterbalanced by the excellence of its ports, and by its being situated to the windward.

In 1734, the French East-India company having determined to form some considerable establishments here, the care of that enterprize was entrusted to the celebrated Mahé de la Bourdonnais. That gentleman, born to command, because he had abilities which enabled him to know mankind, and to enforce obedience, shewed in those distant countries that he was as able a governor as a skilful mariner : the island is indebted to him, and to him alone, for its aqueducts, bridges, hospitals, and principal



magazines. In short, every thing useful that still exists there is the work of that truly great man. La Bourdonnais had a very extensive knowledge of those mechanic arts which are most common and most necessary for our wants. Often was he seen by the break of day, at the head of his labourers, driving a wheel-barrow, or handling the trowel and the compass, merely with a view to excite and keep up a spirit of emulation. After the example which he himself gave, it was hardly possible for any one not to concur, as far as he was able, in promoting the public advantage. Whatever, therefore, he planned or undertook for the benefit of the colony, during the twelve years of his administration, was always attended with speedy and complete success. It was this governor also who made choice of the port to the north-west. A  
man



man less enlightened would have perhaps preferred the port in the south-west, because it is larger and more commodious : but this able seaman knew, as much as any one, the advantages of a port to the leeward. On those shores, where general winds prevail, leeward ports are alone susceptible of an easy defence when attacked, as the enemies ships must always be towed in order to bring them into the harbour. By the same reasoning the wind is always favourable for going out, another advantage, which, though inferior to the former, is not to be overlooked.

The cultivation of corn is that which succeeded best in the Isle of France. The lands there produce successively, every year, a crop of wheat and one of maize, commonly called Turkey corn. The *manioc* \*, which

\* *Manihot*, *magnoc* or *manioc*, is a plant which grows



which was transported from Brazil, is at present the ordinary food of the blacks.

The continual want of supplies by ships and squadrons has greatly impeded the increase of sheep and horned cattle in this island. It produces, however, an excellent

in America and the West Indies, and from the root of which a kind of bread is made, called *cassada* or *cassavi*. The juice of the root is a mortal poison; but when it has been properly extracted, the root is put over the fire, in order that all its aqueous, volatile, and noxious particles may be dissipated: it is then grated down into a mealy substance, which is again dried; and it is afterwards formed into small cakes, and baked, by being placed upon hot plates of iron. The milky juice of the *manioc* when swallowed, or when the root is eaten without being carefully prepared, brings on convulsions, and occasions a violent retching and purging. It acts only on the nervous system, and produces no inflammation in the stomach; but the stomach of a man or animal poisoned by it, appears to be contracted one half. The French sometimes call the bread made of this root *Madagascar bread*. T.

kind



kind of grafs, which fprings up from the earth about the beginning of the rainy feafon, and which comes to full perfection in the fpace of three months. The inhabitants take advantage of that time to pafture their cattle and flocks ; but when vegetation has ceafed, nothing remains on the ground except fome ftraw too hard for the nourifhment of animals. This ftraw is fo dry that the leaft fpark fets it on fire, and the wind fpreads the flames with fo much rapidity, that there are no phyfical means of checking its progrefs. When fuch an accident takes place, the cattle quit the favannas, and go to feed in the woods.

When the Portugueze difcovered the Ifle of France, the land was covered with wood to the very fummits of the mountains. The whole ifland was one vaft foreft composed of beautiful trees. Of thefe the moft remarkable were feveral kinds of the palm-tree,



tree, bamboos, ebony, matt-wood with large and small leaves, tacamahaca, stink-wood, and a multitude of others, which were exceedingly valuable.

When this island was first inhabited, the ground was all cleared by means of fire. It would, however, have been prudent to leave rows of trees here and there at certain distances. Those rains which, in warm countries, are so necessary to render the earth fertile, seldom fall on ground after it has been cleared; for it is the forests that attract the clouds, and draw moisture from them. Besides, cultivated lands have no shelter to defend them from the violence of the wind. Cultivation without measure, and without method, has sometimes done much more hurt than good.

Those eminences which hang over the harbour, and defend it from the violence of the winds, have been cultivated to the very tops.



tops. The chalk of the mountains is become dry, and the earth proper for vegetation has fallen down into the valleys. Those large trees, which, when the island was inhabited, secured the earth from such dangerous falls, have been either burnt or cut down. Torrents have been consequently formed, and the greater part of the gravel washed down by them has choked up the harbour. The anchoring ground at present is not sheltered from the violence of the sea, nor the impetuosity of the winds. Thus through an absolute want of foresight in the first settlers, and a desire to promote their own temporary advantage, France is likely to be deprived of a port which is considered as the bulwark of its forces, and the most commodious storehouse of its commerce in the Indian seas.

M. de Tromelin, formerly a captain in the navy, an officer as fertile in resources as skilful



skilful and experienced in every part of his profession, finding, however, that this evil might be remedied, became very anxious to accomplish so important an object. At that time M. Poivre was intendant of the isles of France and Bourbon. That celebrated man seeing all the advantages of M. de Tromelin's project, united with M. de Steinaure, a general officer, highly worthy of esteem both by his knowledge and virtues, and who acted in the interim as governor, to request, in the name of the colony, of the duke de Praslin, then minister of the marine, the speedy execution of a plan which would give the Isle of France a safe harbour, where vessels might be sheltered from hurricanes. When the proposed works were ordered, M. de Tromelin first employed himself in changing the course of the torrents by dykes and channels, which served to collect the body of the waters, and  
to



to convey them to sea behind Cooper's Isle, in a place where mounds of sand and gravel could occasion no obstruction.

This, without doubt, was the most urgent part of the operation. The clearing of the harbour, or rather channel, might be afterwards effected without any obstacle, in a period of time proportioned to the number of machines destined for the purpose of taking up the mud and sand ; for it is well known that each machine clears almost to the depth of twenty feet a day, when the wheels which make the two ladles act are worked by thirty-six men.

Mr. Tromelin did not confine his plan to that labour which was necessary for clearing the channel, and preventing it from being choked up in future. This officer had greater and more extensive views. He remarked that the channel communicated with a vast basin perfectly sheltered from  
the



the most violent winds. This basin, known under the name of *Trou Fanfaron*, is three hundred fathoms in length. In breadth it is sixty fathoms, and the mean depth of the water does not exceed ten feet. It was necessary, therefore, to make it twenty feet deep, in order that it might be capable of receiving the largest vessels, as fully loaded as possible. To effect this, nothing was requisite but to remove some sand-banks; and two machines, in less than six years, were able to clear away forty-five thousand cubic fathoms of sand which encumbered the basin. But this was not the most embarrassing part of the labour. The entrance of the basin was shut up by a coral bank, to get rid of which appeared to be a work of great expence and difficulty. This obstacle, however, did not discourage M. de Tromelin. After a judicious examination of its extent, and taking a number of soundings

ings



ings very near to each other, he was enabled to form a proper plan for accomplishing the object of his wishes, and by means of gunpowder he broke to pieces, under the water, that part of the bank which obstructed the passage of vessels.

No rock can resist the expansive force of an elastic fluid, when the engineer who employs it knows, by holes disposed at suitable distances, to interrupt the communication of motion in such a manner as to render the force proportional to the mass. It is really astonishing that gunpowder is so little used for extirpating rocks under water, as there is no force greater or less expensive when it is directed by intelligent men.

Had M. de Tromelin been acquainted with the ingenious method devised by M. Coulomb, a celebrated academician, for labouring under water, that able officer would, doubtless, have made use of it; and this  
grand



grand trial would have enlightened those engineers who are entrusted with the care of the like operations in the ports of France.

When great hydraulic works are undertaken in countries periodically exposed to violent winds and hurricanes, the execution of them ought to be conducted with as much spirit and expedition as possible, in order to oppose a great resistance to the combined force of the wind and the waves.

One must have experienced a hurricane to form a proper idea of that formidable meteor. A hurricane is almost always accompanied with rain, thunder, and an earthquake. The atmosphere appears to be on fire, and the wind blows with equal violence from every quarter of the horizon. A hurricane is a kind of spout, which seems to threaten that part of the earth upon which it falls with entire destruction. It is at least  
under



under this appearance that seamen observe it at a distance, and ships often remain becalmed a few leagues from the place where these terrible storms burst forth with the utmost fury. If the celerity of the wind exceeds fifty feet per second, nothing then can withstand its force ; the largest trees are torn up by the roots, and the best-built houses are thrown down. Neither the weight of anchors, the strength of cables, nor the goodness of the bottom are capable of keeping ships at their moorings. The wind drives them on shore, and dashes them to pieces, unless they form a bed for themselves in the mud.

During the hurricane of March, 1771, I saw the main topmast of the *Mars*, a ship of sixty-four guns, broke in the cap ; and yet that hurricane was not near so violent as the hurricane which happened in the month of February the same year. Able seamen are



well acquainted with the force necessary to break a main topmast when struck: they will not, therefore, think that I exaggerate when I estimate the velocity of the wind, during its most violent gusts, at an hundred and fifty feet per second. The extraordinary variation of the barometer, on shores situated between the two tropics, is the only index hitherto known, by which a hurricane can be foreseen some hours before its commencement.

At the time of the hurricane, which took place in the month of February 1771, the sudden falling of the mercury gave me, as well as M. Poivre, great uneasiness. It was then four in the afternoon, and M. Poivre invited the port captain to his house: but that officer, who had been an eye-witness of the hurricane in the year 1761, was not struck, as we were, with the variation of the barometer. He said, that there were



more certain means of foretelling hurricanes. Twenty-four hours, said he, before the hurricane commences, you will see the blacks come down from the mountain, and announce its approach. Besides, the setting of the sun will determine what measures I ought to pursue, in order to prevent, as much as possible, those accidents which are inseparable from these dreadful phenomena. M. Poivre's entreaties, and my observations, not being capable of persuading the captain, we were obliged to wait till sunset. The sky was then pure and serene; but the mercury still continued to fall in the tube of the barometer. The sun set very beautifully, and the port captain, who had been a long time in the service of the East-India company, left us in high spirits, and perfectly secure respecting the misfortunes with which the island was threatened. He seemed to pity us for considering the varia-



tion of the barometer as a matter of so much importance. One can seldom overcome the obstinacy of a man, who, being acquainted only with the practical part of his business, entertains the absurd prejudice that theory is of no use. Men of this kind are unfortunately too common; and those who should employ themselves in exposing the evils which ignorant and conceited commanders have caused, and still cause, would do no small service to humanity.

The hurricane commenced at seven in the evening, that is to say, an hour after sunset. Before nine all the vessels were driven on shore, except the *Ambulante* flute, and a small corvette, called *le Verd Galand*. By a sudden gust the flute was forced out to sea, and the corvette being made fast to her by a cable, was entirely lost.

The *Ambulante*, without sails, without rudder, and without provisions for the sailors,

ors,



ors, and a detachment of the Irish regiment of Clare, who did duty on board, was tossed about by the winds for more than twelve hours. By their frequent shifting she was driven quite round the island, and at length cast, in a most miraculous manner, upon the only part of the coast where men in such a violent storm could save their lives. What renders these disasters more distressing is, the impossibility of their mutually assisting each other. They must remain motionless amidst the ruins by which they are surrounded; they must patiently wait for their fate, without being able to foresee or avoid it. The violence and fury of the wind prevent them from quitting the shelter they have chosen, or the place into which they have been driven.

The hurricane continued eighteen hours without intermission, and with equal violence. Neither the large quantities of rain



which fell, nor the thunder and lightning, were able to allay the fury of the winds : but at three o'clock next day the mercury, which had fallen twenty-five lines, remained for some minutes stationary. A little time after it again rose ; the sudden gusts then ceased, the wind became more steady, and at six in the evening it was possible to give some assistance to the unfortunate people who had been shipwrecked. In such terrible situations, man, pressed down by the imperious yoke of necessity, seems to have lost all sensibility. He waits, therefore, in a kind of stupor for the blow which is about to fall upon him. He endures in silence, and without murmuring, the evils by which he is afflicted. During this hurricane, the communications in different parts of the island were interrupted by the falling of trees, and the overflowing of waters. We were three weeks without  
hearing



hearing any news of the *Ambulante*, which had been cast on shore at a place distant only six leagues from Port Louis in the Isle of France. All the crops were destroyed. On that account it was requisite that every effort should be made to repair those vessels which had suffered least by the storm; and it was still M. de Tromelin who rendered this important service to the colony and to commerce. It was necessary to dispatch instantly the greater part of these vessels to Madagascar, in search of stores and provisions of every kind. It is under such unfortunate circumstances that the talents of able administrators display themselves to the greatest advantage. M. Poivre, who, in the course of his administration, had shewn himself equally prudent and enlightened, had taken the salutary precaution to make several vessels winter at the Cape of Good Hope. These vessels, when informed of



the disaster which had befallen the Isle of France, brought it supplies in abundance, and these supplies saved the colony; for they arrived soon after the second hurricane, the new ravages of which had depressed the courage and hopes of the unfortunate inhabitants. The damage which the ships sustained in the harbour by the violence of the waves and the impetuosity of the wind, in the second hurricane, was much inferior to what they had sustained by the first. The variation of the barometer informed them of their danger, and they each used the utmost expedition to provide for their safety\*.

Had

\* These islands seem to be much exposed to these destructive scourges. The hurricane which happened at the Isle of France, on the night between the 9th and 10th of April, 1773, was attended with the most dismal effects. "The storm," says Mr. Brunel, from  
whose



Had M. Poivre's merit been less known,  
I should have eagerly embraced this opportunity

whose memoir this account is taken, "announced itself about nine in the evening, when the moon appeared above the horizon : but its greatest violence was between eleven and one in the morning. The roaring of the wind, and the noise of the thunder, were dreadful ; while the lightning, which made the earth and the heavens appear as if on fire, still added to the horror of the scene. The fear of the inhabitants did not cease till towards five in the morning ; but when day appeared, the spectacle was dreadful beyond description. More than three hundred houses were destroyed in the town of *Port Louis*, all the roofs were carried away, and the principal church was reduced to a heap of ruins. Many of the people were buried under the rubbish ; others, bruised and mutilated, solicited assistance from their neighbours, who were not in a situation to afford them relief ; and the streets were strewn with nails, splinters of wood, shingles, and fragments of every kind. All the vessels in the harbour, in number thirty-two, were driven on shore and greatly damaged. Of several small barks nothing was to be seen but the keels ;



tunity of bestowing upon his memory that tribute of praise which is reserved for those  
few

keels; and one had entirely disappeared, without leaving the smallest trace that could lead to a discovery of its fate. Dead bodies were seen floating amidst the wreck of the ships; and such of the sailors as had escaped death, struggling against the irritated waves, were making useless efforts to reach the shore. In short, nothing presented itself to the sight but consternation, misery, and distress. The desolation in the country was no less afflicting; the maize, rice, and corn, were cut and dispersed; the coffee and cotton plants, sugar-canes, nutmeg and cinnamon trees, were torn up by the roots; the oldest trees were overturned, or twisted by the violence of the wind; manufactories and work-shops were destroyed; and the grass appeared dry and withered, as if it had been burnt. In one of the windward quarters of the island, the sea, hurried along by the tempest beyond its usual boundaries, rose more than forty feet, drove the inhabitants to the neighbouring eminences, in order to avoid being overwhelmed in their houses; and extended to the adjacent plains and woods, where it left, when it retired,



few men, who, by their situation in life, have been benefactors to the human race. My heart is the more impelled to discharge this act of gratitude, as he honoured me with his tenderest friendship : but the life of this illustrious man has been published by M. Dupont ; and that celebrated writer is much more capable than I am to appreciate the talents of an administrator. Besides, I am not a literary man : this may be readily perceived by the want of order and method which is observed in whatever I write. In publishing this work, therefore, I have had nothing in view but a desire of being useful.

retired, fish of various kinds. This disaster occasioned such a scarcity of provisions, that bread was sold at eighteen sous per pound, according to the currency of the colony : but a supply of corn and rice was afterwards procured from Bengal, the coast of Coromandel, the Cape of Good Hope, the island of Madagascar, and the Persian gulf. T.

Having



Having from my earliest years applied, through taste, to the study of the mathematics, the art of ruling is entirely unknown to me. The numerous and long voyages which I have made to various parts of the world may have perhaps given me some knowledge of mankind; but the more one knows them, the more one dreads to accept the honourable office of conducting and directing them.

The zeal with which M. Poivre was animated for the improvement of agriculture, induced him to advance considerable sums of money to the planters, to enable them to cultivate corn. The magazines were always well supplied with provisions, because the first article of his agreement was that payment should be made in the produce of the earth. The price of bread, therefore, seldom experienced any considerable variation.

M. Poivre,



M. Poivre, desirous to enrich the colony entrusted to his care, with every useful production distributed in such profusion throughout the four quarters of the world, purchased from the old East-India company, the garden of *Montplaisir*, which he wished to cultivate himself for the purpose of raising exotic plants. He set the first example of turning up the earth, in order to destroy radically all noxious weeds, and by this operation to ensure the success of his plantations.

It is well known that to M. Poivre alone the French colonies are indebted for the nutmeg and cloves; and this service, which will soon open a new source of commerce to France, will, doubtless, not be forgotten. To him also they are indebted for the bread-fruit, and the dry rice of Cochin-china. In short, his garden at *Montplaisir* contains a multitude of valuable plants, of which M.  
Céré,



Céré, whose friendship he and I enjoyed, has given an excellent description. To M. Céré, at present, the care of that treasure is entrusted ; and those who have the management of the colonies could not certainly have made choice of a more able and more zealous cultivator \*.

I have

\* M. Poivre, formerly intendant of the isles of France and Bourbon, was born at Lyons, in the year 1719; and at an early period of life entered into the congregation of foreign missions, by whom he was sent to China, some part of which he travelled over, and collected many important observations respecting the country, and particularly the state of agriculture among the Chinese. In returning to Europe, the vessel in which he had taken his passage, was attacked by an English ship of war, and during the engagement he had the misfortune to lose one of his arms by a cannon bullet. This unfortunate accident obliged him to renounce the ecclesiastical state; but the East-India company finding him an active, intelligent man, made choice of him for establishing a new branch of commerce in Cochin-china.



I have here said almost every thing respecting the isles of France and Bourbon that

china. Having succeeded in this undertaking, he was, in 1766, sent by the Duke de Choiseul to the isles of France and Bourbon, to superintend those colonies. In this situation he perfectly answered the expectations of the French minister. He excited among the inhabitants of those islands a spirit for improving agriculture and the arts. He sent to Madagascar for a supply of cattle and sheep, in order to stock them with provisions. He naturalized in them the bread-fruit tree; and, after much danger and difficulty, procured plants of the nutmeg and cinnamon trees, which being properly cultivated there, are now in a thriving condition, and likely to supply France with a valuable article of commerce. M. Poivre afterwards returned to France, and died of a dropy in the breast, at Lyons, the place of his nativity, on the 6th of January 1786, in the sixty-seventh year of his age. He left behind him some small works, which shew that he was a judicious observer, as well as a philosophical writer. These are, *Voyage d'un Philosophe*, containing observations on the manners,



that deserves to be known. The mountains of the former are not high : the elevation of the highest does not exceed six hundred and twenty-six fathoms ; the soil of them is ferruginous and productive. No venomous animals, except scorpions and millepedes, are known here. For beauty of climate, and salubrity of air, these isles may be compared to the Fortunate Islands. They are separated from the Indian Ocean by an archipelago abounding with shoals and quicksands. One of the principal objects of my voyage was to determine the situation of these shoals ; and it is to M. Poivre

manners, arts, and agriculture of the people of Asia and Africa ; a *Memoir on the Preparation and Dying of Silk* ; *Remarks on the History and Manners of the Chinese* ; a *Speech delivered to the Inhabitants of the Isles of France and Bourbon* ; and some other manuscript tracts, in possession of the academy of Lyons, of which he was a member. T.

that



that navigators are indebted for this important research.

Ships which set out from the Isle of France for India were forced, during the two monsoons, to pursue a long and indirect route, in order to avoid that archipelago of small islands and shoals situated to the north. Whilst navigators were ignorant of the true position of these dangerous objects, there was little safety for any squadron which might have attempted a more direct course. On the south side of the Line, from the eighteenth degree of latitude to the twenty-eighth, the wind blows from the south-east during the whole year. From the eighteenth degree to the Equinoctial, the south-east monsoon commences in April, and continues till October, at which period it is succeeded by the eastern monsoon. On the north side of the Line the case is entirely contrary.



Those who depart from the Isle of France for India, in the fine season, steer towards the northermost point of Madagascar, and passing afterwards between the flats of Patrom and the Amirantes, cross the Line in the fiftieth degree of longitude. Meeting with the western monsoon on the north side of it, they traverse the Maldives, between Keloè and Shewlipar; and then approaching Cochin, the rest of the voyage is nothing but mere coasting.

Vessels which set out, in the bad season, from the Isle of France for Pondicherry, are obliged to pursue a much longer and more indirect course. They go in quest of the variable winds as far as the thirty-sixth degree of south latitude, and then steer in such a direction as to be able to cut the Equinocial in the eighty-fourth degree of longitude.

If a more perfect knowledge of that archipelago



chipelago enables navigators, at present, to attempt, in both seasons, a more direct route, I flatter myself that I have, in some measure, rendered that service to navigation, as I was the first, who, by astronomical observation, determined the position of the most dangerous of these small islands. However little versed people may be in the science of navigation, they must be sensible that researches of this kind are accompanied with continual dangers. The principal places, the situation of which I determined, are the Secheyles islands, the flat of Car-gados, Salha de Maha, the island of Diego-Garcia, and the Adu isles.

The island Secheyles has an exceeding good harbour. It is situated in the latitude of  $4^{\circ} 38'$  south, and in the longitude of  $53^{\circ} 15'$  east from Paris. This island is covered with wood to the very summit of the mountains. It abounds with land and sea



tortoises, some of which weigh three hundred pounds. In 1769, when I spent a month here in order to determine its position with the utmost exactness, Secheyles and the adjacent isles were inhabited only by monstrous crocodiles; but a small establishment has been since formed in it for the cultivation of nutmegs and cloves. In one of these islands, called the Isle of Palms, there is found a tree which bears that celebrated fruit, known by the name of the cocoa of the Maldives, or sea cocoa. The reader will find a description of it at the end of the list of plants growing in Madagascar.

In this introduction I ought to take notice of those objects only which struck me most. Among the number of these is, the port of Diego-Garcia. That island, which we judged to be about twelve leagues in circumference, has a very pleasing aspect.

Its



Its form is like that of a horse-shoe. Its greatest breadth is not above a quarter of a league : yet the land is high enough to inclose and shelter a vast basin, capable of containing the largest fleet. This basin is about four leagues in length, and its mean breadth is about one. It forms an excellent harbour, and has two entrances on the northern side. These passages are exceedingly beautiful. The position of it, according to observation, I determined to be in  $7^{\circ}14'$  south latitude, and  $68^{\circ}$  east longitude from Paris.

With regard to the shoals which abound in this archipelago, they are as yet not all known. They are not to be found in the old charts of M. d'Apres. That hydrographer was deficient in that spirit of enquiry so necessary to bring nautical charts to perfection ; for he did not derive from the materials he had in his hands all that



advantage which an able astronomer might have obtained for the safety of navigators. I here speak from a thorough knowledge of the subject. The collection of charts of the Isle of France is full of notes written by my hand, in which I clearly prove that he has confounded Artove with Agalega, and Cargados with St. Brandon, though among his papers he had various plans of these shoals and islands; and that he has committed a multitude of other errors less striking, but still of great importance. I have indeed rectified them as far as I was able; for in objects, which so essentially concern the safety of navigators, one ought not, through private considerations, to withhold or delay any thing that may tend to improve hydrography. But if I have treated M. d'Apres with too much severity, I have always paid a just tribute of applause to his zeal, and his constant desire of rendering his



his labours useful. That hydrographer could require nothing more from a man who looks only to things, and pays no attention to individuals. Besides, having been nearly shipwrecked on the Cargados, because it pleased that hydrographer to confound Cargados with St Brandon, though a plan of the former was taken by the boats the Charles and the Elizabeth, and though one of the latter is given in the *English Pilot*, was it not my duty to shew that these two dangerous shoals differ essentially, both in their form and their longitude, as they lie at the distance of fifty leagues from each other? Cargados has the form of a crescent, and St. Brandon that of an equilateral triangle. M. d'Apres, confounding these two places, has in his chart given them a mean position, merely because in the old charts he found them both placed in the same latitude. This position is so false



that the most expert navigator is ignorant what route he ought to pursue in order to avoid them.

On the memorable day of the passage of Venus over the sun's disk, in the month of June 1769, I could not make an observation of that important phenomenon, though the sky was pure and serene, because the corvette on which I had embarked was in danger of being shipwrecked on the Cargados. To avoid destruction we were obliged to double, against the wind, the most eastern point of that formidable shoal. It must be allowed, therefore, that after such an accident I have great reason to mistrust that opinion, too much credited, of the correctness of M. d'Apres' charts.

I cannot here enter into any farther detail respecting the archipelago which separates India from the Isle of France ; but I will venture to affirm, that it is necessary it



should be known, before more direct routes are attempted, during the two monsoons. More direct routes are by no means new; they were pursued formerly by navigators; and a knowledge of the winds, and an inspection of the chart, will easily enable seamen to find them out. A long dissertation, therefore, would be quite foreign to the subject of which I propose to treat. It is however of some importance for elucidating a digression, to be found in the course of the following work, on the utility of banishment, to give an account of some shipwrecks, which will serve to prove, that men left by accident on barren coasts or desert islands, may find, in the fish and animals which abound on the borders of the sea, a sure means of subsistence.

A ship, called the *Heureux*, having on the 30th of August 1769, set out from the Isle of France, in order to proceed to Bengal,

unex-



unexpectedly fell in with the isles of Jean de Nova. The captain wished to pass to windward, and by this manœuvre avoid the dangers which threatened him. As soon as he had doubled them, he directed his course to the N. E.  $\frac{1}{4}$  N. with a view of shortening his passage by some days ; for he was sensible that he ought not to neglect any thing that might hasten his arrival at Bengal, because the season was too far advanced. But in this route, the vessel in the middle of the night was driven upon some low flats, which left no hopes of her safety. These flats were surrounded by a chain of breakers, which augmented the fears of the crew : all their exertions were of no avail, and the vessel was just on the point of being dashed to pieces, when the captain threw out an anchor in such a manner as gave him reason to conclude that the ship would be wrecked on one of the flats which was a little more elevated



elevated than the rest. This manœuvre succeeded, and the people were able to wait for the approach of morning on the top of the masts. The break of day, however, did not extricate them from their alarming situation; but at half after six they had some dawn of hope. Perceiving at a distance a small island of sand, the whole crew transported themselves thither, in succession, by means of a canoe, which the captain, with wise precaution, had caused to be launched into the sea, before the fatal moment when his ship struck. Unluckily, this island of sand was only a kind of shoal, which became dry at low water. In this cruel perplexity, the captain had no other alternative but to send his canoe to seek assistance on the coast of Africa. The unfortunate people who were dispatched in it, eight days after their departure fell in, on their passage, with a rock, which they

4 named



named the *Island of Providence*. This rock was not entirely barren ; they found on it water, sea tortoises, and cocoas. Nine of the boat's crew remained here, while two vigorous rowers endeavoured to return to the sand island, where the rest of the ship's company had taken shelter until assistance should be brought to them. This attempt was the more hazardous, as they every moment saw themselves in danger of being swallowed up by the high tides, the fatal period of which was fast approaching. At the end of three days, however, the canoe reached the place of its destination ; but as it was too small to receive all the people who had been shipwrecked, they supplied this deficiency by a raft constructed of the remains of their vessel. It was made sufficiently large to contain such provisions and utensils as were necessary for building and victualling a small shallop. This raft was  
made



made fast to the canoe, and in that manner towed to the Island of Providence. On this rock these people continued three months, employed in constructing a shallop, twenty-five feet in length, in which they had at length the good fortune to reach Madagascar without any accident. The latitude of the Isle of Providence was observed to be nine degrees five minutes south. Its longitude is reckoned to be forty-nine; and it is supposed that it lies N. N. W. some degrees west from the Isle of France.

M. Moreau, captain of a small vessel called *le Favori*, being dispatched from the Isle of France, on the 9th of February 1757, for Narfapoor, fell in, on the 26th of March the same year, with the Adu islands. His observed latitude there was  $5^{\circ} 6' S.$  and his longitude, by estimation,  $66^{\circ} E.$  from the meridian of Paris. Having ordered some of his people to go on shore in a canoe, he

was



was obliged to leave them behind, because, not being able to find anchorage, the currents, which carried his vessel rapidly towards the west, drove her a great way to the leeward. M. Moreau told me, that six leagues to the south of these islands he fell in with a sand bank, where there was a good bottom, and that he made every effort in his power, though in vain, to rejoin his canoe. I am persuaded that the reader will peruse with satisfaction the relation which M. Riviere, the officer who commanded the canoe, has given of the Adu isles, and of the misfortunes which he and his companions experienced.

The crew of the canoe consisted of three white men and five Lascars. M. Riviere rowed round these islands, without being able to find any place where he could easily land. Having lost sight of the vessel for several days, he, however, resolved to attempt



tempt to land on a small island, which was not a league in circumference ; and he accordingly accomplished his purpose, but with the utmost difficulty.

These islands, which are twelve in number, are connected by a reef of rocks, which, at low water, afford a passage from the one to the other.

M. Riviere adds, that they form a bay which may be about six miles in circumference. The passage which affords an entrance to it is on the eastern side: he sounded it, and found it to be thirty fathoms deep. This bay, which is of a circular form, has in its middle a sand-bank nearly square, and almost a quarter of a league in circumference. It abounds with shell-fish, and fish of various other kinds.

These isles are flat and covered with cocoa trees. The crew of the canoe lived here for three months on birds, fish, shell-fish, and

cocoas ;



cocoas ; but they found in them neither water nor tortoises.

When the hatchets, which enabled them to cut down the cocoa trees, were unfit for service, M. Riviere formed a resolution of proceeding to the coast of Malabar, though he had neither charts nor compass. This officer, therefore, caused his canoe to be loaded with cocoas, and embarked in it with the two white men. The Lascars constructed a raft, called by the Indians, *Catimaron*, which was to be towed after the canoe, and which carried the remainder of their provisions. Directing their course N. N. W. they fell in with a high shoal four or five hours after they had lost sight of land. Some days after their departure, the sea, in which there was a prodigious swell, overset the float. The whites then proposed to Mr. Riviere to abandon the Lascars,



Lascars, because the canoe was too small; but he rejected that proposition with indignation. He took the Lascars on board the canoe, though he had provisions only for thirteen days, and arrived safe at Cranganore, near Callicut, twenty-eight days after his departure from the isles of Adu. It would be difficult to relate what dangers and fatigue he experienced in that passage; but his generous and humane conduct, in so trying a situation, merits the greatest praise.

The Isle of Sable was discovered in 1722 by a vessel called the *Diana*, commanded by M. de la Feuillée: it is flat, and not much more than a quarter of a mile in circumference. At its northern and southern extremities, however, fresh water fit for drinking was found at the depth of fifteen feet. The *Utile*, Captain de la Fargue, being shipwrecked in 1761, the officers and the  
e crew,



crew, consisting chiefly of blacks, took refuge upon this small island. During six months which they remained on it, they constructed a chaloupe from the remains of their ship, in which the whites embarked, and without any accident reached St. Mary, in the island of Madagascar, after a very short passage. The blacks remained upon the shoal, always waiting, but in vain, to receive some assistance from the whites. Every man possessed of the least humanity must be struck with horror, when he knows that these poor blacks were suffered to perish in great misery, and that no attempt was made to save them.

A corvette, called *La Dauphine*, commanded by M. de Tromelin, a lieutenant in the navy, and brother to the gentleman before mentioned, fell in with the Isle of Sable on the 29th of November 1776. Having by his skill and abilities overcome



all those obstacles which prevent navigators from approaching that dangerous shoal, he had the good fortune to bring back to the Isle of France, the wretched remains of the crew of the *Utile*. Eighty male and female blacks had perished, some through hunger, and others in attempting to save themselves on rafts. Seven negresses supported for fifteen years all the hardships of the most distressing situation that can be imagined. The most elevated part of this flat is only fifteen feet above the level of the sea. It is six hundred fathoms in length, and three hundred in breadth. The plumage of birds, fastened together with much ingenuity by these negresses, supplied them with clothes and covering. This island is absolutely barren, and those on it are not sheltered from the fury of the waves in the time of storms. These seven negresses, who escaped from all those evils which arise from famine and the



absolute want of every necessary, carried with them a young child, who partook of the extreme weakness of its mother. They related, that during the time of their residence on the island, they had seen five vessels, several of which had in vain attempted to land at the place of their captivity. A small vessel, called *La Sauterelle*, for some time gave them hopes of being at length delivered from their melancholy situation; but the canoe of that vessel, through a dread no doubt of being wrecked upon the island, where the crew had before experienced the utmost difficulty in landing, bore off suddenly, and with so much precipitation that one of the seamen was left behind. This man, who fell a victim to his courage and humanity, seeing himself abandoned, formed the desperate resolution of attempting to make his way to Madagascar on a raft. He embarked with three negroes and three negroes,



gresses, two months and a half before the arrival of the corvette *la Dauphine*.

If, in this introduction, I have taken the liberty to insert a dissertation on the isles of France and Bourbon, and that Archipelago full of shoals which is situated to the north of these isles, it was, as I have already observed, because I thought it highly necessary to point out to navigators the obstacles which they will have to encounter when they attempt, during the bad season, to proceed to the coast of Coromandel by a direct course. I had entered into very minute details on this subject, for according to the original plan of this work, it was to be divided into two distinct parts; but owing to unforeseen circumstances, the nautical part of my voyage will not appear for some time, though it was printed above five years ago, as well as that which is now published.



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V O Y A G E  
T O  
M A D A G A S C A R.

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DESCRIPTION OF THE ISLAND.

**T**HE island of Madagascar has excited the avaricious desires of the Europeans, ever since it had the misfortune to be tolerably known. Its extent, together with the richness of its soil and productions, seemed to offer, to the people who should make a conquest of it, commercial advantages which they would not, certainly, have suffered themselves to neglect. Luckily however, the unwholesomeness of the climate has hitherto saved it from the yoke of those civilized nations, who assume the barbarous

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and



and unjust right of subjecting to their authority those tribes whom they call *savages*, merely because they are unacquainted with the manners and customs of Europe.

There is not one of these civilized nations that can boast of having sacrificed even a few of the most trifling interests of commerce, to the sacred principles of the law of nature. All of them have been unjust and barbarous: all of them have carried the sword, fire, and disease into every place to which they were attracted by the hopes of gain. Ought they to forget that the soil upon which these savages live belongs to them, as much as that upon which we live belongs to us?

The Europeans would have acquired more solid and lasting advantages, had they endeavoured to introduce industry and the arts into those countries which are destitute of them. These presents would not have



been unproductive ; and commerce would have soon experienced how much preferable that mild and humane method is, to the unjust and cruel means which they employed to subdue the unfortunate inhabitants of all those countries which held forth to them any new objects of wealth.

The island of Madagascar was discovered, in 1506, by Lawrence Almeyda ; but the Persians and Arabs knew it from time immemorial, under the name of *Sarandib*.

Alphonso Albuquerque commissioned Ruy Pereira dy Conthinho to explore the interior part of it, and ordered Tristão d'Acunha to sail round it, and mark the bearings of its principal capes and head-lands.

This island is divided into twenty-eight provinces, which are, *Anossy*, *Manapani*, the valley of *Amboule*, *Vobitzan*, *Watte-Manahore*, *Ycondre*, *Etomampo*, *Adchimoussy*, *Erengdranes*, *Vobitz-Anghombes*, *Manacarongha*,



*Mantatane, Antaveres, Ghalemboule, Tamatave, Sahaveh, Voulou-Voulou, Andafoutchy, Manghabey, Adcimoutchy, Mandrarey, Ampatre, Caremboule, Mahafalley, Houlourvey, Sivah, Yvandrhon, and Machicores.*

When the Portuguese discovered Madagascar, they wished to give it the name of the island of St. Lawrence. In the reign of Henry IV. the French named it *Ile Dauphine*: but though its real name is *Madecasse*, it is generally known under that of Madagascar.

This large island, according to several learned geographers, is the *Cerne* of Pliny, and the *Minuthiasde* of Ptolemy.

It extends almost N. N. E. and S. S. W. and lies between the twelfth and twenty-sixth degrees of southern latitude.

We may reckon that the superficies of this island, so celebrated for the fertility of its soil, and the variety of its productions,  
contains



contains two hundred millions of acres of excellent land. It is watered on all sides by streams and large rivers; and above all by a great number of small rivulets, which have their sources at the bottom of that long chain of mountains which separates the eastern from the western coast. The two highest mountains in the island are Vigagora in the north, and Botistmene in the south.

These mountains contain in their bowels, abundance of fossils and valuable minerals. The traveller, who, in the pursuit of knowledge, traverses for the first time wild and mountainous countries, intersected by ridges and valleys, where nature, abandoned to its own fertility, presents the most singular and varied productions, cannot help being often struck with terror and surprise on viewing those awful precipices, the summits of which are covered with trees, as ancient, perhaps, as the world. His astonish-



ment is increased when he hears the noise of immense cascades, which are so inaccessible that it is impossible for him to approach them. But these scenes, truly picturesque, are always succeeded by rural views, delightful hills, and plains where vegetation is never interrupted by the severity and vicissitude of the seasons. The eye with pleasure beholds those extensive savannas which afford nourishment to numerous herds of cattle, and flocks of sheep. Fields of rice and potatoes present, also, a new and highly interesting spectacle. One sees agriculture flourishing, while nature alone defrays almost all the expences : the fortunate inhabitants of Madagascar never moisten the earth with their sweat; they turn it up slightly with a pick-axe ; and this labour alone is sufficient. They make small holes in the ground at a little distance from each other, and throw into them a few grains of rice, over which  
they



they spread a little mould with their feet. What proves the great fertility of the soil is, that a field sown in this manner produces an hundred fold.

The forests contain a prodigious variety of most beautiful trees, such as palms of every kind, ebony, wood for dying, bambous of an enormous size, and orange and lemon trees.

Timber fit for masts, and for constructing ships, is no less common than that employed by carpenters and cabinet-makers. Flacourt says, that he sent to France, in 1650, fifty-two thousand weight of aloe wood of an excellent quality. Physicians call this wood *agallochum*, and the Portuguese eagle-wood.

These numerous trees and shrubs are surrounded by a multitude of parasite plants and vines. In these forests may be found agaric



and mushrooms, the colours of which are lively and agreeable, and which have an exquisite flavour. The Malegaches call them *bolat*, and know very well how to distinguish those which are not prejudicial to the health. Useful gums and resins are also collected here: the milky juice which the islanders draw from trees, called in their language *finguiere* \*, produces, when it coagulates, that singular substance known to naturalists by the name of elastic gum. The elasticity of this resinous gum has been lately employed in various arts; surgery has even derived some benefit from it, as it serves to make excellent bandages: but it is evident, that this valuable substance may be used with advantage for many other purposes.

All the forests of Madagascar abound with

\* *Iatropha elastica*. LINN. T.



plants unknown to botanists, some of which are aromatic and medicinal, and others fit for dying.

Flax, a kind of hemp, which, in length and strength, surpasses that of Europe, the sugar-cane, wax, different kinds of honey, tobacco, indigo, black pepper, gum lac, amber, ambergrease, several silky and cottony substances, would long ago have been objects of commerce, which Madagascar might have furnished in profusion, had the Europeans, since they frequented the island, endeavoured to diffuse among the islanders that knowledge which is necessary for preparing and rendering valuable the articles above mentioned. The most indefatigable botanist, in the course of a long life, would scarcely make himself even slightly acquainted with the natural history of all the vegetable productions that grow in this island,



island, the extent of which, in latitude, comprehends several climates.

Every research, which tends to give us a knowledge of the productions of Madagascar, will be no less useful to commerce than to the improvement of arts and manufactures.

There are, doubtless, few countries in the world where navigators can find, in greater abundance, and at less expence, refreshments of every kind.

It was in the great bay of Antongil, that M. Mahè de la Bourdonnais, with as much skill as expedition, found means to repair the losses and misfortunes which his squadron had sustained : without the resources which he procured here, that able seaman would have, perhaps, not been in a condition to put to sea ; and might, consequently, have failed of that great success in India which has given a lustre to his memory.

The



The long stay which M. de la Bourdonnais made in the bay of Antongil, to repair his shattered vessels, filled him with regret during his whole life, that he had not acquired more knowledge of the productions of Madagascar while he was governor of the isles of France and Bourbon. This celebrated man was fully sensible of the utility which that large island might be to the colony over which he had presided.

Timber for building houses and constructing ships, pitch and tar, whale oil, salt-fish of all kinds, indigo, tobacco, manufactured hemp and flax, with cotton and different kinds of silk, appeared to him very important objects of commerce. He admired with what dexterity the women of Madagascar weave those beautiful pieces of stuff, which serve them for clothing; some of them are made of the filaments of the leaves of a plant called *raven*, others more highly valued



lued by the natives, but in less request among the Europeans, are manufactured of cotton and silk.

M. de la Bourdonnais was no less struck on seeing the industry with which these people forge and melt iron and other metals; but he set more value on their manner of twisting small cables, which are employed in fishing for whales, and in mooring their piroguas.

He hoped that the natural ingenuity of these islanders, and their taste for the mechanical arts would render it a matter of little difficulty to introduce into Madagascar several branches of commerce, useful both to Europe and the French colonies in the isles of Bourlon and France. He proposed therefore to engage the directors of the East India Company to erect there manufactories of sail-cloth, forges, founderies and ropewalks.



walks. The population of Madagascar is sufficiently extensive to give us reason to expect success from such establishments: besides, in that country, labour and raw materials are exceedingly cheap.

No dread was to be apprehended that M. de la Bourdonnais would lead the directors of the company into great expence for warehouses and buildings. On the contrary, he wished they might have the prudence to imitate the simplicity and economy observed by the Malegaches, in the construction of their houses. Nothing, indeed, would be more ruinous than to raise in this wild country edifices like those used by us for carrying on manufactories of that kind. It is too common in Europe to see useful establishments languish, and, sometimes, even occasion bankruptcy to those who set them on foot, because they have been so imprudent as to launch out into an extravagance of build.



building, which is almost always of no utility to the principal object of their plan.

The industry of these people cannot, certainly, in any manner, be compared to that of the Europeans. It is impossible to calculate exactly the immense loss of time which is occasioned to them, by the coarseness of their tools, and the imperfection of their arts. The savage does not know, as we do, the advantages of dividing labour, which procures to each individual the greatest possible degree of dexterity, and, besides, saves time, which artificers always lose in leaving one kind of work to undertake another. When one, however, has been a witness to the laborious care of the savages, and to the patience which they employ in order to succeed in the most common arts, one cannot help honouring them with that grateful applause which is due to those, who, among us, exert themselves in bringing manufactures



tures and the arts to perfection. Nothing is necessary but some new inventions to change the industry of a great nation. The invention of the stocking-loom, and the more recent discovery of spinning cotton by machinery, have operated a great revolution in these two branches of manufacture. Neither knitting nor spinning by the hand can ever in future come in competition with work executed by machines.

Ye Europeans who travel into these distant countries, communicate to those people, whom you call savages, your learning and your knowledge; make it an indispensable law of your duty to behave to them with that justice, that equality, and that attachment which ought to prevail among beings of the same species. The enlightened state of the present age no longer permits you to be ignorant of this sacred duty. Forget not the immense obligations you yourselves are  
under



under to some truths, which were unknown to your ancestors. You are indebted to them for the rapid progress you have made in the mathematical sciences, and the useful arts.

The improvement of the rational faculties has an influence on human happiness, which the most refined sophistry cannot destroy. Knowledge afterwards is susceptible only of increase; and man becomes happier and better in proportion as he is enlightened: for what system is more false or dangerous, than that which is founded upon a contrary principle? Can it be denied, that a proper education, given with care to some young Melegaches, who might be sent back to their own country when they had acquired a perfect knowledge of our industry and manufactures, would be of great service to that extensive island? But that this service might be complete, these young islanders ought to



be preserved from catching that frivolous turn of mind which is so destructive to society in Europe, and especially in France. Care ought to be taken, above all, that they should not carry to their island the seeds of this pernicious scourge, which checks every kind of useful industry, and diffuses inexpressible evils throughout whole nations. It is in large capitals, particularly, that this scourge is felt. Millions of people perish in the country through wretchedness and hard labour, while the rich affix a value only to agreeable talents, and arts of luxury. That excessive fondness which the great shew for things of no use, and which are often very pernicious, is so common, that it makes very little impression upon us. What then do the Europeans possess of such value, that they take the liberty to despise all the rest of mankind? If we consider our manners and our laws, we shall find that we have as yet



scarcely emerged from barbarity; and the most enlightened men cannot foresee the epoch when the wisest of nations will be delivered from those ridiculous prejudices, which check useful industry, and give an importance only to objects that are destructive, or at least of no utility.

The natives of Madagascar are called *Malagaches*, or *Madecasses*. They are portly in their persons, and rise above the middle stature. The colour of their skin is different: among one tribe it is of a deep black, and among another tawny: some have a copper-coloured tint; but the colour of the greater part is olive.

All those who are black have woolly hair, like the negroes on the coast of Africa. Those who are of a complexion similar to that of the Indians, and Mulattoes, have as lank hair as the Europeans. Their nose is not flat; they have a broad open forehead; their



their lips are thin ; and their features are regular and agreeable. These people generally display in their countenance a peculiar character of frankness and good-nature. They never shew any desire of learning but things which relate to the simplest wants of mankind ; and this desire is always extremely moderate: they are very indifferent respecting knowledge which cannot be obtained without reflection. A natural want of care, and a general apathy renders every thing insupportable to them that requires attention. Sober, light and active, they spend the greater part of their lives in sleeping, and in amusing themselves.

The Malegache, like the savage, is destitute both of virtue and vice. To him the present is every thing ; he is susceptible of no kind of foresight ; and he does not even conceive that there are men on the earth who give themselves uneasiness respecting futu-



rity. These islanders are free beings, who enjoy peace of mind, and health of body. Man is so organized, that, whether owing to moral or physical causes, he who has the misfortune to think of himself is almost always in a state of illness. Indeed, when men have a good constitution, they affix little value to the advantage they enjoy, in that respect, over almost all their fellow creatures. Our evils, if I may say so, are in ourselves, and our pleasures in those objects which procure them to us. Man is a humane, feeling, and compassionate being; and it is our constitution which irresistibly leads us to assist those whom we see suffering. It is that salutary organization which, extinguishing, as one may say, self-interest in each individual, supplies among people who live in a state of nature the want of laws and of virtues. It is that which prevents the robust savage from robbing childhood,



hood, or feeble old age, of its subsistence, even when he is obliged to expose himself to danger and fatigue, in order to procure wherewithal to satisfy his hunger. In short, it is to this noble organization that the savage is indebted for that aversion which he has to hurt his own species; and this natural and involuntary sentiment luckily does not depend on the principles of education.

The Malegache, as well as the savage, is absolute master of himself; his freedom is confined by no check or restraint; he goes wherever he thinks proper, acts as he chooses, and does what he pleases, except what may hurt a fellow-creature. It never entered the mind of a Malegache to attempt to domineer over the thoughts or actions of any one: each individual has his own peculiar manner of living; and his neighbour never disturbs him, nor even thinks of attempting it. In this respect these islanders



are much wiser than the Europeans, who have the cruel madness to wish that all the people of the earth would conform to their customs, opinions, and even prejudices.

Are savages then so much to be pitied? Do we find many of them discontented with their condition? Does it become us to despise the state of nature? Are we not surrounded by men, who, tired of existence, detest it, and seek to deprive themselves of it?

The savage confines his wants and desires to the procuring of what is absolutely necessary for his subsistence. He enjoys in peace the gifts of nature, and endures with silence those evils which are inseparable from humanity.

The conduct of man in a state of civilization is not so reasonable. Idleness and opulence hurry him on to those vain and false enjoyments which, in the end, bring upon him



him new infirmities ; while unrestrained passions, and a taste for the most frivolous things, make him continually deviate from the path that leads to happiness. He who seeks it never finds it. Happiness exists, and can exist only in ourselves, and in the good use which we make of our reason.

Were the savages as unhappy as we suppose, because they are not acquainted with, or despise, all those superfluities upon which we set so much value, why do they refuse to adopt our manners, our customs, and our laws ?

“ Vander Stel, governor of the Cape of  
 “ Good Hope, having procured a Hottentot  
 “ child, caused him to be educated accord-  
 “ ing to the manners and customs of Eu-  
 “ rope. Fine clothes were given to him ; he  
 “ was taught several languages ; and his  
 “ progress fully corresponded with the  
 “ care taken of his education. Vander Stel,



“entertaining great hopes of his talents,  
 “sent him to India under the protection of  
 “a commissary general, who employed him  
 “with advantage in the company’s affairs.  
 “After the death of the commissary, this  
 “Hottentot returned to the Cape. A few  
 “days after, while on a visit to some Hotten-  
 “tots, his relations, he formed a resolution  
 “of pulling off his European dress, in  
 “order to clothe himself with a sheep’s skin.  
 “He then repaired to Vander Stel, in this  
 “new attire, carrying a bundle containing  
 “his old clothes, and, presenting them to  
 “the governor, addressed him as follows:  
 “‘Be so kind, sir, as to observe, that I for  
 “ever renounce these clothes; I am deter-  
 “mined to live and to die in the religion,  
 “manners, and customs of my ancestors.  
 “The only favour I have to beg of you is,  
 “that you will suffer me to keep the neck-  
 “lace and cutlafs which I now wear.’—Hav-  
 “ing



“ing delivered this speech, he immediately  
 “betook himself to flight, without waiting  
 “for the governor’s answer, and was never  
 “afterwards seen at the Cape\*.”

Such examples are not uncommon: I could mention several of the same kind among the Madecasses.

The inhabitants of Madagascar are divided into a great number of tribes. It is supposed that the population of this island may amount to four millions. This evaluation, however, is by far too great; and it is impossible to ascertain the truth on this point, in the present state of the island, which is divided into a great number of societies, all distinct one from the other: each society inhabits that canton which it finds most convenient, and governs itself according to its own usages. A tribe is composed of several villages, who have all a particular

\* *Histoire des Voyages*, tom. v.



chief. This chief is sometimes elected, but for the most part succeeds by hereditary right. The lands are not divided: they belong to those who take the trouble to till them. These islanders are not acquainted either with locks or bolts, and live in a very frugal manner. Hunger regulates their hours of repast. It is, however, common to see them dine at ten in the morning, and sup at four in the afternoon. Their food consists of very white rice, exceedingly light, and well boiled, which they besprinkle with a succulent kind of soup, made from fish or flesh, and seasoned with pimento, ginger, saffron, and a few aromatic herbs. This simple dish is served up in the leaves of the *raven*, which are used for plates, dishes, and spoons. These vessels are always clean, and are renewed at each repast.

The Malegaches have two methods only of preparing their food. They either boil  
it



it in earthen vessels of an excellent quality, which they manufacture with great ingenuity, and which they call *panelles*, or they broil it upon the coals.

They catch with much dexterity a great number of birds unknown in Europe, which are as much sought after by naturalists, on account of the beauty of their plumage, as they are esteemed by travellers, on account of their exquisite taste.

The pheasant, the partridge, the quail, the pintado, or Guinea fowl, the wild duck, teals of five or six different kinds, the black paroquet, the spoon-bill, the turtle dove, the black-bird, the green wood-pigeon, pigeons and paroquets of various colours, together with a kind of bat of a monstrous size, afford excellent and delicate nourishment to the Europeans. It was not without a considerable degree of reluctance, that I first ate the bats of Madagascar, dressed after  
the



the manner of a fricafeed chicken. These animals are so hideous, that the very sight of them frightens our sailors; yet when one can overcome that disgust which is inspired only by the idea of their figure, their flesh is found to be much more palatable than that of our best fowls.

The Malegaches catch immense quantities both of sea and fresh-water fish.

The dorado, breams of different kinds, soles, pilchards, much larger, but not so good or so fat as ours, herrings, mackarel, oysters, muscles, crabs, and turtle, furnish food in abundance to the islanders who live on the borders of the sea. The rivers also supply them with very fine eels, and fresh water mullets, in taste and excellence preferable to sea mullets. On these coasts there are a great many kinds of fish, which one must not eat without trying whether they are poisonous, by putting a piece of silver under  
their



their tongue. If the piece of silver loses its colour, and becomes black, those who should eat them would experience the most fatal symptoms, and be exposed to great danger. Several of the people belonging to admiral Boscawen's squadron lost their lives at Rodriguez, by not taking this useful precaution.

The French have frequented only the eastern coast of Madagascar. The province of Carnassi, in which Fort Dauphine stands, is well known to them, and also a part of those where Foulepointe, the bay of Antongil, and the island of Nossi Hybrahim, are situated.

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OF THE SOUTHERN PART OF MADAGASCAR.

**T**HAT part of Madagascar where Fort Dauphine is situated, is very populous.



lous. Almost all the villages are built upon eminences; they are furrounded by two rows of strong palisades; and within these there is a parapet of earth four feet in height. Large bamboos, placed at the distance of five feet from each other, and sunk to a considerable depth in the ground, serve to strengthen the palisades: but some of these villages are fortified also by a ditch ten feet in breadth, and six in depth.

The place where the chief resides is called *Donac*: it contains two or three buildings furrounded by a peculiar kind of inclosure, where the chief lives with his women and his children.

The chiefs always go armed with a fusée, and a stick headed with iron, to the other extremity of which is affixed a small bunch of cow's hair: they cover their heads with a cap made of red woollen cloth. It is by their caps, above all, that they can be distinguished



tinguished by their subjects. The authority of these chiefs is very much limited ; yet in the province of Carcanossi they are supposed to be the proprietors of all the land, which they distribute among their subjects, in order to be tilled and cultivated. For this they require a small quit-rent, which, in the language of the country, is called *faensa*.

The people of the province of Carcanossi are not entirely ignorant of the art of writing. They have even some historical books in the Madecasse language : but their learned men, whom they call *Ombiaffes*, use only the Arabic characters. They have among them treatises on medicine, geomancy, and judicial astrology. These Ombiaffes are both forcerers and physicians. The most celebrated come from the province of Matatane, in which country magic is preserved in its full glory. The Matatanes are dreaded by the other natives of the island, because they excel



excel in this art of deception. The Om-  
 biaffes profess, in the public schools, geo-  
 mancy and astrology. The art of writing  
 has, doubtless, been brought into this island  
 by the Arabs, who made a conquest of it  
 about three hundred years ago. Their paper  
 is made in the valley of Amboule: it is ma-  
 nufactured from the *Papyrus nilotica*, which  
 the Madecasses name *Sanga-Sanga*. They  
 pull off with great dexterity the inner bark  
 of this tree; divide it into very thin fila-  
 ments, which they moisten with water;  
 and having laid them across each other, in  
 various directions, press them well down.  
 They are then boiled in a strong lye of  
 ashes, and afterwards pounded in a large  
 wooden mortar till they are reduced to a  
 paste. This paste is washed and drenched  
 with water upon a frame made of bamboos,  
 in the form of a grate. When this opera-  
 tion is finished, the leaves are spread out  
 to



to dry in the sun, and are glazed with a decoction of rice water, called, in the Malegache language, *ranou pan*. This paper is of a yellowish colour; but when it is well glazed, it does not imbibe the ink. The pens used by these islanders are made of the bamboo.

Their ink is made from a decoction in boiling water of the bark of a tree which they call *arandrato*. This ink is not quite so black as ours, but it is naturally more shining.

The Arabic language has made some progress in the north-west part of the island of Madagascar. It is well known that the Arab princes formed large establishments along the African coast, which, according to geographers, correspond with the kingdoms of Monomotapa and Mono-Emugi. They took possession also of the island of Comora; and these princes, when they emigrated to Africa and the adjacent isles,



did not forget their ancient country. They still indeed carry on an inconsiderable trade with Aden, Mascate and the coasts of Abyssinia. They have also on the small river of Bombetoc, in Madagascar, a kind of settlement, which enables them to visit different parts of that island, for the purposes of commerce. By these means they have introduced their language, and left some traces of Mahometanism among the Malegaches. Formerly, there subsisted between the Arabs and the Portuguese of India a hatred and animosity, which were founded solely on the zeal these two nations entertained for their religion. The Arabs of Comora and Madagascar made frequent attacks upon the Portuguese establishments on the coast of Africa, which did them great injury: they even destroyed some of their settlements: but this hatred became gradually extinguished, when the decline of the

Portu-



Portuguese power rendered them less the objects of jealousy. An attempt was made at Goa, about twenty years ago, to take advantage of this suspension of hostilities, in order to form a Portuguese settlement at Cape St. Sebastian, in Madagascar. The intention of this establishment was merely religious. The Portuguese thought of forming a mission, rather than a factory; but this project was not attended with success. M. Bosse, an inhabitant of the isle of Bourbon, saw the melancholy remains of this establishment.

It is surprising that Mahometanism has not made greater progress in this island, which has been so much frequented by the Arabs. However, if we except circumcision, abstinence from pork, and some few trifling practices, which have very little influence over the conduct of these people, the descendants of the Arabs themselves have



lost sight of the fundamental parts of their religious opinions. They do not believe in a future existence ; like the Manichees, they admit of two principles, one supremely good, and the other extremely wicked. They never address their prayers to the former ; but they entertain a great dread of the latter. They are continually doing homage and offering up sacrifices to him.

The island of Madagascar is so near to the coast of Africa, that it is natural to suppose that it must have been peopled from that vast continent : but at present the different races are so intermixed, that it would be vain to attempt to describe all the varieties of them.

One can, however, in this island distinguish the race of real negroes ; but it is a matter of more difficulty to distinguish those who are descended from the whites.

The whites, who inhabit the province of  
Anossi



Anoffi and Carcanoffi, pretend to be descended from Imina, the mother of Mahomet. They have assumed the name of Zafferahimini. The whites, who inhabit Foulepointe, Noffi-Hibrahim, and the bay of Antongil, are sprung, some from the pirates, and others from the Jews: for this reason, they call themselves Zaffe-Hibrahim, that is to say, the descendants of Abraham. Besides these, there is a third kind of whites, who say they were sent to Madagascar by the Caliph of Mecca, to instruct the Malegaches in the secrets of nature, and the religion of Mahomet. These impostors seized upon the province of Matatane, after they had expelled and massacred the Zafferahimini, who governed that district. They are called Zaffi-Casimambou. Their complexion is darker than that of the other whites, and their profession is to teach to read and write the Arabic language.



The Zafferahimini, in the province of Anossi and Carcanossi, believe that they came originally from the sandy plains on the borders of Mecca. On this account they are called *Ontampassemaca*, and are divided into three classes, the Rhoandrians, the Anacandrians, and the Ontzatfi. The first and most honourable class, is that of the Rhoandrians. People of this class have assumed to themselves the privilege of killing animals. Among savages, and people who subsist by hunting, the trade of a butcher is almost always held in great distinction. The Rhoandrians are the nobility of the country; and it is always from this class that the sovereign is chosen.

The Anacandrians are descended from the Rhoandrians, and a woman of an inferior class. For this reason, they share with the Rhoandrians the honour and advantage of killing, for the other islanders,

such



such animals as are necessary to their subsistence.

The Ontzatfi are the last class of the Ontampassemaca ; but they enjoy no particular marks of distinction. They are generally brave soldiers, skilled in the art of war, who can throw a stone or an assagay with great dexterity, and who spend their time in dancing, sleeping, and amusing themselves. They learn from their earliest infancy some songs, containing lessons of morality, or fables respecting their origin.

The native blacks are divided into four classes : the Voadziri, the Lohavohits, the Ontzoa, and the Endeves.

The Voadziri, we are assured, are the descendants of the ancient sovereigns of the island. They are generally pretty rich in slaves and flocks ; and they are allowed to possess several villages. These people must be held in great consideration among the



islanders of Madagascar, for they have preserved, notwithstanding the despotism of the Arabs, who conquered the province of Anossi, the right of killing, when they are not in the presence of a Rhoandrian or an Anacandrian, such animals as belong to their subjects. The Lohavohits are much less powerful than the Voadziri. They can never possess more than one village; and, however rich they may be in flocks, they must always send for a Rhoandrian or an Anacandrian, to kill those animals which they and their subjects use as food.

The caste of the Ontzoa comes immediately after that of the Lohavohits, to whom they are nearly related; but they have no kind of authority or privilege. The Ondeves are slaves by extraction. In the Malegache language that word signifies *a lost man*.

The Malegaches preserve, respecting their  
origin,



origin, a fable which corresponds extremely well with the subdivision I have given of these different castes.

Such of these islanders as have any erudition relate, that the Creator of heaven and earth formed, from the body of the first man whilst he was asleep, seven women. These were the mothers of the different castes.

The caste of the Rhoandrians are the offspring of the first man and the woman formed from his brain. The mother of the Anacandrians, and that of the Ontzatfi, had not so noble an origin. The one was formed from his neck ; and the other from the left shoulder.

The caste of the Voadziri proceed from the first man and the woman formed out of his right side.

The mother of the Lohavohits and the Ontzoa came from the thigh and the calf of



the leg ; but the extraction of the Ondeves is still meaner. They are said to be descended from the soles of the feet.

It is doubtless a subject of melancholy reflection to find amongst the people who inhabit the large province of Anossi so ridiculous fables respecting the inequality of their condition. What a deplorable absurdity for savages to refuse being brethren, and to disdain a common origin ! The explanation of this kind of phenomenon can be found only in the conquest which the Arabs, the ancestors of the Rhoandrians, made of Madagascar. This foreign race have left, wherever they were dispersed, the most lamentable traces of superstition. The Rhoandrians are reduced at present to a family of about twenty persons. None of them are to be found but in the province of Anossi ; and there is reason to hope that the island will at length be delivered from  
the



the government and yoke of these conquerors, who have laid it waste, and infected it with Mahometan practices.

The Malegaches submit to the Rhoandrians only as free subjects. They change their chiefs at pleasure; and they can attach themselves to any one whom they think capable of securing to them happiness and tranquillity. These islanders are too brave to crouch under a burthenfome yoke; but their extreme credulity is, without doubt, very prejudicial to their liberty, and to the success of their enterprises.

How is it possible that these people, involved in the darkness of ignorance, can defend themselves against the deception of the Ombiaffes, when the most enlightened nations are still every day dupes to quacks and impostors? It would appear as if it were necessary that man should suffer himself to be subjected by chimeras. Reason is seldom  
I ever



ever so powerful as to preserve him entirely from that fondness for the marvellous which often hurries him into the most ridiculous illusions; and if in civilised nations he sometimes artfully conceals this fatal propensity, it is only because he is ashamed of his weakness.

The Malegaches of the province of Anossi are lively, sensible, and grateful: they are far from being destitute of intelligence or capacity. These islanders are passionately fond of women; and when in their company never appear sad, or dejected. Their principal attention is to please the fair sex, who, in this country more than in any other, meet with that respect and deference which are so necessary to the happiness of society. Man here never commands as a despot; nor does the woman ever obey as a slave. The balance of power inclines even in favour of the women. Their empire is  
that



that of beauty, mildness, and the graces : for, colour excepted, the Malegache women are handsome. Their persons are slender and genteel ; they have pleasing and delicate features ; a soft smooth skin ; teeth remarkably white ; and fine blue eyes, the pupils of which are brown and sparkling.

A plurality of wives is not uncommon here among the chiefs, and those who are rich ; but they never espouse more than one legally : the rest are considered as concubines. This practice is not attended with disagreeable consequences in Madagascar ; for all these women live in harmony together. Besides, a divorce may take place as often as the conjugal union displeases either the husband or the wife. When they part, however, by mutual consent, they restore to each other the property they possessed before marriage. In Madagascar adultery is looked upon as a robbery, and as such is punished.



punished. These people, therefore, pay the utmost respect to marriage; they forewarn strangers to behave with decency to their wives; but they offer them their daughters, and think themselves much honoured when they have children by them. Married women may be known by their hair, which is separated into tresses, and bound up in the form of a nosegay on the top of the head. Young women suffer it to fall carelessly over their shoulders. Husbands are always in high spirits when with their wives; their presence inspires them with joy; as soon as they perceive them, they begin to dance and to sing; and they continually repeat that they sooth the cares of life. The Malegache women appear to be happy, and are generally in good humour. Their lively, cheerful and equal temper is peculiarly pleasing to the Europeans.

While the Malegaches are at war, their  
women



women sing and dance incessantly, throughout the whole day, and even during a part of the night. They imagine that these continual dances animate their husbands, and increase their vigour and courage. They scarcely allow themselves time to enjoy their meals. When the war is ended, they assemble, at sunset, and renew their singing and dancing, which always begin with much noise, and the sound of various instruments. Their songs are either panegyrics or satires; and appeared to me to interest the spectators very much. Such sports are a kind of useful lessons, in which glorious deeds are celebrated, and contemptible actions ridiculed. As soon as a woman perceives that her health betrays any signs of having had familiar intercourse with the Europeans, she absents herself from those joyful assemblies, in order to avoid the cutting raillery of her companions, and to put herself under the  
care



care of the physicians, or Ombiaffes. This custom prevents the venereal disease from spreading so much in this island as it has spread in Europe. Besides, the Ombiaffes have found out a remedy for this disorder, which is said to be extremely efficacious. I do not recollect the name of the plant which they use ; but I know that its leaves resemble those of the phyllyrea. These physicians order the patient to chew and swallow it, lying alternately on the back and belly, in a horizontal position. The patient must not be loaded with clothes ; and in order that perspiration may not be impeded, she must be surrounded, on all sides, with a strong brisk fire, during the whole time that the remedy acts. The virus of the disease generally accumulates in the soles of the feet ; and the abscess there formed is seldom attended with disagreeable consequences. Great care is taken that the heat  
of



of the fire may not be too disagreeable to the patient. These savage people thus know how to deliver themselves happily, and in less time than we, from that scourge which we introduced amongst them, and which in Europe occasions so much devastation.

Most travellers, instead of lamenting that the savages ever became acquainted with the Europeans, seem to take delight in throwing out every kind of invective against them. It is thus that they have almost always rewarded them for the hospitality which they so generously and disinterestedly shewed towards us. If you read Flacourt\*, you will imagine that the Malegaches

\* He was director-general of the French East-India Company, and in 1648 had the management of an expedition in the island of Madagascar, which, like all the preceding, proved unsuccessful. This expedition, however, procured a very minute account of the island, which Flacourt was enabled to give, from having re-



ches are the most perverse, the most deceitful, and the most fawning of mankind. He does not hesitate to assert, that among these islanders treachery and revenge are accounted virtues; compassion and gratitude weaknesses. Such absurd declamation, however, can impose only on those who have not studied, with Rousseau, man in his primitive state. Can he indeed, who follows without restraint the dictates of nature, be corrupt and wicked? When man, in a civilized state, is hurried on by the impetuosity of passion, his desires, rather inflamed than satisfied, plunge him into an abyss, from which all the power of reason cannot deliver him. But the savage, when in his pleasures he follows the impulse of his senses, experiences nothing of the like

sided in it ten years. It was printed at Paris, in one volume quarto, with figures designed and engraven by the author, and was dedicated to the subintendant Fouquet, who had the principal share in the company then formed for carrying on a trade to the East Indies. T.

kind.



kind. In all countries where men are free, and where inequality of condition is known only by a few faint shades, the riches of individuals are that of the soil, and the soil is the property of all in common. Whatever travellers may say, bad morals are not found but in a state of civilization. The difficulty of gratifying his appetites leads man aside from the path which nature has traced out for him; bad education, pernicious examples, a variety of interests, frivolous tastes, and fictitious wants degrade, in our eyes, human nature so far as to make some metaphysicians believe, that we are all born with a secret propensity to vice. Man, naturally, says Hobbes, is a wicked being. Let us banish such a disagreeable idea; and let us, in our fellow-creatures, see good and benevolent beings. I have studied with some care the character and customs of the islanders of Madagascar; I have several times assisted



at their assemblies when they were deliberating upon important affairs ; I have followed them in their dances, their sports and their amusements ; and I have always found among them that prudent reserve which secures them from those fatal excesses, and those vices, so common among polished nations. I was, indeed, then so young that my observations cannot have much weight ; but, if my experience is not sufficient to inspire confidence, I beg the reader to study the nature of things, more than the relations of ignorant and unprincipled men, who think they have a right to exercise the most despotic sway over the inhabitants of a foreign land.

If the Malegaches have sometimes employed treachery, they were forced to it by the tyranny of the Europeans. The weak have no other arms to protect them from the attacks of the strong. Can these people defend



defend themselves by any other means against our bayonets and artillery? They are destitute of knowledge and resources; yet we take advantage of their weakness to make them yield to our caprices: they receive the most rigorous treatment in return for the hospitality which they have so generously shewn to us; and we call them traitors and cowards, when we force them to break the yoke with which it has pleased us to load them.

These melancholy truths are too well proved, by the ruin of the different establishments which the Europeans have attempted to form in Madagascar.

In 1642, Captain Picault obtained for himself and associates the exclusive privilege of trading to Madagascar; and at the same epoch a grant of the island was given to a powerful company, by letters patent from the crown.



One Pronis therefore was commissioned to take possession of Madagascar in the name of the king, with orders to form an establishment in some fertile spot, which might be susceptible of defence, and of an easy and safe access. In consequence of these orders, he made choice of the village of Manghefia, which is situated at the extremity of the province of Carcanossi, in the latitude of  $24^{\circ} 30'$ . This place appeared to him as likely to answer the proposed end in every respect. The numerous herds of horned cattle which frequented this part of the country, and its rich fields of rice and potatoes, suffered no uneasiness to remain in his mind respecting provisions. A navigable river, which takes its rise at the bottom of mount Siliva, waters meadows of an immense extent in the neighbourhood: timber of all kinds fit for building houses, or constructing ships, may be found in abundance close to commodious



modious docks ; and the harbour is perfectly sheltered from the sea winds by the small island of St. Lucia.

Scarcely had Pronis established himself at Manghefia, when Captain Resimont brought him seventy people from France, to reinforce his small colony. But the unwholesomeness of the climate in the space of a month destroyed one third of the whole. Pronis being then obliged to abandon this first establishment, notwithstanding its advantageous situation, retired precipitately with the remains of his colony to the peninsula of Tholanger, the air of which is more salubrious.

This peninsula, which is situated in the twenty-fifth degree of latitude, increases insensibly in breadth, and might easily be secured from any attack of the islanders by redoubts and palisades. The fort built here, the elevation of which above the sea is an



hundred and fifty feet, commands the harbour, so that an enemy at anchor would not long be able to withstand the fire of its batteries. A bold shore surrounded with breakers renders it very difficult to land here; and access to the fort would be impracticable, were it strengthened by some additional works. This fort, called Fort Dauphin, is of an oblong figure, and is surrounded with good walls built of lime and sand, covered with strong cement: it was thought needless to enclose it on the side towards the harbour. The anchoring ground is excellent: a ship here would sooner break her cables than drive on her anchors: but the sea winds, and above all the frequent and strong north-east breezes, are very troublesome to ships moored in this port, the entrance of which is bounded on the south by Cape Ravenate, and on the north by the point of Itapera. The beautiful river of

Fanhère,



Fanfhere, which has its source at the bottom of the mountains of Manghabey, runs into the sea two leagues from Fort Dauphin, and very near to Cape Ravenate. This river supplies water to a large lake, which the islanders call the lake of Amboule. It is ten thousand fathoms in circumference, and its mean depth is about forty feet.

The lake of Amboule would form an excellent harbour, were not the channel by which it communicates with the sea often shut up by shifting sands.

There are certain times when large vessels might easily be carried into this basin: but such opportunities are rare. Before these occasions can happen, the river, by a sudden swell, must have washed away the bar of sand which the winds and the waves are every day accumulating at its mouth, and which is formed in that spot where the current of the water is in equilibrio with the force



force of the tide. It is not, however, impossible to open that passage, and to clear away the sand-bank which prevents ships from entering this excellent harbour.

To effect this, the hulls of some old vessels laden with ballast ought to be sunk at certain distances, and in a direction which local observations made with great care could alone point out. These incumbrances would serve as so many foundations to a new sand-bank, which would be formed from the quantities daily washed in by the sea. After this preliminary operation was finished, it would be necessary to wait some time, until the sand-bank was pretty well consolidated to withstand the force of the river, which, when increased in strength and quantity, might produce the effect of a large sluice. The bank employed to withstand the current being constructed in such a manner as to break of itself, the violence of the stream would



would not fail to cleanse the mouth of the river, and to render the entrance of the lake practicable.

Every method employed to make moles in the sea might be attended with advantage in accomplishing the object here proposed. If I have given the preference to that of using the hulls of old ships, it is because it appears to me to be the most commodious, the most expeditious, and the least expensive. Besides, an experiment of this nature could not fail of being useful and instructive, whatever might be its success. Vessels, when sunk, are masses so enormous and solid, on account of the care taken to bind all their parts together, that I do not think it possible to substitute for them, in moles, and works destined to withstand the fury of the sea, any other bodies more capable of resisting the violence of the waves. The river Fanshere is navigable for boats to  
the



the distance of from fifteen to twenty leagues from its mouth. The labour necessary to bring the navigation of this river to perfection would be very inconsiderable.

The point of Itapera, which is to the north of Fort Dauphin, encloses, on the southern side, the great bay of Loucar. The island of St. Clair shelters it from the sea winds, and prevents the small river of Itapera from being choked up with sand, like that of Fanthere.

The port is on the leeward side of the island; but the anchoring ground here is little frequented by navigators, because the bay of Loucar abounds with shoals and quicksands.

The peninsula of Tholanger was so much the more favourable to the establishment of Pronis, as the rich and fertile valley of Amboule, and the proximity of several navigable rivers, freed him from all uneasiness respecting



respecting the means of subsisting. Mines of iron and steel of an excellent quality, hemp, resinous gums, pitch and tar, and timber fit for building houses, or constructing ships, all found here in abundance, were advantages which a wise and enlightened administration would not have suffered themselves to neglect. Pronis, however, was a man destitute of talents and industry. The indolence in which he lived, as well as the Frenchmen under his command, involved the colony in all those disorders which an imprudent conduct usually produces. Licentiousness was succeeded by a spirit of revolt ; and those who owed submission and obedience to their chief soon put him in irons. In this state of captivity, he continued six months. When released from his imprisonment, by a vessel which had arrived from France, with such provisions as he stood most in need of, he rendered himself guilty



guilty of a new crime, by publicly selling to Vander Mester, the governor of Mauritius, at present called the Isle of France, all the unfortunate Malegaches who were in the service of the establishment. What raised the indignation of the islanders to the highest pitch upon this occasion was, that there were amongst these slaves sixteen women of the race of the Lohavohits.

When the company were informed of this shameful conduct, they deprived Pronis of his commission. Flacourt was chosen to succeed him; but he did not arrive at Fort Dauphin till towards the end of December 1648. As he has published a minute account of every thing which took place under his administration, I shall not here trace out a picture of the cruelty, injustice, and oppression, which that governor exercised towards the unfortunate islanders. In 1661 he sent forty Frenchmen, followed



by a body of armed blacks, to burn and ravage the fertile country of Fanshere. The manner in which Flacourt violated that hospitality which had been so generously shewn to him, cannot be defended in an enlightened age. I am inclined to believe, that every man, hereafter, who has the least regard for virtue or humanity, will fly from foreign lands, and renounce every commercial advantage, rather than imitate the barbarous conduct of this governor. Instead of making savage nations wear our chains, let us impart to them our sciences, and our knowledge. People sunk in the darkness of ignorance, and intimidated by the superiority of our arms, cannot certainly avoid the yoke which we are pleased to lay upon them : but what right is more iniquitous than that of force ? And how dare we at present accuse savage nations of treachery, when, harassed by our tyranny, they have



have only attempted to avenge themselves for our severity? If Flacourt knew better than Pronis how to enforce obedience from the French under his command, he did not, however, shew that he was much better acquainted with the principles of the laws of nature: he was unjust and cruel towards a people, who being the proprietors of the country, ought to have given laws to him, instead of receiving them. But let us leave *Flacourt's History* to those who may have courage to read it; and let us see whether his successors were less inhuman.

Fort Dauphin was burnt in 1655, and was not rebuilt till the year 1663. Chamargou, who was then governor, sent La Cafe to explore that part of the island which lies to the north of the country of the Matatanes. This commission La Cafe executed with much intelligence. It may not be here improper to give some account of the character



rafter of this man, whose memory is still celebrated among these people. La Cafe was only a fictitious name ; that of his family was Le Vacher ; and he was born at Rochelle. On his arrival at Fort Dauphin, the French were held in no kind of estimation among the islanders. After great expences, that establishment was in a state of the most deplorable decline. La Cafe, however, undertook to revive the consequence of the French nation ; and in this he succeeded. By a great number of victories he acquired the surname of *Dian Pouffe* ; and no greater honour could have been conferred upon him by the Malegaches : for *Dian Pouffe* is the name of a chief who formerly conquered the island, and who is even yet held in great veneration among these people.

The French, alone, withheld from La Cafe that justice which was due to his valour and good conduct. The governor of



Fort Dauphin, jealous of the glory he had acquired, by executing, in an able manner, those difficult commissions which had been assigned to him, refused either to reward or to promote him. The sovereign of the province of Amboule, named Dian-Rassitate, took advantage of the just resentment of La Cafe, and invited him to enter into his service. Five Frenchmen accompanied him, and abandoned Fort Dauphin. Dian-Nong, Dian-Rassitate's daughter, having conceived a violent affection for La Cafe, offered him her hand with the consent of her father ; and this chief, tottering on the brink of the grave through age and infirmities, had the consolation of securing the happiness of his subjects, by rendering his son-in-law absolute master of the rich and fertile province of Amboule. When La Cafe married Dian-Nong, he refused the title and honours which, in that country, are



are attached to the sovereign power. He wished only to be considered as the first subject of his wife, who was declared sovereign after the death of her father. La Case, beloved by Dian-Nong, who, to a charming countenance, added great courage, and the rarest qualities; esteemed and respected by his family, and the Amboulese, to whom he was a father, could only offer up ineffectual vows for the prosperity of the French establishment at Fort Dauphin.

He was not suffered to go to the relief of his countrymen, whom he knew to be in the utmost distress. Chamargou had set a price upon his head, as well as upon those of the five Frenchmen who had followed him to Amboule. The chiefs, who resided in the neighbourhood of the fort, highly irritated to find that an attempt should be made against the life of a man for whom they entertained the highest veneration, una-



nimously refused to supply the colony with provisions. An absolute famine, therefore, was now added to increase the desolation occasioned by fevers and other distempers, which had reduced the number of the French to eighty men.

The establishment at Fort Dauphin was on the point of being totally ruined, when the arrival of a vessel, commanded by Kercadio, a gentleman of Brittany, suspended for some time the evils with which the colony was afflicted.

Disorder and confusion had never ceased to prevail among the French from the time that they first formed a settlement in Madagascar. The islanders detested, and even began to despise them. They were incensed at our tyranny; and our intestine divisions had weakened that sentiment of terror, with which the superiority of our arms had at first inspired them. Captain  
Kercadio



Kercadio saw, therefore, that the assistance he had brought with him from France could not be of long duration. That brave officer, who was free from the prejudices of his station, and the harshness peculiar to his profession, judged it necessary to endeavour to bring about a reconciliation between Chamargou and La Case. He represented to the former, that he could no longer consider as his subaltern, a man, who, by his marriage with Dian-Nong, had become not only absolute master of the province of Amboule, but sovereign also of the whole island of Madagascar. No madness, indeed, could have been attended with more fatal consequences to the French, than that of the head of a languishing colony obstinately persisting to treat as a rebel, a person as powerful as he was respected, and who, by a single word, might have occasioned his destruction. Despairing that his reason-



ing would have any effect on the prejudiced and inflamed mind of Chamargou, Kercadio applied to an intelligent counsellor, who, through a very singular accident, had embarked in his vessel, and earnestly begged him, as his friend, to employ his abilities, in endeavouring to convince the governor what were his real interests, and those of the colony entrusted to his care.

If the counsellor succeeded in this difficult enterprize, he was less indebted for the accomplishment of his wishes, to his eloquence, than to the honour of being known to and protected by the marshal de la Meilleraye. As soon as he informed Chamargou that he should be indispensably obliged to give an account to the marshal of the cause of the misfortunes, and perhaps of the entire loss of Fort Dauphin, the governor, who had been hitherto so haughty and intractable,



tractable, who braved famine and death, and who was on the point of sacrificing to his desire of revenge the melancholy remains of the colony under his command, became timorous and submissive. The name of the marshal alone struck him with terror. He sent to beg that Kercadio would forgive his obstinacy; and did every thing in his power to induce that officer to bring about a reconciliation between him and La Cafe; offering, at the same time, to make every reparation that might be required. Kercadio set out, therefore, for Amboule, accompanied by the counsellor. The negociation with which he was charged, experienced neither difficulty nor delay. La Cafe despised the vain efforts of his enemies. This respectable character had no stronger desire than that of being useful to his countrymen. He hastened to their assistance, as soon as he had permis-



sion ; peace and abundance followed him to Fort Dauphin ; and during the time that he directed it by his counsel, disorder and want ceased to afflict that establishment.

Dian-Nong behaved with no less generosity than La Cafe ; and such is the force of virtue, that there was not a single Frenchman who was not sensibly affected by the heroic courage of this woman, who had sufficient command over herself to banish all remembrance of the injuries done to her husband. She gave way to that sweet impulse, or rather innate desire, which inclines man to assist his fellow-creatures, when he sees them in distress.

The counsellor shared with his friend Kercadio the happiness of having brought back peace and plenty to Fort Dauphin ; but without forgetting the detestable stratagem by which he had been torn from his business, and his favourite pursuits. He had  
been



been wandering for several years on the stormy ocean, without any particular object in view; and was traversing distant countries, contrary to his interest and inclination. His wishes, directed solely to his native soil, could not be accomplished without experiencing new distresses. The bitter remembrance of the manner in which his confidence had been abused, in order to give him up to despair, still aggravated the severity of his fate. Ye, who are so often dupes to the false appearances and deceitful looks of those impostors who found their fortunes on your credulity, may this relation be useful to you, and preserve you from the misfortune of heedlessly trusting yourselves into the hands of those worthless men, who do not flatter and caress you but because they know you, and through motives which your vanity does not permit you to perceive. This counsellor, commissioned to  
execute



execute an order which his family had solicited and obtained for transporting his brother to Madagascar, on account of his profligacy, was so imprudent as to entrust himself, at Nantz, to one of those officious men who have the perfidious talent of inspiring strangers with confidence, and of profiting by their simplicity. This wretch thought it a harmless joke to kidnap the counsellor, in the room of his brother, whom he suffered to escape, and by this double fraud he stripped both of them of their money.

It would appear as if Providence had thought proper to inflict this cruel punishment upon the lawyer, in order to shew, that men ought never to depart from a strict observance of the rules of justice, even when their motive is laudable, and when, by doing so, advantages are likely to result to the person whom they wish to amend.

At



At the end of the last century, the French wished at any event to people their colonies. Respecting the means of doing this, they were far from being scrupulous or delicate. They often hurried away by stratagem, and oftener by violence, young men accused of misconduct. Seldom did they enquire thoroughly into the accusation brought against them; and many, without doubt, were made victims to this secret kind of inquisition. The greater part of our colonies, however, have received benefit from these forced emigrations. The exiles seem to have forsaken their vices when they changed their climate; but this effect can appear surprising only to those who are little accustomed to reflection. It may be readily perceived, that ease and liberty must have produced this change. In civilized countries, the passions are inflamed by restraint; but in free and fertile countries



tries the disturbers of social order lose their vicious inclinations almost in an instant.

Is there a freer, or more happy nation in the world than the United States of America? The rights of every individual are there held sacred. Dangerous would it be for any one who should attempt to violate them. However powerful he might be, he would be considered as an enemy to his country.

In that happy country virtue, knowledge, talents and industry meet with a most distinguished reception. Burthensome privileges, frivolous distinctions, and humiliating preferences have never yet taken deep root there, as in Europe. Little inequality is found there; and the people wish to acknowledge that only which naturally arises from superiority of talents and knowledge. The action of the law has the same power over him



him who commands, as over him who obeys. Justice is equally distributed to all; and convenience is never substituted in the room of equity.

The most numerous class of citizens is never degraded by absurd prejudices, which, in Europe, render individuals so much discontented with their situation that they are continually obliged to leave it. The duty of contributing towards the support of public affairs has never had the appearance of a badge of slavery. May this example make an impression on the enlightened nations of Europe, and teach them that the cause of all their disorders is that excessive inequality of power and riches, which induce the greater part of mankind to employ even the most criminal means to raise themselves from the abjection and contempt in which they are sunk by destructive prejudices.

Those who are destitute of knowledge or talents,



talents, employ flattery, meanness, servility, falsehood, and perfidy, in order to elevate themselves above their equals.

It is, doubtless, morally impossible that fortune, birth, and exalted employments should not, among polished nations, give great pre-eminence to those who enjoy these advantages. It is difficult for the poor not to be, in some respects, very much dependant on the wealthy: but if the laws fall with severity on the one, and lightly on the other; if vice dare shew itself without exciting contempt and indignation; if it conduct to power and grandeur, with more certainty than an union of the most valuable qualities, the sage is forced to seek obscurity in order to avoid oppression; the people, disgusted with virtue, because it opposes every thing which they consider as happiness, hear no more the voice of conscience, which is silenced by the imperious cry of interest;

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they behold with an eye of envy those who are above them ; they lose all affection for their fellow-creatures, and at length disdain labour and innocence. Ought we to be surprised, that, in so reversed an order of things, the poor, more pressed down by the weight of their misery, than dazzled by the vain enjoyments of the rich, and the false splendour of opulence, should seek in vice and villany the means of rendering their lot more supportable ? Can they be restrained by the dread of punishment, when they are every moment in torture, and compelled to detest their existence ? Did these fatal disorders cause the same ravages in the country as in cities, the luxury and population of which are so much boasted of, agriculture would be neglected, and the earth become a desert. But the laborious life of the people of the country, the simplicity of their taste and manners, and still more



more the smallness of villages, and their respective distances, which never allow of frequent and numerous assemblies, check the progress of corruption. This destructive evil is found, above all, concentrated in large capitals, where its poison, heightened by the various interests of a multitude of people collected together, diffuses itself abroad, and infects every order of society. Crimes are the inevitable consequence and visible sign of a vitiated constitution.

It is then highly necessary to correct and reform every thing that leads man aside from his duty ; to inspire him not with contempt, but with love, for his fellow creatures ; and to shew him, that it will promote both his interest and his happiness not to do an injury to another. It is not by multiplying executions that we can ever attain to so salutary an end. This barbarous and ineffectual method becomes also often unjust,

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when



when, by a general subversion of every principle and rule, the apparent prosperity of a vicious man seduces and misleads those unhappy wretches who expiate, by punishments capable of striking fear and terror into the bosom of a cannibal, crimes that are the fruit of a fatal delusion from which education could not secure them. What enlightened man is there who, possessing the least sentiment of humanity or justice, is not moved with compassion for those melancholy victims of that depravation, which prevails among numerous bodies of people, when the laws by which they are governed are neither framed with wisdom nor have that force which is necessary to preserve good order? In such cases, can a virtuous judge in the bottom of his heart be as unfeeling as the law; and even when he condemns the guilty, does not his reason reproach him with his severity? Let us open our prisons,

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and



and we shall find, that the criminals confined there for their crimes have been almost all hurried to those mansions of grief and misery, by causes which do not exist in countries where man enjoys complete liberty, in the midst of peace and tranquillity.

Every society whatever has doubtless the right of excluding from its bosom all those who disturb its good order : but can it assume to itself the power of life and death over those individuals who compose it ? This question has been warmly debated ; but has it ever been resolved ? The Marquis of Beccaria, in his excellent treatise on *Crimes and Punishments*, says, “ It appears to me absurd  
 “ that laws, which are only an expression  
 “ of the public will, that detests and punishes  
 “ homicide, should commit the same crime  
 “ themselves ; and that, to deter mankind  
 “ from murder, they should themselves com-  
 “ mand a public murder. What then are  
 “ real



“real and useful laws?” adds Beccaria.  
 “Those which all would propose, and  
 “which all would wish to observe.”

He then examines if punishments ought to be proportioned to crimes, and if the punishment of death be useful and necessary for the safety of society. On this subject he observes, that frequency of punishment never rendered men better. According to this illustrious author, the death of a criminal is a less powerful check than the long and durable example of a man deprived of his liberty, and obliged to repair, by the labour of his whole life, the injury he has done to society. In short, the punishment of death is not a right, but the war of a nation against a citizen.

It is not necessary that I should explain, at more length, the principles of the Marquis of Beccaria on crimes and punishments; and it is still less necessary that I should enter



into a long and elaborate discussion of so difficult a subject. It will be sufficient for me to observe, that the only principle which cannot be contested, is that which gives to every society the right of expelling those who occasion in it trouble and disorder. But why have civilized nations made, as yet, scarcely any use of a power so just and humane? Would the earth be too small for receiving all the disturbers of public tranquillity? Africa, Asia, and America afford immense tracts of land, uncultivated and uninhabited, into which if malefactors were dispersed, they might introduce our language, our arts, and our industry? This, perhaps, might still be the effectual means of removing those obstacles which form a barrier between us and the rich commerce of India, by the isthmus of Suez, and the Red Sea. If the difficulty of approaching that coast, and the still greater difficulty of find-

ing



ing certain subsistence, be objected, I shall observe in reply, that a few sloops, loaded with provisions, hatchets and fire-arms, would answer the double object of procuring a safe landing, and providing against want. With such light vessels one may clear the most difficult bars, and approach the most dangerous shores. With regard to the possibility of subsisting in places near the sea, the history of navigation does not permit us to doubt of it. I could support my assertion by a multitude of facts; but I shall confine myself to quote only one, with the particulars of which I am perfectly acquainted. Besides, this fact is one of the most conclusive. Seven negresses lived on brackish water and shell-fish, for fifteen years, on a shoal in the Indian Sea, known under the name of the *Isle de Sable*. This fact is well authenticated. A corvette, called *La Dauphine*, conveyed them to the Isle of France,



in 1776; and it was in 1761, that the *Utile*, the vessel in which they had embarked, was wrecked on this dangerous sand-bank, situated to the east of Madagascar, under the fifteenth degree of latitude. This island, the greatest elevation of which above the level of the sea does not exceed fifteen feet, is absolutely barren. Its surface contains about one hundred and fifty acres; and it affords not the smallest shelter from the scorching sun of the torrid zone.

But though these desert and uninhabited countries should not, always, answer those views of utility, which ought to be proposed by such banishment, we cannot reasonably entertain any dread of hurting large countries, inhabited by scattered tribes of savages, destitute of knowledge and industry, by leaving among them such criminals as merit the most indulgence, when they cultivate useful arts.

Those



Those who entertain any apprehensions of that kind, must have reflected very little on the causes of profligacy, which produce so much mischief among civilized nations; for what vices can be hurtful in a country where equality prevails? Irregularities are never found but in great cities, in the midst of luxury and wretchedness.

Should the colony of malefactors, which the English have lately established at Botany Bay, though founded on principles different from mine, have, for the happiness of humanity, that success which it is reasonable to expect, can the other nations of Europe refuse to imitate the example? Will they complain of the expences that such emigrations may occasion? But these expences are just, as well as useful to society; and if we compare them with the present expences of imprisoning and executing criminals, we shall find that they are much inferior. Can



we prefer the punishment of the galleys to banishment of that kind? What advantage does society derive from those miserable objects, galley-slaves? The people necessary for guarding them, the idleness of man when stigmatized and degraded, and the means which he is continually devising to avoid the task imposed on him, render them much more burthenfome than useful. Besides, the union of vicious men spreads corruption indiscriminately to every individual. It is a certain fact, that the least guilty become in a little time as corrupted as the rest of the profligates with whom they associate. In short, such establishments have carried the worst of moral and physical evils into every place where it has been thought useful to form them. However important the nature of this digression may be, I ought not to extend it farther, but leave to some abler pen the trouble of displaying, with  
method



method and precision, the numerous advantages which must result from banishment when commanded by justice, and directed by the spirit of wisdom, and views of utility.

But to return to my subject. La Cafe remained no longer at Fort Dauphin than the time absolutely necessary for re-establishing in it abundance and peace. His wife, Dian-Nong, was much disgusted with the place; and her own private affairs recalled her to Amboule. Besides, Chamargou, more jealous of La Cafe's success than grateful for his services, would not have failed to do every thing in his power to render his life uncomfortable. Of this La Cafe could entertain the less doubt, as the governor did not deign to join his entreaties to those of the rest of the colony, in order to induce him to remain at the fort. At the moment, however, when the French, to the number  
of



of two hundred, were levying considerable taxes from the fertile province of Carcanossi, and giving law to the islanders, a cruel war again broke out to deluge that fine country in blood, and to render the assistance of La Case necessary. This war, more fatal to the French than the Malegaches, was occasioned by the inconsiderate zeal of a missionary. Dian Manangue, sovereign of the province of Mandrarey, a powerful, bold and spirited chief, and a faithful ally to the French, had received in his *donac*, with every mark of distinction, one Father Stephen, a Lazarist, and superior of the mission of Madagascar.

This father, charmed with the excellent qualities of the chief, imagined that it would be an easy matter to convert him. When Dian Manangue perceived his intention, he thought it a mark of respect due to the friendship which he had vowed to the  
 30 French,



French, and above all, to the recommendation of La Cafe, to inform the zealous missionary that all his efforts would be fruitless. These people are fond of making orations, and of haranguing in public. Dian Manangue, therefore, assembled his women and family, in order that he might declare publicly that nothing was capable of making him renounce his ancient customs. “ I  
 “ pity,” said he, “ your folly, in wishing,  
 “ that, at my age, I should sacrifice my happiness and the pleasures which surround  
 “ me in my *donac* to your will. I pity you  
 “ for being deprived of that which soothes  
 “ the cares of life. You permit me to live  
 “ with one woman : but, if the possession  
 “ of one woman be a good, why is the possession of a numerous seraglio an evil,  
 “ when peace and harmony prevail among  
 “ those who compose it ? Do you observe  
 “ among us any symptoms of jealousy, or  
 seeds



“ feeds of hatred ? No—All my women are  
 “ good—they all endeavour to render me  
 “ happy ; and I am more their slave than  
 “ their master.

“ But, if your maxims are so useful and  
 “ necessary, why do not your countrymen  
 “ at the fort follow them ?—They ought  
 “ to know much better than I the merit and  
 “ value of your words. Believe me, my  
 “ friend, I will not deceive you ; it is im-  
 “ possible for me to change my customs ; I  
 “ will never quit them but with my life. I,  
 “ however, give you leave to exercise your  
 “ zeal on the people who are subject to my  
 “ authority ; and I give you the same power  
 “ over my family and my children. But  
 “ this permission will be of very little avail,  
 “ unless you can suit your precepts to our  
 “ manners and usages.”

Father Stephen made no other reply to  
 this speech than to order the chief, in a  
 peremptory



peremptory tone, to dismiss all his women, except one. This missionary even so far lost sight of moderation, that he had the temerity to threaten that he would cause the French to carry away all his women, if he delayed, for a moment, to put his order in execution. It may be readily imagined, that a behaviour so violent and unexpected must have occasioned a general indignation and revolt in the *donac*. The women fell upon the missionary; loaded him with reproaches and blows; and in their fury they would have undoubtedly strangled him, had not Dian Manangue, notwithstanding the agitation he was under, come speedily to his assistance. The chief was obliged to make use of all his authority before he was permitted to remain alone a single moment with this father, whom he dismissed after giving him a rich present. Besides, he asked of the missionary a respite  
of



of fifteen days to determine on the grand affair of his conversion : but this delay, solicited with so much earnestness by the chief, and with difficulty granted by the missionary, was intended to answer a very different purpose. Dian Manangue wished to gain time, in order to quit the province of Mandrarey, without dread of being pursued by the French ; and, when he thought he could do this in safety, he departed with his women and slaves, to seek shelter in the country of the Machicores, which is twenty-five leagues distant from Fort Dauphin.

His departure, however, was not so private as to escape the knowledge of Father Stephen, for he had spies even in the *donac* of the chief. In vain, therefore, did Chamargou endeavour to retain him. The missionary, consulting only his zeal, formed the rash resolution of following Dian Manangue to the country of the Machicores.



A brother of St. Lazarus, and another Frenchman, with six servants or domestics, loaded with sacerdotal habits, accompanied him in this dangerous expedition.

In the first week of Lent, 1664, Father Stephen joined Dian Manangue, after experiencing much fatigue and a multitude of disasters. The chief, more astonished than alarmed at the courage of the missionary, behaved to him with the most profound reverence, and received him in a manner which he had no title to expect. In vain did he beg him to renounce the project which he had formed of converting him; observing, that his manners and usages were an insuperable obstacle to such a change. Father Stephen, instead of making any reply, snatched from him his *oli* and his amulets, threw them into the fire, and declared open war against him. It need be no matter of surprise that this violent conduct of  
the



the missionary should occasion his destruction, as well as that of those who attended him. Dian Manangue caused them all to be instantly butchered ; and, at the same time, swore, that he would entirely extirpate the French from the island. In order that he might execute this fatal vow with more certainty, the chief sent his son, who had been baptised, to La Vatangue, his brother-in-law, to acquaint him with the motives which had induced him to free himself from the tyranny of the French, whose insidious designs aimed at nothing less than to abolish the manners, usages, and religion of the country ; adding, that his *oli* (a kind of amulet consulted by these islanders) had commanded him to defend them, even at the hazard of his life ; and he assured La Vatangue, that the French had rendered themselves incapable of conquering, since they had dared to proceed to such criminal excesses.



excesses. The irritated chief gave notice to his brother-in-law, also, that Chamar-gou had sent forty Frenchmen to the eastern coast, and that he might easily surprize and massacre them. “ I send you my son,” continued he at the end of the letter, “ to  
 “ be at the head of the army which you dis-  
 “ patch to attack and destroy the French :  
 “ it is my *oli* that inspires me ; and you are  
 “ well acquainted with the misfortunes  
 “ which come upon us when we do not  
 “ faithfully obey its mandates. My son  
 “ will give you a particular account of every  
 “ thing that has passed ; and you will, no  
 “ doubt, be filled with indignation when  
 “ you know the perfidious behaviour of  
 “ these strangers towards their most faithful  
 “ ally.” La Vatangue was extremely happy on receiving this intelligence of the expedition of the forty Frenchmen ; but he had only time to be upon his guard ; for



two days after the arrival of his nephew, his spies brought him word, that the French were encamped at the distance of a league from his village.

This chief sent them a present of rice, honey, and four oxen, begging them to inform him what was the intention of their journey, because he had never seen such a numerous body of Europeans in the interior parts of the island. La Forge, who commanded this detachment, returned for answer, that he had orders to subject his country to the dominion of Fort Dauphin. The chief, alarmed at so unexpected an enterprise, requested peace; offered to give him four hundred oxen; and observed, that his country of Haye-Fontchy was at too great a distance from the fort to excite the hatred or jealousy of the French. La Forge rejected with disdain the proposals of the chief, and had the madness to ask twenty thousand



land oxen as the price of a peace. To so extravagant a demand La Vatangue made no reply ; but whilst these adventurers were ranging through a field of sugar-canes, he caused them all to be slaughtered.

The particulars of the disaster which befel these forty adventurers, sent out by Chamargou, were known by a Portuguese, who was the only person that escaped, by taking shelter in a large marsh covered with reeds and stagnated water. In this place he remained two days, concealed up to the neck in mud. The islanders, who pursued him, fearing that they would sink in the earth, which was soft and spongy, set fire to the reeds, in order that they might oblige the Portuguese to come forth ; but under cover of the thick smoke, occasioned by this conflagration, he had the good fortune to escape. The islanders wished much to destroy this man, that Chamargou might



not receive intelligence of the fate of his companions, and come to attack them before the arrival of Dian Manangue, who was still with his army in the country of the Machicores.

The Portuguese related, that their expedition had been attended with success till they fell in with La Vatangue. Their number spread terror and consternation throughout all the villages where they passed: the chiefs paid, without hesitation, the contributions which were exacted; and they were on the point of reaping the fruit of a long and fatiguing journey when the insatiable rapacity of their commander occasioned their ruin, and the loss of their rich booty.

Chamargou, in this relation, ought to have perceived the just punishment of these unfortunate plunderers, who were going to ravage countries over which they had no kind of authority: but this governor, instead



stead of profiting by the lesson given him, formed the fatal resolution of carrying fire and the sword amongst the Malegaches. He set out, therefore, at the head of thirty Frenchmen, followed by a small army of Manamboulese; slaughtered without distinction both women and children; set fire to all the villages which he found in the course of his march; and took possession of the *donac* of Dian Manangue. Father Manner, the only missionary who remained, carried his standard during this bloody and inhuman expedition, on the particulars of which I shall not farther enlarge. An eye-witness, who was afterwards provincial commissary of artillery, published an account of it in 1722, in a work entitled, *A Voyage to Madagascar, by M. V.*

The manuscripts which furnished me with materials for this relation do not agree in every point with that author; but it ap-



pears, that Chamargou was obliged by an absolute scarcity of provisions to make an attempt to regain Fort Dauphin. When he arrived at the great river Mandrarey, and was endeavouring to cross it, Dian Manangue, who had watched his motions, appeared on the opposite bank with an army of six thousand men to oppose his passage. This chief, bearing the surplice and square cap of the missionary Stephen at the head of his forces, braved the French, who were on the point of perishing by famine. In the mean time La Case arrived, accompanied by ten Frenchmen, and three thousand Androfacs, who were his subjects, or rather the subjects of his wife, Dian-Nong. As soon as this brave man came up, he rushed into the water, ordered his people to fire upon the enemy, and by the terror of his name, rather than the superiority of his arms, forced them to quit the borders of the river,

and



and to betake themselves to flight. Though the approach of night ought to have prevented him, he then set forward to pursue them. Having discovered Dian Manangue, amidst a numerous body of the islanders, he wished to throw himself upon him: but Rabazé, a friend and favourite of the chief, had the courage to stop him, and to sacrifice his life to save that of his sovereign. The darkness of night only put an end to the carnage: but on the conclusion of this bloody war Fort Dauphin was again reduced to the most deplorable state of distress. The chiefs ceased to send in provisions, and even intercepted those which the garrison endeavoured to procure from distant parts. Dian Manangue, who pretended to be sovereign lord of a great part of the island, threatened our establishment with a formidable army; and his presence alone would have occasioned a fa-



mine, had it not been for five thousand cattle, which La Cafe found means to convey into the fort. All the expeditions of this extraordinary man were attended with the most complete success. With thirteen Frenchmen, and two thousand Androfes, he defeated Dian Ravaras, who was at the head of an army of eighteen thousand men, and took from him twenty-five thousand oxen, and five thousand slaves. The great celebrity of La Cafe made the council of the company, at length, see the necessity of employing and rewarding a man, who had rendered them such signal services, and who was still capable of rendering them much greater.

They, therefore, sent him a lieutenant's commission ; made him at the same time a present of a sword ; and congratulated him on his success.

La Cafe charged M. de Rennefort, who



was returning to France, to thank the company for the new marks of favour conferred on him, and to inform them, that he would undertake the conquest of the island with two hundred Frenchmen, and realize the other advantageous projects which he had already had the honour of proposing, if they would agree that he should be accountable to them only for his conduct. It does not, however, appear that the company adopted this plan, which was more that of a brave soldier than of an enlightened governor ; for an honest man respects the laws of hospitality, and laments to see the principles of justice and humanity violated for the sordid interests of commerce.

In 1666, the marquis of Mondevergue was appointed by the king to the general command of all the French establishments situated on the other side of the equinoctial ;



tial; and Caron and LaFaye had, at the same time, the management of all the commerce of the Indies. The marquis of Mondevergue arrived at Fort Dauphin on the 10th of March 1667, in a vessel of thirty-six guns, and was followed by a small fleet of nine ships, on board which were two directors of the Indies, an attorney general, four companies of infantry, ten chiefs of colonies, eight merchants, and thirty-two women.

As soon as Mondevergue arrived, he caused himself to be proclaimed admiral, and governor-general of the French colonies in the East. He was, however, obliged to have recourse to La Cafe, in order to procure provisions for his fleet. La Cafe, ever ready to serve his country, provided for the whole; and, besides this, brought about a reconciliation between the French and Dian Manangue, whose bravery and intelligence were not to be despised. This



chief, who at the fort was styled the prince of Mandrarey, swore obedience and fidelity to the governor general.

Caron, who was a Dutchman, did not remain long at Fort Dauphin. He set out for Surat, with a great part of the fleet, in order to take the management of that settlement.

La Faye, however, continued at Fort Dauphin; and in the month of November 1670, another fleet of ten ships arrived, commanded by M. de la Haye, captain of the Navarre, a vessel of fifty-six guns. All these ships belonged to the king, and were equipped with the war complement of arms and men. La Haye assumed the quality of general and admiral, with the authority of viceroy, and made Chamargou second in command, and La Case major of the island. At this period, the company had given up to the king the sovereignty of Madagascar.

The



The marquis of Mondevergue, to whose option it had been left either to remain governor of the island, or to return to France, chose the latter course, and embarked in a ship called the *Mary*, in the month of February 1671. On his arrival at Port-Louis, he found a commissary, who had orders to make him give an account of his administration. The company were much incensed against him; for La Haye, with whom he had quarrelled, had aspersed his character, and accused him of several misdemeanors. Though the public voice was in his favour, this brave officer, who had governed the island with prudence, and re-established peace in it, was obliged to yield to the superior influence of his adversary, and died a prisoner in the castle of Saumur.

La Haye, whose authority was unlimited, now resolved to deliver himself from  
those



those chiefs who gave him offence; and, accordingly, proposed to Chamargou and La Cafe to declare war against Dian Ramoufaye who had come to render him homage. This chief, who resided nearest to Fort Dauphin, was summoned to send immediately to the fort all the arms which he had received from the French. It may be readily conjectured, that this demand was followed by an absolute refusal. La Haye, therefore, ordered Chamargou and La Cafe to besiege Dian Ramoufaye in his village. They had under their command seven hundred Frenchmen, and six hundred Malegaches: but their attack was not attended with success; for Dian Ramoufaye made so vigorous a defence, that the French were obliged to retire. This check did not appear natural; and it was believed that Chamargou, discontented at being only second in command,

in



in a country where he had always been first, had contributed not a little to the failure of an enterprize, the injustice of which they had not even deigned to conceal. However this may be, La Haye was so much dejected by the miscarriage of his first expedition, that he resolved to abandon Fort Dauphin, and to carry his forces to Surat, after having visited the island of Mascarenhas, since called the Isle of Bourbon.

The pride of this governor was very much hurt to think, that the whole extent of his authority was not sufficient to prevent Chamargou, who had the superiority over him in point of local knowledge, from being able, by secret machinations, to counteract, at his pleasure, the operations which he wished to carry into effect.

La Haye's departure was followed by the death of the brave La Cafe ; and it was not difficult



difficult to foresee, that the loss of this celebrated man would infallibly occasion that of the colony.

At this period, it was well known, that the islanders breathed nothing but vengeance against us, and eagerly sought an opportunity of retaliating for our injustice and oppression. Our yoke was become odious and insupportable to them. Historians, for the honour of civilized nations, ought to bury in oblivion every detail of the atrocious cruelties exercised against those people, whom they brand with the odious epithets of barbarians, traitors, and thieves, because they have revolted against some European adventurers, whose least crime was a violation of the sacred rights of hospitality.

If the establishment at Fort Dauphin subsisted so long, notwithstanding the detestable administration of these rulers, it was  
the



the name alone of La Cafe which kept the Malegaches under subjection to so vicious a constitution. The memory of that truly extraordinary man is still held in great veneration among these islanders. His bravery, joined to more valuable qualities, and above all, the alliance he contracted by his marriage with Dian-Nong, inspired them with so much respect, that it was only after his death, that all these chiefs united against the wretched remains of the French adventurers, whose temporary successes were always followed by memorable disasters.

La Cafe, without doubt, was of too warlike a disposition, and this is a stain upon his memory : but all people almost have a secret propensity to this destructive scourge, which desolates the most beautiful countries in the world, and occasions a thousand times more evils to mankind than all the  
other



other scourges united. What man is there whom a passion for glory does not, sometimes, so far intoxicate as to make him forget every sentiment of justice and humanity? It is very difficult for a brave foldier to make his conduct, in every respect, that of a philosopher; and, under this point of view, it would, perhaps, be unjust to pass a severe censure upon all the actions of him who in Madagascar did most honour to his nation.

Chamargou survived La Cafe only a short time, and was succeeded by La Bretefche, in the command of the settlement. La Bretefche was La Cafe's son-in-law; but he possessed neither the talents nor the influence of his predecessor. Finding that it was impossible for him to preserve his authority, amidst the division and disorder which prevailed between the French and



the natives, he took advantage of a ship which had touched at the island, and which was going to Surat, to embark for that colony with his whole family. Several missionaries, and some Frenchmen, followed his example; but scarcely had the vessel set sail, when a signal of distress appeared hoisted on the fort. The captain of the vessel immediately ordered his boats to be launched, and proceeded towards the shore; but he arrived only time enough to pick up, below the walls, a few miserable wretches who had escaped a general massacre of the garrison, which had been effected in consequence of orders given, for that purpose, by Dian-Ramoufaye, and other chiefs in the neighbourhood. Such was the dismal end of a colony which might have become flourishing and useful to commerce, had not those who directed it taken every



every method they could to render the French name odious to these people, naturally mild, hospitable, and humane.

Among the different memoirs which I have consulted in compiling this historical account of the first establishments of the French in the southern part of Madagascar, I must make honourable mention of a manuscript given me by M. de Maleherbe. That minister, dear to the sciences and to letters, whose venerable name is never pronounced but accompanied with that tribute of homage and respect which are due to knowledge united with virtue, had the goodness to add to it a large map of Madagascar, accurately delineated, and executed with great care. That map, which he permitted me to have reduced and engraved, is prefixed to this work.

The manuscript and the map which accompanied it were the production of M.



Robert, who, in 1725, dedicated them to the duke de Chaulnes, whose protection he then solicited, in order to form a new establishment in the northern part of Madagascar.

M. Robert had been taken by the pirates, and conducted to that island, where he remained several years, which he employed usefully in traversing its principal provinces, and making himself acquainted with their productions. The object of his plan for an establishment there was, to collect the riches which the pirates had dispersed throughout the northern part of the country, while it served them as a place of refuge; but this project, the advantages of which would, perhaps, never have compensated for the expence, was not carried into execution. At present there are no considerable establishments in Madagascar but one, formed, of late years, in the southern part,



by M. de Modave, a man of spirit and a brave officer, and another, in the northern part, by count Benyowski. I was at the Isle of France in 1768, when M. de Modave came, in the name of the king, to take possession of the government of Fort Dauphin. The duke de Praslin was then minister of the marine, and had approved the plan presented to him by M. de Modave.

As it appears to be of some importance, I shall here give a copy of the memoir presented to that minister, when this establishment was projected.

#### MEMOIR OF M. DE MODAVE.

“ T H E Isle of France, like our Antilles, may consume our provisions, and, in exchange, give us productions which we have not.

“ It is a place where our ships, and people employed in the Asiatic trade, may



“ stop and take in refreshments. It affords,  
 “ also, the powerful means of protecting  
 “ our commerce, and of defending us in  
 “ India. So many advantages united, might  
 “ well persuade some that this colony, of  
 “ all our establishments beyond sea, is that  
 “ which ought most to interest government:  
 “ but on successively examining the Isle of  
 “ France, under every view in which it  
 “ appears so important, we shall find, that  
 “ it is everywhere in that state of imper-  
 “ fection which would oblige us to doubt  
 “ of its utility, were it confined to what it  
 “ can be by itself and its present dependen-  
 “ cies. The Isle of France, indeed, confi-  
 “ dered under the first view, and as a me-  
 “ dium of exchange, which is undoubtedly  
 “ the most interesting, has scarcely any thing  
 “ to give either to Asia or to Europe\*. Be-  
 “ sides,

\* The introduction of spiceries, by the indefati-  
 gable



“ fides, it cannot increase its provisions for  
 “ exportation, but by lessening objects  
 “ much more essential. It will be of no  
 “ use for the subsistence of troops; it is so  
 “ small that it can never answer this pur-  
 “ pose, even were all the cultivated lands  
 “ in it employed in raising grain and ve-  
 “ getables for the table,

“ The Isle of France, already so pre-  
 “ carious by the uncertainty and smallness  
 “ of its crops of grain, has a fault, also, in  
 “ regard to strength. All the labour of  
 “ this colony is consigned to slaves, and it  
 “ is deficient in population. These imper-  
 “ fections, however, may be corrected by  
 “ forming an establishment at Madagascar;  
 “ and therefore it is necessary to attempt it.

gable zeal of M. Poivre, has now given rise to an im-  
 portant branch of commerce, which M. de Modave  
 could not be acquainted with at the time when he  
 wrote this memoir.



“ The success of this enterprise appears  
 “ certain ; the expence will be moderate,  
 “ and the utility of it immense.

“ An infinite variety of objects may be  
 “ procured from Madagascar. This island  
 “ unites the productions of two zones.  
 “ It may furnish, in abundance, for the  
 “ Asiatic and European trade, cotton, silk,  
 “ gums, grapes of all kinds, ambergrise,  
 “ ebony, dye-woods, hemp, flax, iron of  
 “ an excellent quality, several metals, and  
 “ even gold. All sorts of Indian stuffs  
 “ may be manufactured here at a much  
 “ cheaper rate than any where else. The  
 “ great plenty of retail articles, together with  
 “ rice and corn, will secure every subsist-  
 “ ence necessary for such sea and land forces  
 “ as government may wish to keep up in  
 “ the Isle of France. To all these objects  
 “ we must add salt fish, hides, and tallow.

“ Navigation between this island and

“ Ma-



“ Madagascar may, with some precaution,  
 “ be kept open at all times. An intercourse  
 “ between these two islands is, therefore,  
 “ natural and necessary. The riches and  
 “ strength of the Isle of France depend on  
 “ Madagascar ; and it will be equally easy  
 “ for the former to execute and preserve  
 “ the proposed establishment. There is no  
 “ necessity for sending troops and squadrons  
 “ for this conquest, nor for transporting a  
 “ whole society at a great expence. Better  
 “ arms and better means will promote  
 “ this establishment without expending  
 “ much money. It is only by the force of  
 “ example, morals, religion, and a superior  
 “ police, that we propose to subdue Mada-  
 “ gascar. The society there is already  
 “ formed ; and nothing is necessary but to  
 “ invite it to us, and to direct it according to  
 “ our views, which can meet with no ob-  
 “ stacles, as they will interest the Mede-  
 “ casses



“casses themselves by the advantage of a  
 “reciprocal exchange.

“When I am established at Fort Dau-  
 “phin, with a detachment of troops under  
 “my command for the defence of the fort,  
 “and the protection of the French, I will  
 “make an excursion for six months into the  
 “interior parts of the country, because Fort  
 “Dauphin must not be considered as the  
 “best place for a settlement. Three leagues  
 “to the south of that fort is the beautiful  
 “river of Fanshere, the course of which, to  
 “the distance of twenty leagues from the  
 “sea, is navigable for small vessels. Above  
 “its mouth, it forms a lake, three thou-  
 “sand fathoms in diameter, the depth of  
 “which is never more than ten fathoms.

“This lake communicates with the sea  
 “by a channel, of from fifty to sixty fathoms  
 “in breadth, formed by the fall of the wa-  
 “ter; and, in the driest season, it is suffi-



"cient to afford a passage to the largest  
 "sloops. With a little labour, this lake  
 "might be made one of the finest harbours  
 "in the world ; and it appears that it is at  
 "Fanthere that a settlement ought to be  
 "made.

"When once a camp is transported thi-  
 "ther, with the consent of the natives, it  
 "will be proper to double the garrison ; and  
 "it will then be necessary to have mecha-  
 "nics for erecting the first works and build-  
 "ings.

"Our safety in the country, and the  
 "strength that is to be acquired for the  
 "establishment, and even for the Isle of  
 "France, ought not to allow us to have  
 "slaves in our service : but the natives of  
 "the country might be employed for hire ;  
 "and, as it is easy to make use of the  
 "plough, it will be possible to have soon,  
 "and



“ and at less expence than in the Isle of  
 “ France, a very extensive tract of land cul-  
 “ tivated, and with a few planters.

“ It will be requisite to have on the spot  
 “ a magazine stored with brandy, blue cloth,  
 “ glass ware, and some light French stuffs.

“ The first twenty habitations will ensure  
 “ the success of the establishment ; and after  
 “ the second year, it will be easy to form  
 “ many others.

“ During the first two years scarcely any  
 “ thing can be done, as one may say, but to  
 “ make a trial of the establishment ; and, to  
 “ secure it, materials must be prepared to  
 “ build a fort, which may be raised in the third  
 “ year, rather for supporting the dignity of  
 “ the governor, than for the sake of keep-  
 “ ing possession by force. The Isle of France,  
 “ and the affection of the natives, ought to  
 “ be the true safeguard of this settlement.

“ On



“ On these two principles the fort may be  
 “ constructed without shaking the founda-  
 “ tion of the new colony.

“ The expence of the proposed enterprize  
 “ will be as moderate as its utility will be  
 “ extensive. That part of it incurred by  
 “ troops will be little or nothing, as they  
 “ will form part of the garrison of the Isle  
 “ of France, where their maintenance would  
 “ be attended with more expence. As to  
 “ the houses to be built, they will require  
 “ only a small number of workmen, who,  
 “ for moderate wages, will in a little time  
 “ construct all the necessary edifices, and  
 “ the money expended on them will soon  
 “ be reimbursed by the sale of various arti-  
 “ cles which may be procured from the  
 “ establishment, and which will be set apart  
 “ for that purpose.

“ All these buildings, therefore, will be-  
 “ long to the king, without taking any  
 “ thing



“ thing from the funds sent to the Isle of  
 “ France to defray the expence of erecting  
 “ them.

“ The only increase, which the proposed  
 “ establishment will add to the expence of  
 “ the isles of France and Bourbon, will be for  
 “ the officers and people employed. This  
 “ sum, however, will not be considerable;  
 “ for it will not amount to forty thousand  
 “ livres. I value at 33,548 livres the  
 “ different utensils, and articles of merchan-  
 “ dize, which must be taken from the stores,  
 “ in the Isle of France, to supply with pro-  
 “ visions and other necessaries this new co-  
 “ lony, with the management of which the  
 “ minister has been pleased to intrust me.”

Such is the memoir which served as a  
 basis for the French establishment at Fort  
 Dauphin, under the direction of M. de  
 Modave. If the result of this new enter-  
 prize did not correspond with the hopes  
 which



which the minister had entertained, it was because every colony, not founded on the happiness and instruction of those people among whom an attempt is made to establish it, will always have temporary success only. It is not soldiers but artisans, farmers, and well-informed and laborious men, that ought to be established among such people. We ought never to forget that the treaties of savages with the Europeans are, in every respect, like those which children would make with philosophers; and since the treaties hitherto formed with the Malegaches are evidently in that situation, it would be highly unjust to take advantage of them contrary to the interests of these islanders. There are none but stupid or dishonest men who can affix a value to contracts so ridiculously illusory. You have obtained by cunning: you have by force extorted concessions from the credulous inhabitants.



habitants of foreign lands ; and because they foresee not the danger to which they expose themselves, by receiving you amongst them with friendship and generosity, you wish even to turn their kindness against them, and to make a right of them in order to oppress them, and subject them to your dominion.

If great commercial advantages invite you to Madagascar, adopt principles more just and humane.

For forming your establishments, choose farmers and mechanics. Those who know the character of the Malegaches, entertain no doubt respecting the reception which these islanders will give to men whose frugal and active lives banish vice, and introduce abundance.

Cultivating the earth by the plough, and a number of other useful practices, will inspire these people with sentiments of gratitude  
and



and veneration. India will supply you with a multitude of ingenious artificers and weavers, who know how to manufacture cotton stuffs, and to give them those brilliant and durable colours which cause them to be so much sought for in commercial countries.

Colouring substances, extracted from vegetables, have not, in our frozen climates, the same splendour and the same strength, as in the scorching climates of the torrid zone.

The fruits of our gardens, which grow on wall trees, never assume a ruddy colour, but on that side which is exposed to the rays of the sun.

We have no acid that fixes colours on cotton cloth, in so lasting and unalterable a manner, as the juice extracted from Adam's fig-tree, which we call *Bananier*.

The Indians excel also in manufacturing silk stuffs. Several provinces of Madagaf-



car would furnish a great abundance of that valuable substance. So important a branch of commerce ought the less to be neglected, as the Malegaches, in the southern part of the island, are acquainted with the method of preparing and weaving it, in order to make vestments.

In the neighbourhood of the Bay of Antongil, I discovered four kinds of cods, which produce silk of an excellent quality.

The Malegaches distinguish them by the four following denominations.

The *andevè* is a cod almost like that which, in the southern provinces of France, furnishes the best silk.

The *ande-vontagua*, another cod, smaller than the preceding, furnishes a silk much finer than that which comes from China, and equally beautiful.

The tree called *anacau* is covered, during a certain season of the year, with small  
cods,



cods, which being suspended by filaments hang from the leaves and branches. The silk procured from these cods is remarkable for its strength and fineness; but to divide it properly, and to render it useful, the cods must be preserved from the filth and dust that fall from the tree. These cods are known under the name of *andeanacau*.

The fourth kind of silk is not susceptible of being divided. The Malegaches call it *ande-saraha*. It is found in a kind of bag, which contains several hundreds of small cods.

The wool of Madagascar is beautiful; but the islanders derive no benefit from it. The Indians, however, would easily teach them to prepare it, and we should soon be indebted to them for a new and highly important branch of commerce. There are few oriental travellers who are not acquaint-



ed with those fine woollen stuffs known in Bengal by the name of *shawls*, which the Mahometans use for turbans. This stuff costs no less than an hundred pistoles the yard, when the superfine wool of the Cachemirian sheep has been employed in manufacturing it.

So exorbitant a price must surprise those who know the cheapness of labour in India, and at what a low rate raw materials may be procured in that country. It is, however, with very rude instruments that the Indian, more dexterous and more patient than the European, is enabled to weave these valuable stuffs.

Should France wish, in the course of time, to share with India and China, the advantageous trade which they carry on in woollen and silk stuffs, and printed cottons, I think, and many intelligent men are of the same opinion, that this might be accomplished,



plished, by forming, at Madagascar, upon proper principles, a colony of Indian weavers, who should be under the protection of the isles of France and Bourbon. It would, however, be necessary to introduce there, at the same time, those celebrated machines used at Manchester, for carding and spinning both coarse and fine cotton and wool; for the art of manufacturing cloth would be confined then merely to the weaver; and, certainly, the Indian weavers have a decided superiority over those of Europe. Such an assertion does not tend to depreciate our industry. I am perfectly sensible that it would be highly absurd to put the villages on the banks of the Ganges in competition with our large manufactories. This would be comparing the productions of patience and skill with those of genius.

The industry of the Indian is not confined merely to the trade of weaving. He



understands the art of cultivating the earth equally well, and knows how to prepare sugar and indigo. Under his hand clay assumes a variety of singular forms; and the earthen-ware of India is even sought for, and esteemed, in Europe.

The Indian is no less expert than the Chinese in the lapidary art. To cut and pierce the hardest stones he makes use of adamantine spar pulverised, and moistened with oil. He employs this substance, which is of very little value in India, for the same purposes as diamond powder is employed in Europe. The Indian knows, also, how to render the bamboo useful in manufactures. He makes paper of it, and likewise furniture, palanquins, and vessels for holding water. This tree is a species of large reed, from the joints of which there distils a kind of sugar, much esteemed by the orientals. This reed rises sometimes to the height of  
an



an hundred feet ; and the hardness and lightness of its wood cause it to be employed for a variety of uses.

Those men, who in Europe have rendered themselves eminent by a knowledge of the mechanical arts, might teach these Asiatics a great number of processes, from which they would derive great benefit. We are not yet well acquainted with the origin of borax. I was assured at Pondicherry, that this salt, so necessary for facilitating the fusion of metals, is not an artificial, but a natural salt, and that it was procured from the mines of Aurengabad. The late M. de Laffonne, first physician to the king, and member of the Academy of Sciences, gave me particular injunctions to make every research I possibly could on this subject ; but, notwithstanding all my care, my efforts were attended with very little success. Filagree-work, in gold and silver, prove,



likewise, to our most expert artists, that the Indians can manufacture these metals with great ingenuity. But without entering into farther details on the industry of these people, I shall only observe, that what I have already said, is sufficient to prove, that to establish a colony of Indians at Madagascar, would be an enterprise worthy of an enlightened nation. The Indian will prefer Madagascar to his native country. He will, doubtless, choose rather to work for himself, in a climate similar to his own, and in a fertile island, where he will enjoy full liberty in the midst of peace, than to cultivate for the benefit of the Mogul, the field which was torn from his ancestors by the most detestable robbery. By his example he will invite the Malegache to labour; and his industry will raise the colony to the highest degree of prosperity.

The true wealth of a nation is the pro-  
duce



duce of its labour. The industrious citizen, therefore, never remains in a state of inactivity and indigence, but because a nation neglects or mistakes its real interests. A brisk trade not only gives rise to many useful occupations, but it creates a necessity for many kinds of labour, the advantages of which can scarcely be calculated. Such, chiefly, are high ways, improvements in the navigation of rivers, canals of communication, the draining of marshes, the cultivation of waste lands, and plantations of trees on the summits and declivities of mountains. It cannot be too often repeated, that it is upon dry elevated spots that woods become of most utility; for in such situations they prevent the earth from being carried down by torrents, and encumbering the beds of rivers

But if you wish to carry your establishments soon to perfection, observe the strictest economy



economy in your labours. Substitute the strength of animals for that of men; employ currents of air, and falls of water: neglect none of those moving forces dispersed with so much profusion over the face of the earth. Notwithstanding the indifference and disdain which most people affect to shew for the mechanical arts, that science which serves as the basis of them is at once necessary and sublime. Can we prefer to it the vain declamations and idle chimeras of the man, who, through pride, loses himself in researches useless to his wants, and above the reach of his weak conception?

If the utility of the mechanical arts cannot be contested; if the use of those ingenious machines, which save much labour in most manufactures, be a fertile source of riches and prosperity, why do people, in some civilized countries, overlook the advantages which may be derived from them?

Does



Does not such a sign plainly point out to us that the commerce of a nation is destitute of spirit? This proof is evident; and if the processes pursued, in order to save labour, occasion disorder, we may readily conclude that those entrusted with the administration of government have neither knowledge nor abilities.

However this may be, the evil which results from economy in labour is only temporary; while the good that arises from it is permanent. Were a nation so little acquainted with its real interests as to reject, under this pretence, those useful discoveries with which the mechanical arts have been enriched, it would, by such conduct, only impoverish itself: for, how could it support a competition with neighbouring nations, who adopt contrary principles? Besides, I speak here only of colonies; and such inconveniences are not to be dreaded in countries



tries degraded by servitude. The slave will never destroy those ingenious machines which are equivalent to a multitude of arms. He will never refuse to employ that which tends to lighten the burden of his chains. If slavery has not totally extinguished his reason, he will, certainly, consider every invention, and every process, which serves to alleviate his misery, as the gift of Heaven.

Let the friends of humanity then unite to introduce every kind of industry into those colonies, in the prosperity of which they are interested. Let them not be afraid of multiplying machines in them, and of employing every agent, of which man, by his ingenuity, has been able to render himself master. Those, who in free and civilized countries complain, that these grand inventions may tend to deprive a multitude of hands of employment, ought, at least, to allow, that they must, on that account, have a salu-



a salutary influence in the colonies, by making the arms of the slave less useful to his master. It cannot, therefore, be denied, that powerful agents, and vigorous animals, with the assistance of machinery, may be substituted, with advantage, in the room of slaves. The private interest of the planters is thus reconciled with the principles of justice and humanity, to promote industry on their estates. Such a new order of things must, doubtless, gradually abolish slavery; and this change, effected in that manner, will be wise and prudent, and give universal satisfaction.

Among the different machines which should be introduced into the colonies, we may distinguish steam-engines.

Steam-engines, such as are still used in the greater part of mines, consist of a boiler which may be heated by combustible substances of every kind. The steam of the  
water,



water, which issues from the boiler, introduces itself under the piston of the pump, by the power of its expansive force. When the piston is at its highest degree of elevation, the communication between the steam that rises from the boiler, and the cylinder or body of the pump, is intercepted. At the same time the injection of cold water occasions a vacuum, by suddenly condensing the steam with which the body of the cylinder is filled, and the weight of the external air immediately forces the piston to descend. It is well known, that the valves and cocks, which open and shut the communication between the steam and the injected water, are always put in motion by the movement of the piston. The Marquis of Worcester, in 1663, was the first, who, by the means of steam, was able to raise water to a great height on alternately turning two cocks. After this discovery,



very, Savery, in 1700, published an account of a steam-engine, of which he pretended to be the inventor. A description of it may be found in *Desagulier's Treatise of Natural Philosophy*. Papin, almost at the same time, constructed a machine which produced the like effect; but Neucomen and Cawley, the first an ironmonger, and the second a glazier, added several new improvements to the invention of Savery. Neucomen's machine (for it acquired the name of that able artist) was, and still is, employed in freeing mines from water. Mr. Watt, a celebrated mechanic, has lately brought this machine to the highest degree of perfection.

The body of the machine consists of a cylinder of cast iron, the exterior part of which is cased with a covering of wool. This cylinder is hermetically closed, at the upper extremity, by a cap with a hole in it to receive the rod of the piston.

This



This piston moves in a collar lined with tow, which is squeezed close to it by means of skrews, and is surrounded by a ring to confine the steam, and prevent the external air from penetrating into the body of the cylinder.

When the steam which rises from the boiler fills the body of the cylinder, and presses equally on the upper and lower part of the piston, the expansive force of the vapour being then in equilibrio, the piston remains fixed at its degree of elevation; but the elastic fluid successively loses its spring, either in the upper or lower part of the piston, in a very short time. By this excellent construction, the rising and action of the vapour are continual; for after the steam is intercepted under the lower part of the piston, and the cold water injected has occasioned a vacuum under it, the expansive force of the steam pressing upon the  
piston



piston causes it to descend ; and because the communication of the steam with the upper part is intercepted, and that with the lower re-established, the piston cannot fail to rise with the same force, if a vacuum be made in the upper part of the piston by the injection of cold water. Such are the late improvements made in steam engines by Messrs. Watt and Bolton. Those which we have in France, according to the latest improvements of these able mechanics, cause a vacuum in the lower part of the piston, and not in the upper. Messrs. Watt and Bolton's principal object in this construction was, to prevent the body of the engine, which receives the steam, from cooling. For this reason, they preferred the action of steam to that of the pressure of the external air ; and, in order that the water injected may not cool the cylinder, when it causes

L a vacuum,



a vacuum, they have added a particular pipe which communicates with the cylinder, and to which they have given the name of a condenser: it is through this part that the cold water is injected. In order, also, to facilitate the reduction of the steam, at the moment of injection, they have added a small pump, which is destined solely for causing a vacuum in the condenser. A very simple and well-known piece of machinery serves to regulate the steam-engine, and to give it a circular motion. For this purpose a heavy wheel, of a large diameter, is employed, which communicates with the piston of the engine, by means of bent levers, like those used for turning a spinning-wheel by the foot. In common engines, the wheel, which serves as a regulator, ought to be twenty feet in diameter, and to weigh from two to two and a half tons. The greater  
part



part of this enormous weight is thrown to the centre, in order that the action of the balance wheel may be more uniform.

I have entered into these details, because I think it a matter of some importance to make known the latest improvements of this useful machine, in order that it may be more generally employed, not only among us, but in the colonies. Were this moving force adopted by the planters, in their mills for squeezing the sugar-cane, how many slaves, devoted to excessive labour, might be relieved!

The sugar-cane is a species of reed which rises to the height of ten feet. It is usually about three inches in circumference; and is covered with a kind of bark, which contains a spongy substance. It is divided into joints by knots placed at the distance of five inches from each other; and on the top it bears a



number of leaves, somewhat like those of the common water-flag.

This plant is cultivated in several countries of Asia and Africa. Every kind of soil is not equally proper for it: that where the earth is deep and light, seems to be the best.

Plantations of the sugar-cane do not require very severe labour. It is sufficient to form furrows in the ground, at the distance of three feet from each other: they ought to be no more than a foot in breadth, and six inches in depth. In these furrows the canes are laid lengthwise, and covered with earth. From each knot they send forth young shoots, but they do not come to maturity, so as to be fit for cutting, till the end of eighteen months. A month after the shoots begin to appear, all the weeds around them must be pulled up: but this care is not necessary when the cane is perfectly formed.

After



After the canes have been cut, new shoots spring up from the old roots, which at the end of fifteen months afford a second crop, but their produce is only one half of the first. Nothing but want of hands to replant, can induce a proprietor to seek more than two crops from his plantation.

When the canes are cut, the next business is to squeeze them immediately in the mill. This operation requires tedious labour during the night; for if the juice remains more than twenty-four hours in the cistern from which it is conveyed to the first boiler, it becomes sour. From the first boiler, it is successively removed into others, till it is converted into sugar. It is purified from that gummy substance which prevents it from becoming white and solid, by throwing into the last boiler a strong lixivium of wood-ashes and quick-lime. It may be readily perceived, that what contributes most



to the relief of the slaves, depends principally on the produce of the mill. The speedier the juice is extracted, the sooner will they be freed from night labour, so prejudicial to their health. Nothing, therefore, should be neglected that can give sugar-mills every possible degree of power and activity; and it is, certainly, neither by mules nor weak falls of water that so salutary an end can be attained. Views of interest unite here with the principles of humanity, to engage the planters to introduce in their mills the use of the steam-engine.

The woody part of the sugar-cane, known under the name of *trash*\*, is more than sufficient for keeping up ebullition in the boiler of a steam-engine, as well as in all the boilers employed in making sugar.

\* The French call the woody part of the sugar-cane, after the juice has been extracted, *bagasse*; but the English planters in the West Indies call it *trash*. T.

That



That I may more fully convince the planter of the utility of steam-engines, I shall shew, that, even at Paris, they save a great deal of expence in the most common labours. When a load of coals, weighing twenty-seven hundred weight, costs in that capital fifty-four livres, M. Perrier, of the Academy of Sciences, whose calculations serve me as a basis, values at no more than six sous the quantity necessary to produce a moving force equivalent to that of a horse labouring eight hours, and making a constant effort of about seventy-five pounds. As the strength of a man is only the seventh part of that of a horse, it follows, that his labour for a day may be supplied by a consumption of coals to the value of ten deniers. In the greater part of our colonies, wood, and other fuel, such as *trash*, are absolutely of no value. Why then do the planters neglect to employ a machine



of so much importance, which would save a multitude of hands? A steam-engine, when solidly constructed, is not apt to be deranged; it may be easily transported from one place to another; it may be erected at a small expence; and it requires only a very common degree of intelligence in those who attend it. Besides, it is not exposed to the danger of stopping, which, in important undertakings, occasions long suspensions of labour, and consequently considerable loss.

It may be of service, also, in places where the water is unwholesome, by procuring, for the use of man, distilled water in abundance, which is well known to be always wholesome, and fit for drinking when impregnated with air.

Those who are acquainted with the effects and advantages of steam-engines, will not be surprised, that able mechanics, notwithstanding



withstanding the high price of fuel, have preferred their moving force to that of streams, and falls of water. The greater part of water-currents experience continual variations by rain and drought. Water-falls require dams and sluices, which interrupt the navigation of rivers, and sometimes inundate lands valuable for agriculture. Besides, water thus collected, and rendered stagnant, diffuses throughout the country the seeds of infection, which produce pestilential disorders, and occasion great mortality in summer and in autumn.

If, to all these inconveniencies, we add the frequent and expensive reparations necessary for dykes, sluices, and works under water; and reflect on the great danger of seeing valuable erections swept away in a moment by a sudden thaw, or inundation; we shall readily comprehend the motives which induced Messrs. Watt and Bolton,  
the



the most celebrated mechanics in Europe, to substitute the moving force of the steam-engine for that of currents and water-falls, even in the grinding of corn. On the banks of the Thames, near Blackfriars bridge, may be seen that grand edifice called the *Albion Mills*, where two steam-engines keep in motion, night and day, sixteen pair of mill-stones, each six feet in diameter. A thousand sacks of flour are the daily produce of these mills; a produce sufficient to supply food to one-third of the inhabitants of London. Four pair of mill-stones more are kept ready picked, to replace those which are worn out, in order that the movement of the whole may never be interrupted. Should this noble enterprise be attended with that success which there is every reason to expect, it will be a great benefit to mankind, by inviting us, through a regard for our own interest, to gradually



gradually abandon our water-mills, which occasion diseases and desolation in the country. M. Perrier followed, in France, the example of Messrs. Watt and Bolton, by constructing near the arsenal, at Paris, a mill upon the same plan. Scarcely was this mill finished, when it was found to be a great resource for that city; but what made its utility more apparent, was the stoppage of the greater part of our mills, occasioned by the ice after the long and severe frost which took place at the end of the year 1788. It was much regretted that this able mechanic confined himself in his undertaking to one pair of mill-stones; but he could not then foresee the inestimable advantages which, by the nature of circumstances, would result from an erection simply intended to try and prove the utility of the enterprise of Messrs. Watt and Bolton. Not being able, through want of time, to extend



extend his undertaking, he was obliged to confine himself to machinery which grinds, daily, about seven hundred bushels, Paris measure.

It is only in the moment of distress that weak men are sensible of the value of industry. At other times, the most important objects are often sacrificed to their frivolous tastes ; and nothing but stern necessity, as one may say, can ever compel them to pay attention to it. But why should these men, who have, however, a great influence over public opinion, be so fond of praising indistinctly, and without knowing the cause, every thing that comes from a foreign country—and of discouraging, by their imprudent eulogies, those able artists who are capable of rivalling and coming in competition with the artists of other nations? Have we then no manufactures in France, no kind of industry worthy of praise?



praise? The tapestries, however, of the Gobelins; the carpets of Savonnerie; the rich stuffs of Lyons; the fine cloth of Louviers; the splendour and durability of our dyes; the exquisite taste which characterises the works of our artists; the beautiful porcelain of Seves; the large glass-plates of St. Gobin, and a multitude of other manufactures more or less important, fully prove, in my opinion, that France is not totally destitute of industry. If we wish to silence those who so unmercifully depreciate our arts, let us ask them, what their progress would be, were they free, and encouraged; and did not absurd prejudices forbid, as one may say, those from applying to them, who perhaps by their education are the best qualified for that purpose?

An enlightened man never disdains or despises but what is useless or hurtful. He respects every profession which is beneficial



to society ; he knows that idleness is the only source of misery and vice ; and he laments to see a number of hands kept in a state of inaction, by that ridiculous prejudice which prevents men of a certain class from employing their talents and abilities in promoting the wealth and happiness of their country. But this prejudice, which, in the greater part of civilised nations, checks the progress of commerce, and is, without doubt, the real cause of all our evils and misfortunes, luckily does not exist in our colonies. We have every reason, therefore, to expect the highest advantages, if we can transport our knowledge and our arts to these distant limes. The fertility of Madagascar, and the valuable productions contained in the bosom of that important island, cannot fail of affording industry the means of establishing a great and extensive trade. It is under this point of view, according



cording to my ideas, that we ought in future to consider such settlements as we may wish to form at Madagascar. Though M. de Modave approached nearer to the accomplishment of this object than any of his predecessors, it may be plainly seen, by his memoir, that his views were not founded upon a basis sufficiently solid, and capable of rendering the establishment which he was commissioned to form, long, flourishing and happy. This was the opinion of M. Poivre. That truly celebrated man had conducted, with prudence, for several years, the French establishments beyond the Cape of Good Hope, and had resided a long time at Madagascar, in order to make himself acquainted with its most useful productions. He was intendant of the Isles of France and Bourbon, at the time when M. de Modave began his settlement; and it may be readily imagined of what weight the opinion of

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that



that gentleman, distinguished by his virtues and knowledge, must have been. It is to his indefatigable zeal that France will soon be indebted for the advantage of sharing with Holland in the rich commerce of spiceries. If this service be not forgotten by future generations, the difficulties and trouble which that respectable citizen experienced, will serve to make his memory more illustrious. Always ardently anxious for the progress of knowledge and useful researches, he never suffered any opportunity of diffusing instruction to escape him. He considered it as one of the first duties of an administrator, to exercise and excite the emulation of all those in whom he perceived talents which he thought might be cultivated with advantage. He profited, above all, by those of the celebrated Commerçon. That learned naturalist had accompanied M. de Bougainville in his  
voyage



voyage round the world, and had formed an immense collection of plants, and of every object of natural history to be found in the countries which he had visited. The relation of his voyage, therefore, was likely to afford a variety of interesting observations; and he was well assured that if he went immediately to France, his useful labours would not remain unrewarded. He however renounced all these advantages as soon as he knew that M. Poivre wished to employ him in procuring new information. After acquiring a thorough knowledge of the natural history of the Isles of France and Bourbon, he proceeded to Madagascar in the year 1769, and M. de Modave, who was then governor of Fort Dauphin, gave him every assistance in his power to enable him to render farther services to science. It is much to be regretted that the accounts of these important disco-



veries should have been lost or dispersed after the death of this indefatigable man, who was carried off when he was just on the point of enjoying the fruits of his useful researches. I have been an eye witness to the wonderful activity of this learned man, who often spent whole nights in preparing and describing the plants and other productions which he had collected under a scorching sun. I doubt much whether any naturalist ever displayed more zeal or more extensive knowledge. But what remains at present of that immense collection which he shewed us at the Isle of France, and with the more satisfaction as it cost him a great deal of labour?—Nothing, or at least scarcely any thing. I can call to witness M. de Jussieu, who was so kind as to transmit to me such fragments of his valuable researches as he was able to procure. These melancholy remains of the unwearied labours of  
 a dis-



a distinguished philosopher, contain nothing but remarks of little importance upon some plants described by Flacourt, in his History of Madagascar. The only dissertation any way interesting concerns the Kimos, which I shall here transcribe, and add to it a short memoir of M. de Modave on the same subject.

“ Those who are fond of the marvellous,  
 “ and who no doubt must be displeased  
 “ with me for having reduced the pretended  
 “ gigantic stature of the Patagonians to six  
 “ feet, will accept, perhaps, by way of in-  
 “ demnification, an account of a race of  
 “ pigmies who fall into the opposite ex-  
 “ treme. I here speak of those dwarfs, in  
 “ the interior parts of the large island of  
 “ Madagascar, who form a considerable  
 “ nation called, in the Madecasse language,  
 “ *Quimos* or *Kimos*. The distinguishing  
 “ characteristics of these small people are,



“ that they are whiter or at least paler in  
 “ colour, than all the negroes hitherto  
 “ known ; that their arms are so long that  
 “ they can stretch their hands below their  
 “ knees without stooping ; and that the  
 “ women have scarcely any breasts, except  
 “ when they suckle ; and even then, we  
 “ are assured, the greater part of them are ob-  
 “ liged to make use of cow’s milk in order  
 “ to nourish their young. With regard  
 “ to intellectual faculties, these Kimos are  
 “ not inferior to the other inhabitants of  
 “ Madagascar, who are known to be very  
 “ lively and ingenious, though they aban-  
 “ don themselves to the utmost indolence ;  
 “ but we are told, that the Kimos, as they  
 “ are much more active, are also much more  
 “ warlike, so that their courage being, if we  
 “ may use the expression, in the double  
 “ ratio of their stature, they have never  
 “ yet been overcome by their neighbours,  
 “ who



“ who have often made attempts for that  
 “ purpose. Though attacked with supe-  
 “ rior strength and weapons, for they are  
 “ not acquainted with the use of gunpowder  
 “ and fire-arms, like their enemies, they  
 “ have always fought with courage, and  
 “ retained liberty amidst their rocks, which,  
 “ as they are extremely difficult of access,  
 “ certainly contribute very much to their  
 “ safety. They live there upon rice, va-  
 “ rious kinds of fruits, roots and vegetables,  
 “ and rear a great number of oxen and  
 “ sheep with large tails, which form also a  
 “ part of their subsistence. They hold no  
 “ communication with the different castes  
 “ by whom they are surrounded, either for  
 “ the sake of commerce or on any account  
 “ whatever, as they procure all their neces-  
 “ saries from the lands which they possess.  
 “ As the object of all the petty wars, be-  
 “ tween them and the other inhabitants of



“ the island, is to carry away on either side  
 “ a few cattle or slaves, the diminutive size  
 “ of the Kimos saves them from the latter  
 “ injury. With regard to the former, they  
 “ are so fond of peace that they resolve to  
 “ endure it to a certain degree; that is to  
 “ say, till they see from the tops of their  
 “ mountains a formidable body advancing,  
 “ with every hostile preparation, in the  
 “ plains below. They then carry the su-  
 “ perfluity of their flocks to the entrance of  
 “ the defiles, where they leave them; and,  
 “ as they say themselves, make a voluntary  
 “ sacrifice of them to the indigence of their  
 “ elder brethren; but at the same time de-  
 “ nouncing with the severest threats to at-  
 “ tack them without mercy should they  
 “ endeavour to penetrate farther into their  
 “ territories: a proof that it is neither from  
 “ weakness nor cowardice, that they pur-  
 “ chase tranquillity by presents. Their  
 “ weapons



“ weapon are assagays and darts, which they  
 “ use with the utmost dexterity. It is pre-  
 “ tended, if they could, according to their  
 “ ardent wishes, hold any intercourse with  
 “ the Europeans, and procure from them  
 “ fire-arms and ammunition, they would  
 “ act on the offensive as well as the defen-  
 “ sive against their neighbours, who would  
 “ then perhaps think themselves very happy  
 “ to preserve peace.

“ At the distance of two or three days  
 “ journey from Fort Dauphin, the inhabi-  
 “ tants of that part of the country shew a  
 “ number of small barrows or earthen hil-  
 “ locks, in the form of graves, which, as is  
 “ said, owe their origin to a great massacre  
 “ of the Kimos, who were defeated in the  
 “ field by their ancestors \*. However this

\* I am surpris'd that M. de Commerfon did not en-  
 deavour to ascertain the truth of this fact, by digging  
 up the earth of some of these barrows.



“ may be, a tradition generally believed in  
 “ that district, as well as in the whole island  
 “ of Madagascar, of the actual existence of  
 “ the Kimos, leaves us no room to doubt  
 “ that a part at least of what we are told  
 “ respecting these people is true. It is  
 “ astonishing that every thing which we  
 “ know of this nation is collected from  
 “ their neighbours; that no one has yet  
 “ made observations on the spot where they  
 “ reside; and that neither the governor of  
 “ the isles of France and Bourbon, nor the  
 “ commanders at the different settlements  
 “ which the French possessed on the coast  
 “ of Madagascar, ever attempted to pene-  
 “ trate into the interior parts of the coun-  
 “ try, with a view of adding this discovery  
 “ to many others which they might have  
 “ made at the same time.

“ To return to the Kimos, I can declare,  
 “ as being an eye witness, that in the  
 “ voyage



“ voyage which I made to Fort Dauphin,  
“ about the end of the year 1770, the  
“ Count de Modave, the last governor, who  
“ had already communicated to me part of  
“ his observations, at length afforded me  
“ the satisfaction of seeing among his slaves  
“ a Kimos woman, aged about thirty, and  
“ three feet seven inches in height. Her  
“ complexion was indeed the fairest I had  
“ seen among the inhabitants of the island;  
“ and I remarked that she was well limbed  
“ though so low of stature, and far from  
“ being ill-proportioned; that her arms  
“ were exceedingly long, and could reach  
“ without bending the body as far as the  
“ knee; that her hair was short and woolly;  
“ that her features, which were agreeable,  
“ approached nearer to those of an European  
“ than to an inhabitant of Madagascar;  
“ and that she had naturally a pleasant  
“ look, and was good humoured, sensible,  
“ and



“ and obliging, as far as could be judged  
 “ from her behaviour. With regard to  
 “ breasts, I saw no appearance of them ex-  
 “ cept the nipples : but this single observa-  
 “ tion is not at all sufficient to establish a  
 “ variation from the common laws of na-  
 “ ture.

“ A little before our departure from Ma-  
 “ dagascar, a desire of recovering her li-  
 “ berty, as much as a dread of being car-  
 “ ried away from her native country, in-  
 “ duced this little slave to make her escape  
 “ into the woods.

“ Every thing considered, I am inclined  
 “ firmly to believe in this new variety of  
 “ the human species, who have their cha-  
 “ racteristic marks as well as their peculiar  
 “ manners, and who inhabit mountains  
 “ from sixteen to eighteen hundred fathoms  
 “ high above the level of the sea.

“ Diminution of stature, in respect to  
 “ that



“ that of the Laplanders, is almost graduated  
 “ as from the Laplander to the Kimos.  
 “ Both inhabit the coldest regions and the  
 “ highest mountains in the world. Those  
 “ of Madagascar, where the Kimos live,  
 “ are, as I have already observed, sixteen or  
 “ eighteen hundred fathoms high above the  
 “ level of the sea. The vegetable productions  
 “ which grow on these elevated places ap-  
 “ pear to be stunted, such as the pine, the  
 “ birch, and a great many others, which  
 “ from the class of trees descend to that of  
 “ humble shrubs, merely because they have  
 “ become alpicoles, that is to say, inhabitants  
 “ of the highest mountains.”

To this extract from Mr. Commerfon's  
 Memoir on the Kimos, I shall add a few  
 observations by M. de Modave on the same  
 subject.

“ When I arrived,” says he, “ at Fort  
 “ Dauphin, in 1768, an ill-written memoir  
 “ was



“ was transmitted to me, which contained  
 “ some particulars concerning a singular  
 “ people, called in the language of Mada-  
 “ gascar the Kimos, who inhabit the mid-  
 “ dle of the island, about the twenty-second  
 “ degree of latitude. I had heard mention  
 “ of them several times before, but in so  
 “ confused a manner that I scarcely paid  
 “ any attention to a fact which deserves to  
 “ be cleared up, and which relates to a na-  
 “ tion of dwarfs, who live in society, go-  
 “ verned by a chief, and protected by civil  
 “ laws.

“ I had found in the relation of Flacourt  
 “ a passage respecting this nation ; but it  
 “ made no impression on my mind, because  
 “ Flacourt rejects the history of these pigmy  
 “ people as a fable, invented by the players  
 “ on the *herraou*, a kind of buffoons, or ra-  
 “ ther impostors, who spend their time in  
 “ reciting absurd tales and romances.

“ Flacourt



“ Flacourt calls these dwarfish people  
 “ pigmies, and mixes their history with  
 “ that of a pretended race of giants, who,  
 “ as the ancient tradition of Madagascar  
 “ assures us, occasioned formerly great ra-  
 “ vage in the island. Flacourt relates, after  
 “ these players on the *berraa*, that the  
 “ pigmies some time ago invaded the coun-  
 “ try of Anossi, from which they were  
 “ driven by the Etanos, who are the origi-  
 “ nal inhabitants of that district. The  
 “ Etanos surrounded the pigmies on the  
 “ banks of the river Itapera, and having  
 “ massacred them all, afterwards heaped  
 “ together in that spot a multitude of stones,  
 “ to cover the bodies of their enemies, and  
 “ to serve as monuments of the victory  
 “ which they had gained over them.

“ After procuring at Fort Dauphin and  
 “ the neighbourhood all the information  
 “ possible, I resolved to send a detachment



“ to discover the country of these pigmies.  
 “ The detail of this expedition is configned  
 “ to my journal ; but, either on account of  
 “ the infidelity of the guides, or their want  
 “ of courage, it was not attended with  
 “ success. I had, however, the pleasure to  
 “ ascertain the existence of a nation of  
 “ dwarfs, who inhabit a certain district of  
 “ the island.

“ These people are called *Quimos* or  
 “ *Kimos*. The ordinary height of the men  
 “ is three feet five inches, and that of the  
 “ women a few inches less. The men  
 “ wear their beards long, and cut in a round  
 “ form. The Kimos are thick and squat ;  
 “ the colour of their skin is lighter than  
 “ that of the other islanders ; and their hair  
 “ is short and woolly. They manufacture  
 “ iron and steel, of which they make lances  
 “ and assagays. These are the only arms  
 “ which they employ to defend themselves



“ from their enemies, who attempt to carry  
 “ off their cattle. When they perceive  
 “ bands of travellers preparing to traverse  
 “ their country, they tie their oxen to trees  
 “ on the frontiers, and leave other provi-  
 “ sions, in order that these strangers may  
 “ find the means of subsisting. When the  
 “ strangers, however, are so imprudent as  
 “ to molest them, by behaving in a hostile  
 “ manner, and are not contented with the  
 “ presents usual in the like circumstances,  
 “ the dwarfish Kimos know how to defend  
 “ themselves bravely, and repel by force  
 “ those who have the temerity to attempt  
 “ to penetrate into the valley where they  
 “ reside, and to which access is extremely  
 “ difficult.

“ Remouzai, who, in quality of captain,  
 “ followed the father of the chief Maimbou,  
 “ in the two unfortunate expeditions which  
 “ he undertook against these people, in  
 “ order



“ order to carry away a part of their flocks,  
 “ and afterwards sell them at Fort Dauphin,  
 “ told me, that he owed his safety merely  
 “ to the knowledge he had of the high and  
 “ steep mountains by which their valley is  
 “ furrounded. Remouzai had been several  
 “ times among the Kimos, and was em-  
 “ ployed as a guide by Maimbou’s father,  
 “ when he ventured to attack them. The  
 “ first incursion had no success, but the se-  
 “ cond was much more fatal: Maimbou’s  
 “ brother was killed; his small army was  
 “ put to flight; and the number of those  
 “ who escaped these pigmies was very in-  
 “ considerable. Notwithstanding all my  
 “ researches, I could never find any person  
 “ except Remouzai, who was able to give  
 “ me any certain accounts respecting these  
 “ two incursions.

“ Maimbou, with whom I had a good  
 “ deal of intercourse, for the purpose of  
 “ procuring



“ procuring provisions to Fort Dauphin,  
 “ was not old enough to accompany his fa-  
 “ ther in this expedition ; but he had con-  
 “ ceived such an aversion to the Kimos, that  
 “ he fell into a violent passion whenever  
 “ I mentioned them in his presence ; and  
 “ he wished me to exterminate that race of  
 “ apes, for such was the injurious appella-  
 “ tion which he always bestowed upon  
 “ them.

“ A chief of the Mahaffalles, a people  
 “ residing near the Bay of St. Augustine,  
 “ who came from a chief in the neighbour-  
 “ hood of the fort, with a view of exchanging  
 “ silk and other merchandize for oxen, said,  
 “ in the hearing of one of my officers, that  
 “ he had been several times in the country  
 “ of the Kimos, and that he had even car-  
 “ ried on war against them. This chief  
 “ added, that for some years, these people  
 “ had been harassed by their neighbours,

N

“ who



“ who had burnt several of their villages.  
 “ He boasted, also, of having in his possession a man and a woman of that race,  
 “ who he said were about the age of twenty,  
 “ or twenty-five.

“ From the accounts of this chief and  
 “ Remouzai, I am inclined to think, that  
 “ the valley of the Kimos is abundant in  
 “ cattle and provisions of every kind. These  
 “ little people are industrious, and apply  
 “ with much skill and labour to the cultivation of the earth. Their chief enjoys  
 “ a much more absolute authority, and is  
 “ more respected, than any of the other  
 “ chiefs in the different districts of Madagascar. I was not able to learn the extent  
 “ of the valley which they inhabit. I know  
 “ only that it is surrounded by very high  
 “ mountains ; that it is situated at the distance of sixty leagues to the north-west of  
 “ Fort Dauphin ; and that it is bounded on  
 “ the



“ the west by the country of the Matatanes.  
 “ Their villages are built on the summits of  
 “ small steep mounts, which are so much  
 “ the more difficult to be ascended, as  
 “ they have multiplied those obstacles that  
 “ render approach to them almost imprac-  
 “ ticable. The chief of the Mahaffalles and  
 “ Remouzai did not agree respecting two  
 “ points which are particularly worthy of be-  
 “ ing ascertained. The general opinion of the  
 “ people of Madagascar is, that the Kimos  
 “ women have no breasts, and that they  
 “ nourish their children with cows milk. It  
 “ is asserted, also, that they have no men-  
 “ strual flux ; but that at those periods  
 “ when other women are subject to this eva-  
 “ cuation, the skin of their body becomes  
 “ of a blood-red colour. Remouzai assured  
 “ me that this opinion was well founded ;  
 “ but the chief of the Mahaffalles contra-  
 “ dicted it. We must, therefore, suspend



“our judgment on this head ; and be cau-  
 “tious in giving credit to phænomena which  
 “appear to deviate so much from general  
 “rules, and to extend to a certain number  
 “of individuals only.

“I procured a Kimos woman, who was  
 “taken in war, some years ago, by a chief of  
 “the province of Mandrarey. This woman  
 “is rather of a tall stature, considering the  
 “general measure allowed to the females of  
 “her nation ; yet her height does not ex-  
 “ceed three feet seven inches. She is be-  
 “tween thirty and thirty-two years of age ;  
 “her arms are very long ; her hands have  
 “a great resemblance to the paws of an  
 “ape ; and her bosom is as flat as that of  
 “the leanest man, without the least ap-  
 “pearance of breasts. My little Kimos was  
 “remarkably thin and meagre when she  
 “arrived at Fort Dauphin ; but when she  
 “was able to gratify her voracious appetite,  
 “she



“ she became extremely lusty ; and I am of  
 “ opinion, that when she is in her natural  
 “ state, her features will be well worth a  
 “ careful observation. The chief who sold  
 “ me this Kimos woman told me, that he  
 “ had a Kimos man at home, and that he  
 “ would endeavour to send him to me.

“ Had the enterprize I undertook a few  
 “ months ago succeeded better, I should cer-  
 “ tainly have embraced the opportunity of  
 “ sending to France a male and female of  
 “ these pigmies ; but I hope to be more for-  
 “ tunate in future. It is certainly nothing  
 “ wonderful to meet with dwarfs in a coun-  
 “ try so vast and extensive as the island of  
 “ Madagascar, the surface of which contains  
 “ various climates, and abounds with a mul-  
 “ titude of different productions ; but a real  
 “ race of pigmies, living in society, is a  
 “ phænomenon that cannot well be passed  
 “ over in silence.”



To these accounts of M. de Modave, and M. de Commerçon, might be added that of an officer who procured a Kimos, whom, as he told me, he wished to carry to France; but M. de Surville, who commanded the vessel in which he had taken his passage, would not permit him.

After such authentic testimonies, is it not astonishing that Flacourt should have treated as fables, every thing that concerns the existence of these people? Let not, therefore, the authority of this man, suspicious in every respect, on account of his implacable hatred against the Madecasses, be any more opposed to incontrovertible facts. The islanders of Madagascar are a people neither worthless nor stupid, because their manners are contrary to ours, and because they think proper to trace out fantastical figures on their bodies. Customs and usages differ according to climates. Man every where  
takes



takes a pleasure in disfiguring himself in a thousand various ways. The Indian lengthens his ears; the Chinese crushes his nose, and flattens his forehead; and if we narrowly enquire into these childish conceits, we shall perhaps find, that man in a state of civilisation, is guilty of much greater absurdities than the savage.

The islanders of Madagascar are neither villains nor thieves, because we find them victims to the most fatal prejudices, and the most ridiculous superstitions. There is no country on the face of the earth which has not its fables and chimeras. Every where you will see men invoking spirits, confiding in the power of amulets, and giving credit to the absurd reveries of judicial astrology. It is certainly not amongst civilised nations that this spirit of infatuation has occasioned the fewest evils. When superstition is added to the multiplied vices of large societies, its



poison acquires more strength and activity. Let us leave to Flacourt the barren task of presenting a melancholy picture of the superstitious practices of the Madecasses: this subject would afford no useful lesson to the reader. Ought we to be astonished, that a weak and tender being, exposed from his cradle to a number of infirmities, should, during the short period of his inconceivable existence, err respecting the cause of those calamities which oppress him? Is it matter of surprise, that the savage, in the delirium of his deranged imagination, should have recourse to chimeras of every kind, in order to avert the dangers with which he is threatened? Hurricanes ravage the fields which he has cultivated; lightning strikes the shelter he has formed; the earth opens under his feet, and, by dreadful and convulsive motions, swallows up in an instant vast tracts of country. Amidst so many  
disasters,



disasters, can the Madecasse remain an unfeeling and stupid spectator of his calamities? Certainly not—and the less enlightened he is, the more will his mind be filled with terror. He will ascribe these great catastrophes, which seem to threaten the earth with destruction, to the anger of an invisible being who governs it; he will endeavour to appease him by prayers and sacrifices; and, mistaking the nature of that worship which he owes to the Deity, he will invent, in his folly, the most childish, absurd, and often even sanguinary practices. It is only through the effect of that spirit of infatuation, from which no people are free, that the Malegaches appear to us more criminal than cannibals, when, by the most culpable superstition, they expose to the teeth of ferocious animals, according to the decision of the ombiaffes, their new-born children. These impostors observe the aspect of the planets,

and



and condemn new-born children to lose their lives, when the moment of their birth has been judged unpropitious. The months of March and April, the last week of every month, every Wednesday and Friday of the year, are days of proscription; so that for nearly one half of the year, the population of Madagascar is destroyed in its source. The inhuman decree of the ombiaffes, however, is not always executed. Fathers more affectionate, and less superstitious, often cause these unhappy and innocent victims, when publicly abandoned in the forests, to be privately carried away by faithful servants, and avert by sacrifices the malignity of the star which presided over their birth.

But let us draw a veil over these scenes of horror, at which human nature revolts. Ought we not, for the honour of humanity, to consign to oblivion so barbarous and criminal a practice? Of what irregularities is  
not



not ignorant and credulous man capable? The fulness of our errors is, if I dare use the expression, that of our miseries. Ignorance increaseth, but knowledge banishes them. Man is either a very new being on the earth, or the earth has experienced many great revolutions; for, if we reflect ever so little on the feeble ray which illuminates the most enlightened nations, can we dissemble our profound ignorance, and not know that we have as yet scarcely emerged from chaos? What the most learned man knows, is so little indeed, that none but vain and superficial minds can boast of it. The fear of exaggerating our progress in the study of the moral and physical sciences ought not, however, to render us unjust towards the present age. The rights of man are now better understood; the causes of the most alarming phænomena are no longer a mystery; and our progress in  
mathe-



mathematics and philosophy has unveiled to us secrets which nature seemed to have placed beyond the reach of our weak understandings. The path to be pursued in future researches, is already traced out to us ; and those who wish to tread in it, need not be afraid of bewildering themselves : the limits of those things which are probable, doubtful, or certain, rest upon a foundation that cannot be shaken. Truth is not like error, susceptible of a variety of forms : it appears only under one ; and never escapes those who search for it with integrity of heart and solidity of judgment ; but it flies from those frivolous mortals who affix a value to objects which have none. Such grovelling beings esteem only those superfluities which serve to pamper vanity and luxury : they must, consequently, invent, and set a value upon, sophisms calculated to conceal from the eyes of the multitude, the



fatal effects of their destructive pursuits. These corrupted men, slaves to prejudices, the absurdity of which is hid merely by the splendor that surrounds them, substitute contempt for the love of humanity. Reason deserted, has no influence over their actions. With a deceitful outside, easy manners, an apparent sensibility, and a scrupulous attention to follow fashions, customs, and opinions, one may attempt every thing in society; one may successfully attack whatever is held most sacred among men; and become an advocate for debauchery, luxury, and slavery. Who, for example, has not repeatedly heard in company, those detestable sophisms which change, as we may say, the most destructive vices and prejudices into virtues? Such weak minds and corrupted hearts are certainly for ever excluded from the sanctuary of true philosophy. The savage is much less distant from it than they.

He



He who freely confesses that he knows nothing, is much nearer instruction than the greater part of those presumptuous characters, who, though scarcely acquainted with the elements of knowledge, decide on the most difficult and complex subjects, without being checked by a consciousness of their own insignificance. During the time I resided at Madagascar, I never ceased making experiments on these islanders; the result of which proved to me, how easy it is to give them just notions of our sciences. I had occasion to be surprised at the astonishing facility with which they comprehend the general causes of those phænomena which ought to alarm and surprise them most. However little versed people may be in the mathematics, they know the method which must be pursued in order to diffuse them. Is it not by cultivating them that Europe has emerged, almost suddenly,

3

from



from a state worse than that of ignorance? It is to this salutary study we are indebted for the fall of that false system of instruction, which teaches only errors and absurdities. But, in order that we may derive the highest possible benefit from this happy change, fear, the daughter of ignorance, and the inexhaustible source of illusion, must be expelled from the face of the earth: it must return to that nothing from which it sprung, for the misfortune of the human race. Has it then fixed its roots so deep in the mind as to render it impossible to extirpate them? Is it thought a matter of so much difficulty to persuade savages that great disasters are only a necessary consequence of the laws of motion? Shall the philosopher direct, at pleasure, by means of conductors, the fire of heaven; shall he draw down from the clouds, by the help of electric kites, the electric matter which is there concentrated; and



and those who witness such decisive experiments, not acknowledge the utility of the study of nature? When the savage beholds these, he will then cease to be terrified by the awful noise of thunder; he will judge, though unacquainted with its cause, that it is not unknown to the philosopher, who has been able to render himself master of it; and this consideration will be sufficient to free him from uneasiness. The case will be the same with regard to the effects of volcanoes and earthquakes, if he be shewn spontaneous explosions, convulsive motions, and similar effects in substances which are familiar to his senses. We must not suppose the ideas of man so confined as not to follow even complex reasoning, when it is founded on experience. I am well aware, that, in civilised countries, an innumerable multitude, employed only in providing for their subsistence by continual



nual labour, and involuntary exertions, have not time to counteract those erroneous opinions which are inculcated into their minds from their infancy ; but savage people, inhabiting fertile countries, are not in the like situation: they are fond of instruction; they have leisure for attending to it : and this is an advantage, certainly, which cannot be contested.

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#### OF THE NORTH-EAST PART OF MADAGASCAR.

THE north-east part of the island of Madagascar is a rich magazine for the colonies in the Isles of France and Bourbon. The most frequented ports in this part, are Foulepointe, St. Mary, and the Bay of Antongil. It is in these three places that the French have attempted to form all their establishments. A soldier in the service of the East-India Company, whose name was Bigorne, gave me some interesting informa-



tion respecting the settlements of the pirates in these districts. This man had gained the affection of the islanders, and by a long residence amongst them had acquired a kind of influence over these people, from which the directors of the Isles of France and Bourbon, for a long time, derived great advantages. It was from this man that I procured the greater part of my knowledge respecting the productions, as well as the manners and customs of the inhabitants of the north-east part of Madagascar.

The inhabitants of this coast are still better, and more humane than those of the province of Carcanoffi. These harmless people use neither locks nor bolts, and shut the doors of their houses with nothing else than thorns, or the branches of trees. Were they even filled with riches, they would leave them in the same manner, nor entertain any dread of their being robbed. Their houses,  
how-



however, are constructed only of leaves and matts, which might be broke through without much difficulty.

The pirates, who carried on their depredations in the Indian seas, alarmed at the great preparations which were making to put an end to their robbery, took refuge on the north-east coast of Madagascar. It appears that they formed their establishment at the isle of Nossy-Hibrahim, named by the French St. Mary. One of the extremities of this island reaches within eleven leagues of Foulepointe, and the other extends to the Bay of Antongil.

By contracting alliances with the islanders, the pirates gained their confidence and friendship. It may, perhaps, appear surprising that men who followed so infamous a profession should not have been more detested. This foreign land became to them and their children a new country: they



assumed its manners, and adopted its customs. In fertile and rich regions, abounding in every thing necessary for subsistence, it is almost impossible to find any advantage by attacking the property of another; since the only riches of the inhabitants are those of the soil, and the soil belongs in common to all. It is not astonishing, therefore, that pirates returning continually to this place of shelter, to repair and re-victual their ships, should be favourably received by the Malegaches, since they shared in their opulence, without knowing how they acquired it. They compared the conduct of these wretches with that of the crews of several European vessels, and the comparison was by no means favourable to the latter, who had more than once procured refreshments by force, and who had exercised the most barbarous cruelties against the natives, burning their villages, or destroying them with their



their cannon, when they did not bring them oxen, fowls, and rice, as expeditiously as they required. The people of Foulepointe have not yet forgotten, and often relate, that, at the beginning of this century, the crew of an European vessel invited a multitude of the islanders into a large tent, and the moment it was filled, the timber-work fell down, so that by this stratagem the Europeans were able to seize a great number of them, whom they made slaves. Were I disposed to pass over such crimes in silence, I should think it useful to make mention of them, in order to shew how many evils and atrocities our European predecessors have left us to repair.

The pirates continued their depredations with success till the year 1722; but, at this period, several nations, alarmed by the enormous losses which their commerce sustained, united together to deliver the Indian



seas from the oppression of these formidable tyrants, who had seized a large Portuguese vessel, in which were count de Receira and the archbishop of Goa, and the same day another vessel which carried thirty-two guns. Both these valuable prizes were captured before the Isle of Bourbon.

The pirates, accustomed to war, and elated with their success, made a long and desperate resistance. Before they were extirpated it was necessary to bring a considerable force against them; to terrify them by the severest punishment, and to pursue them through the most imminent dangers, even to the place of their retreat, where they were obliged to set fire to their vessels:—such were the severe means employed to clear the Indian seas of these plunderers, who had infested them from the time that Vasco de Gama opened a passage to India, by the Cape of Good Hope. The entire destruc-



tion of their maritime forces prevented the pirates from interrupting commerce any more, and compelled them to quit the wretched establishment which they had formed at St. Mary, an island in the neighbourhood of Madagascar.

These banditti, however, being thus forced to renounce their former wandering kind of life, began to think of signalising themselves by new acts of atrocity. As they could no longer exercise with advantage their infamous employment, in fertile countries where all property is confounded, and being too inferior in number to subdue the islanders, one would have thought that no other means of doing mischief were left for them than to attempt to promote discord among the inhabitants: but had they confined themselves merely to the exciting of quarrels and war among the Malegaches, this flame probably would have been soon



extinguished ; and when tranquillity had enabled these islanders to see their real interests, they would certainly not have failed to attack the pirates, and to be revenged on them for their perfidy. It was necessary, therefore, for the success of their pernicious designs, that they should render war advantageous to these people ; and the sale of prisoners, that is to say, a trade in slaves, answered two ends to them, that of fomenting and perpetuating divisions among the Malegaches, and that of procuring a new mode of enriching themselves, and of causing them to be courted and protected by European nations, who favoured this detestable traffic. By this new crime the pirates terminated their course of robbery—a crime which depopulates and still desolates the island of Madagascar. This destructive scourge, since the moment of its birth, has not ceased a moment to acquire new degrees of



of vigour and activity. It would be as difficult to foretel the period when it will end as to estimate the ravages to which it has given rise. Of all the evils and all the disorders occasioned by the pirates, the greatest, without doubt, is that of having introduced the slave-trade into Madagascar; and yet I should think I disgraced my pen, did I allow myself to trace out the picture of the atrocious cruelties they exercised, and the infamous stratagems they practised. The slave-trade is an institution so much the more abominable as the evils which it produces are scarcely felt by those who derive profit from them. It would seem as if it required long study and meditation to discover that liberty is connected with the essence and dignity of man; and that it is the height of injustice to have converted it, if I may use the expression, into a saleable commodity. If this truth does not make  
that



that impression which it ought on enlightened nations, and force them to proscribe slavery, how can they flatter themselves that it will be perceived by savages involved in the darkness of ignorance? We cannot, therefore, be surpris'd that the Malegaches, struck with the advantages which they continually derive from the sale of slaves, still entertain a grateful remembrance of these infamous men, to whom they think they are indebted for the greater part of their riches.

Before these banditti established themselves in the island, cattle and sheep were of no value. Rice and various kinds of provisions had no other price than that which was affixed on them by navigators; and it even appears, that during the time of their piracy, they spent in drunkenness and debauchery, on their return from every expedition, the fruits of their long voyages.

Want of foresight is not uncommon among  
men



men accustomed to a wandering and dissipated life. The extreme profusion of these profligates is, therefore, no matter of surprise; but being more deceitful than prodigal, it is no wonder that they always carefully endeavoured to conceal from these islanders the impure source from which they derived their riches. This, perhaps, is the only point on which they were forced to be prudent, under pain of incurring the hatred of these people, whose friendship it was their interest to preserve.

A recital of their shameful and detestable robberies would have carried terror and alarm into those countries, where the least of these crimes was punished with death. It is not to be doubted that the Malegaches would have exterminated such dangerous guests had they been fully acquainted with their vicious inclinations: but since their memory is not execrated, and has not left  
in



in the minds of these people any traces of their infamy, they must have seduced them by a profound dissimulation, and a deceitful appearance of confidence and affection. And how could savages possess sufficient knowledge of mankind to be able to unmask villains, exercised from their infancy in falsehood and cunning, and whose interest it was to conceal, or disguise the greater part of their vices ?

I confess that this explanation alone can afford satisfaction, after the vain efforts which I made on the spot, with a view to discover the true cause of that kind of respect, or rather veneration, which the Malagaches entertain for the memory of these infamous plunderers.

It was not at the time when the pirates were employed solely in ravaging the Indian seas that they were able to occasion great disorder at Madagascar ; their stay in that



island was always very short, and being obliged to repair their vessels speedily, and to procure provisions, they could not think of sowing division among these people, who might have revenged themselves during their absence on their women and children, and have entirely ruined their establishments; and it was only at certain periods that they could give themselves up to all the excesses of drunkenness and debauchery. But when they were forced to renounce their infamous profession, they followed a plan of life entirely different. Their views then were directed towards the means of recovering a part of those riches which they had imprudently dissipated, and to secure the protection of the Europeans by opening to them a branch of commerce, with the extent and importance of which they were well acquainted. These profligates, therefore, were the first who introduced



introduced the slave-trade into the north-east part of Madagascar. This we are told by all the traditions of the country, and it was confirmed to me by La Bigorne. It was not, however, without causing much trouble and disorder that they were able, about the year 1722, to overcome the aversion which the Malegaches had for that horrid traffic. Before this epoch several European ships had made vain efforts to induce them to sell their prisoners and malefactors. Their negotiations for this purpose, instead of being attended with success, were rejected with indignation, and sometimes punished in an exemplary manner when they ventured to employ stratagem or force. The pirates were too well acquainted with the intrepid spirit of the Malegaches to use these means; and they were sensible that they were too few in number to subdue them, or to dictate to them concerning a trade which  
they



they detested. The least violence, in this respect, would have occasioned their destruction; and with still more certainty that of their wives and children. The surest way of accomplishing their end, therefore, was to kindle up amongst these people the flames of discord; and, taking advantage of their intestine wars, to prevail on them to dispose of their prisoners, who, on account of their number, could not fail of being a burthen to them. But it was of the utmost importance to the success of their views in the midst of these disorders, to be on a good footing with both parties, and to assume in appearance the office of mediators. It was requisite, also, that they should wait for a favourable opportunity, or at least a plausible pretext for putting their odious plot in execution, and this was not long wanting.

The Bethalimenes, a people in the interior part of the country, had quitted their villages,



villages, and had flocked in great numbers towards the place where the pirates lived, with a view of procuring different articles of commerce, which they considered either as useful or convenient. They particularly sought for the beautiful stuffs of India, Masulipatam handkerchiefs, muslins, and some other kinds of goods of less value. The inhabitants on the sea coast, known under the name of Antivarres and Manivoulese, beheld these strangers amongst them with great pleasure; and they would have thought themselves deficient both in that hospitality and affection which they owed to the pirates, had they in the least interrupted their commerce, or prevented them from procuring such cattle and provisions as were necessary for victualling their ships.

The Bethalimenes, who are a more economical and courageous people than the  
An-



Antavarres and the Manivoulèse, when they saw that the source of the wealth of the pirates was exhausted, by the absolute destruction of their marine, began to prepare for returning to their villages with their riches. The Antavarres and the Manivoulèse would not have opposed their departure, had not the pirates used their utmost endeavours to excite them to plunder, by representing to them, that these valuable effects which ought to be the reward of their labour and attachment, would be forever lost to them, if they suffered them to be carried away, and dispersed in the interior parts of the country. After a long resistance, founded solely on that respect which is due to hospitality, the Antavarres and the Manivoulèse suffered themselves to be overcome, and hurried into an unjust war. This cruel war gave rise to all those which afterwards deluged the north-east



part of Madagascar with blood. Before that period these people lived in peace, and those petty divisions of little importance which are inseparable from all societies, never were of long duration, and left behind them no traces of animosity. The pirates were artful enough never to be seen in the armies of the Antavarres and the Manivoulese, without assuming the appearance of the strictest neutrality. They, however, sold at a very high price to these people, who were their friends, arms and warlike ammunition; but while they refused the like assistance to the Bethalimenes, they secretly advised them, in the most treacherous manner, to exchange with an European vessel, newly arrived at Foulepointe, their prisoners for fire-arms and ammunition. The Bethalimenes, highly irritated at the excesses committed by the Antavarres and the Manivoulese against them, eagerly followed



followed this advice. By making a brave defence they had taken a great number of prisoners; and as these prisoners were a burthen to them, they saw it would be advantageous to sell them, in order to procure fire-arms, which were necessary to repel the attacks of their enemies.

The Bethalimenes were extremely thankful to the pirates for having taught them how to make the Antavarres and the Manivoulése repent of their injustice, by enabling them to procure arms and ammunition, sufficient to intimidate these disturbers of their tranquillity. They even found themselves much better provided with these articles than their enemies, who were now no longer in a condition to throw any obstacles in the way of their departure. These same islanders, therefore, who had always shewn the most invincible repugnance to sell their prisoners, suddenly changed their



principles on this point; and yet these people consider us as cannibals. The efforts which the Europeans had incessantly made to procure slaves, either by force or stratagem, contributed not a little to confirm them in this unfavourable opinion. The enemies of the whites, whose number was very considerable, took a pleasure in giving strength to this odious calumny; and I may venture to assert, that it has been perpetuated in such a manner, from generation to generation, that it still subsists. If any method can be devised of destroying so degrading an accusation, it certainly must be by carefully educating amongst us some young Medecasses, and afterwards sending them back to their own country. When they have become acquainted with our manners, our arts, and our industry, we may easily inspire them with quite contrary sentiments. However little we reflect on the salutary con-



consequences that would ensue from such a plan, it will appear astonishing that it has been so long neglected.

If I have allowed myself to pass over in silence the long series of war which from that epoch never ceased to desolate the northern part of Madagascar, I cannot help observing, that the pirates alone kindled up amongst these islanders the flames of discord ; and, at the same time, conciliated the affections of the Antavarres and the Manivoulese, as well as that of the Bethalimenes.

After this, the Europeans no longer disdained to seek their protection. The public sale of prisoners served to foment the flames of their hatred and vengeance ; and these two scourges united set no other bounds to their ravages than the entire depopulation of an island, celebrated by its extent and prodigious fertility. What a number of



victims sacrificed to the insatiable avarice of a few plunderers !

Ye just and compassionate, behold what it has cost, in blood and crimes, to bring your colonies to that kind of prosperity, the greater part of the advantages of which you daily hear exaggerated ; as if that prosperity, always precarious, were not more apparent than real ; since the opulence of a few is founded only on the misery and slavery of the multitude.

The slave-trade, after having served to establish the power of the pirates, was of no utility to their children.

Tamfimalo, son to the daughter of a powerful chief, by an old pirate, celebrated for his cunning and depredations, seized the sovereign power after the death of his father. His reign was signalized by no extraordinary event, but his memory is still venerated amongst these people ; and his re-  
spected



spected ashes repose at St. Mary, where they were deposited in the year 1745, which was the period of his death.

Tamfimalo was succeeded by his son John Harre; but his power was very limited; and his misconduct rendered him despicable in the eyes of his subjects. He made choice of Foulepointe for the place of his residence, and left the government of St. Mary to his mother and his sister, the latter of whom was known under the name of Betie. A little time after the death of Tamfimalo, the East-India company formed an establishment at St. Mary, and M. Goffe was ordered to take possession of that island in the name of the company. In this ceremony, M. Goffe was accompanied by Betie, the daughter of Tamfimalo, and the widow of John Harre, though this honour, according to the usages of the country, belonged to the widow of Tamfimalo, whose



sovereignty was acknowledged. This haughty and imperious woman, highly offended at that kind of disdain and neglect with which Goffe seemed to treat her, swore that she would be revenged on him for so open an insult offered to her dignity. For a long time Goffe despised her anger and threats: but this conduct was far from being prudent; and might have brought great misfortunes upon the establishment entrusted to his care. Obstinate fevers, and epidemical diseases, soon after weakened the colony, and reduced it to a very languishing condition during the latter end of autumn. The directors of the Isle of France were obliged, therefore, to send new recruits annually, to repair the losses which were occasioned by the insalubrity of the island. The mortality became so great towards the conclusion of the year, that it was then called the *Grave of the French*. The greatest  
care,



care, it is true, was taken to send no persons thither to settle except such as could occasion little hurt to society, if they perished.

If Goffe was deficient in attention to the widow of Tamfimalo, he neglected, as we are assured, no means of pleasing Betie. This charming young woman to an agreeable figure added a pleasant disposition; and the islanders entertained a much stronger affection for her than for her mother. Betie was not insensible to the attachment of Goffe; and she more than once disconcerted the fatal projects of her mother against the French: but bounds were at length set to her zeal, over which it was impossible for her to pass.

Tamfimalo's widow accused Goffe of having dared to disturb the ashes of her husband, and of carrying away the riches shut up in his tomb. This accusation, whether just or unjust, excited such a fermentation that  
the



the destruction of the French was from that moment irrevocably decreed. The islanders fell upon their establishment, set fire to it, and made a general massacre of its inhabitants. As soon as this fatal event, which took place on Christmas eve 1754, was known at the Isle of France, an armed vessel received orders to proceed to the entrance of port St. Mary, and to punish the islanders with the utmost severity. The punishment inflicted on them was indeed terrible; a number of villages were burnt, and several large piroguas filled with the natives were sunk. That in which the widow of Tamfimalo embarked, made strong efforts to gain the Bay of Antongil, and to escape from the boats sent in pursuit of her: but in spite of every exertion they got near enough to fire upon it. Tamfimalo's widow was killed; several of those who accompanied her shared the same fate; and the rest, among whom



whom was her daughter Betie, were taken prisoners. When Betie was carried to the Isle of France, she justified herself before the supreme council, by proving that her mother alone had been the cause of the massacre of the French. She shewed, at the same time, that her connection with Goffe had endangered her life; and that she could no longer be in safety at St. Mary, as she had lost, by her attachment to the French, and the efforts which she had made to save them, the confidence and affection of the islanders. The supreme council of the Isle of France, convinced of the innocence of this young woman, sent her to her brother John Harre, at Foulepointe, with considerable presents, requesting her to employ every means possible to re-establish peace and concord between the natives of that district and the French. These people, terrified by the ravages exercised at St. Mary, had retired



tired to the interior parts of the country ; all commerce was suspended ; and the wants of the Isle of France required that every method should be pursued to revive it. Bettie, by the great ascendancy she had over her brother, being the properest person to accomplish this salutary end, she united, for that purpose, with Bigorne, an intelligent and active man, who had been a foldier in the service of the East-India company.

In a little time, Bigorne learned the Malagache language ; and by an open and steady conduct won the affection of the islanders. To his care and activity the colony was indebted for the re-establishment of its commerce. Among all the honourable testimonies of gratitude which were rendered to him for this service, the most distinguished is that of M. Poivre, who, in 1758, was an eye-witness to the good conduct



duct of this brave soldier. That celebrated administrator, whose suffrages cannot be suspected of prejudice or partiality, has often, in my presence, paid the highest compliments to this man, whose memory is still respected amongst the islanders of Madagascar. The influence which he had over the minds of these people was, however, more owing to the goodness of his character than to his eloquence.

The speeches which he made to these people, in their grand assemblies called *palabres*, were not to be compared to those of the Malegache orators. M. Poivre, who assisted at several of these assemblies, often told me, that the natural eloquence of the Malegaches was truly astonishing. He took delight in relating even the most minute particulars of a grand *palabre*, at which all the neighbouring chiefs, and an immense multitude of people,



people, were present, in order to form a treaty of commerce with the commissaries of the French East-India company.

The following is, in a few words, the account of it which he gave me:

The orator, after saluting all the chiefs, advanced towards the French; made a profound bow to them, and, addressing himself to Bigorne, said: "You know, Bigorne, that  
 " for more than eight years the white men  
 " have come hither to trade with the Male-  
 " gaches; and can you say that a white  
 " man was ever killed by any of our na-  
 " tion?

" We have always received you, not only  
 " as brothers, but even as the lords of the  
 " country.

" When the French asked from us oxen  
 " and rice, did we ever refuse them?

" When they wished to raise palisades,  
 " and



“ and to construct houses, have we not  
 “ gone to the forests to procure timber ne-  
 “ cessary for that purpose.

“ Have those who came hither before  
 “ you, Bigorne, or those who are here now,  
 “ ever had any cause of complaint against  
 “ us? Have they not drawn water from  
 “ our fountains? Have they not cut down  
 “ the trees of our forests, without any man  
 “ at Foulepointe asking them—why do  
 “ you so? The people in the south, as  
 “ well as those in the north, and more  
 “ recently still those of St. Mary, massacred  
 “ the French, and made war upon them:  
 “ but those of Foulepointe never attacked  
 “ any of them; on the contrary they have  
 “ given them every assistance in their power,  
 “ and they have at all times testified their  
 “ kindness and friendship towards them.

“ Are the chiefs at Foulepointe then  
 “ less powerful than their neighbours?



“La Bigorne, they are more so.—Do  
 “they fear to carry on war against the  
 “whites?—No.—Who dare make war on  
 “John Harre, the illustrious son of Tamfi-  
 “malo, our sovereign and our father?”

“What are the white men who would  
 “be rash enough to attack those formidable  
 “and invincible chiefs, here present, *Ma-  
 “rouat Ramifi* and *Ramatao*?”

“Would we not shed even the last drop  
 “of our blood in their support?”

“It is to our friendship, therefore, and  
 “to our goodness of heart alone, that the  
 “French are indebted for the kind treat-  
 “ment which they have experienced at  
 “Roulepointe, since they first frequented  
 “that port.”

“Let us now examine the conduct of  
 “the French towards us.”

“Why, Bigorne, hast thou erected a  
 “palisade of large stakes, much more ex-

“tensive



“ tensive, and stronger, than that which  
 “ was erected formerly, without having  
 “ deigned to ask permission of John Harre  
 “ and the other chiefs? In this hast thou  
 “ followed the ancient usage? Speak—  
 “ Answer—Hast thou offered them the  
 “ smallest present?—But you observe silence  
 “ —You blush—You are conscious of your  
 “ guilt—You look towards them—You beg  
 “ forgiveness—Here, in thy name, I ask  
 “ John Harre, our sovereign, who presides  
 “ over this illustrious assembly, and these  
 “ generous and invincible chiefs, to pardon  
 “ thy imprudence. We love thee, Bigorne;  
 “ but never, in future, abuse our affection  
 “ —Swear that thou wilt never commit  
 “ the like faults—Such errors will for ever  
 “ alienate from thee, without hopes of re-  
 “ turn, the hearts of the inhabitants of Foule-  
 “ pointe; and to preserve them take an  
 “ oath that our interests and yours shall be

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“ here-



“ hereafter the same. Ask, then, of your  
 “ chiefs here assembled, why, since the ar-  
 “ rival of the last seven ships, the captains  
 “ have still neglected to make the usual pre-  
 “ sents, which serve to promote a good  
 “ understanding in those exchanges which  
 “ the whites wish to make with the Malega-  
 “ ches? Why have not these vessels brought  
 “ effects to pay the debts contracted above  
 “ a year ago by the French?

“ We have sold them, on credit, accord-  
 “ ing to the rules of fair dealing, provisions  
 “ of every kind, without any other security  
 “ than small bits of paper, which contained,  
 “ as you assured us, a promise of being paid  
 “ in three moons. Why has this solemn pro-  
 “ mise remained till the present day undif-  
 “ charged? This certainly is compelling us  
 “ to give up all commerce with the whites, or  
 “ at least to entirely withdraw that confidence  
 “ which we had in their words and oaths.

“ A large



“ A large vessel which touched here last  
 “ year was in the most urgent want of pro-  
 “ visions, without having effects necessary to  
 “ purchase them. The merchants of Foule-  
 “ pointe, however, supplied the crew with  
 “ oxen and rice, and at the same price at  
 “ which they could have bought them for  
 “ ready money.

“ They promised to send us payment by  
 “ the first vessel which should come from  
 “ the Isle of France. Since that period  
 “ twelve have arrived ; but they all refused  
 “ to pay this just debt.

“ Will you now say, Bigorne, that the  
 “ people of Foulepointe have behaved dis-  
 “ honestly to the French ?

“ Will you say, also, that, in giving a  
 “ trade-musket in exchange for an ox, you  
 “ pay too dear ?

“ Will you say that two yards of blue  
 “ cloth is the just value of a measure of rice,



“weighing fifty pounds? You either think  
 “us very ignorant of the price of provisions  
 “at the Isle of France, or you have formed  
 “the mad project of giving laws to us in-  
 “stead of receiving them.  
 “Is it not true,” continued the orator,  
 addressing himself to the assembly, “that  
 “you wish to deal with these strangers  
 “hereafter on juster and more equitable  
 “terms?”

The assembly testified by a general and  
 tumultuous acclamation that this was their  
 desire.

Bigorne then wished to elevate his voice;  
 but the orator commanded him to be silent;  
 and resumed his discourse by the order of  
 John Harre and the other chiefs.

“The following,” said he, “are the con-  
 “ditions prescribed by the merchants of  
 “Foulepointe: The measure of rice shall  
 “be diminished, when, in measuring it, the  
 “whites



“whites endeavour to heap up the rice, by  
 “knocking on the bottom of the measure,  
 “in order to increase its contents: they  
 “will not suffer the measure to be heaped  
 “as heretofore.

This observation made the assembly smile.

“An ox shall no longer be given in  
 “exchange for a paltry trade-fusée: a good  
 “soldier’s musket shall be the price of an  
 “ox.

“A piece of blue cloth shall contain two  
 “yards, according to the ancient measure.

“The bambou of powder shall be increased  
 “in such a manner, that three bambous  
 “shall contain an hundred charges for a  
 “musket.

“The people of Foulepointe, who serve  
 “the whites in quality of *scullions*, or do-  
 “mestics, shall receive a trade-fusée as  
 “wages for thirty days service.”

After this, the orator addressing the chiefs



and the assembly, said, "Are not these your  
 "latest wishes?"—The cry of "Yes" then  
 resounded from all quarters, intermixed with  
 shouts of praise and approbation.

When this noise had subsided, the orator  
 cried out with a voice like thunder, "You  
 "hear, Bigorne, the wish of the *Palabre*;  
 "it is the law of the chiefs, it is the desire  
 "of the people who trade with the whites.  
 "Explain fully to your masters what I have  
 "just now proposed.—If they accept these  
 "conditions, we shall confirm the treaty  
 "by a solemn sacrifice. If they will not  
 "accept it, they may depart. We have no  
 "provisions to give them."

Bigorne translated word for word to M.  
 Poivre the speech which I have here relat-  
 ed; and the latter was obliged to interpose  
 his authority, in order to prevent him from  
 reproaching the orator for his vehemence.  
 Bigorne was not accustomed to be treated  
 with



with so little ceremony by these people : and this lesson seemed to hurt him the more, as it was given before officers honoured with the confidence of the East-India Company.

M. Poivre, on the contrary, beheld the energy of these savages with pleasure. He was struck with the force and solidity of their reasoning; but, being intrusted with the interests of the company, it was not in his power to make any alteration in the usual price of provisions. He ordered Bigorne to communicate this to the assembly ; and to assure them, at the same time, that the merchants of Foulepointe would be immediately and generously paid for all the commodities with which they had supplied the French. He likewise granted an augmentation of salary to those domestics who were in the service of the whites ; and accompanied all his promises with the most polite expressions, and such as were likely



to awaken the sensibility of the chiefs. Whilst he thus treated them as friends and brothers, he recommended peace and concord to them, in the strongest terms; and gave them to understand, that the conduct of all those whites, who should not entertain the same sentiments and respect for them, would be generally disapproved. The speech of M. Poivre, delivered in the Malegache language by Bigorne, seemed to make more impresson on the orator than on the assembly; and it was only in consequence of the advice given by the former, that the treaty was agreed upon by a general acclamation.

The conclusion of this treaty was a matter of the utmost importance. The wants of the vessels were urgent: for, as they contained six hundred men, three oxen a day, with a proportionable quantity of rice, were necessary to supply them with provisions.

This treaty was ratified with the utmost  
solem-



solemnity. The orator slaughtered a victim; received the blood in an earthen vessel; and mixed with it sea-water, pimento, gun-flints broken, and bruised very fine, and a small quantity of earth and gun-powder, moistened with *tasfia*, or spirit made from the sugar-cane. Two leaden bullets served him to pound these different ingredients, in order to form a kind of beverage, which he wished the devil might convert into poison for all those who, having drunk of it, should not adhere to their oath. He then took two lances, or assagays, and dipped the points of them in the liquor, while John Harre sprinkled a few drops of it upon the ground.

The orator, afterwards, taking a knife in his right hand, and first invoking the god of the whites, and then that of the blacks, begged them with a loud voice to inspire into the hearts of both peace, amity, concord, and sincerity.

—molo

Then



Then striking with his knife the points of the two assagays, which he had dipped into the liquor, he denounced the most horrid maledictions and imprecations against those who should infringe the treaty.

“If the whites,” said he, “break their  
 “oath, may this beverage become poison  
 “to them; may those hurricanes which  
 “rush with fury from the four quarters of  
 “the heavens, fall upon their vessels; may  
 “they be swallowed up by the waves; and  
 “may the bodies of these wicked men be  
 “torn by the formidable monsters which  
 “inhabit the abysses of the sea.

“Hear, John Harre—listen to the voice  
 “of the powerful genius who inspires me:  
 “Should the people of Foulepointe be so  
 “base and so worthless as to violate this  
 “solemn treaty, may they perish by the  
 “sword of the enemy; may their bellies  
 “burst;



“burst; and may their filthy carcases be-  
 “come food for the crocodiles.

“Must not the invisible spirit who pre-  
 “sides at this assembly be avenged? Must  
 “he not punish the perjured, since he re-  
 “ceives their oaths? All men, whether white  
 “or black, are before him; all are subjected  
 “to his supreme will; and he requires from  
 “us all, under the pain of incurring pu-  
 “nishments equally terrible and severe, the  
 “same fidelity, and the same sincerity.”

Rabefin (this was the name of the orator)  
 pronounced these horrid imprecations three  
 times; and with so much vehemence in his  
 speech and gestures, that they made an im-  
 pression upon the assembly, of which it  
 would be impossible to convey an idea by  
 words.

Whilst the assembly were in this state of  
 fear and terror, John Harre and the other  
 chiefs with a trembling hand put about a



spoonful of their disgusting liquor into a leaf of *raven*, and swallowed it, with the most horrid grimaces. Their example was followed by the greater part of those who assisted at the ceremony: but some of the Frenchmen contented themselves with only feigning to do it, notwithstanding the pressing invitation of Bigorne, who, without doubt, believed this ridiculous and disagreeable farce necessary, if not to the success, at least to the solidity of the treaty.

Rabefin then proceeded to sacrifice the victims; and a grand feast, accompanied with dancing, music, and sports, terminated, rather in a noisy but joyful manner, this celebrated *palabre*. I have described the ceremonies practised at this assembly in preference to any of those at which I assisted, merely because it related to affairs of the utmost importance; and by doing so I have, I think, attained the end which I ought to have had

in



in view, that of tracing out a slight sketch of the character and extraordinary customs of these people.

This short description will be sufficient to such readers as wish rather for instruction, than to amuse themselves with all the childish conceits with which the most serious deliberations are often accompanied, not only in Madagascar, but in more civilised countries.

Rabefin had the talent of being able to change the features of his face at pleasure : his words, which always corresponded with his gestures, assumed the appearance of sincerity ; and he was no stranger to the art of moving minds the least susceptible of enthusiasm, and of enflaming the least irascible.

Is it not surprising, that a savage should possess, in so eminent a degree, this art of deception, which the orators of civilised na-

tions



tions often abuse in so dangerous a manner? How did Rabefin know that, in order to mislead mankind, it is always better to address the passions than to speak to the judgment? How had he learned to take advantage of that secret propensity which makes us so fond of fraud and delusion? What influence over the multitude have not those perfidious declaimers, or cunning impostors, who, either with a view to interest, or of distinguishing themselves in the world, endeavour to varnish over with brilliant, but false, colours the most fatal errors? Falsehood, susceptible by its nature of an infinite variety of combinations, may be disguised under a thousand forms; but truth is not attended with this dangerous advantage; it has only one appearance; and to endeavour to embellish it is to degrade it, and destroy its force. Cato wished that all those sophists and rhetoricians, who were so celebrated



lebrated at Rome in his time, might be driven from the city. I am much of the same opinion as that great man. Reason has no enemies more formidable. Efferescence and enthusiasm are always attended with danger, even when they are directed towards views of utility : but if they are directed to hurtful objects, the evils which they produce cannot be expressed. This sentence, however, can relate only to those who, endeavouring to impose on the multitude, disdain no means of deception which are likely to accomplish that end. The decree would be too severe did it not respect true eloquence ; that is to say, that sublime talent which carries persuasion and conviction, at the same time, into the hearts of enlightened men. Real eloquence is the delight of good minds, and one of the most powerful promoters of happiness. Clearness, precision, and elegance are its principal attributes.



tributes. A man truly eloquent never borrows foreign assistance; he knows that every thing which is not deeply and sensibly felt, has not been strongly expressed. He disdains and rejects those brilliant ornaments, and artificial appendages, which serve only to give error, if not weight, at least the appearance, and sometimes the splendour of truth.

Rabefin was held in great reputation; but his morals did not correspond with his abilities. Corrupted from infancy, by his intercourse with the Europeans, he was accounted one of the most dangerous and deceitful of villains. Bigorne, who knew better than any one his vices and his influence over the inhabitants of Foulepointe, was obliged, not only to shew him in public every kind of deference and respect, but also to gain him over with the utmost secrecy by rich presents. It was only by pursuing



fuing this method that he could accomplish his views; for any other would have made them miscarry, and have even exposed him. Men proof against corruption are very uncommon. Civilised nations, do not flatter yourselves : in this respect you have no advantage over savages.

The greater part of your orators imitate with more art, but perhaps with fewer external appearances of deceit, this Rabefin, who cunningly sold, for his own benefit, those interests of which he was believed to be a most zealous defender. Would not one have supposed him to be absolutely averse to the treaty of commerce, which the agents of the East-India Company wished to form with the merchants of Foulepointe? And after the sudden and unexpected conclusion of this treaty, could any but John Harre, and the other chiefs, be reasonably accused of having promoted it, because a very rich

R

present



present was publicly given to them? Bigorne, however, who was highly irritated at Rabefin's speech, did not suffer M. Poivre to be ignorant, that all his efforts would have been of no avail, had not this orator, won over by presents before the *pala-bre*, formally acceded to every thing asked, without the participation of John Harre and the other chiefs. This fact is highly deserving of remark, as it took place among savages, where sincerity, and still more the dread of breaking a solemn oath, obliges every individual to adhere to whatever has been agreed upon, under the severest penalties.

The morning after the conclusion of the treaty, the market at Foulepointe was stored with every thing in abundance: the vessels, therefore, made haste to take in their quantity of provisions; which they did soon, and at a very small expence.

When



When M. Poivre arrived in France, he gave a favourable account of La Bigorne's conduct to the East-India Company. La Bigorne was then only interpreter at Foule-pointe; but, on the recommendation of M. Poivre, he received a commission to manage, in the whole island of Madagascar, under the orders of the administration of the Isle of France, all affairs relating to trade and the victualling of ships. The Company had every reason to be satisfied with their choice; for La Bigorne conducted himself with equal prudence and ability, till the year 1762, when he was recalled to the Isle of France because he had made war on John Harre. We are assured that he exerted his utmost endeavours to preserve peace at Foule-pointe; but that he was, at length, obliged openly to support several chiefs, allies of the French, who had cause to complain of the violence and depredations of John



Harre, whose propensity to vice and debauchery increased every day.

The chiefs, who were enemies to John Harre, united together, in order to prevail on Bigorne to take the command of their armies. This brave foldier did not, however, yield to their entreaties, but on conditions which must have appeared very strange to the savages. He openly declared, that if he assumed the command of their troops, he would take the prudent precaution not to expose himself to the enemies fire ; because his death would infallibly occasion the destruction of those warriors who fought under his standards. A general, who, following only the impulse of his courage, suffers himself to be hurried into the thickest of the battle, is no longer able to dispose his forces in the most advantageous manner ; the army is then absolutely without a chief ; the combatants are consequently



quently thrown into disorder ; and chance only decides the victory.

I do not know whether the Medecasses were struck with La Bigorne's reasons. People without discipline, and who have no idea of the advantages which always result from good order and perfect harmony, must have believed that General Bigorne had more abilities than courage. However, after shewing some marks of astonishment and surprise, they ranged themselves under his banners. La Bigorne then made them go through some very simple manœuvres ; and finding them submissive, and resolved to execute his orders punctually, he led them towards the enemy. When the two armies were in sight of each other, he renewed his prohibition of beginning the combat until he had given the signal.

The army of John Harre was more numerous and much stronger than that of



La Bigorne ; but the position of the latter seemed to promise him the most complete victory, should John Harre venture to attack him. John Harre, not having sufficient abilities to judge of his disadvantageous situation, charged the enemy with vigour ; but he was repulsed in so terrible a manner that he was obliged to seek safety by flight. This chief, therefore, who had hitherto been accounted invincible, was overcome merely by the skilful disposition of a man, who did not appear in the engagement, and who was even at some distance from the field of battle.

John Harre, having afterwards learned that La Bigorne directed the movements of the army which had defeated him, observed, “ How could I defend myself against the  
 “ invisible spirit of a white man who at-  
 “ tacked me ? But, in order to be revenged,  
 “ I will quit Foulepointe, and retire to the  
 “ bay



“ bay of Antongil. My removal from that  
 “ port will alarm the merchants of Foule-  
 “ pointe ; the markets will no longer be sup-  
 “ plied ; commerce will, in the mean time,  
 “ suffer ; and La Bigorne’s chiefs will recal  
 “ him to the Isle of France. My departure  
 “ from Foulepointe, therefore, seems to  
 “ promise me a speedy deliverance from my  
 “ most formidable enemy.”

What John Harre had predicted soon  
 afterwards took place. His defeat had oc-  
 casioned great sorrow at Foulepointe ; and  
 his departure put an entire stop to com-  
 merce. Some of the chiefs, friends to Bi-  
 gorne, made vain efforts to bring provisions  
 to the markets ; for the merchants at Foule-  
 pointe opposed them as much as they could.  
 The French vessels, which had come to  
 that port for refreshments, after endeavour-  
 ing, without effect, to restore peace and  
 concord among these people, were obliged



to repair to the Isle of France, in a very deplorable state, and in the utmost want of the most common necessaries. On their united complaints La Bigorne was recalled and disgraced: yet we are assured that he was not guilty; and that few men in his place would have suffered so long the oppressive and insolent behaviour of John Harre. I should be glad that I could believe this to be the case: but his conduct will always appear reprehensible to those who think they have no right to prescribe rules, and to give laws in a foreign country.

However this may be, La Bigorne's departure brought back John Harre to Foulepointe. On his arrival he met with a much better reception than he had any title to expect; and commerce soon began to resume its wonted activity: but matters did not long remain in this tranquil situation. The  
flames



flames of discord were not yet extinguished; hatred and animosity still continued to foment them; but, at length, after a tedious war, the island of Madagascar was delivered from this turbulent and formidable tyrant, who could live in peace neither with his allies nor his subjects. He was killed in 1767 by the Manivoulese; and his spoils served to enrich the enemy, and to augment their power.

His son *Yavi* inherited only a small part of his father's possessions, as he was too young not to be satisfied with what was given him. Of the reign of this prince I shall say nothing, though I had an opportunity of being particularly acquainted with him; for, as he had neither spirit nor abilities, he never performed any action of sufficient importance to merit a place here.

At the time when John Harre died, the isles of France and Bourbon were not under  
the



the direction of the East-India Company. The king had resumed the management of them, and had appointed M. Poivre to be intendant of that colony. Bigorne then no longer found any obstacle to prevent his returning to Foulepointe, where his presence, on account of certain circumstances, was become highly necessary. On his arrival he received from the inhabitants the most flattering testimonies of friendship and esteem. The strong idea which the islanders had before entertained of his talents and integrity caused him to be chosen arbiter of all their differences. He re-established peace in the northern part of Madagascar; and M. Poivre had nothing to bestow upon him but praises for his good conduct. I was particularly acquainted with him, when I visited Madagascar in 1768, and I can fully certify that he deserved them. M. Poivre, who honoured me with his friendship

ship



ship and confidence, being desirous of procuring for his celebrated garden at *Montplaisir*, known at present by the name of *the King's Botanical Garden in the Isle of France*, the rarest and most useful plants of that island, cast his eyes upon me as a person proper for making that valuable collection. He, indeed, could not have given a richer present to the colony entrusted to his care. This able administrator never suffered a vessel to depart without requesting the captain, or some intelligent officer, to bring him the various productions of the countries which they were going to visit; and this demand was always accompanied with proper instructions. The garden of *Montplaisir* thus became, in his hands, one of the richest nurseries known, since it contains the most valuable plants of the four quarters of the world.

On my arrival at Foulepointe I did not  
find



find La Bigorne; and this disappointment gave me the more uneasiness, as he was particularly enjoined to afford me every assistance in his power to accomplish the object of my mission. However, after examining the whole environs of Foulepointe, I set out to join him at Mananharre, a village situated at the entrance of the bay of Antongil. In my way thither I traversed the island of St. Mary, where I remained as long as was necessary for studying its different productions; and I did not reach Mananharre till the eighth day after my departure from Foulepointe.

La Bigorne received me with every mark of attention, and gave me a variety of information, of which I have been here able to insert only a few short extracts. With him I visited the most interesting places in the neighbourhood of the great bay of Antongil, and with him I saw those astonishing quar-



quarries of rock crystal, the masses of which are so enormous as almost to surpass belief. But let me not lose sight of my object, and proceed to give an account of the establishments formed by the French in the northern part of Madagascar.

I shall terminate what appeared to me most remarkable on this subject by an account of that of Benyowski. This large establishment, which was formed under the administration of M. de Boynes, cost an immense sum of money; had no success; and ended in a very tragical manner.

Benyowski has been so much celebrated that it may not be here improper to give a short account of his principal adventures: but that I may not venture to say any thing without good authority, I shall transcribe the memoir which he delivered to the gentlemen intrusted with the management of the Isle of France. This memoir was dispersed



perfed so much throughout the colony, that it was eafy for me to procure a copy of it. I have not made the leaft correction in it; becaufe I thought it a matter of importance to exhibit in every point of view this audacious man, whose fcandalous behaviour coft millions to France, and brought new calamities on Madagafcar.

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LETTER OF BARON D'ALADAR, KNOWN  
AT PRESENT UNDER THE NAME OF  
BENYOWSKI, TO THE GOVERNOR OF  
THE ISLE OF FRANCE.

“ IT is with the utmoft pleafure and  
“ eagernefs, infpired by my zeal and the  
“ defire I have of ferving you, that I proceed  
“ to fatisfy you refpecting what you require  
“ of me.

“ Börn a Hungarian, of the illuftrious  
“ family



“ family of the barons de Benyowski, I  
 “ served in quality of general in the armies  
 “ of the empress our sovereign. My father  
 “ was of the house of Aladar XIII. and my  
 “ mother of that of the counts de Rerary :  
 “ I am consequently a Pole by extraction.

“ In 1765, the king of Poland, elector of  
 “ Saxony, being dead, and his kingdom in-  
 “ vaded, I went to Warsaw, to support  
 “ the interests of a prince, in the midst of  
 “ trouble, and of the subversion of celebrated  
 “ statutes, and of the first members of the  
 “ state. The grandees of the kingdom had  
 “ been arrested by a secret order ; and as I  
 “ was of the party of the prince bishop  
 “ of Cracaw, and other magnates, a re-  
 “ quest was made that I might be arrested  
 “ by prince Repnin, the Russian minister.  
 “ Informed of this design, and not knowing  
 “ what to do, I repaired, as speedily as I  
 “ could, to a friend of prince Radziwil,



“ whose protection I solicited. Here I staid  
 “ till the general confederation of Bar was  
 “ declared, to which being invited by mar-  
 “ shal Pulawfky, I immediately entered into  
 “ that of Cracaw, under the command of  
 “ marshal de Czarnowsky. Being admitted  
 “ as an officer into the regiment of Castres,  
 “ I was made a prisoner by the Muscovites,  
 “ who had taken Cracaw. I, however, ran-  
 “ somed myself for the sum of two thousand  
 “ ducats, and afterwards entered into the  
 “ confederation of Bar, where having ob-  
 “ tained the rank of colonel and general, I  
 “ served against the Muscovites, under the  
 “ command of Fortality-Svaniecz, and com-  
 “ bated the enemy, as is proved in the acts  
 “ of the confederation. The enemy being  
 “ expelled, I received orders to go to  
 “ Turkey with M. Pulawfky. The bacha  
 “ of Natolia and Chotyn received me with  
 “ friendship, and gave me assistance of troops



“ and money, with which immediately en-  
 “ tering the kingdom of Poland, I sustain-  
 “ ed a combat against the Russians, near  
 “ Pruth, where I was wounded and taken.  
 “ I was then carried to Riovia, where I  
 “ found marshal Czarnosky, count Potosky,  
 “ and young Pularsky, with three thou-  
 “ sand men.

“ Being afterwards removed to Cazan, I  
 “ passed Nezin and Tuta ; and, by means  
 “ of a German surgeon, I transmitted to his  
 “ eminence the prince bishop of Cracaw,  
 “ who was at Kaluga, a letter, in which I  
 “ informed him of my misfortune. The  
 “ governor of Cazan, M. Guafnin Sama-  
 “ rini, suffered me, like the rest of the pri-  
 “ soners, to enjoy my liberty in the city.

“ On the 15th of August, 1769, I was  
 “ visited by a Russian officer, who privately  
 “ gave me letters from the captive princes,  
 “ with orders to carry them to Kaluga. After

S

“ conferring



“ conferring with the principals, and taking  
 “ their advice on this subject, I escaped to  
 “ Cazan, by pretending to the governor that  
 “ I had an ardent desire to visit the copper  
 “ mines, and arrived without any accident  
 “ at Kaluga, assisted by colonel Bacheme-  
 “ triew, the governor of Fortality, who was  
 “ of the party of the prisoners.

“ I had been appointed to treat person-  
 “ ally with the princes and magnates; and  
 “ it was agreed, that, confining myself to  
 “ a few expeditions, I should set out for  
 “ Petersburg. I even repaired, without de-  
 “ lay, to Quorsum, and taking up my quar-  
 “ ters in the house of colonel Soacsek, I  
 “ finished the expedition according to my  
 “ engagement. When on the point of re-  
 “ turning to Cazan, I was arrested by orders  
 “ of the empress of Russia; and as nothing  
 “ certain was known respecting my private  
 “ flight, I was sent prisoner to Kaluga, to  
 “ which



“ which I had been dispatched by the  
 “ princes.

“ Having formed a friendship with the  
 “ governor, we entered into a treaty, by  
 “ which, with the assistance of Tuga, we  
 “ engaged to retire into Poland; and the  
 “ governor had disposed every thing to fa-  
 “ cilitate our escape, when, on the 18th of  
 “ October 1769, an officer of the guards  
 “ arrived from Petersburg with orders to  
 “ arrest the governor; but the governor  
 “ prevented him by putting him to death;  
 “ and, seeking safety by flight, left us all pri-  
 “ soners. That very day we were loaded  
 “ with chains, and conducted to Peterf-  
 “ burgh, where it was impossible for me to  
 “ hear any farther news of my companions  
 “ in adversity.

“ I was shut up in the private prison of  
 “ Fortality; and, on the fourth day after  
 “ being obliged to appear before Orlow and



“ Czernichew, I was interrogated respecting  
 “ several points. As they could draw no-  
 “ thing from my answers, even by threats,  
 “ they promised me a pardon, in the name  
 “ of the empress, if I would swear fidelity  
 “ to her majesty, and discover those secrets  
 “ with which I had been entrusted. On my  
 “ refusing to comply with these terms, I  
 “ was remanded to prison, from which, by  
 “ means of an officer, I wrote to prince  
 “ Lobkowitz, her majesty’s lieutenant; but  
 “ I received no answer. Some days after,  
 “ having appeared before the commission,  
 “ I was compelled to sign the following  
 “ paper :

“ *I, the undersigned, acknowledge that I not*  
 “ *only wished to break my chains, but that I*  
 “ *committed an assassination, and have been*  
 “ *guilty of treason against her Imperial majes-*  
 “ *ty; and if her majesty, through her natu-*  
 “ *ral*



“*ral goodness, shall be pleased to soften the ri-*  
 “*gour of my sentence, I hereby engage, after*  
 “*recovering my liberty, never to set a foot*  
 “*again in the dominions of her majesty, much*  
 “*less to bear arms against her.*”

“*Petersburgh, Nov. 22d, 1769,*

“*Baron Maurice Augustus Aladar de*

“*Benyowski,*

“*General of the first confederation.*”

“*After signing this paper, I was sent*  
 “*back to confinement ; and on the 24th of*  
 “*November, at midnight, an officer ap-*  
 “*peared, at the head of twenty-eight men,*  
 “*who having put irons on my legs, hurried*  
 “*me into a carriage, and proceeded towards*  
 “*Moscow. I had as my companion in mis-*  
 “*fortune major Vynblat ; and, deprived of*  
 “*all nourishment, except bread and water,*  
 “*we passed through Nizney, Kuzmodem,*  
 “*Janskoy, and Solichanszky, where the of-*



“ ficer, who was entrusted with the care of  
 “ conducting us, fell ill, which obliged us  
 “ to remain there some days.

“ On the 28th of December the same  
 “ year, one of the foldiers came and told  
 “ me, that a body of guards, who were  
 “ conducting fome prifoners, had ftopped at  
 “ a place not far diftant. As they were in  
 “ our neighbourhood, they wifhed very  
 “ much to fee people who were unfortunate  
 “ like themfelves ; and prevailed on their  
 “ officer to conduct them to us in the night-  
 “ time. When they arrived, I immediately  
 “ perceived his ferene highnefs the prince  
 “ bifhop of Cracaw, whose tears prevented  
 “ him from fpeaking; but we were not  
 “ long permitted to fee each other. Having  
 “ feparated, we purfued our journey, in  
 “ company, but in different carriages, as far  
 “ as Tobolfk, the capital of Siberia. After  
 “ a very fhort ftay there, we croffed the de-  
 “ farts



“ parts of Tartary drawn by dogs; without  
 “ hearing any thing of the rest. We suffered  
 “ much from hunger; and, after travers-  
 “ ing Siberia, we found some exiled officers  
 “ of different nations.

“ At length, on the 20th of May, 1770,  
 “ we reached the port of Ochozk, where we  
 “ were kindly received by Plenistere, the  
 “ governor. Soon after, two Russian officers  
 “ arrived, who said they belonged to the  
 “ guards of their highnesses the princes de-  
 “ tained at Kaluga, and with whom I formed  
 “ an intimate friendship.

“ On the 3d of September the same  
 “ year, we were put on board a ship, and  
 “ conveyed to the port of Bolsao. On the  
 “ 24th of December I received a letter from  
 “ the bishop of Cracaw, by a merchant,  
 “ who transmitted it to me. It informed  
 “ me that the princes were removed to the  
 “ northern part of Tartary, towards Ana-



“dyo; and that a troop of Russian soldiers  
 “were preparing to revolt, in order to re-  
 “lease them. I immediately wrote to ma-  
 “jor Vynblat, to inform him what he  
 “should do to procure us our liberty also.  
 “For my part, I rendered myself the friend  
 “of the officer Guresnim, who never quit-  
 “ted me; and he not only facilitated the  
 “means of my escaping, but even opened  
 “his purse to me.

“Our affairs were in this situation when  
 “we were joined by two exiled Russian  
 “officers, who told me, that near us there  
 “was a prisoner closely guarded, who was  
 “supposed to be a person of great distinction,  
 “and who had been kept in irons seven  
 “years. No person could give us any sa-  
 “tisfactory account of him: we were only  
 “told that he was ten or eleven years of  
 “age, and that he was entrusted to the  
 “care of an old officer, who wished very  
 “much



“ much for his deliverance. I conceived  
 “ then a project of gaining the friendship  
 “ of this officer, who willingly listened to  
 “ my proposals. He revealed to me the  
 “ name of the prisoner; who was, indeed,  
 “ of an illustrious birth; and we concerted  
 “ together a plan for his escape, taking each  
 “ of us an oath that we would exert our-  
 “ selves to the utmost to make it succeed.

“ It was on the 25th of May, that, with  
 “ the assistance of God, we intended to pro-  
 “ cure our liberty at the price of our blood.  
 “ As I was the only person who understood  
 “ how to work a ship, I was appointed the  
 “ chief of the enterprise. The conspiracy,  
 “ however, being discovered on the 21st of  
 “ April, the governor ordered me to be car-  
 “ ried away in the night, for the second  
 “ time, with an intention of conveying me  
 “ to some other place. My brethren in dis-  
 “ tress, frightened at this blow, came to me  
 “ on



“ on the 26th, and begged me to relieve  
 “ them. The affair was easy. The lieute-  
 “ nant, who was on guard over me, having  
 “ caused arms to be carried privately to his  
 “ habitation, supplied me and all my com-  
 “ panions, at the head of whom I took pos-  
 “ session of the fort on the night of the 27th.  
 “ In this action the governor and some others  
 “ were killed in the commencement of the  
 “ attack, while a few of my people only were  
 “ slightly wounded.

“ Next morning, the soldiers and Cos-  
 “ saks wished to enter sword in hand into  
 “ the town of Bofsao, the inhabitants of  
 “ which, terrified, after the second and third  
 “ discharge of our musquetry, surrendered  
 “ on the 29th of April. I entered trium-  
 “ phantly into the town of Kamtschatka,  
 “ and no one appeared to oppose me. I  
 “ immediately sent people to seize the ves-  
 “ sels which were in the harbour; and went  
 “ myself.



“ myself with some others to Zamicka,  
 “ where I arrested the secretary of the se-  
 “ nate, who had arrived from Peterburgh,  
 “ and obliged him to deliver up all the let-  
 “ ters of the chancery. After taking every  
 “ thing that belonged to me and two hun-  
 “ dred inhabitants of Kamtschatka, I went  
 “ down to the harbour, where I seized on  
 “ three ships, chose for myself the strong-  
 “ est, and left the rest dismasted.

“ Having freed this vessel, which was  
 “ called the St. Peter, from the ice, I em-  
 “ barked with every thing necessary, and  
 “ set sail on the 12th of May, 1771. I had  
 “ sixty-seven persons with me on board, viz.  
 “ eight officers, eight married women, and a  
 “ young woman known by the title of the  
 “ Princess: the rest consisted of the crew.  
 “ In this manner I departed from Kam-  
 “ tschatka, and passing the latitude of 52°  
 “ 52',



“ 52', entered the channel of the Kurile  
 “ isles, commonly called *Jedso*.

“ Pursuing my course towards the north-  
 “ east, I landed on the island of Bernighia-  
 “ na, situated to the east, under the fifty-  
 “ fifth degree of latitude, and the ninth me-  
 “ ridian from the port which I had left.  
 “ Here I found M. Ochotyn, with eighty  
 “ men. This Polish officer, according to  
 “ what he related, had saved himself in the  
 “ same manner as I, and had established  
 “ himself with his crew in those American  
 “ islands called *Alentis*. He had formed an  
 “ alliance with the inhabitants of the coun-  
 “ try; and his people had contracted mar-  
 “ riages amongst them. In this island I  
 “ left three of my men; and he gave me  
 “ letters to shew wherever I might judge it  
 “ necessary to do so.

“ On the 26th of May, steering away a  
 “ considerable



“ considerable distance from that island, I  
“ found the sea covered with ice, which  
“ obliged me on the 2d of June to land at  
“ the island of Aladar, situated under the  
“ sixty-first degree of latitude, and the twen-  
“ ty-second meridian from Kamschatka. On  
“ the 9th of June I again put to sea, and  
“ directing my route towards the south-east,  
“ fell in, according to my reckoning, with  
“ the point of the American continent, un-  
“ der the sixtieth degree of latitude, and  
“ the twenty-sixth meridian from Kam-  
“ schatka. Sailing then towards the fifty-  
“ first degree of latitude, on account of the  
“ violence of the wind, I afterwards chang-  
“ ed my course towards the south-west;  
“ and on the 20th of June arrived at an  
“ island known to the Russians by the name  
“ of *Urum-Sir*, or the island of *Xti*, situated  
“ under the latitude of  $53^{\circ} 45'$ , and distant  
“  $15^{\circ} 58'$  of longitude from Kamschatka.

“ Here



“Here I formed a friendship with the Ame-  
 “ricans, which induced me to remain some  
 “days amongst them ; but on the 27th of  
 “June I set sail, steering south-west, and  
 “kept at sea till the 30th, when I discover-  
 “ed, in the latitude of  $46^{\circ} 6'$ , and ten de-  
 “grees of longitude from Kamtschatka, a land  
 “inhabited likewise by Russians ; but I  
 “could not go on shore on account of con-  
 “trary winds, which, notwithstanding all  
 “my efforts, carried me to a great distance  
 “from it. Having, therefore, formed a  
 “design of resuming my ancient route, af-  
 “ter suffering a long time from the incon-  
 “stancy of the winds, and finding that our  
 “water was exhausted, so that we were  
 “obliged to drink sea-water, rendered pota-  
 “ble with flour and whale oil, I landed, on  
 “the 15th of July, on an island, which lies  
 “in the latitude of  $32^{\circ} 45'$ , and in longitude  
 “ $334^{\circ} 45'$  from Kamtschatka. This island  
 “was



“ was inhabited, and the beauty of its situ-  
 “ ation, added to other attractions, induced  
 “ me to give it the name of *Liquoris*. I quit-  
 “ ted it on the 22d, and directing my course  
 “ westward, arrived, on the 28th, at *Kilin-*  
 “ *gur*, a Japanese port, situated in latitude  
 “  $34^{\circ}$  and longitude  $34.3^{\circ}$  from Kamischatka.  
 “ This port is close to a town and citadel,  
 “ where we were kindly received by the  
 “ inhabitants, who gave us a supply of pro-  
 “ visions.

“ On the 1st of August I quitted this  
 “ port, and on the 3d landed at *Meaco*,  
 “ where I was insulted by the Japanese,  
 “ whom I found very untractable. Desir-  
 “ ous of proceeding thence to the Philip-  
 “ pines, I continued my route towards the  
 “ south, and, coasting along some other  
 “ islands for several days, landed in the isle  
 “ of *Usona*, in latitude  $27^{\circ} 28'$ , and longi-  
 “ tude  $335^{\circ}$ .



“ Being perfectly well received by the  
 “ people of this island, I spent some days  
 “ amongst them: they supplied me with  
 “ abundance of provisions; and after a mu-  
 “ tual treaty I sailed for the island of *For-*  
 “ *mosa*. Having entered a port in latitude  
 “  $23^{\circ} 15'$ , and longitude  $223^{\circ}$ , I found  
 “ myself attacked by the inhabitants, who  
 “ killed three of my men. After avenging  
 “ their death, the winds always contrary  
 “ obliged me to make for the continent of  
 “ China, coasting along some small islands  
 “ known under the name of *Piscatoria*;  
 “ and want of water compelled me to enter  
 “ by open force into *Tanafoa*, and to attack  
 “ the Chinese, who endeavoured to prevent  
 “ me from procuring a supply. I then  
 “ sailed for *Macao*, a city belonging to her  
 “ most faithful majesty, where I arrived on  
 “ the 22d of September, 1771.

“ In this place I was received with every

“ mark



“ mark of friendship, by the Sieur Salema  
 “ de Saldanha, the governor, and obtained  
 “ permission for me and my crew to land ;  
 “ but we left our arms in the ship, in order  
 “ that we might excite no suspicion. Here  
 “ I learned that there was a league of friend-  
 “ ship between our august sovereigns ; and  
 “ being desirous of keeping a secret, in  
 “ which they were interested, I asked per-  
 “ mission to hoist the flag of his most Chris-  
 “ tian Majesty, which I obtained.

“ What can I say more to your excellency,  
 “ that your own people are not able to in-  
 “ form you of ? Having transported my  
 “ baggage to the house of M. de Robien,  
 “ the president of the council, now in China,  
 “ I embarked, on the 17th of January, with  
 “ my crew, in two trading vessels, and ar-  
 “ rived safe and sound in the Isle of France,  
 “ where I have drawn up the present rela-  
 “ tion : I beg, therefore, that you would be

T

“ pleased



“pleased to order me a speedy passage to  
“ Europe.

“ I shall every where acknowledge this  
“ favour received from your friendship, and  
“ shall be eternally devoted to your ser-  
“ vice.

“ I am your Excellency's

Isle of France,

March 21, 1772.

“ most humble servant,

“ Baron Maurice Augustus d'Aladar de

“ Benyowski,

“ General of the first confederation.”

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ONE cannot help feeling some emotions of surprise on seeing that Benyowski has omitted every thing that might have tended to direct navigators in the route from Kamtschatka to China, by the way of Japan. Nothing is necessary but the elements of the nautical science to enable one to remark soundings and anchorage; to point out the strength



strength and direction of the winds; to determine the variations of the needle; to fix the situation of the principal caps and quicksands; and, in short, to give, if not the longitude, at least the latitude of the most remarkable places.

The journal of the pilot, entrusted with the care of the vessel, ought certainly to have informed him respecting all these particulars.

A traveller of abilities, or only animated with a desire of rendering himself useful, when he visited distant countries, and traversed passages little frequented by European ships, would not have neglected details indispensably necessary to the safety and improvement of navigation. Benyowski, however, boasted of the extent of his knowledge, and of having discovered a new route for going from Kamschatka to China: but the journal of his voyage, while it proves



that he was ignorant even of the most common and technical terms used in navigation, leaves no document, or certain traces of the course which he says he pursued.

This accusation is not made without sufficient reason. I appeal for the justness of it, to all those who, like me, saw him arrive from Canton at the Isle of France. They will all certify, that, with a view to render the account of his adventures more romantic, he publicly declared, that in a small vessel badly equipped, and almost destitute of provisions, or rather having nothing to subsist on but dried fish, he quitted, on his departure from Kamschatka, the Asiatic coast in order to go to America. Over and above, this intrepid adventurer was not afraid to affirm before experienced seamen, that he went on shore on some unknown land, situated to the north of California. This strange assertion gives rise to a multitude of objections.



objections. The distressed situation of his vessel rendered his narration very improbable: besides, the short journal which he had the imprudence to publish, made no mention of that land situated to the north of California, and much less of its productions. On the last article, above all, Benyowski appeared to be exceedingly embarrassed; and he could find no means of delivering himself from importunate questions, but by saying that he reserved for his court alone, the honour of being made acquainted with the particulars of his important discoveries.

This evasion was not attended with success. A general map of the world was presented to him, and he was desired to trace out the course of his voyage, after being assured that such a slight sketch could not expose him; but Benyowski refused. M. Poivre, then intendant of the Isle of France, was extremely glad that these efforts were



made in his presence, to detect the impudent imposture of this stranger. That enlightened administrator prudently avoided taking any part in them ; but he made use of this close attack to inspire M. de Boynes with a just and salutary suspicion of the pretended discoveries of Benyowski. If, as we shall see hereafter, this information did not produce the intended effect, it would certainly be highly illiberal to throw out even the slightest reproaches against him, on that account. However, the relation given by Benyowski, of his romantic adventures, was sufficient to ruin, in the opinion of the public, this man, who was not ashamed to produce before a generous people a scandalous declaration, in which he owned himself guilty of an execrable crime. This stranger, said they, is not a madman ; and yet he wishes to persuade us that force and rigorous means were used to deprive



prive him of his innocence, and to cause him to sign a deed which, while it disgraces and debases him, renders him odious and suspected. What expression in our language is strong enough to characterise the unparalleled impudence of this stranger, who thus allowed himself to spread an accusation more degrading to himself than to his enemies ?

Is there a country in the world where the open acknowledgment of an assassination is the means of recovering liberty ? What could have been the end of this scandalous declaration ?—Is it not impossible to discover the motive of it ?

Whilst I express my sentiments in this manner, I am only the faithful interpreter of that universal sentiment of indignation with which the people of the Isle of France were inspired, when they read Benyowski's improbable relation. It was an object of censure to every person of sense ; and if I



have transcribed it literally, it was merely because I thought it proper that the moral character of this adventurer should be known. I hope I shall be pardoned for so often bestowing upon him that degrading appellation. Benyowski is not condemned by his writings alone; there are still greater charges against him.

Escaped from the prisons of Kamschatka, Benyowski proceeded to China with twenty or thirty prisoners. Scarcely had this stranger arrived at Canton, when he found among the French there some individuals, who were sensibly affected by his misfortunes; and he obtained from the factors and officers of the East-India Company considerable assistance for himself, as well as for the people whom he pretended to have under his command. They even did more for him: they engaged M. de St. Hylaire to take him on board his ship, and to convey him with  
all



all his suite to the Isle of France. M. de St. Hylaire, having a rich cargo under his care belonging to private merchants, made at first some hesitation: he was afraid of admitting into his vessel such a number of strangers who had broke from the prisons of Kam-schatka; but compassion got the better of every other sensation. When he had, however, proceeded to sea, his uneasiness began to be revived with more strength; and very justly, for these people had given him some cause to repent of his imprudent generosity. These adventurers, at the time when they embarked, had carefully concealed their arms. M. de St. Hylaire, therefore, when informed of this deception, was exceedingly sorry to have men in his ship who were perhaps in a situation of giving laws to him instead of receiving them. Thirty or forty prisoners, armed in a formidable manner, were, certainly, sufficient to alarm him respecting  
the



the fate of his valuable cargo. In so delicate and difficult a situation what course could he pursue? Ought he to have made use of his authority to disarm these strangers? But his ship was weak, and badly equipped—ought he in such a case to have risked the property of his employers, and to have exposed his life and his liberty against robust, resolute, and enterprising men, who had every thing to gain and nothing to lose? The slightest pretence might have given rise to a quarrel, and produced an insurrection which it was prudent to avoid. M. de St. Hylaire weighed all these matters in his mind, like a wise man; and, foreseeing his danger, resolved, after mature deliberation, to watch privately all the motions of his passengers. He even did more: he pretended to pay great honour, and to shew much deference and respect to Count Benyowski. This adventurer then acted the man of importance;



exhausted all the resources of the most impudent imposture to give himself a still greater air of consequence ; and by the most ridiculous bravadoes imposed even on his companions in misfortune. He openly declared himself to be their chief ; his orders were punctually executed : he ever afterwards commanded as a master, and they behaved to him with the obsequiousness of slaves. None but those who were gentlemen durst speak to him. This is a certain fact. I was told it by M. de St. Hylaire and his officers.

The honours so prudently paid to Benyowski, while they flattered his pride, preserved tranquillity and good order in the ship. Subordination, so necessary for the safety of navigators, was not interrupted by this dangerous man ; and, at length, after a short and favourable passage, they arrived at the Isle of France. Much praise is certainly due to the wise and cautious conduct



duct of M. de St. Hylaire ; for it evidently appears that he extricated himself, with great ability, from a very difficult and dangerous situation.

Benyowski, surrounded by a numerous suite, repaired immediately on his landing to the governor of the colony. He no longer appeared as an unfortunate prisoner, but as the general of an army decorated with several insignia, and followed by an aid-de-camp, whose rich uniforms announced an officer of superior distinction. What an astonishing metamorphosis, or rather what a ridiculous farce ! Had I not been an eye-witness of it, I should scarcely have ventured to relate it. When the real history of these adventurers was known at the Isle of France, the general and his brilliant attendants became a subject of laughter to every sensible man in the colony. Seamen are seldom enthusiasts. Such people require



quire coolness to subdue the elements, and knowledge to conduct, from one extremity of the earth to the other, those large floating castles, which secure and protect the commerce of polished nations. The lives of sailors, and the safety of a ship or squadron, ought not to be entrusted to men too susceptible of passion, or whose imaginations being lively and irregular are apt to be hurried into fits of delirium. Men of this kind, who are fond of, and admire, whatever is fabulous or romantic, are common only among idle and frivolous nations, or in large capitals, where their fatal influence occasions still greater disorders than that of profligates. Such enthusiastic characters are rare in the colonies, and are always destitute of credit and authority.

Benyowski felt the truth of this assertion in all its bitterness. He saw, at the same time, of how much importance to him it  
was



was to immediately quit a country where his adventures and travels excited no enthusiasm. The more he prolonged his stay the less respect was paid to him. On his departure for France he threw aside the name of Baron d'Aladar, under which he had hitherto appeared, and assumed that of Count de Benyowski: but what is highly worthy of remark is, that, at this epoch, he publicly announced that he was going to solicit in France the general government of the island of Madagascar.

This new gasconade occasioned much amusement, and excited no alarm. One must have had a foresight more than human to dread that a hope, in all appearance so chimerical, should one day be realised. I can, therefore, safely assert, that words are not sufficient to express those sensations of uneasiness and surprise which filled the minds of the whole colony, when they  
learned



learned that Benyowski had been appointed to the important station of governor of Madagascar. I am entirely unacquainted with the seducing arts which this adventurer employed to accomplish his ends: but M. Poivre, when he heard this intelligence, said to me: “ We have seen swarms of locusts  
 “ devour, in an instant, abundant crops; we  
 “ have seen two terrible hurricanes threaten  
 “ the Isle of France with entire destruction:  
 “ Madagascar served to repair the evils  
 “ caused by these formidable scourges; but,  
 “ in future, the Isle of France will have no  
 “ resource. It must sink under its misfor-  
 “ tunes, and perish if afflicted with such  
 “ disasters. Under Benyowski’s govern-  
 “ ment, Madagascar will not supply this  
 “ colony with provisions: we can no longer  
 “ have in our distresses but distant and pre-  
 “ carious succours. I have been much ac-  
 “ customed to see the success of impostors  
 “ and



“ and adventurers: but that of Benyowski  
 “ astonishes me; especially after the letter  
 “ which I wrote respecting him to M. de  
 “ Boynes. I am well aware that every  
 “ thing eccentric pleases and amuses the  
 “ multitude, and leads them into every  
 “ excess of credulity; but who could have  
 “ imagined, that a stranger, lately escaped  
 “ from the prisons of Kamtschatka, and  
 “ whose character was blasted by his own  
 “ writings, would have obtained an import-  
 “ ant situation without my consent? Con-  
 “ nected closely by my office with the pro-  
 “ sperity of the colony, I ought to have in-  
 “ spired him, when he first spoke to me of  
 “ Madagascar, with a desire of dethroning  
 “ the Great Mogul. His request, without  
 “ doubt, would have been granted; and we  
 “ should have been delivered.”

Benyowski, however, was permitted to  
 raise a company of volunteers; and he  
 wished



wished that this troop might be dressed and armed in such a manner as to spread fear and terror among the Malegaches; but by this he proved how little he was acquainted with the character of these people. He then chose the Bay of Antongil for the place of his principal establishment, though that part of the country is ravaged and desolated by pestilential fevers, from the month of October to the beginning of May. Navigators call that fatal season the winter. No doubt can be entertained that the noxious vapours, which arise from the woods and marshes, are the real cause of these epidemical diseases. The inflammable air and putrid exhalations, which proceed in abundance from water in a state of stagnation, and corrupted by the remains of vegetables, change the good quality of the atmospheric air, during calm weather or great heats. On such occasions the air is seldom renewed by



the sea breezes; the north winds carry these exhalations along the coasts; and drought and tranquillity render their effects more fatal. The Malegaches know, in a small degree, how to preserve themselves by remaining in their huts, or houses, amidst a thick smoke; yet the sobrest and most robust of these islanders cannot always withstand the malignancy of the disorder. It is not surprising, therefore, that the Europeans, who are obliged to reside on that coast, should fall victims to distempers, which attack even those who are seasoned to the climate.

I was witness to the entire destruction of a small French establishment at Foulepointe, about the end of the year 1768. Though assistance of every kind was speedily given to the unfortunate people who belonged to it, not one of them could be saved. The robust as well as the weak all fell victims

to



to disease in the course of a very short time. If I beheld this calamity without sharing the fate of the rest, it was because the salubrious sea air, with which our vessel was surrounded, corrected, in some degree, the fatal effects of the putrid exhalations. Besides, as soon as the first symptoms of the disease appeared in the village, all communication with the land, except what was indispensably necessary, was rigorously forbidden. The crew were no longer allowed to have any intercourse with the islanders; nor were their piroguas suffered to approach our vessel. Without this precaution the infection might have been introduced into the ship; and no means could have been devised to check its progress. Those who intend to frequent this dangerous coast ought not to despise these observations, the justness of which is confirmed by a multitude of examples. In a word, one



must either perish or fly from that unwholesome climate when the infection breaks out. No part in the northern quarter of Madagascar is free from putrid and malignant fevers; but these cruel diseases do not every year occasion the same ravages. Their violence and duration seem to depend more particularly on the direction of the wind. When it blows long from the north, the evil is at its height. There are few men robust and strong enough to resist the influence of this dangerous wind, which prevails only from the end of October till the beginning of May.

Benyowski certainly could not have had very just notions, or accurate accounts, respecting the unhealthfulness of Madagascar. Yet it cannot be presumed that the badness of its climate was entirely unknown to him, as he had resided some time at the Isle of France. It was observed even then that he had  
formed



formed a design of soliciting the government of it: but this man, accustomed to brave every kind of danger, must not have thought such an obstacle capable of opposing the success of a permanent establishment.

However this may be, Benyowski arrived at the Bay of Antongil, surrounded by a body of troops, sufficient to overawe the islanders. His soldiers were furnished with enormous sabres; they wore pistols in their girdles; and it appeared as if their arms, their helmets, and their uniforms had been invented to spread fear and terror amongst the natives of Madagascar. As soon as he had landed, he took formal possession of the island, and made himself be proclaimed governor-general. He then traced out the plans of several fortresses, with a view of rendering himself formidable to the Mae-gaches, whom he wished to conquer and



subdue. His projects, however, were neither founded on justice, nor directed by a local knowledge of the country. He made war upon the Malegaches; exercised every kind of cruelty against them; and was soon execrated as the tyrant of the country. The natives frightened fled into the interior parts of the island; all commerce was suspended; and Benyowski deserted was known throughout all Madagascar by the name of the *wicked white man*.

It was, doubtless, very easy to foresee that Benyowski's establishment would not be attended with success: but such a beginning would, certainly, appear surprising, were not the immorality and misconduct of this adventurer well known. The reception Benyowski met with in France, and his being vested with unlimited power, must indeed astonish every person of sense. We live in an enlightened age, and, on that ac-



count, it is more difficult to account for the French nation thus confiding in, and employing, a stranger whose actions were more than suspicious. Several millions were thus sacrificed to a false and imprudent speculation, from which nothing could result but great evils to the Isle of France, and still greater to Madagascar.

A simple recital of facts conveys the most severe censure upon the imprudent confidence reposed in this adventurer. M. Poivre certainly is free from all blame on that account; for he did every thing in his power to guard his country against the danger of being deluded by him.

But let us hear the account of an officer of distinction, who has every title to the highest celebrity. I am not allowed to mention his name; because, being now absent, I had not an opportunity of asking his permission. This officer accompanied



M. de Belcombe and M. Chevreau when they inspected Benyowski's establishments at Madagascar.

“ When I arrived,” says he, “ at Foule-  
 “ pointe, on the 17th of September 1776,  
 “ the population of the villages in the  
 “ neighbourhood of the fort had decreased  
 “ one half; bloody wars had desolated the  
 “ whole country; the crops were entirely  
 “ destroyed; and agriculture was so much  
 “ neglected that we could hardly procure  
 “ three hundred pounds of rice. A scarcity  
 “ of other provisions was equally felt. My  
 “ surprise, on this account, was very great;  
 “ for, when I was in the same spot three  
 “ years before, I observed commerce and  
 “ agriculture flourishing; the markets were  
 “ abundantly supplied; and ten large ves-  
 “ sels found a sufficiency of rice to load  
 “ them, without any increase taking place  
 “ in the value of that necessary commodity.

“ This



“ This large quantity of provision was solely  
 “ destined for the Isle of France, which three  
 “ successive hurricanes had reduced to a most  
 “ alarming state of distress. All the crops were  
 “ lost ; a dreadful famine, the inevitable con-  
 “ sequence of these scourges, threatened the  
 “ colony with ruin ; and the severity of it  
 “ began even to be felt when the speedy  
 “ arrival of these ten vessels, loaded with  
 “ rice, quieted the uneasiness of the inhabi-  
 “ tants, in the first moments of their distress.  
 “ If, on this occasion as on many others,  
 “ Foulepointe saved the Isle of France, we  
 “ could no longer hope for the same  
 “ assistance. The fields were unculti-  
 “ vated, and commerce entirely annihilat-  
 “ ed. The despotism of Benyowski had  
 “ spread a general alarm throughout the  
 “ island. The Malegaches in consternation  
 “ fled from the borders of the sea, and re-  
 “ tired to the interior parts of the country.

“ M. de



“ M. de Belcombe having assembled  
 “ Yavi, the sovereign of Foulepointe, and  
 “ the other chiefs of the neighbourhood,  
 “ asked them if they had any reason to  
 “ complain of the French, and above all  
 “ of the fifteen soldiers of Benyowski’s  
 “ legion, who guarded the harbour of  
 “ Foulepointe. Their answer to this ques-  
 “ tion was not explicit : they were, doubt-  
 “ less, afraid that their complaints would  
 “ serve as a pretence for new persecutions ;  
 “ and confined themselves merely to the re-  
 “ questing of a free-trade. M. de Belcombe  
 “ assured Yavi and the rest of the chiefs,  
 “ that the French soldiers were kept at Ma-  
 “ dagascar only to protect and secure the  
 “ liberty of the Malegaches ; and he ex-  
 “ horted them to cultivate their lands, and  
 “ to live in peace with their neighbours.  
 “ M. Chevreau took an inventory of the  
 “ stores belonging to the king ; and M. de  
 “ Bel-



“ Belcombe, before his departure for the  
 “ Bay of Antongil, gave the strictest and  
 “ most precise orders to the officer who  
 “ commanded the detachment, to maintain  
 “ discipline among his troops, and to put  
 “ a speedy end to the uneasiness and alarms  
 “ of these people.

“ M. de Belcombe and M. Chevreau  
 “ made but a very short stay at Foulepointe.  
 “ As the principal object of their mission  
 “ respected Benyowski's establishment at  
 “ the Bay of Antongil, they proceeded  
 “ thither ; and M. de Belcombe appeared  
 “ at the head of the troops, as inspector of  
 “ the French settlements in Madagascar.

“ I accompanied M. de Belcombe and  
 “ M. Chevreau, being ordered by the go-  
 “ vernor of the Isle of France to attend  
 “ them on this service.

“ Benyowski's audacity astonished me so  
 “ much that words can scarcely express what  
 “ I felt.



“ I felt. He at first received M. Chevreau  
 “ with haughtiness, and I may even say im-  
 “ pudence.

“ M. de Belcombe appeared satisfied with  
 “ the military position of the spot chosen by  
 “ Benyowski for forming his principal es-  
 “ tablishment, to which he had given the  
 “ name of *Louisburgh*: but though this  
 “ place may be easily defended, I know  
 “ none more marshy and unhealthful.

“ *Louisburgh* is situated on a tongue of  
 “ land which advances three hundred fa-  
 “ thoms into the sea. The ground upon  
 “ which the magazines and houses are  
 “ built is scarcely four feet above the level  
 “ of the water, in the time of high tides ;  
 “ and even this elevation has been formed  
 “ by embankments. All the neighbouring  
 “ land is a marsh, which the sea covers at  
 “ certain periods. The fort, constructed  
 “ for the defence and protection of *Louis-*  
 “ burgh,



“ burgh, consists of three bastions, each of  
 “ which is mounted with one cannon. This  
 “ fort is of wood, and is built upon stakes  
 “ driven into the earth. I dare venture to  
 “ affirm that both it and the houses are al-  
 “ ready in need of being rebuilt; for all the  
 “ wood was in a state of rottenness, occa-  
 “ sioned by the moisture. The tongue of  
 “ land upon which Louisburgh stands is  
 “ connected on one side with Port Choiseul,  
 “ an excellent harbour, and capable of re-  
 “ ceiving several large vessels. A spacious and  
 “ beautiful river, called by the Malegaches  
 “ Linguebate, gives this tongue of land  
 “ the form of a peninsula. The river Lin-  
 “ guebate is an hundred and eighty fathoms  
 “ in breadth; it is navigable; and I fol-  
 “ lowed its course in a boat for the space  
 “ of seven leagues. At this distance it is  
 “ an hundred and fifty fathoms in breadth.  
 “ On the banks of this river Benyowski  
 “ has



“ has constructed several forts, the most  
 “ considerable of which is, at least, equal  
 “ in strength to that built for the defence  
 “ of Louisburgh. The banks of Lingue-  
 “ bate river are only four feet high at its  
 “ mouth : but the nearer you approach to  
 “ its source the more this height increases.  
 “ In following its source I was much de-  
 “ lighted with the beauty of the neighbour-  
 “ ing fields, which present a spectacle highly  
 “ interesting.

“ I at length arrived with M. de Belcombe  
 “ and M. Chevreau at a place called, by  
 “ Benyowski, the *Plain of Health*. Be-  
 “ tween this place and Louisburgh we vi-  
 “ sited several small forts, and fifteen vil-  
 “ lages. Benyowski had boasted much to  
 “ us of the happy situation of this place,  
 “ which was truly rural ; but we found  
 “ that its denomination was altogether im-  
 “ proper. The *Plain of Health* appeared  
 “ to



“ to us to be a very unhealthy spot, fur-  
 “ rounded by mountains, the great height of  
 “ which attracts the clouds, and condenses  
 “ them into rain. M. de Belcombe re-  
 “ marked to Benyowski the disadvantages  
 “ of this post: but though they were ob-  
 “ vious, he obstinately refused to acknow-  
 “ ledge them. In vain was he shewn the  
 “ defiles in the mountains, which it was  
 “ impossible to guard: he still persisted  
 “ that this post was less susceptible of an  
 “ attack than that of Louisburgh. He main-  
 “ tained that a small battery, which he cal-  
 “ led Fort Augustus, situated on a peaked  
 “ mount, in the middle of the *Plain of*  
 “ *Health*, would protect and defend his  
 “ establishment in such a manner as to re-  
 “ pel an enemy, however numerous. I as-  
 “ cended to this fine fortress by a paltry stair,  
 “ consisting of an hundred and fifty steps,  
 “ and found it a square of eight fathoms,  
 “ surrounded



“surrounded by palisades absolutely rotten.  
 “Four three-pounders were the formidable  
 “artillery which, on the one hand, were to  
 “protect the navigation of the river Lin-  
 “guebate, and on the other to defend the  
 “grand establishment which he proposed  
 “to form at the bottom of the fort, and to  
 “which he had already given the name of  
 “the *Town of the Plain of Health*.

“This town consisted, when we saw it,  
 “of a magazine fifty feet in length, and thir-  
 “ty in breadth; and of two other smaller  
 “edifices, one of which was intended for  
 “an hospital, and the other for barracks.  
 “M. de Belcombe, in my presence, asked  
 “Benyowski, if he had nothing more to  
 “show him. Benyowski, without being  
 “in the least disconcerted, replied, My forts  
 “protect the navigation of the import-  
 “ant river Linguebate, and the free navi-  
 “gation of this river renders me absolute  
 “master



“ master of the adjacent country. Have I  
 “ not in this rendered a very essential ser-  
 “ vice to France? Could any thing more  
 “ be expected from the forces and funds  
 “ which were at my disposal? Would an-  
 “ other in my place have done more?—  
 “ Would he have done as much? M. de  
 “ Belcombe smiled, and said, You sent word,  
 “ governor, to the minister of the marine,  
 “ that you had laid the foundation of a  
 “ large town, which you called the *Plain of*  
 “ *Health*. Where is that town?—What is  
 “ become of it?—Has it disappeared? for I  
 “ see nothing here but a few miserable  
 “ huts.

“ To this embarrassing question Beny-  
 “ owski replied, that his funds had failed.  
 “ My citadel, added he, has cost more than  
 “ I expected. It was necessary that I should  
 “ first pay attention to the safety of the town,  
 “ the plan of which I will now shew you:



“ this project is not a chimera ; it will be  
 “ carried into execution as soon as I can  
 “ procure funds sufficient to undertake it.

“ But your citadel, said M. de Belcombe,  
 “ is a small pitiful battery, commanded on  
 “ all sides by the high mountains which  
 “ surround it : this battery of four three-  
 “ pounders, placed on the summit of a  
 “ small mount, can never answer the end  
 “ you propose. Besides, I here come from  
 “ France, by orders of the minister, to in-  
 “ spect your labours, and I cannot avoid  
 “ making you acquainted with my reflec-  
 “ tions. Permit me to ask you another ques-  
 “ tion, no less interesting—Where is that  
 “ grand highway from Louisburgh to Bom-  
 “ betoc ? Enable me, I pray, to give an  
 “ account of it to the minister. You have  
 “ explained the advantages of it to him in  
 “ the minutest manner. You have told  
 “ him that this communication of the east-

“ ern



“ern with the western side of the island  
 “must make you sovereign, as one may  
 “say, of the African coast, because the port  
 “of Bombetoc is separated from Africa  
 “only by the channel of Mozambique.  
 “That this wild country, intersected by  
 “high mountains, forests, and rivers, should  
 “not have thrown obstacles in the way of  
 “your project, is to me a matter of astonish-  
 “ment and surprise.

“That route, said Benyowski, is traced  
 “out: this is a fact that cannot be con-  
 “tested. I shall shew you an itinerary,  
 “and directions to be pursued for travers-  
 “ing that chain of mountains which se-  
 “parates the eastern from the western  
 “coast. You must leave on the south the  
 “high mountain of Vigagora, and follow,  
 “a few deviations excepted, the road fre-  
 “quented by the islanders, when they  
 “come from the coast of Bombetoc to the



“ Bay of Antongil. Some labour will be,  
 “ doubtless, necessary to render this road  
 “ more practicable ; but the present season,  
 “ and my situation with regard to the  
 “ islanders, will not permit me, for some  
 “ time, to engage in that undertaking. If  
 “ you wish, however, to explore this route,  
 “ I will accompany you ; and you will  
 “ then see what difficulties I must experi-  
 “ ence, before I can overcome those obsta-  
 “ cles which are to be surmounted.

“ M. de Belcombe had neither leisure  
 “ nor inclination to undertake a long and  
 “ difficult journey across the island of Ma-  
 “ dagascar, and he rightly conjectured that  
 “ Benyowski had not made the proposal  
 “ but from a certainty of being refused.  
 “ M. de Belcombe thought it his duty to  
 “ observe, that he was commissioned to in-  
 “ spect works executed, and not works pro-  
 “ jected. Proceeding then to a new ques-  
 “ tion,



“ tion, he asked him why he had ceased to  
 “ send rice and oxen to the Isle of France.  
 “ The wars which I have had to carry on  
 “ against the islanders, said Benyowski,  
 “ have deprived, and still deprive me, of  
 “ the provisions necessary for my own  
 “ people. In such a situation, how could I  
 “ send supplies to the Isle of France? You  
 “ must readily see that it was impossible. I  
 “ can with equal ease justify the wars I  
 “ have undertaken. I assemble a *palabre*,  
 “ and propose to the islanders plans calcu-  
 “ lated to promote their advantage. They,  
 “ however, not only reject them, but the  
 “ chiefs have the insolence to threaten me.  
 “ They even do more: a signal is given  
 “ for destroying me; several muskets are  
 “ discharged at once; and I escape, almost  
 “ miraculously, from this imminent danger.  
 “ Being vigorously supported by my soldiers,  
 “ I disperse the multitude, and frighten them



“ by some cannon shots which I order to  
 “ be discharged from the fort. I insist on  
 “ having the heads of those chiefs who  
 “ made an attempt on my life, in the middle  
 “ of a solemn assembly ; but this is refused.  
 “ I then call to my assistance the Samba-  
 “ rives, a people who live on the banks of  
 “ the river Manaharre: five hundred of  
 “ their warriors range themselves under my  
 “ standards, and enable me to punish and  
 “ subdue my dangerous neighbours. Being  
 “ compelled to sue for peace, the articles  
 “ of a treaty were formally agreed on and  
 “ sanctioned in a grand *cabar* or *palabre* ;  
 “ the usual ceremonies were observed ; I  
 “ rewarded the Sambarives when I dis-  
 “ missed them ; I promised to protect and  
 “ defend them against the enterprises of  
 “ their enemies ; and I exhorted them to  
 “ cultivate their lands, as the speediest  
 “ mode of remedying those evils which had  
 “ been



“ been occasioned by our dissensions. These  
 “ evils are undoubtedly great ; the country  
 “ is laid waste ; the principal part of the  
 “ villages present nothing to the sight but  
 “ heaps of ashes ; the lands are left unculti-  
 “ vated ; and a famine has been the neces-  
 “ sary consequence of all these disorders.  
 “ Peace and tranquillity, however, are about  
 “ to be restored : the islanders, more timor-  
 “ ous and submissive, will apply to agricul-  
 “ ture ; and will repair those misfortunes,  
 “ which they have brought upon themselves  
 “ by their odious and criminal plot against  
 “ a man who knows how to make himself  
 “ be feared and respected. The authority  
 “ with which I am invested shall never lose  
 “ its force in my hands ; I will never suffer  
 “ it to be despised ; I will enforce obedience.  
 “ Every military man must approve my  
 “ conduct, and adopt my principles. The  
 “ whites ought never to trust to the friend-



“ ship of the blacks ; they ought not even  
 “ to demean themselves so far as to seek for  
 “ it. I am a foreigner, and on that account  
 “ ought to exert myself the more in order  
 “ to procure respect to the French flag. My  
 “ administration will restore to it that degree  
 “ of weight which the weakness of my pre-  
 “ decessors made it lose.—Such almost was  
 “ the substance of Benyowski’s conversa-  
 “ tion. He added invectives of every kind  
 “ against the islanders, whose character he  
 “ delineated under the blackest and falsest  
 “ colours.

“ We judged that an absolute want of  
 “ provisions was the only motive which had  
 “ determined him to preserve peace. The  
 “ hatred and resentment of this revengeful  
 “ man had given way only to the most ur-  
 “ gent necessity. M. Belcombe, being much  
 “ alarmed on this account, endeavoured to  
 “ inspire Benyowski with juster and more  
 “ humane



“ humane ideas ; and, though he was  
 “ convinced of the inutility of his exhorta-  
 “ tions and efforts to render the peace dur-  
 “ able, he resolved, on his return to Louif-  
 “ burgh, to make a new treaty, in order to  
 “ convince the inhabitants of Madagascar  
 “ that he entertained sentiments truly pa-  
 “ cific.

“ Benyowski violently opposed this plan,  
 “ which M. de Belcombe had formed, of  
 “ again assembling the islanders, for the  
 “ purpose of confirming the peace ; and he  
 “ endeavoured to prove, that the holding of  
 “ a new *palabre* would be attended with  
 “ great inconveniences. His remonstrances  
 “ however were of no avail ; the assembly  
 “ was held on the second of October 1776 ;  
 “ but it was not numerous, and consisted  
 “ only of an hundred and fifty of the na-  
 “ tives. M. de Belcombe, on this occasion,  
 “ renewed the treaty ; exhorted these peo-  
 “ ple



“ple to cultivate their lands; to avoid all  
 “cause of discord among themselves; and  
 “assured them that the French establish-  
 “ment at the Bay of Antongil had no  
 “other object in view than that of secur-  
 “ing to them happiness and tranquillity.  
 “Sell, said he, what provisions you can  
 “spare to the French, and they will pro-  
 “tect you. Your enemies will then no  
 “longer dare to attack you; and you may,  
 “in future, apply to commerce and agri-  
 “culture with the greatest safety. It is but  
 “doing justice to M. de Belcombe to  
 “observe, that he neglected no means  
 “which were likely to re-establish concord  
 “and confidence among the islanders; but  
 “every hope of prosperity was chimerical,  
 “as long as the French settlements were  
 “under the direction of Benyowski. The  
 “islanders remained motionless, and seemed  
 “to be insensible to all the testimonies of  
 “friend-



“ friendship and assurances of good will  
“ which were given to them. Benyowski  
“ appeared to me very much chagrined at  
“ the insinuations thrown out against his  
“ conduct. This was very evident; for  
“ M. de Belcombe wished that his sentiments might not be misunderstood,  
“ though he always behaved to the governor  
“ with that deference and respect which are  
“ necessary for preserving subordination.  
“ Before our departure from Madagascar,  
“ I had a conversation with Benyowski,  
“ on the little advantage which France was  
“ likely to derive from the establishment  
“ at the Bay of Antongil. You are right,  
“ said he, in your opinion; but a lesson  
“ which has cost two millions of livres,  
“ is not too dear to teach your nation,  
“ that it ought to have allowed me a squadron of ships, with two millions of livres  
“ for my annual expenditure. Had it then  
“ sent



“ sent fix hundred recruits every year, I  
 “ should have raised in the course of twen-  
 “ ty years a flourishing and formidable co-  
 “ lony. I observed to him that the coun-  
 “ try was unhealthful ; and that five in fix  
 “ of the people sent thither fell victims to  
 “ the insalubrity of the climate. In answer  
 “ to this, Benyowski replied, that by clear-  
 “ ing considerable tracts of land, during the  
 “ favourable season, diseases might be pre-  
 “ vented, and that the *Plain of Health* was  
 “ a healthful spot, whatever M. de Bel-  
 “ combe might say to the contrary. If  
 “ I have lost a great many people, conti-  
 “ nued he ; and if the eighty who remain,  
 “ are either sick, or in a state of convales-  
 “ cence, this deplorable situation, in which  
 “ you find me, is to be ascribed to the war  
 “ I was obliged to undertake against the  
 “ islanders, and still more to my residing at  
 “ Louisburgh. Besides, it is always much



“ easier to conquer a colony belonging to  
 “ an enemy, than to establish one. I agreed  
 “ with him in this idea ; and quitted him,  
 “ much astonished at the confidence re-  
 “ posed by the French ministry in the  
 “ projects of this foreigner.

“ On our arrival at the Isle of France,  
 “ that colony began to be in want of pro-  
 “ visions. The resources of Madagascar  
 “ had absolutely failed. It was necessary,  
 “ therefore, to send ships to the Cape of  
 “ Good Hope ; and heavy complaints pro-  
 “ ceeded from every quarter, in order to  
 “ open the eyes of the ministry respecting  
 “ the misconduct of Benyowski.”

The journal from which the above ac-  
 count is extracted proves, that the establish-  
 ment formed at the Bay of Antongil was  
 not susceptible of being preserved.

At the time when it was inspected by M.  
 de Belcombe, M. de Boynes was not mi-  
 nister



nister of the marine. M. Turgot had succeeded to that office; and under the administration of this prudent minister such an establishment could not be supported. Vain efforts were made to avert the storm, for impostors every where find protectors; but sentence was pronounced; and if it was not put in execution till the administration of his successor, it was because M. Turgot did not remain long enough in office to pay particular attention to this part of his duty. This illustrious man, whose eminent talents raised him far above the generality of his cotemporaries, knew from M. Poivre, that Benyowski was a dangerous adventurer, who had rendered himself the tyrant and scourge of the natives of Madagascar. Having just then returned to Europe, I learned that Benyowski had made a conquest of the island of Madagascar; and I heard his courage and abilities every where extolled.



I was assured that he had built towns and fortresses; that he had constructed a grand road from Louisburgh to Bombetoc; and all these reveries seriously propagated were so much believed, as to become a subject of wonder and conversation in the city. One was scarcely allowed to doubt the truth of these ridiculous fables; and M. Poivre himself was obliged to undertake the task of refuting them. In the mean time Benyowski, disgraced, arrived in Paris, where he endeavoured to confirm the reports which had been spread of his brilliant exploits in Madagascar. He complained loudly of the injustice of the administration of the Isle of France; and was at length able, if not to justify himself, at least to obtain new rewards. He then insinuated himself into favour with Dr. Franklin: this fact is incontestable, as I was an eye-witness of it; but I cannot reproach myself with having suffered



suffered that celebrated man to be ignorant of what I knew respecting this adventurer. Benyowski, however, went to America, where he had scarcely arrived when he again formed a project of getting possession of Madagascar; and with that view proceeded to the Bay of Antongil, in an American vessel. I am not acquainted with the object of this expedition; but I know that M. de Souillac, the governor of the Isle of France, sent, on the 9th of May 1786, a vessel, called the *Louisa*, commanded by Viscount de la Croix, to oppose Benyowski's enterprises; and caused a detachment of sixty men from the regiment of Pondicherry, under the orders of M. Larcher, a captain of infantry, to accompany him. M. Mayeur, also, the principal factor, embarked in the same vessel, in order to give M. Larcher every information necessary to counteract the views of Benyowski; for it

was



was known, that he had seized a magazine belonging to the king at Angoncy, a village situated to the north of the Bay of Antongil.

The *Louisa* cast anchor at Foulepointe on the 17th of the same month; and Count de la Croix, after procuring such provisions as he stood in need of, quitted that port and proceeded to Angoncy. He arrived there on the 23d; but instead of anchoring in the bay, the entrance of which is difficult, and the situation badly laid down in charts, he chose rather to anchor at the distance of half a league from the shore, in the bay of the eastern cape near to that of Angoncy. When the vessel was safely moored, M. Larcher prepared to make good a landing; and some boats well manned, and having each two pieces of cannon in their bows, advanced towards a part of the coast where no obstacle appeared to interrupt them: but when the

Y

people



people were just ready to go on shore, a volley from Benyowski's troops left them in no doubt respecting the hostile intentions of that adventurer. A few cannon shots, however, dispersed the enemy, who were seen retreating into the woods; and after they had disappeared, a descent was effected without impediment or disorder. M. Larcher, at the head of his men, wished to march directly towards Benyowski's settlement; but he was unwilling to entangle himself in the thick woods, where it would have been impossible for him to make use of his artillery. The islanders therefore, who served him as guides, conducted him by a more open route, which would, however, have presented insurmountable obstacles had it been guarded and defended.

M. Larcher had five marshes, and a bad bridge, ninety feet long, to cross, before he could arrive at Benyowski's settlement. It  
may



may be readily supposed that he would not have pursued this route had he been acquainted with the danger of it : but Benyowski was so little afraid that any one could march by so difficult a road, that he had neglected to cut down the bridge which rendered it passable. This negligence is inconceivable in a man who expected an attack : for it was afterwards known, that he openly said, “ The people of Foulepointe  
 “ will soon come to ask restitution of the  
 “ magazine I have seized : I am glad of it ;  
 “ for they will save me the trouble of go-  
 “ ing to attack them at Foulepointe.”

When M. Larcher had passed the bridge with his artillery, he distinctly heard the noise of people at work. A little while after the advanced guard announced that he saw a red flag, which is the ordinary signal for engaging in this island. M. Larcher immediately ordered his men to inspect their



arms, and to prepare for marching towards the enemy in order of battle. Fifty houses were then perceived, all regularly placed in a line, one of which, larger and higher than the rest, was judged to be that of Benyowski. They had not yet seen the fort, as the view of it was intercepted by a small grove of trees: but as soon as they distinguished it, they observed about an hundred men who were retiring to it with precipitation.

This fort, situated on an eminence, and surrounded by strong palisades, was defended by two four pounders and a few swivels. As soon as Benyowski judged that the French were near enough, he ordered his men to fire the cannon. The first discharge was with bullets; the second with grape shot; and the third with small balls. These three discharges were supported by a brisk fire of musketry; but notwithstanding this defence,



fence, the French continued to advance in good order. When the commanding officer thought that he was at a proper distance from the enemy, he ordered them to return Benyowski's fire. This single volley proved decisive: Benyowski received a wound in the breast with a ball, which put an end to his existence, at the moment when he was just applying a match to a cannon loaded with grape-shot. Luckily the priming did not catch fire: had this cannon been discharged, it would certainly have occasioned great disorder among the French; and might have, perhaps, caused their expedition to miscarry. They were in a situation where it was necessary for them either to conquer or perish; they were deprived of every means of being supported; all communication with the coast was cut off; and they were inclosed in such a manner, that it would have been impossible for them to regain their vessel.



Immediately after Benyowski's death, the fort surrendered at discretion. The greater part of the islanders saved themselves over the palisades ; and no attempt was made to stop them. The object of the expedition was accomplished ; and M. Larcher had strict orders to treat the inhabitants of the country with humanity. Some of them, who joined the whites, laid down their arms, and surrendered themselves prisoners ; but they were the same moment released, and restored to their full liberty. This generous behaviour induced the chief of Angoncy to come to request peace, and to throw himself under the protection of the French. He presented to M. Larcher an old Portuguese woman, and the Baroness d'Adescheins, the widow of an officer who had followed Benyowski to Madagascar. These two women had fled for shelter to the chief ; and it was in compliance with their entrea-



entreaties that he delivered them into the hands of the French. This chief complained bitterly of Benyowski's tyranny. He said he had reigned over that fertile part of the country where he was established with a rod of iron ; that he plundered the inhabitants without mercy ; and destroyed, through fear, the fruits of their industry. He was continually adding new taxes to the burthens which he thought proper to impose on them ; and he violated, in an outrageous manner, the most respected usages and customs. Their vain remonstrances were rejected with harshness. In treating them as slaves, and subjecting them to the most galling yoke, he wished to make them lose even the hopes of recovering their liberty. These people were submissive to his caprices : his consummate audacity, his cunning, and still more the impetuosity of his character, had rendered him absolute master of



Madagascar ; and, at the time when he was killed, he was preparing to drive the French from the island, and even to turn their kindnesſes againſt themſelves.

Generous nation, but too eaſy to be de-  
luded, ceaſe to give way to that enthufiaſm  
which has involved you in ſo many evils.  
Remember that the Malegaches have ſtill to  
reproach you for abandoning their country  
to pillage, and to the tyranny of an adven-  
turer, who was, in every reſpect, unworthy  
of the reception with which you honoured  
him. You entrusted to this foreigner ſe-  
veral millions of money, and objects of the  
utmoſt importance. You granted him re-  
wards and marks of diſtinction reſerved  
for your moſt zealous defenders ; but what  
gratitude did he ſhew for them ? He took  
up arms againſt you ; he fired upon your  
troops ; he plundered your magazines.  
Had not inconfiſtency and imprudence pre-  
fided



sided over all his actions, he would have found means to prevent you from carrying on commerce, or having any intercourse with Madagascar.

The Malegaches, exhausted by intestine wars, had lost, during the administration of Benyowski, almost all their good qualities: they were become base slaves, devoted to the caprices of a ferocious and intractable master. Under him the lands remained uncultivated; agriculture was neglected; and commerce interrupted had converted into a desert, a country once fertile and flourishing. This artful man had spread the seeds of hatred and discord among the islanders; and his haughty and disdainful gait united with his impudence and imposture to overawe the multitude. Through features which displayed pride and duplicity, one could still distinguish a ferocious aspect, capable of intimidating the most intrepid,



intrepid. The events of his life have been only a long series of crimes and villanies; and his death was a just punishment for his infamous treachery. It was necessary either to deliver Madagascar from the yoke of this tyrant, or to abandon the colonies of the isles of France and Bourbon.

These savage people had neither sufficient knowledge nor spirit to recover, by themselves, their lost liberty; and how could they avoid and escape from the snares with which Benyowski had artfully surrounded them? This common enemy found means by his duplicity to create division amongst them. As the French therefore, through their enthusiasm, were the authors of all the evils which they experienced, justice and equity would have obliged us to go to their assistance, even had not the interest of our commerce rendered it necessary. But I have already proved that the Isle of



France depends in a great measure for its subsistence on the Island of Madagascar, and this dependence is absolute in the time of great calamities. The Cape of Good Hope affords resources then which are distant, expensive, uncertain, and, in every respect, insufficient. It is doubtless much to be wished that some fixed and permanent establishments could be formed in this part; but I have shewn that the insalubrity of the air is an obstacle which cannot be surmounted without sacrificing the lives of a great number of men. From the month of May, however, till the end of October, these shores may be frequented without danger. This is the period most favourable for commerce; it is likewise the time of harvest; and provisions of every kind may be then procured.



REFLECTIONS ON THE NORTHERN PART  
OF MADAGASCAR.

THE northern part of Madagascar is much more fertile in productions of every kind than the southern part. For this reason it is more frequented by European vessels; but the interior part of the country has never yet been visited. When at the Isle of France, I in vain endeavoured to procure such information as might enable me to write a description of it. On this subject, Bigorne could only give me some vague and uncertain ideas, which it was difficult to make any use of. It was, however, from what he told me that I drew out, at Manaharre, a short memoir, which afterwards served as a basis for Benyowski, to propose the forming of an establishment at the Bay of Antongil. This memoir contains



contains the itinerary of the islanders, who go from Bombetoc to that bay ; but nothing remarkable is to be found in it, except an account of the numerous difficulties which occur in that passage. If the Malegaches surmount these difficulties, it is merely because they are much nimbler, and more inured to fatigue, than the greater part of the Europeans. The high mountains of Vigagora, which must be traversed, present, at every step, obstacles capable of stopping men the most accustomed to brave dangers of every kind. Whoever may be obliged to undertake a journey by this rugged way, ought, if he is prudent, to furnish himself with ropes and poles to climb the steepest places. I know by experience how necessary such precautions are, for I have made use of these helps more than once when travelling in those mountains. When I found myself surrounded by rocks, a  
small



small cord held by my guides revived my courage, and facilitated an access to the highest precipices. Silk cords are preferable to those of hemp, because they are stronger and much lighter. Dr. Franklin proposes paper kites, to enable people to cross rivers, the currents of which may be rapid. This method might, doubtless, be of utility in certain circumstances to those who cannot swim well. Those, however, who are unacquainted with that useful art may, by means of bamboos fastened to a long rope, cross very rapid rivers when they have in their service vigorous islanders and good swimmers, who by this simple apparatus can draw them from the one bank to the other. With prudence and industry man may surmount great obstacles: there are few above his genius when he has learned early to attempt to overcome such difficulties.

In



In the forests the compass is his guide ; and, every where else, mechanics furnishes him with the means of escaping from the most difficult situations. These means vary according to circumstances ; but it would be improper here to enter into farther details on this subject. I must, however, observe, that a kind of hammoc like those employed in the colonies for carrying women and children, would be of infinite utility to those who travel in these wild countries. This hammoc must be light and water-proof ; it should be made therefore of very strong canvas, covered with gum elastic dissolved in linseed-oil, a kind of varnish used for confining the inflammable air in balloons. Such a hammoc may be employed, not only as a bed, by suspending it between two trees ; but, by means of a bamboo, it may be converted also into a vehicle for transporting the traveller



veller from one place to another when he finds himself fatigued : and because the canvas, on account of the varnish, is impenetrable to water, the hammoc becomes a real pirogua, the advantages of which are so obvious that it is unnecessary to explain them.

The place most frequented by the Europeans in the northern part of Madagascar, is called Foulepointe ; but the natives give it the name of *Voulou-Voulou*. The harbour is surrounded by a reef of rocks, which break the force of the waves, and shelter ships from heavy seas. The shores of it are very bold, and the least depth of the water is twenty-three feet at low tides.

The reef, which consists of coral rocks, is joined to the main land, and stretches N. N. E. whilst the coast stretches N. N. W.

The entrance of the harbour, which is on the north side, is about fifty fathoms in breadth.



breadth. The depth of the basin is about fifty fathoms : it is capable of containing ten large vessels, which may anchor alongside of each other in from thirty to thirty-five feet of water. The ground is sure ; but, in the winter season, the entrance is shut by a shifting sand-bank, which is dissipated when the south-east succeed the north winds or calm weather. The sea never rises or falls more than four or five feet at the time of spring or neap-tides. During the latter the reef of rocks appears above the water ; and abundance of natural productions may be then found on them, such as mosses, marine plants, black coral, valuable madrepores, sea stars, insects, and shells, which by the variety of their form, and the brilliancy of their colours, serve to ornament the cabinets of the curious. The mouths of the rivers here are bordered with mangles which are loaded with oysters of



an excellent taste. These oyfters adhere to the branches, and form clufters of the moft fingular and remarkable figures. At a little diftance from thofe parts which the fea covers, there are found veins of a kind of fand different from that of the fhore, and which appears to have experienced a femi-vitrification. This fand is intermixed with ftones of a foft friable nature, interfperfed with an infinite number of fmall fragments of natural glafs. Foulepointe, according to the obfervations which I made, lies in latitude  $17^{\circ} 40' 20''$ , and longitude  $47^{\circ} 30'$ . During my ftay here Reaumur's thermometer never rofe above twenty-feven degrees, and never fell lower than fifteen. The barometer experienced very little variation, and always between twenty-eight inches two lines and twenty-eight inches five lines.

Ships can procure at Foulepointe provisions



sions of every kind in abundance, and at a low price. The markets are well supplied when commerce experiences no check or restraint on the part of the Europeans. Some years ago the people of Foulepointe refused to sell hogs and pigs, because an old man who lived at the distance of four leagues from the port, and who was accounted a forcerer, had forbidden them. This Ombiaffe pretended that they would be threatened with great misfortunes if they did not endeavour to destroy the race of these filthy animals: but this prohibition does not prevent the Europeans from procuring them in the mountains, where they may be found in large herds. It would not perhaps be difficult to destroy this inconvenient superstition among these islanders. The villages in the neighbourhood of Foulepointe are not numerous; they are dispersed



perfed here and there on the declivities of little hills, and are defended only by palifades. They are agreeably fhaded by a multitude of useful trees, fuch as the coconut tree, bamboos, orange and lemon trees, wild vines, and bananas, the fruit of which are fo much efteemed by the Europeans : but the moft remarkable is the *raven*, a kind of palm-tree known only in Madagafcar.

This tree, the top part of which is prepared and eaten in the fame manner as that of the cabbage-palm, riles to a great height. It is covered with a hard bark, and its wood, which is fibrous and hard, is employed for conftituting houfes. The walls and partitions of thefe houfes are formed of the ribs of its leaves, which have the folidity of wood and the pliability of leather, and which are faftened together in a very ingenious



genious manner. The leaves serve to cover them; and this covering, which lasts a long time, is preferable to our thatch.

It is of the leaves of the raven also that the Madecasses make their plates, dishes, and cups. These vessels are always clean, but they are never used more than once.

Under the membranous covering which incloses the flowers of this palm, is found a gummy substance of an exquisite taste, which one would take to be honey.

It is not surprising that the Madecasses endeavour to be surrounded by a tree so useful. They make very large planks of it by splitting it from the one end to the other. These planks, however, must be straightened the moment they are split.

The lands belonging to Foulepointe abound with rich pastures and cattle. When you go along the fertile banks of the beautiful river Ongleby, you are surprised to see



it disappear all of a sudden in the sands, at the distance of four miles from its mouth. This river, which is deep in some places and in others broad and shallow, produces plenty of fish, and is covered with water-fowl. Piroguas sail up it for more than twenty leagues. It is a pity that this river, like all the rest in Madagascar, should be filled with monstrous crocodiles. The sight of them often strikes a terror into the most intrepid islanders when travelling along its banks. Great precaution is necessary to avoid the danger of being surpris'd by these destructive amphibious animals. I one day saw an ox dragged away and devoured by one of these monsters.

What makes the rivers of Madagascar delightful renders them also dangerous. The trees and shrubs which cover their banks serve as an asylum and retreat to these formidable animals.



On advancing a few leagues from Foule-pointe, towards the high mountains of *Ambotismene*, the land begins to rise, and the plains and the valleys are sheltered from the winds by little hills. The heat here is not incommodious, because the country is high and covered with wood: the low lands, which are less cultivated, are more wild and rural. The islanders in this part do not keep their cattle, but suffer them to wander about without a guide, and without shackles.

The meadows, which are situated at the bottom of the valleys, are watered by a multitude of streams and rivulets, the windings of which are so much the more agreeable as they are formed by the hand of nature. The flowers by which they are enamelled, have more splendour, and display a greater variety of colours than those with which our meads are ornamented. Tufts



of trees scattered here and there without art or regularity, render the view of these rural spots delightful and interesting. Some leagues farther the scene changes, and the country becomes mountainous. A skilful painter would here be at a loss to fix upon the most picturesque scene. His imagination, bewildered and undetermined respecting a choice of objects, would not allow him the free exercise of his talent; he could not advance a single step without seeing a sudden and unexpected change produce new prospects, and the most interesting points of view. But without stopping to catch a general sketch of this beautiful country, if you employ yourself in studying its productions, an immense and truly useful field then opens before you; and a multitude of vegetables dispersed every where in profusion present themselves to your researches.

You



You will perceive six distinct kinds of rice ; you will see barley of a superior beauty ; and you will distinguish ten kinds of yams, some of which are as large as one's thigh, and all of them fit for supplying food to men as well as to cattle. But besides these roots, which require some care and cultivation, there are others absolutely wild, called by the islanders *fanghits*. This root, which is as large as a man's body, has a delicate taste, and is covered with a reddish coloured skin. We are assured that it both allays hunger and quenches thirst : it is diuretic, and easy of digestion.

You may procure also various kinds of turnips and beans, with pease of an exquisite taste.

The *varvattes* resembles the caper shrub, and flowers in the same manner. Each pod contains a small pea of the size of a lentil.



lentil. This leguminous plant rises to the height of the cherry-tree : in some of the interior provinces its leaves are employed for feeding silk-worms.

When you quit the plains and meadows, to enter those immense forests which serve as a retreat for a variety of wild animals, your imagination is struck with beauties of another kind. Profound solitude, a coolness which surprises you in so warm a climate, shades inaccessible to the rays of the sun, and echoes which on all sides repeat the bellowing of the cattle, still afford you new enjoyments. But these enjoyments do not equally delight all : they seem to be suited in a peculiar manner to those who are of a serious and melancholy disposition : yet, however insensible people may be to the beauties of nature, they will always behold with a kind of enthusiasm that multitude of



of trees of a prodigious size and height, among which the *fotersbe* is particularly distinguished.

Those who prefer the study of botany to that of mineralogy will find abundance of plants in the mountains of Ambotismene to gratify their curiosity. Enormous blocks of rock-crystal also may be seen there, some of which are crystallized, while others appear to have no regular form; some of them contain schorl and other foreign bodies. Those kinds of schorl in greatest request among naturalists, are common in these mountains, as well as indices of tin-mines, which the islanders call *voula-fout-chefine*. Iron-mines of an excellent quality are dispersed in great profusion all over the island, and very near to the surface of the earth. The Malegaches break and pound the ore, and place it between four stones lined with potter's clay; they then employ  
a double



a double wooden pump, instead of a pair of bellows, to give the fire more strength ; and in the space of an hour the mineral is in a state of fusion. The iron produced by this operation is soft and malleable : no better is known in the world. There are, doubtless, other mines in this island ; but those who wish to search for them must not be afraid of difficulties and labour. Riches of this kind being inclosed in the bowels of the earth, much digging and tedious exertions are necessary to procure them : besides, access to the mountains of Ambotismene is impracticable, as the islanders say, to the Europeans ; for their summits abound with steep rocks and precipices, which prevent them from being approached. The highest of these mountains is about eighteen hundred fathoms above the level of the sea. In its shape it has a great resemblance to the Table Mount described by every travel-



ler who has visited the Cape of Good Hope.

I can only give this faint sketch of the mineralogical riches of Madagascar. The real riches, however, of this island are its numerous vegetable productions, varied almost without end by the nature and fertility of its soil. I shall here give a description of those which I brought to the Isle of France to M. Poivre.

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DESCRIPTION OF TREES, SHRUBS, AND PLANTS, WHICH GROW IN THE NORTHERN PART OF MADAGASCAR, AND WHICH I CARRIED TO THE ISLE OF FRANCE, IN THE END OF THE YEAR 1768.

*MALAO-MANGHIT*, a large tree, the bark of which is brown, the trunk straight,



straight, and the wood white. Its sap, at first white and milky, becomes, when exposed to the air, as red as blood. The fruit is a kind of nutmeg. The Malegaches ascribe to this nut the same virtues as we ascribe to the real nutmeg.

*Rarabè.* This is a wild nutmeg-tree, larger and much more beautiful than the *malao-manghit*. It furnishes a nutmeg from which the Malegaches extract a very aromatic oil. This oil, with which they rub their bodies and hair, is efficacious in curing and dissipating cold humours. Taken internally it strengthens the stomach.

*Bachi-bachi.* The bachi-bachi resembles the rarabè; but its leaves and fruit are a little different. It grows in elevated places. Its fruit, as well as the covering which contains them, is aromatic.

*Rhara-horac* is a real wild nutmeg-tree, the trunk of which is large, and the branches bushy.



bushy. It delights to grow in moist marshy places. The *founingo-mena-rabou*, a large pigeon of a blue colour, is very fond of the fruit of this tree. After digesting the mace, it sows the nuts throughout the whole island.

*Ravend-sara.* Of all the nutmeg-trees in the island of Madagascar the ravend-sara has principally engaged the attention of botanists. The odour of cloves, cinnamon and nutmegs is not much different from that of a kind of perfume extracted by distillation from the leaves of this tree. They yield an essential oil much more esteemed than that procured from cloves. The cooks in India employ this perfume for ragouts, in preference to any other kind of spicery. This valuable tree grows in moist places; but a dry soil is not absolutely contrary to its nature. It becomes very large and bushy; its top, which is of a pyramidal



pyramidal form, is well furnished with leaves; its wood is white, exceedingly hard as well as heavy, and destitute of smell, but the bark exhales a very strong odour. Its fruit is a real nut flattened at the two extremities. The perfume of the nut, and the husk in which it is inclosed, is not so strong as that of the leaves, but in my opinion it is much more delicate.

*Harame.* The harame is the largest and tallest kind of tree that grows in the neighbourhood of Foulepointe. The wood of the trunk appears whitish externally, and of a reddish colour in the heart. When it has attained its utmost size, it every year casts its outer bark, which is thick and grey. The trunk is smooth and without branches, except at the upper extremity; but its branches are well furnished with leaves, and the bush on its top has a very beautiful appearance.

The



The smallest incision made in this tree produces, in great abundance, a white resinous gum, which has a very strong aromatic smell. The Malegache women make it into a kind of paste with which they rub their faces, in order to preserve the freshness of the skin.

When this resinous gum is burnt, it exhales a perfume like that of incense. The fruit is a nut, the husk of which, only, is aromatic.

*Laben.* This tree grows in sandy places on the sea-shore, and rises to a very great height. Its wood, which is hard, and of a reddish colour, is proper for being employed in cabinet work. The fruit of the laben is of the shape and size of a large olive. The kernel it contains is white and oily, and has a delicate taste.

*Fouraha.* The fouraha is one of the most beautiful and useful trees to be found



in warm climates. The wood of it, next to that of *Tec*, is the best in India for constructing vessels. It may very properly be compared to the *Tacamaca* of the Isle of France. Like that tree it yields a balm of a green colour, which is excellent for curing wounds. This tree, which is large and bushy, is loaded with branches of a great size, and is remarkable for its prodigious height.

*Tevartna.* The *tevartna* exhibits, in the midst of the forests, all the symmetry of art. It seems to have been cut on purpose into a pyramid consisting of seven stories; and its bushy branches, placed horizontally around a smooth straight trunk, give it an appearance altogether singular. It is, perhaps, the most beautiful tree known for decoration.

*Hintchy.* This tree, the most common of all those found in the forests near Foulpointe,



pointe, is exceedingly proper for forming avenues, as its top is well furnished with leaves. It resembles the plum-tree, and rises to the same height. The wood, which is of a red colour, may be used for cabinet work. Its bark is smooth and white; and the leaves are large, and of a beautiful green.

*Fotersbè.* The fotersbè is one of the largest trees in Madagascar; but its wood is fit only for fuel. Another kind of *fotersbè*, described by Flacourt under the name of *vouafoutra*, grows in the marshes.

*Tanguem.* This tree grows on the borders of the sea. Its wood, which is hard and variegated with veins, is proper for cabinet and inlaid work. The Malegaches make too much use of the fruit of this tree, to the dangerous qualities of which they are no strangers. It is a real manchineel, which, as is well known, produces one of the most formidable of poisons.



*Antafara.* The antafara is known in the Isle of France under the name of milk-wood. Its flowers have the same smell and shape as those of jasmine. If a slight incision be made in the trunk of this tree, it yields, in great abundance, a milky juice which is of a very caustic nature.

*Affy.* This tree, which is a beautiful kind of palm, rises to the height of ten feet. Its trunk is marked with the impression of its leaves, which are continually falling in succession. Its top is crowned with three or four rows of leaves, four or five feet in length, and an inch and a half in breadth. These leaves resemble those of the lily: they are as thick as one's hand, and form a beautiful umbrella.

*Tafoumouna.* The wood of this tree, which is large and bushy, is white, and its bark smooth. Its fruit is a real acorn, like that of the oak. The kernel has a taste  
some-



somewhat aromatic, and smells like turpentine.

*Hounits.* The wood of the *hounits* is of a beautiful yellow colour. The bark is red, and when an incision is made in it, a juice red as coral issues from it. By the help of a common lye the Malegaches extract a fine red dye from the bark of the root. The *hounits* is large and beautiful.

*Zavin-raven.* This tree rises to a moderate size, and is not bushy. The trunk is full of knots; the bark is grey, and the wood white. It grows in marshy places.

*Lingo.* The lingo is a woody creeping twig, which ascends to the summits of the highest trees. This twig is only two inches in diameter. Its wood is yellow, as well as the interior part of the bark.

The Malegaches employ the root and bark of the *lingo* to dye thread red and yellow.



*Harongan.* This tree, which is about fifteen feet in height, grows in a sandy soil. Its leaves are used to dye mats and baskets red. The gum extracted from it is a kind of dragon's blood.

*Tancasson.* The tancasson is a kind of wild vine, the fruit of which is four, and somewhat agreeable to the taste. This twig rises to the tops of the highest trees. Its root is diuretic. The islanders esteem the fruit of the *tancasson*. Flacourt, who has described several kinds of wild vines, makes no mention of it.

*Taco.* A kind of wild vine like the *tancasson*.

*Voua-lomba.* A kind of vine, the fruit of which the Europeans prefer to all others, and which they call *Madagascar grapes*. Their taste is somewhat sourish. This plant dies every year. Its root is a kind of yam.

*Aanakuey.* A large sensitive plant.

*Aresou.*



*Arefou.* A species of elder.

*Tougnounan.* The flowers of this tree are shaped like a bell; and the wood of it is used for making assagays.

*Tafoumounan.* Small white flowers: fruit like an acorn.

*Racoudrit.* A green fruit that grow in clusters.

*Uvang-biri.* A parasite plant bearing large square pods, the seeds of which are anti-hemorrhoidal.

*Tevarte.* A pyramidal shrub, cut naturally into stories.

*Azambou.* Has a fruit which grows in the form of a red nosegay.

*Uua-he-Taïtchou.* Produces a fruit good to eat.

*Sampan-leva.* Has a fruit in the form of a yellow chaplet.

*Tchingit.* A kind of bastard fenna tree, with yellow flowers.



*Lacca.* Bears a small fruit like a grain of pepper. Its flowers grow in the form of the bezel of a ring.

*Vognindosong.*

*Fanpechourou.* A kind of lily in the form of a star. This flower announces the season for whale fishing.

*Voua-hintchi.*

*Filao.* Equisetum arborescens.

*Voantlisan.* A prickly tree, bearing no leaves but on the top.

*Tchuvi-ovi.* A kind of ipecacuanha, seriploca.

*Jacuan.* A species of almond-tree, without leaves, which produces gum.

*Timbalave.* Shrub with white gondolated flowers.

*Ampalt.* Has round leaves which file iron.

*Anghivi.* Its fruit gives a bitter but agreeable taste to the liquors drunk by the Madecasses.

*Azon-*



*Azon-Ranou.* A fresh-water mangle, the pods of which grow opposite to each other.

*Farafer.* A parasite plant, the flower of which is long and red, and shaped like a man's hand, or a fork with five prongs.

*Vongo.* A beautiful tree, the fruit of which is called Vaas-sou-vara. When an incision is made in its trunk, it produces a yellow gum.

*Voua-mitsa-voi.* A species of aster, or starwort.

*Tongouna-lein-tein.* Kind of mint.

*Sanoang-matan-nabanrou.* Kind of creeping asparagus.

*Ranga-zaa.* Bulbous plant with a white flower.

*Tchilotou.* White tulip.

*Fifoutche.* Tree with leaves like those of mallow. Flowers grow around the trunk.

*Schira.* Palm-tree, the bark of which is burnt



burnt in order to extract a salt from it, used by the Malegaches with their food.

*Raven-tongharts.* Balsamic plant.

*Tanroujou.* Kind of benjamin, bearing a button-shaped fruit.

*Azou-ranou.* Shrub, the fruit of which is of a cinnamon colour.

*Afatrabè.* Shrub, the bark of which is odoriferous.

*Vaing-bare.* Parasite plant ; its leaves are downy, and its flowers white.

*Talate.* Bears thick leaves, and berries like those of the holly.

*Jang.* A tree which produces large bunches of flowers.

*Vua-tani.* Has a flower like that of the lihoa of China.

*Vua-montucung.* Parasite plant, with leaves like those of the tamarind-tree. Its fruit resembles a bean.

*Fua-toutouc.* Shrub, with red fruit, which  
are



are eaten, and which taste like strawberries.

*Moulton-rongou.* Resembles the *rara*. Its leaves are small, and the fruit oblong and angular.

*Vouang-titirang.* Produces a kind of nut, the husk of which is downy, and of a yellow colour.

*Voua-malim.* Bears a pod like the apocynon.

*Voua-rougni.* Kind of fresh-water mangle.

*Voua-fourindi.* Large tree with small red flowers disposed in clusters.

*Ampali.* Has long leaves, used for polishing wood, and freeing iron from rust.

*Foudi-fafal.* Semper vivens.

*Voua-sevarantou.*

*Vouang-taè.* Malum cidonium.

*Voua-fatre.* Kind of box. Its fruit, which are aromatic, are eaten.

*Engbi-panza.* Small species of indigo.

*Engbi-*



*Enghi-be.* Large indigo with big pods.

*Vua-macoliong.* Kind of tamarind, from which an oil is extracted.

*Sacaviro-ambou.* Hog-ginger. A kind of zedoary.

*Vua-fao.* Species of the sago palm.

*Ouvi-rombè.* Creeping twig, the leaves of which are small, and shaped like a sharp-pointed heart.

*Chifontsui.* Has small leaves disposed in pairs, like those of the lesser *harame*. Its flowers consist of four green leaves inclosed in a calyx.

*Vua-bonda.* Bears a fruit of the form of a cucumber, which smell like a quince.

*Sangnamou-batou.* The leaves of this plant have the same effect as those of the *coccus indicus*. When used to catch fish, they must be bruised.

*Vaint-rombou.* Herb endowed with the same properties as the above.

*Sanga-*



*Sanga-Sanga.* A triangular kind of bulrush, the real *papyrus*.

*Vua-toudinga.* Bears a fruit like the *pipar* of China.

*Vua-carabo.* A kind of twig which bears a fruit like a large chestnut.

*Vua-nantoula.* Bears a fruit which contains a large kernel like the seeds of the *sapotilla*, but much thicker.

*Vouang-pin-lela.* Has leaves like those of the cinnamon-tree, without any smell.

*Vua-tingui-le-pas.* Produces a fruit of a green colour, the pulp of which disposed in coats opens like the petals of a flower. The seeds are found in the heart, inclosed in a bag with three round corners.

*Anja-oidy.* Kind of very high heath.

*Vua-tchirie.* Species of *vacoua* with long narrow leaves.

*Vua-kbicafon.* Bears a small fruit like the *rangoustan*.



*Tchouti-morou* or *ranou*. Small filiquous plant.

*Vua-hia-varè*. Creeping twig with female white flowers.

*Vua-nambouavon*. Bears red fruit disposed in the form of a nosegay. The flowers are of a violet colour; the leaves, which are whitish, and which grow in pairs, are useful for healing wounds and ulcers.

*Vua-rha*. Kind of fig-tree, the fruit of which are eaten.

*Vua-be-täitsou*.

*Varou*. Kind of mallow.

*Lindem*. Species of palm.

*Angnan-rambou-labe*.

*Tongou-hintchi*.

*Harame*. The gum of this tree appears to be of the same nature as ambergris.

*Chingolpont*.

*Chistala*.

*Alut-mandrout*.



*Vanghoui-nangboua.*

*Bakrang.* Creeping twig which bears large berries like buttons.

*Ardouranga.* Small plant, with a red filiquous flower like indigo.

*Vaguinang-boua.* Shrub with white downy leaves, and white flowers. Its root heals wounds.

*Canipouti.* Grass with large leaves, the juice of which is employed for making figures on the body.

*Thipoulou-pouli.*

*Adabou.* Large tree.

*Oucirandra.* An aquatic plant with indented leaves; flowers shaped like a crescent; root fit to be eat.

*Tottlas.* Kind of laurel, the leaves and berries of which are aromatic.

*Voua-bonda.* Bears a large fruit like an oblong cylindrical mango. It has a sweet odour,



odour, and its seeds are ramified. The leaves are placed exactly opposite to each other.

*Mounou-founace.* A shrub with violet flowers. The leaves are disposed by threes.

*Azou-minti.* Curious pyramidal shrub.

*Azou-minti-be.* The same with large leaves. A beautiful tree.

*Tocam-boudi.* A small palm with large leaves divided at the extremity.

*Fouraugdra.* A kind of creeping twig which bears a triangular bladder. Its leaves are like parsley.

*Voua-mandrroucou.* Produces flowers which grow from the trunk. The petals have a spiral form.

*Voua-mena.* Bears a sweet fruit as red as coral. The wood and the leaves are also red.

*Mang.* Tree, the leaves of which are like



like those of the mallow, but larger and stronger. Its flowers are downy like those of the *ketmia*, and of a rose colour.

*Angua-malou*. Kind of aromatic shrub, with flowers like golden buttons.

*Volang-bondi-pouni*. Red wood, which turns black as it grows old. This wood is proper for dying.

*Tsimamasoo*. Creeping twig, the flowers of which are like those of jasmine, and of a bright red colour.

*Manouquibonga*. Shrub composed of twigs like the vine. Its flowers, which are beautiful, and red, are disposed in the form of a plume of feathers.

*Maan*. Kind of downy plant, with leaves like those of the mallow.

*Sommoutorang*. Bears a downy flower, in shape like the bezel of a ring.

*Lalong*.



*Via-foutchi.* Woody creeping twig. The fruit is inclosed in a star-like calyx.

*Diti-azou.* Has a fruit like a small pear.

*Tavoutala.* Small bulbous plant. It is a species of orchis, and bears a flower of a flaxen colour.

*Chetchia.* Kind of hieracium, with a yellow flower.

*Angnan-rambou.* Another hieracium, with a violet-coloured flower.

*Catoubanda.* Kind of chickweed, employed to dissipate swellings.

*Nantou.* Mat-wood of two kinds, with large and small leaves.

*Amp-elang-thi-foube.* Gentianella, with a violet-coloured flower.

*Campoudi.* Kind of chickweed, or alsine.

*Onbave.* Tree which produces a gum like gum-arabic.

*Bontou.* Tree the root of which dyes yellow.



yellow. It grows near water: its leaves are thick and disposed in pairs.

*Voai-marang.* Shrub the bark of which stops fluxes.

*Vuendrang.* Kind of galega.

*Afè.* Large polipodium, the seeds of which are eaten.

*Tabourounangat.* Betel tree.

*Vua-rozan.*

*Voua-assim.*

*Ampelantghi.* Beautiful plant which rises to the height of a foot.

*Sondi-fa-fat.* Plant found on the borders of the sea. The Malegaches when fatigued rub their bodies with the leaves of this plant, and such frictions render them fresh and nimble. They pretend that the leaves of the *Sondi-fa-fat* are incorruptible. They are applied with success to wounds.

*Vognin d'osong.* Parasite plant, the leaves of which resemble those of the lily. The



period when this plant flowers announces the time of whale-fishing. It flowers in June. The prows of the piroguas which are intended for the whale-fishery are ornamented with large bunches of its flowers.

*Azimena.* Very beautiful shrub with a bushy top. Its leaves are thick, and of a bright green colour. It rises to the height of four feet; and its flowers exhale an exceeding sweet odour.

*Teulon-gouala.* A shrub the leaves of which are odoriferous, and serve the Malegaches to make pillows. It is about four feet in height, and its fruit are bitter, oily, and aromatic.

*Voua-dzigné.* The straightest and tallest tree found in Madagascar. It greatly surpasses in height all the other trees of the island. Its wood, which is yellow, hard, and heavy, is employed for building houses; but more commonly for making the keels of  
of



of piroguas. The gum, which distils from this tree, is as yellow as amber; but it is viscid and without smell. The Malegaches procure from this valuable tree a kind of clear oil, which when fresh has a very agreeable taste. This oil mixed with rice renders that food more delicate; and it is for the most part prepared in this manner by these islanders.

*Tougmonnam.* Tree which grows on the summits of the mountains. Its wood, which is hard and heavy, is of a red or brownish yellow colour, and is used for cabinet work and assagays.

*Vohan-filan.* Tree twelve feet in height. Its trunk, which is straight, is covered with prickles; and its leaves, which are four inches and a half in length, and two and a half in breadth, are of a beautiful green colour. There are no leaves on the trunk of this tree; but its top, which is perfectly



round, is loaded with them. The wood-pigeons are remarkably fond of the fruit of the *vohan-filan*, the appearance of which is altogether singular.

*Toulouc.* Bushy shrub which grows in every kind of soil. The fruit of this shrub has an agreeable taste, and is known under the name of the Madagascar strawberry. It is esteemed by the Europeans as well as by the Malegaches.

*Voua-severantou.* Bushy shrub which rises to the height of six or seven feet. It grows commonly in a sandy soil. Its wood is white.

*Chi-font-fui.* Beautiful shrub, the stem of which is straight, and without leaves. Its top is round and bushy.

*Finguere.* Kind of wild fig-tree, which, when incisions are made in it, yields a milky juice. This juice, after it coagulates, forms a real elastic gum, like that which distils from



from the caoutchouc. The Malegaches make flambeaux of it, which burn without wicks, and afford them an excellent light when they go out to fish in the night-time. Spirit of wine makes no impression on this gum ; but it dissolves in æther and linseed-oil. There are also other fat and oily substances which affect it very sensibly.

The *finguerie* rises to the height of twenty feet. Its leaves are eight inches long, and four in breadth. Its fruit resembles a round fig, and is full of small seeds. The Malegaches eat this fig with pleasure : but for my part I found it bitter and caustic.

On attentively examining the bottles and other vessels which the Peruvians make of elastic gum, it may be readily comprehended how easy it would be to employ it in surgical operations. Belts and bandages made of this substance would be attended with many advantages. Dissolved in linseed-



oil or æther, it in a great measure loses its elasticity, and in that state it is very proper for coating over silk, in order to render it impervious to air or water. M. Bernard lately has employed elastic gum for a variety of purposes, which it would be too tedious to enumerate. I must, however, observe that the Chinese have been long acquainted with the art of dissolving this elastic gum, and of giving it various colours. M. Bertin, minister of state, was so kind as to shew me several articles made of it, the most remarkable of which was a small ball, perfectly resembling a ball of amber.

*Bagnets.* Plant from which real indigo is procured in Madagascar. The islanders extract this dye from it by a very simple operation. When the plant begins to flower, they infuse the stem and the leaves in water. After they have become putrid, the water assumes a violet colour, and when this colour



lour grows very dark, the stem and leaves are taken out. A certain quantity of oil is then poured into the coloured water, and the water being drawn off, a sediment remains behind, which, when dried in the sun, furnishes a beautiful indigo.

M. de la Marck made me observe that the *revendfas* is not a nutmeg-tree, but a proper genus. It is the *bagatophyllum*\*.

The *intchy*, according to the opinion of that learned botanist, is a *courbaril-hymenæa*.

The antafara, according to the same, is a species of the genus called *taberna-montana*.

The *filao* is the *casuarina* of Forster and Linnæus the son.

The *vua-tchiriè* is the *pandanus*.

In the enumeration, here given, of the trees and plants of Madagascar, I have made no mention of ananas, white pepper, water-melons, bananas, Indian saffron, the large

\* *Juss. Gen. p. 431.*



cardamum, ginger, veronica, alkekengi, purslain, sweet basil, star-wort, gentianella, the winter cherry, the papyrus of the ancients, called *sanga-sanga*, the nenuphar, &c. &c. With regard to the animals found in Madagascar, Flacourt has left nothing of importance for me to say on that subject.

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DESCRIPTION OF A TREE, WHICH BEARS  
A SINGULAR FRUIT, MUCH CELEBRATED  
IN INDIA, AND KNOWN UNDER THE  
NAME OF THE COCOA OF THE MAL-  
DIVES.

THE tree which bears that fruit, known under the name of the *Cocoa of the Maldives*, or the *sea-cocoa*, rises to the height of forty or fifty feet. The top of this beautiful tree, which may be classed among the palms, has the form of a fan; and is composed of ten or twelve branches, twenty feet long,



long. Each of these branches, or palms, proceeds from a pedicle six feet in length, which is indented quite round.

From the bottom of the leaves arises a ramified panicle, the branches of which are terminated by female flowers. The pistil of these flowers, when ripe, produces a spherical fruit, eight or ten inches in diameter. The covering of the fruit is thick and fibrous, like that of the common cocoa. The shape of these cocoas, however, is extremely singular; and the bottom of them is filled with a milky substance, of a bitter and disagreeable taste. The trunk of this tree differs very little from that of the cocoa-tree; but it is larger and harder. The Isle of Palms is covered with this tree: but it is not to be found in any of the neighbouring islands, or in any other known part of the world. It is probable, therefore, that those nuts which are accidentally found at the Maldives



dives have come from the Isle of Palms, though the distance between these two places is about three hundred leagues. This remark may serve to point out the direction of the currents in the Indian Ocean.

The Indians ascribe great medicinal virtues to this nut, known to botanists under the name of *nux. medica*. The Asiatic physicians pretend that it is antiscorbutic; that it radically cures the venereal disease; and that it is a powerful antidote against poison. The Indian princes cause cups to be made of it, which are always more or less ornamented with gold and precious stones. These cocoas are in so much request all over Asia, that it was not uncommon, about the year 1759, the period when they were discovered, to see them sold for upwards of four hundred pounds sterling each.



## DESCRIPTION OF COCHINCHINA.

THE kingdom of Cochinchina, which is about one hundred and fifty leagues in length, extends from the eleventh to the twenty-seventh degree of northern latitude. On the north it is bounded by Tonquin; on the south by Ciampa and Camboja; on the east by the Indian Ocean; and on the west by the kingdom of Laos, and a savage people named the Kemouys. Its greatest breadth does not exceed twelve or fifteen leagues. It is divided into eleven provinces, four of which, *Dinheat*, *Quambling*, *Dinh-gnoè*, and *Huè*, lie towards the north. *Huè* is called the Royal Province; and its capital is distinguished by the same name. The seven southern provinces are *Cham*, *Quangz-hia*, *Quinbin*, *Fouyen*, *Fanriphanrang*, *Nan-lang*, and *Bounay*. The last province has been lately conquered from the Camboges.

*Huè*,



*Huè*, which contains the royal city, where the kings of Cochinchina reside, is the most beautiful of all these provinces. For about sixty years, since Cochinchina and Tonquin were separated, the royal city has had no other remarkable edifices than the king's palace and some pagodas : the rest of it is very ill built. This capital is situated near a large and beautiful river, which was formerly so deep as to be capable of bearing ships of great burthen ; but since a dreadful inundation, which happened about five or six years ago, sand-banks have been formed at its mouth, so that small vessels only can enter it.

The city of Huè is intersected by canals after the Chinese manner, in order to facilitate the transportation of merchandise, and for the convenience of the inhabitants, who are pretty numerous, and who could not endure the great heats of summer without  
bathing



bathing two or three times a day. The king maintains about twelve or fifteen thousand foldiers around his palace, to protect his person as well as to defend his states; and near three hundred neat galleys, which, in the time of war, serve to convey troops from one place to another, and in the time of peace to carry the monarch when he travels: for he never quits his palace but in that manner. Those which he uses are extremely beautiful, and even richly gilt: especially those of his women, part of whom always accompany him wherever he goes. This prince keeps, besides, four hundred elephants trained to war; and it is in the number of these animals that the strength of his kingdom consists.

The government of Cochinchina is monarchical. The sovereign is absolute master of the whole kingdom, which he governs with the assistance of his four principal ministers,



nisters, two of whom are called his right hand, or *Tha*: and two his left hand, or *Huan*. These ministers have the power of appointing to all employments, both civil and military.

Each province is under the management of a governor, who both commands the militia, and administers justice: in the province of *Phanriphanrang* the governor has the title of viceroy. The whole militia are divided into two distinct bodies, sea and land foldiers, and both of these are divided into regiments.

The king's household is composed of the finest men to be found in the kingdom. The most beautiful company of these is that which is distinguished by the title of *golden sabres*. The men of this company are picked from all the other companies. They are the strongest, as well as the bravest, and their authority, consequently, is much greater.

The



The king who was on the throne in the year 1744, was the ninth who had governed Cochinchina after its separation from Tonquin. He was a tall, well-looking man thirty years of age. At first he had only the title of *chua*, or sovereign: but at the fourth moon of the above year he declared himself *vua*, or king. What emboldened him to take this step was, the dismal situation to which he knew Tonquin was reduced by the civil wars that had ravaged it for almost six years. Until that period, he contented himself with the modest title of *chua*, through a dread of being attacked by the Tonquinese, whose king pretends to be *vua* of Cochinchina.

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#### TAXES.

THE king of Cochinchina is rich in gold

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and



and money, of which he has always several edifices full. His great wealth arises from a tax paid by all his subjects from the age of nineteen to that of sixty. This tax is greater or less according to the strength and situation of each individual. Every three years the governor of each province causes a new list to be made out, of all those who, according to law, have attained to the proper age of taxation. To enable him to do this, the chief of every village forms a list with great care, and carries a copy of it to the governor, who orders all those whose names are inserted in it to appear before him on the day appointed. They all strip themselves from head to foot : the mandarin then causes his officers to examine them ; and those who are robust and well proportioned, and who seem to have most strength to labour, are taxed at a higher rate than those who, being feeble and weak, or in a bad state of health,



health, can with difficulty gain a livelihood. This tax, which goes into the king's treasury, is paid according to the strength or situation of each individual, either in gold, money, or rice. Every year, in the seventh month, the taxes of all the provinces are transported to court with great pomp and magnificence. On this occasion there are great rejoicings in the capital for a month, during which the people are employed in feasting, seeing plays, artificial fire-works, and diversions of various kinds.

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#### MANNERS AND CUSTOMS.

THE Cochinchinese, compared with the Indians, are brave, active, and industrious. They are fond of truth, and closely adhere to it when they know it. They are, however, poor and ignorant; but extremely



polite to each other, and to strangers. They have a great esteem for the Chinese, on account of their learning; and they call their empire *Moedaiminh*, or the *kingdom of light*: but since the missionaries have resided amongst them, they seem to have a greater respect for the Europeans. The king, above all, is very fond of them; and encourages them to frequent his ports for the sake of carrying on commerce with them. The Cochinchinese are much addicted to women; and polygamy is allowed amongst them. A man generally has as many wives as he can maintain; and the law gives him great authority over them, as well as over his children. Women convicted of infidelity to their husbands are condemned to be exposed to the fury of elephants. The women, who are not remarkable for their modesty, go quite naked to the middle; and they publicly bathe, without any ceremony,

in



in the view of every body. In their persons, the Cochinchinese have a great resemblance to the Chinese, except that they are more tawny: their women are beautiful and very fair. Their dress is the same as that which was used in China before the irruption of the Tartars. The mandarins of letters in Cochinchina have adopted the Japanese dress. They preserve their hair, on which they set great value, and particularly the women, some of whom have it so long that it reaches to the ground.

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#### RELIGION.

THE religion of this country is the same as that of China. The people frequent pagodas erected in honour of *Fo-hi* and *Tchoua*, and their mandarins of letters go to the temple of *Confucius*, who is their master, as



well as that of the Chinese. At present the Christian religion is tolerated, and makes great progress. Some princes and mandarins of the first rank are Christians. We may reckon that there are about sixty thousand people in the whole kingdom who have embraced the Christian religion.

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#### LITERATURE.

ALL the learning of the Cochinchinese consists in their being able to read Chinese books, and in acquiring a knowledge of the morality which they contain. It is this knowledge which qualifies them for becoming mandarins.



## WOODS AND FORESTS.

COCHINCHINA is only a chain of mountains, the valleys and plains between which are well cultivated. The eminences are abandoned to tygers, elephants, and other animals of various kinds. The mountains, though uncultivated, are covered with woods and forests, the timber of which is of great utility. The Cochinchinese procure from them rose-wood, ebony, iron-wood, sapan, the cinnamon-tree, calembouc, sandal wood, and in general all those kinds of wood which are used in India for constructing houses, barks, and furniture; or from which gum, balm, and perfumes are extracted. I have even heard it asserted by some of the natives, that the clove-tree is to be found in these mountains.



## GOLD MINES.

THE Cochinchinese procure also from their mountains various other productions, such as honey, wax, rattans, and gamboge. They find there, likewise, ivory, and even gold, in pretty large quantities. Mines of this metal are very abundant. The most celebrated are those in the province of *Cham*, situated in a place called *Phunraè*, where the French missionaries have a church, and where there are a great number of Christians. This place is about eight leagues distant from *Faifo*. There are other famous mines in the province of *Nanlang*. Every body, even foreigners, are allowed to work these mines; and they would be very productive, did the inhabitants of the country give themselves the trouble to dig them; but there are few people who choose to  
apply



apply to this labour, and those who do so, are very ignorant of the art of mining. They never dig deeper than the height of a man. In the place where I saw them at work, masses of pure gold, perfectly free from the mixture of extraneous bodies, and weighing two ounces, are sometimes found. This gold, collected in dust or small fragments, is afterwards formed into cakes, and carried to market, where it is sold like other merchandize. The usual price of it, according to the Chinese value, is an hundred and thirty *quans*\*; but it has been sold sometimes for an hundred and seventeen. A great many mines of iron, which in this country is sold at a dear rate, are found also in the mountains.

\* The reader will see the value of a *quan* in the article of Money.



## OTHER PRODUCTIONS OF THE COUNTRY.

LAND in Cochinchina, when cultivated, is extremely fertile, and the people reap every year two crops of rice, which is sold almost for nothing. This country abounds with all the fruits of India, such as ananas, mangoes, citrons, oranges, and with many others peculiar to itself. It produces also plenty of pepper, together with arec and betel. Arec, in several provinces, forms the principal riches of the inhabitants ; and large quantities of it are every year sold to the Chinese, who come hither to procure it. They have also abundance of cotton ; but they are not acquainted with the art of making it into fine cloth. They cultivate mulberry-trees, upon which they feed silk-worms, and manufacture a kind of coarse silk stuffs. They do not, however, succeed but in some kinds of



of fatin. Raw filk is here sold at a very dear rate : a Cochinchinese foot costs sometimes two hundred *quans*. The Cochinchinese sugar is undoubtedly the finest in India, and this article alone brings immense sums from the Chinese merchants, who carry cargoes of it from *Faifo* to Canton and Japan, where they gain at least four hundred per cent. by it. The best is sold for four *quans* the Cochinchinese foot. It is almost all made in the province of *Cham*, near *Faifo*. The Cochinchinese cut their canes before the end of three years, and have a crop annually in the autumn. None of those kinds of grain which we have in Europe grow in Cochinchina, except maize, or Turkey corn. It produces neither wheat, barley, nor rye, and even few pease or beans. It is indeed very ill supplied with those vegetable productions which form the riches of our kitchen



kitchen gardens ; and this, perhaps, is owing to the people being bad gardeners.

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### AGRICULTURE.

THE Cochinchinese employ buffaloes only in cultivating their lands. These animals are stronger than oxen, and support themselves better among the mud of the rice-fields. They have, however, a great many oxen ; but they are small, lean, and almost of no use. They have no sheep, and their butchers' shops are very ill supplied with provisions. To make up for this deficiency, they are rich in poultry : fowls, ducks, and pigeons are sold cheap, and game may be procured for little or nothing. These people never eat fish, though they have them excellent, and in great plenty :



plenty: their rivers, as well as the sea, abound with them.

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### COMMERCE.

WITH regard to the commerce of this country, it may be observed, that the Cochinchinese are neither rich, nor well acquainted with the nature of trade. As to foreign trade, they never carried on any, except with the Chinese and the people of Japan; but the latter, about twenty-five years ago, gave up all intercourse with them, by order of their sovereign, who forbade his subjects to go out of the kingdom. The like prohibition was made in Cochinchina; and, on that account, the Cochinchinese are obliged to be contented with such merchandize as the Chinese bring to them. The inhabitants of Cochinchina, however, are



far inferior to the Chinese in acuteness; and the latter, therefore, find very little difficulty in over-reaching them. The articles brought them from China are generally tutanag; yellow, red, and white copper; tea, porcelain, embroidered silk stuffs, drugs, and medicines of every kind; such as rhubarb, birthwort, ginseng, celadine, spices, and a great many roots, of which the Chinese sell large quantities. The Chinese carry thither also abundance of paper, which is used for burying the dead; gilt and coloured paper for their pagodas and sacrifices; and a little nankeen, together with paintings of all kinds, vermilion, azure, orpiment, and canvas, and cotton cloth. *Sommes*, a kind of Chinese vessels, go from *Honang*, loaded with all sorts of earthen-ware and kitchen utensils, for which they find a ready and profitable sale. Those *sommes* which come from the eastern coast of China, or from *Emouy*,



*Emouy*, or *Ning-po*, bring sometimes with them the merchandise of Japan, which they dispose of to great advantage, and particularly copper and sword-blades.

The *sommes* which come from the coasts of *Camboja* and *Siam* bring worked copper, drugs, cardamom, peltries, &c.

The articles of merchandise which the Chinese import from Cochinchina, are gold, ivory, eagle-wood, sugar-candy, arec, wood for cabinet work, and for dying, pepper, musk, a certain kind of salt-fish, birds nests, and drugs which the Cochinchinese procure from their mountains, such as the horns of the rhinoceros, gamboge, &c. The Chinese *sommes* take in return gold, sugar, and horses: these animals are sold at a cheap rate in Cochinchina. The manner in which the Chinese carry on trade in Cochinchina is as follows: As soon as they arrive in sight of the harbour, they find Cochinchinese pilots,



lots, who conduct them in. These pilots, who are of the rank of mandarins, have orders to be always in readiness to afford this assistance to strangers. When they have come to anchor, the captain, with some of his officers, goes on shore, and repairs to court with a general list of his goods, and such presents as are intended for the king. It may be proper here to observe, that business and contracts of every kind begin and terminate with presents; and it is of great importance to bring such as may be agreeable to the sovereign; because, if he is satisfied, he exempts the vessel from paying the duties of anchorage, which are considerable, and which are higher or lower according to the nature of the merchandise with which it is loaded. The Chinese pay ten per cent. agreeable to an ancient tariff, which determines the price of all commodities imported. On his return from court, the



the captain unloads his vessel, and transports his goods to a factory, which is visited by the mandarins who preside over the customs, in order to see whether they can meet with any thing curious, or that might be agreeable to the king, or the principal mandarins of the kingdom. These mandarins of the customs present a list of what they wish to buy; and if they find among the cargo any of the articles in their list, they separate them from the rest, and settle the price with the captain, who must be contented with a bill payable in two or three months. Before this visit, the captain can dispose of nothing: he must also be very exact, and make no omission in the list which he presents to the king on his arrival; for if the mandarins of the customs should find any thing not mentioned in the list, the consequences might be very disagreeable. He must, likewise, give some presents



to the minister, and to the principal commissioner of the customs, who, in Cochin-china, is always a powerful mandarin, and styled *Onlaibotao*. With regard to the sale of their merchandize, the Chinese apply to some of the mandarins, who readily become merchants when any thing is to be gained, and who purchase the dearest and most valuable articles. For objects of less importance, there are trusty women, well acquainted with commerce, who each take charge of a few lots, on receiving a small sum for their trouble. An European captain who might go to this country, would easily find rich christian merchants to assist him.

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#### MONEY AND THE VALUE OF GOLD AND SILVER.

MERCHANDIZE in Cochin-china is paid for with gold and silver; but oftener with  
*atches,*



*caches*, the only kind of coin used in the country. They are strung after the Chinese manner; and each string contains six hundred, which are equal to a *quan*. The *quan* is divided into ten *tiennes*, or *masses*, which contain each sixty *caches*. The Cochinchinese have no denomination for money lower than the *tienne*. Below the *quan* they reckon by *caches*, and above it by *chue*, each of which makes ten *quans*, or six thousand *caches*. The *quan*, or *tael* of Cochinchina makes therefore only six Chinese *masses*; and the *mass*, in China, is equal to the tenth part of a *tael*. The Chinese *tael*, consequently, is equal to one *quan*, six *tiennes*, and forty *caches* of Cochinchina. Gold and silver are here articles of merchandize; but they have fixed prices, and are cheaper or dearer according to the quantity which the Chinese annually bring them. The people of Cochinchina are not acquainted with the value of our piastres. They



melt them into cakes, containing each fifteen piaftres, which were long worth twenty-two or twenty-three *quans*: at present they are worth only from seventeen to twenty. By carrying these piaftres to Cochinchina, the Chinese acquire a profit which they would not get by felling them at home, where a piaftre is worth no more than feven hundred *caches*: but in Cochinchina it is reckoned to be equivalent to at least eight hundred. They choofe, therefore, to carry silver thither fometimes rather than other merchandize, which they might find it difficult to fell, and on which they could gain nothing; for their profit depends not fo much on the goods which they import into Cochinchina, as thofe which they export from that country. The value of gold rifes and falls in the fame manner, according to the number of buyers. At the time when the Chinese *fommes* arrive, it cannot



not be purchased in the market for less than one hundred and thirty *quans*; towards the period of their departure, it rises to one hundred and fifty: but if it be purchased in the winter time, that is to say, between the first of June and the end of the Cochinchinese year, a period which corresponds with our months of October, November, December, and till the month of March the year following, it may be procured for an hundred and ten, and even an hundred. Those who are well acquainted with the country, may find means to purchase it at a still lower rate.

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#### WEIGHTS AND MEASURES.

THE measure used by the Cochinchinese, for buying and selling, contains about two of our *French* feet. This measure, which is called *thiae*, is consequently one half,



wanting an inch, shorter than our yard, and six *pontes* four *condorins* longer than the Chinese *cove*. They have no other, except that used for rice, which the poor, alone, purchase by measure. It is equal to about six Cochinchinese pounds. This pound contains fourteen ounces more than ours, and ten more than the Chinese, which is equivalent to twenty French ounces. It is, therefore, equal to thirty French ounces.

In this country, there are certain kinds of goods, such as ivory, and calambac wood, which are prohibited; that is to say, the king alone reserves the right of selling them. These two articles cannot be purchased but from the sovereign. Those who might purchase them from private persons, would run a great risk of being punished. All kinds of merchandize, in general, whether purchased from the king or individuals, are exempted from duty. Merchants,



chants, therefore, may carry them on board their vessels, when, and in whatever manner they choose.

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### SEA PORTS.

THERE are several ports in Cochinchina, the most considerable of which is that called by the inhabitants *Hoyan*, and by the Portuguese *Faifo*. It is situated in the province of *Cham*, in the latitude of sixteen degrees, and some days journey distant from court. This harbour has sufficient depth of water, and ships may remain in it in perfect safety. It is extremely commodious for merchants, as their vessels may anchor close to the factories. The entrance of it, which is the mouth of a large river that comes from the mountains of *Laos*, and traverses the province of *Cham*, is extremely easy. *Faifo* is the place of greatest trade in Cochinchina;



there are here always about six thousand Chinese, who are the richest merchants, and who have married in the country, and pay tribute to the king. It contains two churches, one belonging to the Portuguese jesuits, and the other to the Spanish Franciscans. The governor of the province resides at the distance of a league, in a place called *Reta*, which lies upon the banks of the river, and where the French missionaries have a church. Merchants who arrive at *Faifo* always find factories to be let, the largest of which generally cost about an hundred piastrres for the trading season.

In the province of *Quinbin* there is another port called *Nuoeman*, that is to say, the *Port of salt water*. This harbour is safe, and well frequented, but not so much as that of *Faifo*. It is not however convenient, as it is at several days journey from court, to which captains are obliged to go frequently.



frequently. It would, nevertheless, be commodious for ships which went thither to procure silk or arec, because these two articles are found in that province. Besides these, there are several other small ports, especially in *Nanlang*; but they are neither sufficiently safe nor deep for large vessels. The Chinese never frequent them, on account of their distance from court.

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COMMERCE WHICH MIGHT BE CARRIED  
ON BY THE EUROPEANS IN COCHIN-  
CHINA.

WITH regard to the commerce which might be carried on by the Europeans in Cochinchina, it may be easily seen by the preceding account, what kinds of merchandize might be procured there, either for transporting to China, and the coasts of



India, or even to Europe. The great difficulty would be, respecting the goods which ought to be carried thither. On this subject the following remarks may be useful.

The Cochinchinese set a great value upon every thing that comes from Europe. Many articles of little consequence in France, are highly esteemed by them, such as toys, glass ware, and light stuffs, particularly those of a red colour, which would in Cochinchina find a profitable market. All kinds of arms manufactured in Europe, especially sword-blades made after the fashion of the country; and all sorts of jewels, from diamonds to common crystal, would also be purchased at a high rate, by the sovereign, and the great mandarins. The latter would take, likewise, gold and silver wire, on which one hundred per cent. might be gained; but it would be proper not to carry a large quantity of these articles. Brass is  
fold



fold in Cochinchina at least for four *quans* the Chinese foot: something, in my opinion, might be gained on that commodity. Sulphur too, which sells there at a great price, might be carried thither, as well as quinquina, to the virtues of which the Cochinchinese are no strangers, Canadian Ginseng, and other European drugs and medicines. We have many kinds of goods in France, which would be too dear for these people; but small quantities of them might nevertheless be sold to great advantage: such, for example, as the silk stuffs of Lyons, embroidered with gold and silver, which the Cochinchinese use for making bags to hold their betel and tobacco: part of their magnificence consists in having several of these bags richly ornamented. One might also carry to Cochinchina some pieces of scarlet cloth, tapestry made in imitation of that of Persia, and a few pieces of that kind  
of



of linen which is manufactured in Britanny. Among the toys, bracelets and ear-rings of pinchbeck ought not to be omitted. There are many other things which would doubtless answer for the trade of that country; but experience alone can determine those which would be in the greatest request. When the Europeans send thither some vessels loaded with European goods, they will be then able to learn what will suit the Cochinchinese market best.

Should any European merchants freight a vessel to Cochinchina, they must, as I have observed, send presents for the king, else their vessel would run the risk of being very ill received. The presents most likely to afford satisfaction to the king, would be mirrors, watches, jewels, silk brocades, chrystal toys; optical machines, such as a telescope, magic lantern, cylinder, &c.; mechanical curiosities, hand organs, and woollen tapestry  
and



and carpets. Such articles would be very agreeable to the sovereign of Cochinchina, who is curious, and has an excellent taste. He is fond of European manufactures, and prefers things of use to things which serve only for amusement. Presents intended for the mandarins ought to be of the same kind, but of less value; and ought to be distributed according to the dignity of each. One would be exposed to the danger of creating enemies, if, in the distribution of these presents, those given to one class of mandarins should be equal to those given to another.

Besides the advantages which the French colonies might derive from the commerce of Cochinchina, in going thither to take in cargoes either for the coasts of India or China, they might even find others in that country of a different kind, which would appear more substantial and valuable to those acquainted with the real interests of a colony,



colony, and which might be of the utmost utility to it. They might procure there people to work in their sugar-houses and silk manufactories, as well as carpenters and labourers of every kind. This, in my opinion, seems to be an object of very great importance, and to merit particular attention.

I do not pretend, by this short description, to convey a thorough idea of Cochinchina. I wished only to point out, in a cursory manner, what I considered as most necessary to be known, should it be hereafter thought expedient to establish a commercial intercourse with that distant country.



M E M O I R  
ON THE  
C H I N E S E T R A D E.

By M. B R U N E L.

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**I**N an age when it is well known that the preponderance of states is regulated by their commerce, an object of so much importance ought to be appreciated according to its just value. This is the best method of contributing to the glory and prosperity of a kingdom; and, on that account, it ought to engage the attention of every good citizen. Whether we consider commerce as external or internal, it is equally subject to laws; but both are subordinate to necessity, or the abundance of the moment. It depends



depends equally on the productions of different countries, and the industry of their inhabitants : for commerce really is nothing but an exchange of these productions, the quality and price of which are determined by various circumstances.

France, by the fertility of its soil, and the mildness of its climate, produces every thing necessary or agreeable, with a profusion which renders it independent of all other countries. It has, therefore, long deliberated on this important question, whether it ought to concentrate its commerce within itself, or to extend it to foreign nations ? This, however, is no longer a problem. Reason and calculation, supported by experience (that daily lesson the least equivocal of any), seem to have fully resolved it. We have even cause to hope, that the opinions of mankind will be no longer undecided in a matter so interesting.

The



The advantage of not confining the productions of a particular climate to one canton, and of communicating the enjoyment of them to distant regions, has been fully felt. It has been observed, that, since the Europeans experienced new wants, their desires have been excited by new objects : a taste for the commodities and arts of other countries, has been diffused amongst them. It would, therefore, be impolitic to interrupt that reciprocal communication which subsists between nations. This would be shamefully devoting ourselves to become tributary to our neighbours, and to suffer the balance to incline altogether in their favour.

Our Indian commerce, without doubt, has created more new wants among us than real riches ; but it would occasion great loss to abandon that branch of foreign trade to other nations, who would not fail to profit

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by it. Our sage legislators are so much convinced of the truth of this observation, that they have endeavoured to remove those restraints which impeded its progress and prosperity. They have abolished that check of exclusive privilege which visibly obstructed it; and delivered it from the oppression of an odious monopoly, which, instead of being a national object, concerned only a few individuals, who studied more the increase of their own private fortunes, than the good of their country.

The desire of gain is the only thing which excites the industry of the Europeans, in their commerce with the Chinese, since they might live very well without their productions. Customs, however, soon degenerate into wants, or at least into disagreeable privations, which are nearly similar. We wish for superfluities; and China, of all the Asiatic countries, is that  
which



which furnishes them in the greatest abundance. An extensive and profitable trade, proportioned to the wants of the inhabitants, may consequently be carried on there, when we have acquired just notions respecting the principal commodities which it produces.

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### CHINESE MONEY.

THOUGH there are in China rich mines of gold and silver, they are not allowed to be opened, for fear, no doubt, of causing too great a circulation of money. It is under this view of political and commercial interest, that we ought to consider a prohibitory law, which proceeds, indeed, from the spirit of the government ; but this reason, too subtle to be perceived by the people, is exhibited to them under a more



engaging aspect, and as a specious motive of humanity : it is, as we are told, that the lives of the subjects of the empire may not be sacrificed. These valuable metals, therefore, being procured from other nations, the Chinese have introduced no other current money than *caehes*, and halfpence. Of these there are two sorts, one of brass, and the other of copper. They are both mixed with *toutenag* ; but the alloy being much less in the halfpence, they are of more value.

Various Chinese characters may be observed on these pieces. Those at the top and bottom express the name of the emperor in whose reign they were coined ; and those on the sides signify *valuable current things*, that is to say, *current money*.

There are some bankers who carry on a traffic with them ; but in business of this kind, the Europeans never have any concern. In China there is no current money,



money, except these *caches* and halfpence. Payments are made only by weight ; and the Chinese are often even obliged to clip gold and silver, in order to settle their accounts, when they either pay or receive. The instrument which they use for this purpose, is called *kias-tien*, in French *tap-chine*.

Gold and silver, for the payment of large sums, is weighed in scales ; and for those of from fifteen to twenty *taels*, a small steelyard is employed.

The Chinese reckon by *leang*, *tsien*, *tuën*, *ly*, and *háo* ; in the room of which the Portuguese have substituted the words *tael*, *mas*, *condorin*, *cache*, and *haus*.

1 Tael	is equal to	10 Mas.
1 Mas	—	10 Condorins.
1 Condorin	—	10 Caches.
1 Cache	—	10 Haus.

A tael is worth about an ounce of silver.



A hundred taels make 750 French livres, or about thirty-two pounds sterling.

As money is not received in China but by weight, specie of every kind is taken, of whatever nature it may be; but the quality of it is carefully examined. This is called *ki-ynsè*, and *noufs-tok*: the former of which represents our deniers for silver, and the latter our carat for gold.

The current fineness of silver is ninety-four, to which standard all coins, whether above or below, are reduced. The finest silver is ninety-eight, and in trade passes for an hundred. Hence it happens that a piece of silver, gilt, which is acknowledged to be of the fineness of an hundred, would be taken for an hundred and two.

The piastres of our colonies were formerly taken at the rate of ninety-five, whereas those of Mexico were received only at that of ninety-four; but the Chinese, the shrewdest of mankind in respect to a knowledge of money



ney and metals, having observed the alteration found in the former, and especially in those coined since 1729, refuse to take them, at present, in exchange for gold, or in payment of merchandize.

The French crown, of the value of six livres, was taken formerly at the rate of ninety-five; but, at present, it is received only for eight *mazoirs*, according to its weight.

The duties of the emperor, or of the customs, are received only in specie at the standard of an hundred: for these duties there is a certain tarif.

The Europeans, who trade together in their *haus*, or factories, generally value

	Livres. Sols.	
The French Louis d'Or, at	24	0
The French Crown - -	3	0
The Taël - - -	7	10
The Silver Rupee - -	2	8
The Piaſtre - - -	5	6
The Gold Pagoda - -	8	0
E e 4	The	



			Livres.	Sols.
The Dutch Florin	-	-	2	4
The Cruzado	-	-	2	10
The Pound Sterling	-	-	22	10
Gold Ducats and Sequins according to their weight.				

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### GOLD.

THE Chinese have gold of different *toks*; but they never give it to strangers, except at the standard of ninety-three. The most esteemed comes from Cochinchina. It has the form of small bars, and is of a greater degree of fineness than common gold. It is sufficiently distinguished by the different figures imprinted on it; but it is not always free from adulteration. It sometimes happens that the mark signifies the *tok* to be ninety-three, when, in the inside, it is really only ninety-one. This fraud is committed by putting the bar into the fire with brick-dust and salt. The gold then comes forth



forth from the fire purified on the outside; and the Chinese having imprinted a false mark on it, sell it for gold of a superior quality. Great attention, therefore, is necessary to avoid deception in purchasing this article.

The method employed by the Chinese to ascertain the fineness of gold, and to guard against fraud, is as follows.—They put a piece of gold into a crucible, and purify it thoroughly, by making the alloy evaporate. This is done by means of a certain powder, which they throw into the crucible. A thick smoke immediately arises; and the same operation is renewed till the smoke ceases, which shews that the gold is perfectly pure. A small quantity of the liquid gold is then poured into a hole made on purpose between two pieces of marble, where it assumes the form of a small plate, an inch in length, three lines in breadth, and



and of the thickness of a sixpence : on the plate they write, *Pure gold.*

Among the metal which remains in the crucible, they throw a silver penny ; and from this gold, diminished one penny in its fineness, they form a second plate ; upon which they write, *Gold of ninety-nine.*

The like operation repeated a third time, gives them a third plate ; upon which they write, *Gold of ninety-eight.*

Continuing, then, in this manner, they form as many plates as they choose from a piece of gold, which decreases always in fineness proportionably to the silver mixed with it in the crucible.

Generally they have twenty or thirty of these plates, each with an inscription which exactly shews its real fineness or quality. They afterwards form a kind of bracelet of them ; and the merchant, who purchases gold, either in cakes or ingots, first tries it



by comparing it with his plates. He then bruises on a piece of black marble, a kind of bean, that leaves behind it an oily viscous matter, upon which he rubs the gold; and by comparing the colour on the marble with the plates of his bracelet, its resemblance to some of them appears, which consequently determines the real value of the gold. By these means the Chinese merchants avoid all deception.

Gold at Canton is generally valued by the standard of an hundred taels: that is to say, ten taels of gold, of the fineness of ninety-three, is commonly equivalent to an hundred taels of silver; because, in China, gold is sold, or rather exchanged, for silver.

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#### WEIGHTS.

THE Chinese weights are the *pic*, the *caty*, and the *tael*, which are used also by  
the



the Europeans. The *pic* corresponds to our hundred weight; the *caty* to our pound; and the *tael* to our ounce.

The *tael* of weight, as well as the *tael* of money, is divided into *maz*, *condorin*, and *cache*. The *pic* is valued at one hundred and three French pounds, of eight ounces each; and a hundred *pics* are equal to 650 *taels*, 4 *mas*, 6 *condorins*  $\frac{62}{123}$  Chinese weight. All gross goods, such as tea, toutenag, &c. are weighed in balances with scales like ours, which are called *tien-ping*. For smaller articles, a steel-yard, named *ten-gorge*, is employed; and for those which are still less, another sort, called *ty-teng*.

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#### MEASURES.

THE Portuguese, and, in imitation of them, the other nations of Europe, give  
the



the name of *cob* to the Chinese measure. It contains one foot, eight inches, three lines ; and, therefore, it requires three cobs, one sixth, to make a French ell. The Chinese foot is called *tchi*, and is divided into ten inches.

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## ACCOMPTS.

The Chinese do not calculate with the pen, but with a board, having small wooden balls strung upon it, at certain distances, two of which are at the top, and five at the bottom. Each of these balls at the top is equal to five, and those at the bottom to one. When they have cast up a sum, they mark it on the board: when a second is cast up, it is immediately added to it, and generally without any error. This operation is performed with the utmost facility. The board used for this purpose is called



*soïon-pan*, or *board for reckoning*. The names which the Chinese give to their cyphers, and the manner in which they express them, are as follows :

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2	cule	-	-	==
3	fan	-	-	===
4	fec	-	-	┐
5	ou	-	-	⊕

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## MERCHANDIZE.

### TEA.

TEA grows on a small shrub, the leaves of which are collected twice or thrice every year. Those who collect the leaves three times a-year, begin at the new moon which precedes the vernal equinox, whether it falls in the end of February, or the beginning of March. At that period most of the leaves are perfectly green, and hardly fully expanded :



panded: but these small and tender leaves are accounted the best of all; they are scarce, and exceedingly dear.

The second crop, or the first for those who collect the leaves only twice a-year, is gathered about the end of March, or the beginning of April. Part of the leaves have then attained to maturity; and though the other part have acquired only half their size, they are both collected without any distinction.

The third, or the second for some, and last crop, is more abundant, and is collected about the end of April, or the beginning of May, when the leaves have attained to their full growth, either in size or number. There are some people who neglect the two first crops, and who confine themselves entirely to this; the leaves of which are selected with great care, and distributed into classes according to their size and goodness. Tea  
ought



ought to be rejected as of a bad quality, when old, and as it were withered leaves are found amongst it : which may be easily known, by infusing a little of it in water ; for then the leaves dilate, and return to their natural state.

The leaves of the tea shrub are oblong, sharp-pointed, indented on the edges, and of a very beautiful green colour. The flower is composed of five white petals disposed in the form of a rose, and is succeeded by a pod of the size of a filberd, containing two or three small green seeds, which are wrinkled, and have a disagreeable taste. Its root is fibrous, and spreads itself out near the superficies of the ground.

This shrub grows equally well in a rich as in a poor soil. It is to be found all over China ; but there are certain places where the tea is of a better quality than in others. Some people give the preference to the tea  
of



of Japan, but we have reason to doubt whether there is any real difference.

The manner of preparing tea is very simple: when the leaves are collected, they are exposed to the steam of boiling water, in order to soften them; and they are then spread out upon metal plates, placed over a moderate fire, where they acquire that shrivelled appearance which they have when brought to Europe.

In China there are only two kinds of the tea-shrub; but the Chinese, by their industry, have considerably multiplied each of them. If there are therefore large quantities of tea in that country which is excessively dear, there is some also very common, and sold at a low rate. The Chinese, however, are very fond of good tea, and take as much pains to procure it of an excellent quality, as the Europeans do to procure excellent wine.



## BOHEA TEA.

THE Chinese name of this tea is *vou-y-tcha*, that is to say, tea of the kind called *vou-y*. It takes its name from a mountain in the province of Fokien.

There are three kinds of this tea; the first of which, called common bohea, grows at the bottom of the mountain; the second, called *cong-fou*, or *camphou*, grows at the top; and the third, named *saot-chaon*\*, grows in the middle.

*Cong-fou-tcha* means bohea tea better prepared, and *saot-chaon* signifies quintessence. The latter is thus named, either because growing on the middle of the mountain, and being sheltered from the injuries of the weather, it acquires a greater degree of fine-

\* The names of the last two kinds are in England corrupted into *congo* and *fouchong*.



ness than the rest ; or because none of the leaves are gathered, except such as are full and juicy.

The *saot-chaon* tea sold to the Europeans, is nothing, therefore, but *cong-fou* tea of a superior quality. The three shrubs distinguished by the above names, are in every respect the same ; and the only difference of the tea consists in the manner of preparing it.

Bohea teas, in general, ought to be dry, and heavy in the hand : this is a sign that the leaves have been full and juicy. When infused, they ought to communicate to the water a yellow colour, inclining a little to green, which indicates that they are fresh, for old tea produces a red colour. Care must be taken, above all, to avoid red leaves, and to choose such as are large and entire. This also is a sign of freshness ; for the longer tea is kept, the more it is shaken,



which breaks the leaves, and mixes them with a great deal of dust. It sometimes happens, however, that the tea-dust is owing to the manner in which it is put into the box, as the Chinese tread upon it with their feet, to make it hold a larger quantity. The leaves of the *cong-fou* and *saot-chaon* teas ought to have a beautiful black shining tint, to be large and weighty, and to communicate to water a very bright colour, and a mild taste.

The *pekao* is a particular kind of tea-shrub, the leaves of which are all black on the one side, and all white on the other. As the real *pekao* tea is very scarce and dear, even in those places where it grows, the Chinese, who study the art of adulterating their teas in general, take care, when this valuable sort is collected, to put into it a great many more black than white leaves. They adulterate it, likewise, by mixing with it some of the  
small



small half-grown leaves, as yet white, which grow on the top of the common bohea tea-tree. This changes the quality of the *pe-kao*; for these leaves being scarcely formed, can have very little sap or flavour.

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### GREEN TEA.

GREEN Teas do not grow in the same places as the Bohea tea. They are brought from the province of Nankin, and are distinguished into three sorts. The first is known under the name of *songlo tea*, but oftener under that of *green toukay*; the second is called *bin tea*, and the third *hayssuen tea*. There are also some other kinds; but the greater part of them are unknown, or of little importance to foreigners. The *songlo* and *hayssuen* teas come from the same shrub.



Their only difference is in the manner of their being prepared.

*Bin tea* grows on a different shrub, the leaves of which are thicker and larger than those of other kinds.

All these teas ought to have a green leaden tint: the older they are, the leaves become more yellow, which is a very great fault. They ought also to have a burnt or scorched smell, not too strong, but agreeable: for when they have been long kept, they have a fishy smell, somewhat like that of pilchards. The French wish to find in green teas, and particularly in *songlo*, and imperial, an odour similar to that of soap.

In these different kinds of tea which I have mentioned, there is a particular distinction to be made, as they are generally classed into one, two, or three kinds, according to the periods at which they were gathered,

TEA



## TEA IN BALLS.

IN China there is a kind of tea called *poncul-tcha*, to which the Europeans give the name of *tea in balls*. It is procured from the province of *Fle-tchien*, or *Yunnan*, and is a composition or mixture of different teas formed into balls. When it is used, a small quantity of it is cut off, and suffered to infuse a much longer time than common tea. It is not agreeable to the taste, but it has the peculiar virtue of curing disorders of the breast, and facilitating digestion. Some of this tea is brought also from *Siangyang*, a town in the province of *Houquang*, but it is inferior in quality to the former. The latter may be easily known, by applying it to the mouth, and breathing strongly upon it; if it is penetrated by the breath, it is accounted genuine. The older the *pon-*



*cul-tcha* is, the more it is in request ; it is even pretended, that it has been kept in some families, with astonishing precautions, for more than a century : but this is an affair of taste, absolutely foreign to commerce.

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#### CHINA INK.

THIS is a composition of fish-glue, ox-gall, and lamp-black. When in a liquid state, it is poured into small wooden moulds, where it is suffered to harden.

The Chinese consider it as an excellent remedy for spitting of blood. They keep some of it, therefore, often in their mouths, as the Europeans do lozenges. The best is made at *Tcienien*, a city of the province of Nankin, situated on the *Kiang*, or blue river. That of the finest quality is dry, hard, black, and shining.

GALEGA.



## GALEGA.

THERE are two kinds of galega. The first, and the largest, is a thick, heavy plant, covered with a hard, reddish bark, whitish in the inside, and of a sharp, bitter taste. Its flower is like that of pease, without smell, and sometimes of a blue, and sometimes of a white colour. It gives an agreeable taste to vinegar, and is accounted a specific in disorders of the breast.

The second sort is a hard root, of the size of the little finger, reddish within and without, and of a stronger and more aromatic taste than the former. The plant which rises from it, has the form of a small tree, bearing leaves like those of the myrtle. It ought to be chosen fresh, juicy, of a high colour, compact, odoriferous, and with a sharp aromatic taste. The Chinese cut it  
into



into pieces of the size of a filbert, in order that they may be dried and transported with more ease. They consider it as an excellent antidote. These two kinds of galega are cultivated in the province of *Xansy*, and the merchants of the city of *Tayven* carry on a trade in them.

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#### GAMBOGE.

THIS is a resinous gummy juice, of a yellow colour, extracted drop by drop on incision, from a prickly shrub, which rises to a considerable height, and climbs round other trees like ivy. The best kind is brittle, hard, high-coloured, of an insipid taste at first, and then sharpish, inflammable, and capable of being, in a great measure, dissolved in spirits of wine. This gum, which



is used in medicine, is procured from *Sigan*, a village in the province of *Kiangsi*. Some people prefer the gamboge of Siam to that of China.

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#### GUM LAC.

THIS gum, employed in the composition of Spanish wax, ought to be chosen in bright transparent leaves. It is brought from *Quan-ton*, in the province of *Queicheu*; but it is much inferior to that of Bengal.

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#### CURCUMA.

THE curcuma is a plant, the root of which is hard, of a yellowish colour, both within and without, and approaches near to that of ginger.



ginger. It bears a purple flower; its fruit is covered with bristles, like the Indian chestnut; and its seeds, which are as round as pease, are good to eat. They are boiled with meat, and mixed also with rice, and different kinds of ragouts. This plant is used likewise in medicine; and it produces a fine saffron-coloured dye. It ought to be chosen fresh, heavy, compact, juicy, and of a beautiful yellow colour. The best comes from *Carfung*, in the province of *Honan*.

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### QUICKSILVER.

THIS fluid, heavy mineral, which penetrates gold and silver, is a natural production of several parts of China and the East-Indies. It is generally found in the mountains, covered with a kind of soft stones, as white as chalk. It is remarked, that the plants



plants which grow upon these mountains are greener and taller than any where else ; but the trees seldom produce fruit. When a thick mist, or vapour, which does not ascend very high, is seen to arise from the mountain, it is a certain sign that there is a mine of quicksilver below. The richest mines are those situated towards the north : they are always surrounded by water, which must be evacuated before they are worked.

It is seldom possible to get quicksilver pure from the mine, as it is found mixed with earth, or reduced to natural cinnabar, that is to say, mercury combined with sulphur. If the mercury is mixed only with a small quantity of earth, it is strained through a shamoy skin, on which the earth remains alone ; but when it is in the form of native cinnabar, it must be extracted by means of iron and fire. The iron serves to detach the sulphureous acid which confined the mercury ;



mercury ; and the fire gives the mercury an opportunity of shooting in a receiver filled with water, which is necessary, that it may condense, by the coolness it finds when it rises from the fire.

This mineral substance, being composed of small globules, always disunited, is the more difficult to be fixed and retained when it is pressed. It remains, however, motionless, when suffered to settle in one place ; yet the old East India Company gave over carrying any of it in their vessels, for fear of accidents. It was brought home by the commanders of private ships, who were less timid, and without any inconvenience, after using proper precautions. The advantage they derived from this article, ought to encourage us to imitate them, provided we do not neglect the necessary preservatives.



## CINNABAR.

THERE are two sorts of cinnabar : one natural, which is found perfectly formed in the bowels of the earth, as described in the preceding article ; and the other artificial, which consists of three parts of crude mercury, and one of sulphur, mixed and sublimated together. The latter pounded a long time on a piece of porphyry, may be reduced to a very fine powder, called vermilion, which is one of the most beautiful red colours we have. It is used for rendering Spanish wax red. Fine cinnabar ought to be of a bright red colour.

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## BORAX.

THIS is a salt, proper for accelerating the fusion of metals. It must be chosen

as



as white and crystalline as possible. It is, generally, in pieces as broad as the hand, and from one to two inches in thickness, when it has not been broken. One must not, however, be too nice in having it always in large masses: were they no bigger than an egg, it is a matter of no consequence, provided they are white and pure. The borax procured from Surat, is much inferior to that of China.

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#### RHUBARB.

THIS is a large root, which grows in low, cold, moist places, in the provinces of *Houquang* and *Leaotong*. Its leaves are broad, of a dark green colour, and have an acid and agreeable taste. When the root is taken from the earth, its outer bark is scraped off, as well as the thin yellow membrane



which is below ; it is then perforated, and filed on a string, in order that it may be suspended in the open air, or dried in the shade. The largest pieces are not the best, because the surface of them only becomes dry. Rhubarb ought to be chosen in pieces of a moderate size, two inches at most in thickness ; flat, hard, and heavy ; fresh, smooth on the outside, and of a saffron and nutmeg colour ; veined in the heart, and having a bitter taste, and an aromatic smell. The excellence of this plant as a remedy, is well known : it produces also, a yellow die, which makes it at all times an article of great consumption.

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### CHINA ROOT.

THIS plant, called *Smilax China*, has a root as large as a child's hand. It is

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twisted,



twisted, full of knots, reddish on the outside, of a flesh colour in the heart, and destitute of smell. It sends forth thorny stalks, which are of a creeping nature, and which climb around such trees as grow in its neighbourhood. It must be chosen full, heavy, and compact; of a reddish colour, and free from rottenness: for it is much subject to be gnawed by worms. It is employed with success as a medicine, in the province of *Onanfi*, where it abounds. The Chinese use it for food, instead of rice; and this contributes not a little to render them lusty.

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### MUSK.

THIS is a kind of bilious, fermented, curdled, and almost corrupted blood, taken from a bag under the belly of a species of roe-buck, the hair of which is dry, brown, and



and brittle. When the animal is killed, this bag is cut off; and the curdled blood being separated from it, is hung up to dry in the sun. In this situation it is soon converted into a light substance, almost in powder, and of a brown colour, which is again put into the bag for the sake of transportation. These animals are caught in the beginning of summer, because, having been half-starved during winter, on account of the snow, which lies very deep on the ground, their blood is heated, and in a state of fermentation.

Musk ought to be chosen very dry, and in bags of the size of an egg, thin, having a strong smell, and well covered with hair, which should be of a brown colour. It is necessary to observe carefully, that the bags have not been opened, and again sewed up; and that no small stones, or bits of lead, have been put into them, which is a trick very



common among the Chinese. If one is obliged to keep the musk separate from the bag, it ought to be preserved in a leaden box, in order that the coolness of the metal may prevent it from becoming dry, and contracting a bad smell.

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#### TOUTENAG.

THIS is a white, metallic alloy, made of tin and bismuth; hard, compact, and heavy. The best, which is in cakes, is very sonorous when struck, and pure and brilliant when broken. The emperor of China, alone, has the right of selling to his subjects, gold, quicksilver, and toutenag.



## MOTHER OF PEARL.

THIS article consists of large thick oyster-shells, of a grey colour on the outside, and smooth and silvery within. They have internally the same beauty and splendor as those pearls which are commonly found in them.

The Chinese do not procure these shells in their own country, but from Cochin-china and Camboja. They manufacture all kinds of toys of them; and use them also instead of window-glass, as they admit almost as much light as some of our glass in Europe. They employ them, likewise, in making lime; not for building, because it is not so strong a cement as that made of stone; but for plaster and stucco, as it is much finer and whiter. Mother of pearl ought to be chosen of a beautiful white co-



lour, thick and smooth, and, above all, free from yellow or grey spots and veins.

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### VARNISH.

THE Chinese varnish is a composition of a viscous liquor extracted from different shrubs and small reddish worms, about the size of the silk-worm. After these worms have been boiled in water, the surface of it appears covered with a kind of oily substance, which is carefully collected, and which immediately fixes and becomes hard: but it may be softened by heat, when it is necessary to use it. This second kind of varnish is much superior to the first.

There is, however, a third kind, which is of a still better quality, and in much greater request. It is made of a kind of gum called *cie*, which, in summer, distils from



from certain trees under the form of the tears of the turpentine tree. The yellow is the best; that which is black is indifferent.

The *cie*, when fresh and moist, exhales a malignant vapour, which occasions paleness and prodigious swelling in the faces of those who collect it for the first time. This malady cannot be cured but by rubbing the part affected with the ashes of burned feathers. Without this remedy the disorder increases, a fever ensues, and the patient is exposed to great danger.

Works to which this varnish is applied do not dry except in a very moist place, which requires time; but when they are once dry, they remain always in the same state, and never alter. Articles which are well varnished, receive seven coats of varnish, one of which is never laid upon another until the former is perfectly dry. Hence



it happens that the varnish of those pieces of furniture manufactured at Canton, which being made in haste, according as they are ordered, and have not had time to dry, retains a disagreeable odour, not observed in those of Nankin, which are in the greatest request, next to those of Japan. The brilliancy peculiar to the Nankin varnish is given to it by polishing, and by insinuating into the pores of the wood a kind of powder, which incorporates with it, and produces that lustre so much admired.

Great care ought to be taken that the different coats are laid on evenly and smoothly, without blisters, and that the figures are well executed.

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#### CINNAMON.

THIS odoriferous bark, the best of which is, without doubt, that of the island of Ceylon,



Ceylon, is found also in China. The Chinese cinnamon is of a superior quality to that of Cochin, and may be procured at a moderate price. This bark ought to be chosen thin, of a beautiful brown colour like that of Spanish snuff, and of a very sharp taste. Cinnamon of the first quality is in great request.

One may procure likewise in China star-aniseed, which ought to be chosen fresh, and of a fine odour, as well as cardamum, equal in goodness to that of the Malabar coast. The pods ought to be of a triangular form, having the seeds in the inside brown, and of a sharp, aromatic taste ; and the membrane which incloses them ought to be odouriferous, and of a bright yellow colour. The newest is the best.



## GINSENG.

THIS oriental plant, so much celebrated, grows in the mountains of Tartary, which border on certain provinces of the Chinese empire. Its stem, which is as thick as that of wheat, and about a foot in height, bears at first red buttons, which expand each into six white leaves like those of the violet. This knotty root has almost the figure of the mandragora; but it is smaller, transparent, and interspersed with small black veins, which form two or three branches. It has a sweet taste, with a slight mixture of bitterness; and is of an aromatic smell, which is far from being disagreeable. This root, in order that it may be preserved, is dried, and then it becomes red on the outside, and yellowish within. It is sold at a high price, especially when it is of a good quality.



quality. Those kinds which are brown and grey are much inferior to the other.

Worms sometimes get into the ginseng, and gnaw it, which would render it unfit for sale, were it not for the cunning of the Chinese, who have the patience to fill up the holes with a yellow powder which has a great resemblance to the colour of the root. They insinuate this powder into the small eyes of the plant, with so much art, that one must be a great connoisseur to avoid being deceived. The Chinese themselves, however, are sometimes dupes, in their turn, to the fraud of some European merchants, who mix with their oriental ginseng a certain quantity of that of Canada, which is far inferior in value. It is deficient not only in colour, smell, and transparency, but also in its virtue and properties. Notwithstanding the high idea entertained of this plant, the trials made of it in Europe never  
corre-



corresponded with the wonders ascribed to it by the Chinese.

The immoderate use of ginseng would soon bring on death. The rich are contented with taking, in the morning, a small quantity of it, equal in weight to about a grain of corn. When taken in small doses, either infused or in powder, it is salutary for old men, and those who are exhausted by excesses : but it is prejudicial to young people, and to those who are of a warm temperament. The strength and virtue of this root is so great, that the same dose of it will serve twice for infusion without any addition.

The best ginseng ought to be fresh, heavy, of a strong smell, and free from caries and worm-holes. The Chinese name of it signifies *resemblance to the thighs of a man*.



## NANKIN SILK.

THIS filk is the most esteemed on account of its clearness and whiteness. When it does not possess these two qualities, it ought to be rejected. Care ought to be taken also, that in the skains there be no bad filk in large flocks, which serve to increase its weight; and not to purchase it till it has been well dried, and exposed to the air, in order to guard against the deception of the Chinese, who often keep it shut up in moist places.

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## SILK STUFFS.

SILK stuffs of a good quality ought to have fine borders, and to be closely woven, very soft, smooth, and bright. To judge of  
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of the goodness of a piece of silk, one must not be directed by the weight ; because the more Canton silk, which is a hard kind of an inferior quality, has been employed in manufacturing it, the more it will weigh. Stuffs made of that silk do not take the die well, especially green and blue colours ; and they are always hard and stiff to the touch. The goodness of a piece of sattin or damask may be known by its being soft, smooth, and even. If made of coarse silk, it will be rough and uneven.

The woof of the stuffs manufactured at Canton is made of coarse silk, which renders them very inferior to those of Nankin, where the materials are finer, and where the workmen are more skilful, because they supply furniture for the emperor's palace.

The principal silk stuffs brought from China are, Plain pekins of from  $11 \frac{1}{2}$  to 12 ells by 1.



Lustrings, of 12 ells by from  $\frac{5}{8}$  to  $\frac{2}{3}$ , and of 14 ells by the same.

Plain gourgourans, of 13 ells by  $\frac{1}{2}$ , and of 14 ells by  $\frac{5}{8}$ .

Plain padefoys of 14 ells by  $\frac{5}{8}$ , and nearly  $\frac{5}{8}$ .

Double ditto of 14 ells.

Pekin handkerchiefs, twenty in a piece.

Plain, embroidered, and brocaded fattins, of from  $11\frac{1}{2}$  to 12 ells by  $\frac{5}{8}$ .

Plain and painted gauzes, single or double.

Lampases for dresses, of 12 ells by  $\frac{5}{8}$ .

Ditto for furniture, of from  $21\frac{1}{2}$  to 22 ells by  $\frac{1}{2}$ .

Painted pekings for dresses, of from  $11\frac{1}{2}$  to 22 ells by  $\frac{3}{8}$ .

Yellow nankeens; first, second, and third kinds.

White ditto, first and second kinds.

White nankeen cloth, in pieces of twenty-seven ells.

PORCELAIN.



## PORCELAIN.

WE are not informed who was the inventor of porcelain, nor to what chance or experiments we are indebted for that discovery. It is, however, probable, according to some of the Chinese annals, that porcelain was used in China before the year 424 of the Christian æra. Since that period it has been gradually brought to a degree of perfection, which induces the most opulent people in Europe to use it.

Formerly the manufacturers of porcelain resided in the cities *Feon-leang*, *Kinte-ching*, and *jao-tcheou*, in the province of *Kiangsi*. The works which were made there, and transported to foreign kingdoms, had no other name than *valuable jewels* of *jao-tcheou* and *Kinte-ching*. Porcelain was afterwards manufactured in other places; but it is very different both in colour and fineness.

Strangers



Strangers may, without any difficulty, distinguish that which is made in the provinces of Canton and Fokien. It is of a coarse white colour, without brightness, and without any mixture of those delicate tints which are peculiar to the porcelain of Kinte-ching. The latter is unquestionably the finest known; and is even purchased by the Japanese themselves.

The Europeans procure almost all their porcelain from Canton, except that which is ordered: for the Chinese merchants send models to *Kinte-ching* to have various articles manufactured in the same manner; but it often happens that the workmen, being sure of a ready sale for their own patterns, neglect these works, and do not give themselves the trouble to correct any faults which may be in the materials or the workmanship. One ought never to give commissions of that kind but to merchants



of established probity and reputation, who may be interested in causing them to be well executed upon the spot. Besides this, there is another inconvenience in these commissioned works. Being all made according to new models, in which it is difficult to succeed, if they have even a few imperfections, they are rejected by the Europeans, who will purchase nothing but what is thoroughly finished. They remain therefore in the hands of the manufacturers, who not being able to dispose of them to the Chinese, because they are not agreeable to their taste, lay upon the pieces they sell an additional price, in order to make up for the loss they sustain by those which are returned.

Nothing is more certain than that the difficulty of imitating models sent from Europe, is one of those causes which augment the price of porcelain when ordered; for we must not believe that the workmen  
can



can copy every pattern indiscriminately which is sent to them from foreign nations. There are some really impracticable in China; though, at the same time, the Chinese can execute some surprising works, which we, in our turn, consider as impossible.

Several people imagine, that porcelain acquires a superior degree of perfection when it has been buried in the earth. This, however, is a false idea, which the Chinese ridicule. The history of Kinte-ching, speaking of the beautiful porcelain of old times, informs us, that it was in so much request, that scarcely were the furnaces opened when the merchants disputed who should have it, which certainly does not imply that it was buried in the earth. It is very true, that in digging up ruins, or in clearing old neglected wells, some very beautiful pieces of porcelain are now and then found, which



have been hid during the time of war or revolutions ; but these pieces are beautiful merely because the owners of them thought of concealing only the most valuable, with a view of finding them again when the troubles were over. If they are highly valued, it is not on account of their having acquired any superior quality in the bosom of the earth, but because their ancient beauty is preserved. There are some connoisseurs also in China, who give a high price for the most trifling utensils employed by their emperors in remote ages. All the change made in porcelain by lying long in the earth, respects its tints and colouring. This mark of antiquity is observed also in marble and ivory ; but sooner than in porcelain, the varnish and enamel of which retard the progress of moisture.

A method has been lately discovered of imitating the ancient porcelain, or at least  
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that of considerable antiquity. Pieces of this kind are generally very thick and heavy. They are first dipped in common mixed with yellow oil, which gives them, when baked, a sea-green colour: they are then baked a second time, in a very fat kind of liquor made from capons and other meat, after which they are put into a dirty sewer for two or three months; and at the end of that time they resemble porcelain made three or four hundred years ago, which was the period when pieces of that colour and thickness were esteemed by the Chinese. These false antiques resemble the real also, in not resounding when struck, and in producing no humming noise when applied to the ear.

The Chinese are remarkably fond of those glass and crystal wares which are brought to them from Europe. Porcelain, however, is preferable; for it has a certain  
kind



kind of splendour as well as glafs ; and if it is less transparent, it is also less brittle. It likewise bears warm liquors ; and one may hold it in the hand with boiling tea, which could not be done with a silver cup of the same figure and thickness.

The Chinese succeed extremely well in forming grotesque figures and animals of porcelain. This kind of china is commonly called *ifcky*.

Such, in general, are the principal objects which might be procured from this vast empire, with the hope of certain gain. I shall therefore now say a few words respecting certain Asiatic articles which might be carried to China, and sold there with considerable profit.

Aphrodisiacs and restoratives are in great request among the Chinese. They are, above all, fond of a kind of birds nests, found on the rocks near the sea-coast,  
and



and made by a species of small swallows, of the fry of fish and a viscous foam which the sun afterwards hardens. Their price is in proportion to their quality. The island of Java furnishes the best : the white are most esteemed.

The Chinese set a great value, also, on the fins of the shark, the sea priapus, crabs, sago, tripam, and a certain kind of Molucca beans described by Rumphius.

Sago is the pith of a palm of the same name found in the island of Timor. Tripam is a small spongy plant without roots, and resembling a mushroom. The rounder and blacker it is, it is so much the more perfect. It is very common at the island of Celebes.

As the most exquisite food appears insipid to the Chinese, and as every thing they eat requires to be heightened by seasoning, they consume large quantities of spiceries, such as cloves, nutmegs, and pepper.



The best cloves are procured at the island of Amboyna. They ought to be full, juicy, heavy, of a strong odour, and hot aromatic taste, and to leave a slight oil on the fingers.

The nutmegs and mace of the island of Banda are the most esteemed. They ought to be chosen fresh, round, heavy, of a strong smell and taste, somewhat bitterish, and with an oily juice.

Benjamin and opium, sandal wood, ambergris, camphire of Sumatra, and Socotrine aloes may also be carried to China. The latter article, which grows in the island of Socotora, near the Red Sea, ought to be bright and transparent, to have a tawny colour, with a bitter aromatic taste, and to be almost destitute of smell.

Benjamin may be procured at Bantam. This aromatic gum is commonly sold in boxes of one or two hundred weight each. It ought to be chosen with a strong smell,



and marbled in different places, in the inside with white.

The Bengal opium is preferable to any other. It is the inspissated juice of poppies, formed into small cakes. It ought to be somewhat soft, of a brownish colour and strong fetid smell, and to yield to the finger when pressed. That which is dry, friable, burnt, and mixed with earth, is of a bad quality.

Sandal wood ought to be heavy, to have a sweet smell, no pith, and to be of a beautiful flesh colour in the inside.

Ambergris is found on the sea-coast, in many parts of India. This resinous, spongy, and inflammable substance is reckoned to be of a good quality when it is of a cinder-grey colour, and has a fine smell. The masses are of different forms; but generally they are flat, of the size of the hand, and consist of different coats, or leaves, two or



three lines in thickness; so that ten or twelve leaves, laid one upon another, form at least the thickness of two or three inches. The bills of paroquets are sometimes found in them, which is a certain sign that they are of a good quality.

I shall terminate this article with some remarks on the trade which might be easily carried on at Timor, situated to the south of the Moluccas, and to the east of Java. The articles which will find the readiest sale there, are fuses, gun-flints, powder and ball, pistols, sabres, iron in bars, common toys, cloth of different colours, silver bracelets, coarse handkerchiefs, and Indian cotton stuffs, a little opium, and Spanish or Madeira wine of a rough flavour.

In return, one might procure rice, saltpetre, tortoise-shell, wax, sandal, and sapan wood, and even a little gold. Large quantities of *cadiang*, a kind of small beans, which  
the



the Dutch give to their sailors, may be also procured here.

I shall pass over in silence a branch of commerce which humanity, reason, and philosophy have shewn to be odious; without, however, having been able to triumph over prejudices, habitude, and the self-interests of a few individuals. When shall we have the happiness not to be acquainted with slavery in our colonies?

T H E E N D.



